

(No. 7206.)

"REGGIO" (S.S.).

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

IN the matter of a formal investigation held at the Town Hall, in the County Borough of Newport, in the County of Monmouth, on the 20th, 21st and 22nd days of October, 1908, before GEORGE RAWLINGS MARIYN and MOSES WHEELER, Esquires, two of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County Borough of Newport, aforesaid, assisted by Captain JENKIN THOMAS, and Captain DAVID DAVIES, Mercantile Marine Nautical Assessors, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British steamship "REGGIO," of Newport, on or near the east end of Bere Island, Bantry Bay, on or about the 20th day of September, 1908.

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 the stranding of the ship was due to an error of judgment on the part of the master by misjudging the distance the ship was from Roanearrig Light, when taking the eastern entrance to Berehaven, at about 8.50 p.m. on the 20th September, 1908.

Dated the 23rd day of October, 1908.

GEO. R. MARTYN, } Justices of the Peace for the
MOSES WHEELER, } County Borough of Newport, Monmouthshire.

We concur in the above Report.

JENKIN THOMAS, } Assessors.
DAVID DAVIES, }

Annex to the Report.

This inquiry was held at the Town Hall, Newport, Mon., on the 20th, 21st and 22nd days of October, 1908, when Mr. R. P. Williams appeared for the Board of Trade, Mr. W. L. Moore for the owners, and Mr. A. T. Miller, of Liverpool, for the master.

The "Reggio," Official Number 115174, is a steel screw steamship built at Sunderland in 1903 by Messrs. Robert Thompson and Son, and is classed at Lloyds. She is 247 feet in length, 36.55 in breadth, 16.85 feet in depth of hold, and schooner rigged. She is fitted with one set of tri-compound surface-condensing engines, the diameter of the cylinders being 19, 31 and 51 inches respectively, length of stroke 36 inches, the nominal horse power being 164, the indicated horse power 875, and her registered speed ten knots. She has two steel boilers, which, together with the engines, were built by the North Eastern Marine Engineering Company, Limited, Sunderland, in 1903. Her gross tonnage is 1395.71 tons, and registered tonnage 875.93, and she is owned by the Orders and Handford Steamship Company, Limited, of which William James Orders and Theodore Leopold Handford, of 132, Dock Street, Newport, Monmouthshire, are designated the persons to whom the management of the vessel is entrusted by and on

behalf of the owners, by advice of the 22nd day of January, 1903, under the seal of the Orders and Handford Steamship Company, Limited, registered owners.

The vessel left Barry on September 19th, 1908, and was under the command of Jenkin Jenkins, who holds a certificate of competency number 017012, and had a crew of 19 hands. She was loaded with 1957 tons of coal, and drew 16 feet 6 inches aft, and 16 feet 3 inches forward, and was bound to Berehaven, Ireland, under charter to the Admiralty for coaling the fleet.

She had three compasses, viz.: one standard compass on the bridge, one in the wheel house, and one placed aft, all of which were adjusted by Messrs. Thomas Ainsley & Company, Opticians, at Cardiff, on April 14th, 1907, and the master ascertained the deviations from time to time afterwards. She was supplied with the latest Admiralty charts and Sailing Directions.

She carried two lifeboats and one jolly boat, all of which were in good condition, and she had her full complement of life belts and life buoys and hand and deep sea leads and lines.

She left Barry Dock at about noon on September 19th, and proceeding on her voyage, passed Nash Point abeam at 2 p.m. and at 11 p.m. the Small's Light was passed, weather cloudy and a fresh westerly wind. On September 20th, at 1.50 p.m., Old Head of Kinsale was passed abeam, weather fine with a fresh wind from the westward, which at 4 p.m. was falling light. At 6.20 p.m. the vessel passed inside of the Fastnet Rock, in charge of the master, and signalled to the station. The course was then altered to W.N.W. From this time until 7.50 p.m., when the vessel was about two miles off Sheep Head, the courses were altered as required. After rounding Sheep Head, the Roanearrig Light was sighted on the port bow, the course was set E.N.E. by compass, and the vessel proceeded up Bantry Bay. At 8.50 p.m., the first mate being on the bridge with the master, Roanearrig Light bore N.N.E. The bearing was taken by the mate and afterwards verified by the master, and it was estimated to be distant from one-half to three-quarters of a mile. Both the master and the mate quite agreed as to the distance off the light. The course was then altered to N. by W. The second mate was ordered to the lead and the engines were slowed. G. H. Cole, O.S., was on the look-out on the fore-castle head, and E. H. Cathcart, A.B., was at the wheel. The night was dark, but clear, wind light, westerly, with heavy ground swell, when the vessel proceeded for the eastern entrance to Berehaven. At 9 p.m. Demetri Grigos, A.B., relieved the look out. At 9.7 p.m. the master, chief mate, who were together on the bridge, and the man on the look out, saw breakers ahead. The helm was immediately ordered hard a port, which was promptly carried out, the vessel being steered by steam. The engines were also reversed to full speed astern. She, however, did not lose her headway and a few minutes after ran on the Carrigavaddra Rocks, on the east end of Bere Island. The engines were kept going full speed astern until 9.15 p.m. when they were stopped, as it was found impossible to get the vessel off. The bilges and tanks were then sounded and it was found that she was making water rapidly. The chief engineer was ordered to set the pumps going. He started pumping the engine-room bilges and then set the pumps on the forehold and bilges but the water gained and got into the stokehold through the bulkhead. He noticed the stokehold plates being forced up, and when the water had risen over these plates the fires were drawn and the safety valves of main boilers eased as it was impossible to keep the water under. The engineers and firemen were then ordered to go on deck. The vessel, after she struck, swung with her head to the west. The master in evidence stated that a flare was burnt for about one hour after she stranded with a view of getting assistance. He could not send up rockets as they had been spoiled, while it was too far and too dangerous to send a boat. The boats, however, were got ready and one of them was used for taking soundings round the vessel the same night, and

a depth of from four to seven fathoms was found. At about 5 o'clock the next morning, September 21st, H.M.S. "Cumberland" passed but no assistance was offered or asked for, as the master thought it was hopeless to try to save her, as she was full of water forward, and the engine room practically full. The master communicated with his owners and received a reply that a salvage steamer would be sent. At 10 a.m. a boat with an officer from H.M.S. "Attentive" came alongside, who afterwards sent divers to examine the bottom and draw a plan of the damage, which showed that she was resting on a pinnacle rock amidships, both ends being free. At about 6.30 a.m. on the 22nd September, the Government tug "Storm Cock" arrived on the scene and offered assistance, but did not do anything, having only a small pump which was quite inadequate to cope with the water, as the ship was then full. The salvage steamer "Lady of the Isles" arrived on Wednesday, the 23rd September, from Penzance. She belongs to the West of England Salvage Association and was sent there under orders from the underwriters. Subsequently another salvage steamer arrived, belonging to one Henshaw, of Queenstown. There is no evidence before the Court to show why salvage operations were not proceeded with. At noon on Thursday, September 24th, the wind was blowing heavily and the master deeming it unsafe to remain on board any longer, abandoned her.

These are the facts of the case and on the conclusion of the evidence, Mr. R. P. Williams, on behalf of the Board of Trade, submitted to the Court, the following questions, Mr. W. Lyndon Moore on behalf of the owners, and Mr. A. T. Miller on behalf of the master, having addressed the Court, and Mr. R. P. Williams having replied for the Board of Trade, the Court gave judgment and returned the following answers to questions of the Board of Trade.

Questions.

(1) What number of compasses had the vessel, were they in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel, and when and by whom were they last adjusted?

(2) Did the master ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time, were the errors correctly ascertained and the proper corrections to the courses applied?

(3) Were proper measures taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 6.20 p.m. of the 20th September last? Was a safe and proper course thereafter steered and was due and proper allowance been made for tide and currents?

(4) Were proper measures taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 7.50 p.m. of the 20th September last, and from time to time thereafter? Were safe and proper alterations made in the course and was due and proper allowance made for tide and currents?

(5) Was the lead used with sufficient care and frequency?

(6) Was a good and proper look out kept?

(7) What was the cause of the stranding of the vessel, and was she seriously damaged thereby?

(8) Was the vessel navigated with proper and seamanlike care?

(9) After the vessel stranded, was assistance offered to the master? If so, did he avail himself of the offer. If not, why not?

(10) Was every possible effort made by the master to refloat the ship?

(11) Was serious damage to the s.s. "Reggio" caused by the wrongful act or default of the master?

Answers.

(1) There were three compasses on board in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel. They were adjusted on the 14th April, 1907, in Cardiff, by Messrs. Ainsley.

(2) From the evidence adduced the Court is satisfied that the deviation of the compasses were found and applied from time to time.

(3) Proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at about 6.20 p.m. on the 20th September, 1908, and a safe and proper course steered thereafter, due allowance being made for tide and currents.

(4) Proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at about 7.50 p.m. on the 20th September, and from then up to 8.50 p.m. the same night a proper course was steered and proper allowance made for tide and currents.

(5) The lead was used with sufficient care and frequency.

(6) A good and proper look-out was kept.

(7) The stranding of the vessel was caused by the master having miscalculated the distance the ship was from Roanarrig Light at about 8.50 p.m. on the 20th September, 1908. The steamer was seriously damaged by the stranding.

(8) The steamer was navigated with proper and seamanlike care.

(9) Assistance was offered by the salvage steamer "Storm Cock," which arrived on Tuesday, 22nd September, but she had not the appliances to give effectual assistance. On the following day, September 23rd, the "Lady of the Isles," another salvage steamer, arrived under instructions from the underwriters, but did not render assistance. There is no evidence before the Court to show why salvage operations were not proceeded with by the "Lady of the Isles."

(10) Immediately after the vessel struck, every effort was made by the master to get the ship off by continuing to keep the engines going full speed astern, and further, the master did all he could under the circumstances having regard to the assistance offered.

(11) The serious damage to the s.s. "Reggio" was not caused by the wrongful act or default of the master.

GEO. R. MARTYN, } Justices of the Peace for the
M. WHEELER, } County Borough aforesaid.

We concur in the above.

JENKIN THOMAS, }
DAVID DAVIES, } Nautical Assessors.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade, on the
10th day of November, 1908.)