

(No. 6852.)

"TROPIC" (S.S.).

FINDING and Order of a Naval Court held at Talcahuano, Chili, on the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th days of July, 1905, to investigate the cause and manner of casualty to the British steamship "TROPIC."

The "Tropic" was a two-masted vessel, built of steel, of 2,340 tons nett register, official number 105.368, built at the port of Newcastle-on-Tyne in the year 1896, and was owned by E. C. Thin, 24, Chapel Street, Liverpool.

It appears from the evidence given before this Court that the "Tropic" sailed from Antofagasta on the 24th of June, 1905, bound for Santa Lucia for orders, via Talcahuano and Coronel, with a cargo of nitrate and about two tons iodine in casks. Her total crew consisting of 31 hands all told, including the master, besides the coast crew of 23 Chilian labourers.

That upon the evidence given the vessel appears to be well found and sufficiently manned, &c. That on the 27th of June observations were taken at noon which were duly verified by the high land some 35 to 40 miles off Valparaiso. The course was set S. by E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. nothing to the eastward to make a S. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. course. At 8 p.m. S. by E. $\frac{1}{4}$ E. and at midnight to S. by E. to pass outside the range of Cape Caranza light, and that the Court considers same to be a safe distance to allow for a possible inset of current. At time of casualty the weather was fine but cloudy, wind blowing from N.N.E. with a westerly swell, but, owing to the darkness it was materially impossible to see any distance ahead.

That on the 28th of June last, at 4.45 a.m., the vessel stranded, the exact position being latitude $35^{\circ} 9' S.$ and longitude $72^{\circ} 20' W.$, off Putú, 15 miles north of Constitucion.

That it is very regrettable that the first life-boat which left the vessel at 9.30 a.m. the same morning with 17 crew all told, bound for Constitucion, to seek for assistance has not since been heard of, and the Court recognizes that the boat left well provisioned and thoroughly equipped.

That the ship's register, log-book, charts, articles, &c., and all other documents pertaining to the vessel were placed at the disposal of the Court. That upon the evidence given by the master, first

and third mates, first and second engineers, boat-swain, and two able seamen, also the surveyor of the Liverpool Salvage Association, the Court is of opinion that the cause of the stranding of the vessel is due to a deviation in the compass and also to an inset of current which is known to exist on this coast during the winter months. That it finds no grounds for blaming the conduct of the master, officers, or any of the crew.

That the Court is unanimously of opinion that the master, officers, and crew be exonerated from all blame.

That the existence of a strong current and deviation in the compass is proved by the vessel subsequently getting 15 miles out of her course during the voyage from Constitucion to Talcahuano, which is a distance of about 80 miles. This has also since been substantiated by the certificate attached,* given by the navigating officer of the Chilian cruiser "Blanco Encalada" in Talcahuano, as well as by the declaration of Captain Pomeroy, of the Liverpool Salvage Association.

That the crew appear to have conducted themselves properly and used their utmost exertions to save life, vessel, and cargo, and that proper discipline appears to have been maintained on board, and the Court considers that great credit is due to captain, officers, and engineers for having successfully floated the vessel.

That the master and officers appear to have navigated the vessel in a seamanlike and proper manner, and the Court has much pleasure in returning to the master, first and third mates their corresponding certificates.

Dated at Talcahuano, Chili, this 14th day of July, 1905.

W. K. STEEL,
Acting Vice-Consul,
President of the Court.

FRANK PYNE,
Master four masted schooner "Tacora"
at Talcahuano.

FRED. ELTON,
British Merchant.

W. O. APPELGATH,
Clerk to the Court.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 22nd day of September, 1905.)

* Not printed.