

(No. 7036.)

“JOHN COOKE.”

FINDING and order of a Naval Court, held at Pisagua, on the 1st day of November, 1906, to investigate the circumstances which led to the stranding on a rock in the bay of the British ship “JOHN COOKE,” on the 15th day of the month of October, while towing to sea in charge of the steam tug “ASSISTANCE,” and to inquire into the responsibility, if any, of the master, certificated first and second mates, the third mate, and crew of the vessel.

The “John Cooke” was a British vessel, an iron ship of 1,758 tons registered tonnage, official number 94218, built at Londonderry and registered in that port.

It appears from the evidence given before this Court that the said ship left her loading berth at or about 3.10 p.m. on the 15th day of October, that she left said berth in tow of the steam tug “Assistance,” and that the authorized pilot of the port was on board in charge of the ship, that he, the pilot, set her course “in shore,” that is to say, the ship was to tow past the inner tier of sailing vessels and thence to sea, a course which the pilot considered safe.

That the pilot had stationed himself on the fore-castle, from whence he directed proceedings.

That the master of the vessel suggested to the captain of the port that the ship should be towed to sea from her loading berth between the ships “Cap Horn” and “Grace Harwar,” that the captain of the port did not agree to this, assuring the master that it would be better for the vessel to be towed straight out from her loading berth, passing the inner tier of ships, and thence to sea, that the master also suggested the same course to the pilot while there was yet time, and the latter did not act upon the advice or alter the course set, also assuring the master that it would be quite safe to continue in shore as described above.

It is apparent, therefore, that both the captain of the port and the pilot preferred the course adopted by them to the course suggested by the master, and that they considered the former free, clear, and safe for navigation.

That at 3.45 p.m. the ship stranded, struck a rock, being at the time fully under command and in tow with the tugboat ahead of the vessel, that ship remained in this position for 24 minutes (twenty-four minutes), finally getting clear, and came to an anchorage clear of the shipping in 20 fathoms of water.

The chart was examined by the Court during the proceedings, and it was found that the rock upon which the ship struck was not marked on said chart.

The Court, having regard for the circumstances above stated, finds as follows:—

That the master, officers, and crew of the vessel have no responsibility in regard to the casualty, nor are any of them to blame.

That the ship was not supplied with an accurate chart of the Bay of Pisagua.

That the Court desires especially to direct the attention of the Board of Trade to the fact that the rock is apparently unknown and uncharted, and that steps should be taken to correct present issue of charts of the Bay of Pisagua.

T. G. PATRICKSON,
British Vice Consul and
President of the Naval Court.

JOHN ROBERTS,
Master of the British ship “Castleton.”

JAS. WOLFE,
Master of the British ship “Jessomene.”

The expenses of this Court, fixed at £6 4s., are approved.

Dated at Pisagua this 1st day of November, 1906.

T. G. PATRICKSON,
British Vice Consul,
President of the Naval Court.

JOHN ROBERTS,
Master of the British ship “Castleton.”

JAS. WOLFE,
Master of the British ship “Jessomene.”

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the
12th day of February, 1907.)