

(No. 7131.)

"TURAKINA" (S.S.).

"The Shipping and Seamen Act, 1903."

Wrecks and Casualties.

(For Stipendiary Magistrates and Justices of the Peace.)

Dominion of New Zealand, } Report on a shipping casualty to
to wit. } the s.s. "TURAKINA."

To the Honourable the Minister of Marine,
New Zealand.

I, the undersigned, Stipendiary Magistrate, having been, on the 14th day of October, 1907, applied to by David Johnston, Esquire, Collector of Customs at the Port of Wellington, for a formal investigation pursuant to section 235 of "The Shipping and Seamen Act, 1903," and other provisions of the said Act, respecting a shipping casualty to a certain British ship called the "Turakina," of the Port of Plymouth, on the 29th day of September last, on the high seas, did duly proceed with the said investigation, to wit, on the 18th, 21st, 23rd, 25th, 28th, and 29th days of October instant, and had before me, and examined on oath, divers persons and witnesses, to wit, Francis Forbes, master of s.s. "Turakina," Martin Paramour, 2nd officer of s.s. "Turakina," Thomas Trevannion Hugo, superintendent of Wellington Fire Brigade, James Henry Napier Anderson Burnes, manager of N.Z. Shipping Co., Ltd., Wellington, Francis Forbes, recalled, William Bandall, surveyor for Lloyds Register, George Timms Scotcher, flax-miller, Michael Francis Bourke, exporter of wool and hemp, William Henry Ferris, Government hemp grader, James Scott MacLaurin, Government analyst, William Hayes Owen Johnston, hemp grader, Walter Hastie Middlemiss, Government hemp grader, Thomas Evans, stevedore's workman, Peter Brown, foreman stevedore, the original depositions of whose evidence are hereunto annexed, signed by me, being assisted therein by Walter George Foster, who does not hold a certificate of any sort, and Stewart Willis, master mariner, holding a certificate of competency No. 94014, from the Board of Trade, who were duly appointed by the Minister of Marine to act as assessors; and upon such investigation and examination of witnesses as aforesaid, I find and report as follows, that is to say:—

1. That the official number of the said ship, called the "Turakina," is 114620, of which Francis Forbes is master, who holds a certificate of competency No. 05283, issued by the Board of Trade, and which ship belonged to the New Zealand Shipping Co., Ltd., of London.

2. That the loss or damage herein more particularly mentioned happened on the 29th day of September, 1907, at about 4.45 o'clock in the afternoon, and subsequently thereto, on the high seas, 557 miles east south east of Chatham Islands, and 1003 miles from Wellington.

3. That the loss or damage appears by the evidence to have been caused by fire.

4. That the nature of the loss or damage done was damage to the said vessel and her cargo.

That the vessel is insured for an amount unknown in a company unknown.

* Not printed.

That the "Turakina" is schooner rigged. Her port of registry Plymouth, her registered tonnage 5381.

That no lives were lost through the casualty.

In the matter of a formal investigation held at Wellington, on the 18th, 21st, 23rd, 25th, 28th and 29th days of October, 1907, before me, assisted by Walter George Foster and Stewart Willis, into the circumstances attending the fire on the said s.s. "Turakina," the Court, having carefully inquired into the circumstances attending the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds, for the reasons stated in the annex hereto, that—

1. There is no evidence to disclose the actual cause and origin of the said fire.

2. And therefore this Court is unable to say whether the said fire could have been prevented or not.

Dated this 29th day of October, 1907.

(S.I.) A. McARTHUR,

S.M.

I concur in the above report.

WALTER GEORGE FOSTER,
Assessor.

I concur in the above report.

STEWART WILLIS,
Assessor.

Annex to the Report.

Flax.

Grading. On the evidence adduced the Court finds that the grading had been satisfactorily carried out, and that no condemned flax had been shipped.

Spontaneous Combustion.

The Court is unanimously of opinion that spontaneous combustion in flax was not the cause of the fire.

Tow.

The Court is also of opinion that spontaneous combustion in tow was not the cause of the fire.

Inspection.

In the opinion of the Court the inspection of cargo prior to shipment and during its receipt is totally inadequate.

Matches.

The Court is strongly of opinion that grave danger of fire exists from allowing men engaged in stowing cargo to take into ships' holds their coats and waistcoats which may contain matches.

Temperatures.

The Court is of opinion that the temperature of holds is not sufficiently regularly and frequently taken.

Recommendations.

The Court recommends:—

1. That a system of inspection similar to that which obtained prior to June, 1905, should be established.
2. That provision should be made for the care of men's coats and waistcoats so as to enable the enforcement of a rule against the taking of matches into holds.

3. That smoking on or about a ship's deck when the hatches are open should be absolutely prohibited.

4. That shipping companies should issue strict regulations as to the regular taking and recording in the ship's log of temperatures in bunkers and holds at every change of watch.

The Court desires to state that in its opinion, as soon as the fire was discovered, every possible means were taken by the captain, officers, and crew to subdue it. It also considers that Captain Forbes exercised the wisest discretion in returning to New Zealand, which action probably averted a most serious disaster.

With reference to its remarks as to inspection the Court wishes to free from all blame the second officer from any dereliction of duty.

Questions.

1. What was the cause and origin of the said fire?

2. Could the said fire have been prevented, and, if so, how?

Answers.

1. There is no evidence to disclose the actual cause and origin of the said fire.

2. And therefore the Court is unable to say whether the said fire could have been prevented or not.

A true copy.

GEORGE ALLPORT,
Secretary Marine Department, N.Z.

22nd November, 1907.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 17th day of January, 1908.)

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