

(No. 6995.)

"PRINCIPALITY."

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

IN the matter of a formal investigation held at the Magistrate's Room, Liverpool, on the 17th and 18th days of October, 1906, before W. J. STEWART, Esquire, assisted by Commander W. F. CABORNE, C.B., R.N.R., and Captain J. ROBERTSON, into the circumstances attending the loss of the British Sailing Ship "PRINCIPALITY," which sailed from Junin for Rotterdam on May 4th, 1905, and has not since been heard of.

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 there is no evidence to show to what the loss of the "Principality" was due.

Dated this 18th day of October, 1906.

W. J. STEWART,
Judge.

We concur in the above Report.

W. F. CABORNE,
JAMIESON ROBERTSON, } Assessors.

Annex to the Report.

This inquiry was held in the Magistrate's Room, Dale Street, in the City of Liverpool, on the 17th and 18th days of October, 1906, when Mr. Paxton (Messrs. Avison and Co.) represented the Board of Trade, and Mr. Owen (Messrs. Lightbound, Owen and Co.) appeared on behalf of the owners.

The "Principality," official number 91258, was a British sailing vessel, built of iron at Sunderland, in the County of Durham, by Messrs. William Doxford and Sons, in 1885, and was registered at the Port of Liverpool. Her length was 258.5 ft.; her breadth, 39.6 feet; and her depth in hold, from tonnage deck to ceiling at midships, 23.1 ft., her gross tonnage being 1,756.54 tons, and her registered tonnage 1,595.42 tons. She had a fore-castle, deck house, and poop, was rigged as a four-masted barque, had two decks, and was provided with a collision bulkhead. She carried two lifeboats, a gig, a jolly boat, and all necessary boat equipment, 27 life belts, and 6 life buoys, and was owned by the "Principality Ship Company, Limited," of 30, Brunswick Street, in the City of Liverpool, Mr. William Thomas, of the same address, being designated as the person to whom the management of the vessel was entrusted by and on behalf of the owners, under advice received on the 6th November, 1885.

In May, 1904, the "Principality," which was classed 100 A1 at Lloyd's, and was then at Antwerp, passed her second No. 1 Survey, the sum of £225 being expended in fulfilling the surveyor's requirements. There was also at this time a further expenditure of £238 on account of her equipment. From Antwerp she proceeded to Fredrikstad, in Sweden, where she loaded a cargo of timber, sailing thence for Melbourne

about the 24th June, 1904. From Melbourne she went to Newcastle, New South Wales, where she took on board a cargo of coal, and then on to Junin, in Chili, via Talcahuano, Valparaiso, and Iquique.

On the 4th May, 1905, the "Principality" left Junin for Rotterdam with 2,600 tons of nitrate of soda, manned by a crew of 25 hands all told, and under the command of Mr. John Parry, who held a master's certificate of competency, No. 035283. He had joined this ship at Antwerp in 1904, having previously been in the same employ for a number of years.

From the date of her sailing from Junin, nothing has been heard of the vessel, and, looking at the time that has since elapsed, it can only be concluded that she has been lost with all hands.

With regard to the questions propounded by the Board of Trade, the ship was in good order and condition when she left Europe, she having, as before stated, just passed through a survey and there being no evidence that she afterwards sustained any damage, the Court has found that she was in good and seaworthy condition when she sailed from Junin.

According to declarations made before His Majesty's Vice Consul at Junin by Mr. Lewis J. Garratt, the aforesaid Vice Consul and agent for Messrs. Weber & Co., the charterers of the vessel, the cargo of nitrate of soda was shipped in bags and was of the class known as "refined," the quantity being 26,417 bags weighing 57,425.98 Spanish quintals, equivalent to 2,600 tons, the Spanish quintal being equal to 46 kilos, and the English ton equal to 1016 kilos. This weight of 2,600 tons was confirmed by a declaration made at Junin before the Vice Consul by Mr. W. F. O'Neill, manager of the Junin Nitrate and Railway Company. On the other hand, a letter from the master to his owners put the amount at 57,024 quintals, or about 402 quintals less, equal to about 18 tons. It may be mentioned that according to the conditions of the charter party the vessel was to load not more than 2,600 tons and not less than 2,500 tons.

In another declaration, the stevedore, Jose Arenas, stated that the cargo was shipped in bags, that rough 3-inch dunnage wood was used, that neither permanent longitudinal bulkheads nor shifting boards were fixed in the holds, and that the cargo was stowed in the customary manner, nothing being done to secure it from shifting, which in his opinion, would have been an unusual proceeding, as the heavy weight of, and the moisture contained in, nitrate of soda in bags would render this unnecessary as it at once settles down into a very solid mass. It was elicited in evidence that whereas the bags of nitrate on the coast of Chili formerly weighed about 4 quintals each, they now weigh a little over 2 quintals. Whether these smaller bags afford an equal factor of safety in the usual manner of stowage, when compared with the larger bags, is a matter for consideration. From the declarations of the pilot, agent and stevedore, it was not possible to ascertain the draught of water or freeboard of the "Principality" when she left Junin.

Having regard to the fact that 2,600 tons was all the cargo that was loaded, and that upon previous occasions she had delivered an equal amount of weight, there is every reason to conclude that her mean draught would not exceed 20 ft. 6½ ins., which should have given her a freeboard of 5 ft., being 1½ ins. more than that named on the certificate granted by the committee of Lloyd's Register, dated the 23rd May, 1891.

Although the draughtsman to Messrs. Doxford & Sons was unable to produce special plans relating to the "Principality," he did so with respect to ships of the same dimensions and built upon similar lines, and due weight has been given to his evidence.

The Court is unable to express any opinion as to the cause of the loss of the vessel. It may have been due to heavy weather, the ship "Indore," which left Caleta Buena on the 20th May, 1905, having on the 14th June encountered a gale of hurricane force in about latitude 48° S. and about longitude 86° W., in which her decks were swept by the heavy sea, her bulwarks set out, bulwark stanchions broken, and two

boats washed away. It was stated that in this same gale a vessel named the "Euphrates" was dismasted.

Of course, it must not be forgotten that in the carriage of cargoes of nitrate of soda there is also a certain amount of danger from fire.

The owner stated that the original cost of the "Principality" was about £16,000; that he estimated her market value when she left Europe at £8,000; that her hull was insured for £10,000, and that her freight and disbursements were covered for £4,000. Of this latter item, £2,600 was on account of freight.

At the conclusion of the evidence, Mr. Paxton, on behalf of the Board of Trade, submitted the following questions for the opinion of the Court:—

(1) When the vessel left Junin on or about the 4th May, 1905—

(a) Was she in good and seaworthy condition as regards hull and equipments?

(b) Was her cargo properly stowed and secured from shifting?

(c) Was she overladen?

(2) What is the cause of the vessel not having been heard of since the pilot left her outside Junin on or about the 4th May, 1905?

(3) What was the cost of the vessel to her owners? What was her value when she last left the United Kingdom? What insurances were effected and how were they apportioned?

The Court then gave judgment as above, and returned the following answers to the questions of the Board of Trade:—

(1) When the "Principality" left Junin on or about the 4th May, 1905—

(a) She was in good and seaworthy condition as regards hull and equipments.

(b) Her cargo was stowed in the usual and customary manner in pyramidal form.

(c) She was not overladen.

(2) There is no evidence as to the cause of the vessel not having been heard of since the pilot left her off Junin on or about the 4th May, 1905.

(3) The original cost of the vessel to her owners was about £16,000, and her estimated market value when she last left Europe was £8,000. At the time of her loss the insurances effected were for £14,000, being £10,000 on the hull and £4,000 on freight and disbursements.

The following is a list of the crew who sailed from Junin in the "Principality" on the 4th May, 1905, according to the report furnished by His Majesty's Vice-Consul.

Name.	Nationality.	Rating.
J. Parry ...	British ...	Master.
G. M. Gunn ...	do. ...	1st mate.
T. H. Hobbs ...	do. ...	2nd mate.
E. S. Slaben ...	do. ...	3rd mate.
D. E. Jones ...	do. ...	Carpenter.
T. Reskesting ...	Russian ...	A.B.
Preeding ...	do. ...	do.
M. Pierre ...	French ...	do.
A. Romero ...	Austrian ...	do.
A. Wedel ...	German ...	do.
V. Civalo ...	Italian ...	do.
H. Kruyer ..	German ...	do.
A. Maldeghen ...	Belgian ...	O.S.
W. West ...	British ...	A.B.
P. McLean ...	do. ...	do.
J. Blair ...	do. ...	Cook and steward.
E. Erikson ...	Norwegian ...	A.B.
W. Smith ...	British ...	do.
F. Fahrenburg ...	German ...	do.
J. Johnson ...	Norwegian ...	do.
M. S. Hovi ...	Finnish ...	do.
Dettmering ...	German ...	do.
J. Hughes ...	British ...	Cabin boy.
W. E. Pierce ...	do. ...	Apprentice.
J. Villeroisin ...	French ...	do.

W. J. STEWART,

Judge.

We concur in the above Report.

W. F. CABORNE,
JAMIESON ROBERTSON, } Assessors.

Liverpool, 19th October, 1906.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 9th day of November, 1906.)

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