

(No. 6706.)

"INTREPID" (S.S.).

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

IN the matter of a formal investigation held at the Moot Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on the 16th and 17th days of August, 1904, before J. D. WALKER and R. O. HESLOP, Esquires, two of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, acting in and for the city and county of Newcastle-on-Tyne, assisted by Captain CUNINGHAME and Commander CABORNE, C.B., R.N.R. (nautical assessors), into the circumstances attending the loss of the British steamship "INTREPID," of Sunderland, near Ristna Point, Isle of Dago, Gulf of Finland, on the 6th day of July, 1904.

Report of Court.

The Court, having carefully inquired into the circumstances attending the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds, for the reasons stated in the annex hereto, that the loss of the "Intrepid" was caused by the set to the eastward being greater than was allowed for by the master and by his failure to verify his position in accordance with the soundings obtained. The Court finds the master, Garibaldi Mark Waggott, alone in default and reprimands him therefor.

Dated this 17th day of August, 1904.

JNO. D. WALKER, }
R. OLIVER HESLOP, } Judges.

We concur in the above report.

ANDW. CUNINGHAME, }
W. F. CABORNE, } Assessors.

Annex to the Report.

This was an inquiry into the circumstances attending the loss of the British steamship "Intrepid," of Sunderland, and was held at the Moot Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on the 16th and 17th days of August, 1904, before John Duguid Walker and Richard Oliver Heslop, Esquires, assisted by Captain Andrew Cuninghame and Commander W. F. Caborne, C.B., R.N.R. (nautical assessors).

Mr. Corder appeared for the Board of Trade, Mr. Bell represented the owners, and Mr. Dixon Jacks the master and chief officer, while the second officer appeared in person.

The "Intrepid," official number 68997, was an iron screw steamship, built at Sunderland in the year 1879 by Messrs. Short Brothers. She was schooner-rigged and of the following dimensions,—Length, 251·3 ft.; breadth, 34 ft.; and depth in hold, 18·5 ft.; and was of 1,398·60 gross, and 879·82 net registered amended tonnage. She was fitted with two compound surface-condensing engines of 140 h.p. (combined), constructed in the year 1879 by Mr. George Clark, of Sunderland, and was owned by the Gordon Steam Shipping Co., Ltd., of 36, Lime Street, London, E.C., Mr. Frederick Gordon, of 2, Collingwood Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, being appointed managing owner on 23rd February, 1899.

She was, on the voyage in question, in good condition and well-found, and fitted with life-boats

and life-saving appliances in accordance with the Act.

The vessel had three compasses, particulars of which are hereinafter given, the courses being set and the vessel steered by the pole compass. The master stated he used this compass in preference to the bridge compass, as the latter was not satisfactory.

The records of his observations, as well as the logs, etc., were not produced, as the master informed the Court they were among the papers taken possession of by the Russian Customs Authorities when he landed at Revel after the casualty, and that they refused to part with them on the ground that he was not about to leave the port direct by steamer but to proceed overland to Riga on his way home.

The Court was thus placed at some disadvantage in having to rely mainly upon oral testimony, though a copy of the protest made by the officers and crew before the notary at Revel was put in and contained an account of the voyage.

It would be well in future if, in similar circumstances, steps were taken by responsible authority to secure the production of papers which have an important bearing on the case, as containing records made at the time of events connected with the casualty, the subject of inquiry.

The master was supplied with the usual blue-back charts and accompanying sailing directions, both of which were up to date.

The "Intrepid" left Tyne Dock about 4.30 p.m. of the 1st July last with a full cargo of 1,750 tons of coal, bound for Cronstadt. Her draught of water on leaving was 18 ft. forward and 19 ft. 1 in. aft, and she carried a crew of 18 hands, all told (and no passengers), under the command of Mr. Garibaldi Mark Waggott, who held a certificate of competency as master, number 034046.

All went well, and, at midnight of the 5th July, when they were off Hoburg Light, which bore N.N.W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. (magnetic), distant by four-point bearing 10 miles, the master set a course N.E. (magnetic), intending to pass some 7 miles off Ristna Light, allowing for the set to the eastward. The log at the time registered 236 miles. At 6.16 a.m. of the 6th July Ostergarns Holmen Light bore N.W. (magnetic), distant by four-point bearing 9 miles, the log registering 278 miles. At 8 a.m. the weather was fine and clear, with light south westerly wind, the log registering 298 miles. The vessel was proceeding at "full speed," making some 9 knots an hour, and at noon the wind turned southerly and it came in hazy. The course was then altered to N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ N. (magnetic), the distance run by log being 332 miles. At 2 p.m., fog set in, the engines were rung to "stand by," steam being reduced, and at 4 p.m., the fog became dense. The engines were slowed down to "half speed," and the course altered to N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. (magnetic), the log registering 366 miles. About 5.40 the fog lifted and "full speed" was resumed; but, after 6.30, the fog came on intermittently and the engines were kept going "full" to "half speed," according to the state of the weather. At 8 p.m. a cast of the lead was taken, giving 38 fathoms, mud, the log registering 393 miles. At 9 p.m. a second cast was taken, giving 27 fathoms, mud; the log registered 399 miles and the course was now altered to N.E. by N. (magnetic). Again, at 10 p.m. a cast of the lead gave 23 fathoms, mud, and the log showed 405 miles. The course was then altered to N.E. by E. $\frac{1}{4}$ E. (magnetic) for one mile, and then to E. $\frac{3}{4}$ N. (magnetic) for one mile, with the object of picking up soundings off Ristna Point. An alteration was then made in the course to N.E. by N. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. (magnetic), the log registering 407 miles.

At 10.40 soundings gave 17 fathoms, sand, and the log registered 409 miles. The master stated he judged from this sounding that the vessel had passed Ristna Point, and, the fog lifting somewhat, he resumed "full speed."

About this time the man on the look-out reported "a fog-signal, one blast on the starboard

bow." Neither the master nor the chief officer nor any of the deck hands heard anything of the signal.

It was heard very indistinctly by the look-out man, who could not say whether it proceeded from a ship or a fog-station. He stated he thought he heard a similar signal a little before, but was so uncertain that he did not report it. In view of the vessel's position at the time as now known, it was in all probability the steam syren on Ristna Point. The vessel proceeded at "full speed," and, at 11.15, she stranded on what proved to be Ristna Point, the log at the time registering 412 miles. The engines were rung "full speed astern," but, as the ship remained fast, they were stopped. The fore-peak and fore ballast tank began to fill immediately. The boats were swung out ready for use and soundings were taken round, giving 16 ft. 6 ins. forward, 18 ft. amidships, and 24 ft. aft. At 1 a.m. of the 7th July they commenced to jettison cargo, and, at 3 a.m., in reply to distress signals, the Dägerört Life-boat came off. At 1.30 p.m. the fog lifted and Ristna Lighthouse was observed bearing N.E. by E., distant about 1½ miles. About 3 p.m. the steamer "Lief," of Christiania, anchored astern, and arrangements were made for her to endeavour to tow the "Intrepid" off. They worked till 5 p.m., when both hawsers parted, and the "Lief" proceeded on her voyage. They continued to jettison cargo, and made several unsuccessful attempts to work the ship off with their own engines. At 2.30 a.m. of the 8th the salvage steamer "Frija" arrived, and, at 10.40 p.m., the vessel came off, but the ropes fouled the propellers of both vessels, and the "Intrepid" drifting broadside on the reef, struck heavily and quickly filled fore and aft. About midnight the vessel was abandoned and became a total wreck. The men were taken off by the salvage steamer and landed at Revel. No lives were lost.

As the narrative shows, no fault can be found with the master on the score of his not taking soundings. On the whole, he navigated the vessel carefully, but failed singularly to take advantage of the information afforded by the soundings. A reference to the chart should have convinced him that he was not in the position he anticipated, and that the vessel was being influenced by the easterly set to a greater extent than he allowed for. Under the circumstances, however, the Court felt justified in not dealing with his certificate.

At the conclusion of the evidence the following questions were submitted on behalf of the Board of Trade; Mr. Bell and Mr. Jacks addressed the Court for their clients, and Mr. Corder replied:—

(1) What number of compasses had the vessel; were they in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel; and when and by whom were they last adjusted?

(2) Did the master ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time; were the errors correctly ascertained and the proper corrections to the courses applied?

(3) Was the vessel supplied with proper and sufficient charts and sailing directions?

(4) Were proper measures taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 6.15 a.m. of the 6th July last; was a safe and proper course thereafter steered; and was due and proper allowance made for currents?

(5) Were safe and proper alterations made in the course at or about noon of the 6th July last and from time to time thereafter; and was due and proper allowance made for currents?

(6) Having regard to the state of the weather after 2 p.m. on the 6th July last—

(a) was the vessel navigated at too great a rate of speed?

(b) was the lead used with sufficient care and frequency?

(7) What was the sound heard by Gundersen, A.B., at or about 10.55 p.m. of the 6th July last; were proper measures then taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel?

(8) Was a good and proper look-out kept?

(9) What was the cause of the stranding and loss of the vessel?

(10) Was the vessel navigated with proper and seamanlike care?

(11) Was the loss of the s.s. "Intrepid" caused by the wrongful act or default of the master, chief and second officers, or of any of them?

To which the Court replied as follows:—

(1) The vessel had three compasses, viz., a pole compass above the upper bridge by which the courses were set and the vessel steered, a steering compass on the upper bridge, which, however, was not used as it was said to be unsatisfactory, and a compass on the poop aft.

With the exception of the steering compass they were in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel, and were last adjusted by Messrs. Moss and Muir, of Sunderland, off Shields, on the 18th July, 1903.

(2) The master stated he ascertained the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time; that the errors were correctly ascertained and the proper corrections to the courses applied. There was no documentary evidence in proof of this, as the compass-error book, logs, and all other papers were stated to have been detained by the Russian Customs officials at Revel, who refused to part with them.

(3) According to the evidence, the vessel was supplied with the usual blue-back charts and sailing directions published in 1903.

(4) Proper measures were taken at or about 6.15 a.m. of the 6th July last to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel when Ostergarns Holmen lighthouse was abeam, bearing N.W. (magnetic), distant, by four-point bearing, 9 miles. The N.E. (magnetic) course which had been set at midnight of the 5th July when off Hoburg Light was continued. This course was safe and proper and was laid with the intention of passing some 7 miles off Ristna Light after allowing for the set to the eastward, an allowance which at the time appears to have been due and proper.

(5) At or about noon of the 6th July the course was altered to N.E. ¼ N. (magnetic), which was safe and proper. The subsequent alterations were not safe and proper having regard to the soundings obtained, and insufficient allowance was made for the easterly set.

(6) The vessel was, having regard to the state of the weather after 2 p.m. of the 6th July, navigated at too great a rate of speed. The lead was used with sufficient care and frequency, but the inference the master drew from the soundings obtained was not justified, as the soundings in fact proved he was not in the position he anticipated.

(7) The sound heard by Gundersen, A.B., at or about 10.55 p.m. of the 6th July, was, in all probability, the steam syren on Ristna Point. The sound was very indistinct and uncertain, and was not heard by the master and chief officer who were on the bridge, nor the other hands on deck, consequently no measures were then taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel.

(8) A good and proper look-out appears to have been kept.

(9) The stranding and loss of the vessel were caused by the set to the eastward being greater than was allowed for by the master, and by his failure to verify his position in accordance with the soundings obtained.

(10) In the circumstances mentioned in answers 6 and 9 the vessel was not navigated with proper and seamanlike care.

(11) The loss of the vessel was caused by the default of the master, Garibaldi Mark Waggott, alone, but the Court does not deal with his certificate, being satisfied that a reprimand will meet the justice of the case.

JNO. D. WALKER, }
R. OLIVER HESLOP, } Judges.

We concur,

ANDW. CUNINGHAME, }
W. F. CABORNE, } Assessors.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 6th day of September, 1904.)