

(No. 6739.)

"TURRET CHIEF" (S.S.).

IN the matter of a formal investigation held at the Harbour Commissioners' Offices, Montreal, P.Q., on Wednesday, the 28th day of September, 1904, before Captain R. SALMON, Wreck Commissioner, assisted by Captain ARCHIBALD REID and Mr. WILBROD GAUTHIER, Assessors, to inquire into the causes which led to the grounding of the British s.s. "TURRET CHIEF," official number 106605, at about 9.45 p.m. on Tuesday, the 16th August, in the neighbourhood of Portneuf, River St. Lawrence, whereby serious damage resulted.

Report of the Court.

The Court, having carefully inquired into the circumstances attending the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds as follows:—

The "Turret Chief" left Indian Cove, Quebec, about 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 16th August, drawing 6ft. forward and 9 ft. aft; she was bound for Port Colbourne, Ontario, in water ballast. Branch Pilot Néré Bellisle was in charge, and, from the report of the master, he was perfectly sober and handled the vessel well until she took the ground abreast of Portneuf River, the tide being about half flood at the time; she remained fast for about half-an-hour, coming off without assistance on the rising tide and proceeding on her way. At the time of the casualty it was raining slightly, but all lights were plainly visible. From the evidence before the Court it was impossible to ascertain the extent of the damage, but the vessel was detained a week in dry-dock undergoing repairs.

Pilot Bellisle is solely responsible for the accident, which was caused by his over-estimating the distance from the north shore. He produces a doctor's certificate showing his sight is defective and explains that since he had an attack of "la grippe" in June his eyes have given him trouble, although he had no reason to suspect his sight was defective when he took charge of this vessel, having passed a satisfactory examination in this respect before the opening of navigation this season.

Under the circumstances the Court will withhold his license until such time as he can produce satisfactory evidence of his ability to pilot vessels.

(Signed) R. SALMON,
Wreck Commissioner.

We concur,

(Signed) ARCHIBALD REID,
Port Warden and Surveyor to Lloyd's
Register.

(Signed) WILBROD GAUTHIER,
President of the Montreal Pilots'
Committee.

Montreal, 29th September, 1904.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the
11th day of November, 1904.)