(No. 7246.)

# "ANGLO-AFRICAN" (S.S.).

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

IN the matter of a Formal Investigation held at the Quarter Sessions Court in the County Borough of Sunderland, on the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 8th days of March, 1909, before Captain JOHN WILLIAM SQUANCE and Alderman THOMAS JOHNSTON, two of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said Borough, assisted by Captain WILLIAM LIGERTWOOD MAIN and Lieutenant C. K. MCINTOSH, R.N.R., into the circumstances attending the loss of the British Steamship "ANGLO-AFRICAN" of London, through stranding on the north side of the entrance to Chesapeake Bay, America, on or about the 5th January, 1909.

*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 loss of the steamship "Anglo-African" was caused by the default of the master, Mr. James Hedley Henderson, but considering his previous good record the Court suspends his certificate for the space of three calendar months.

Dated this 8th day of March, 1909.

JOHN W. SQUANCE,
THOS. JOHNSTON, } Judges.

We concur in the above report.

WM. L. MAIN,
C. K. MCINTOSH, } Assessors.

*Annex to the Report.*

The "Anglo-African" was a British steamship, built of iron at Sunderland, in the County of Durham, in the year 1900, and registered at the port of London, her Official Number being 112770 and her dimensions as per Register being :—Length 370·2 feet, main breadth 48·7 feet, depth in hold from tonnage deck to ceiling at amidships 28·9 feet, depth from top of beam amidships to top of keel 30·95 feet, depth from top of deck at side amidships to bottom of keel 30·37 feet, length of engine room 50 feet. She was fitted with three triple compound engines, made by George Clark, Limited, Sunderland, the diameter of the cylinders being 26, 43, and 71 inches respectively, with a length of stroke of 51 inches and of the nominal power of 450 an indicated power of 2250 horses. Her indicated speed was 11 knots and her registered tonnage, after deducting 1493·10 tons for crew space and propelling power, was 2693·19 tons. This vessel was owned by the Nitrate Producers' Steamship Company, Limited, Mr. John Latta, of 20, Billiter Buildings, London, being the manager on behalf of the owners, and at the time of the casualty she was under the command of James Hedley Henderson, who holds a certificate of competency as master numbered 96853, and dated 26th September, 1878.

This vessel carried four compasses on board, namely :—one on the bridge (Sir Wm. Thomson's), which was the standard by which the courses were steered, one in the wheelhouse, and one aft, for handsteering, and one spare compass. These were last adjusted in June, 1906, by the then master (Captain Calvert) at sea, the vessel being swung round for that purpose and the magnets corrected, but there was no evidence before the Court to show the position of the vessel at the time, and the master stated to the Court that he ascertained the deviation of the compasses by observation regularly every watch. She also had two lifeboats and two pinnaces and carried life belts and buoys sufficient for all the crew, and the ship was well found and in good condition in every respect.

The "Anglo-African" left Tocopilla at 12.40 p.m. on the 19th November, 1908, with a full cargo of Nitrate consisting of about 7000 tons bound for Baltimore, via St. Lucia, for coal, her draught of water on leaving was 25 feet 9 inches forward and 26 feet 8 inches aft. Her crew numbered 34 hands all told. She had no passengers. Nothing of importance occurred during the passage, and the vessel arrived at St. Lucia on 28th December and, after taking in bunker coal, left on 29th December at 9 a.m. her draught of water at the time being 25 feet 9 inches forward and 26 feet 8 inches aft, her mean draught being 26 feet 2½ inches. The course then steered was North 33° West true up to noon of that day when it was altered to North 30° West true, which course took the vessel clear past the islands. This course was continued until the 5th of January. The weather was fine and nothing of importance took place until the 5th of January when it became cloudy. At noon of the 5th the ship's position by account was Lat. 35° 36′ North and Long. 74° 59′ West. No observations could be obtained on account of the weather. At 3.53 p.m. soundings were taken by the second officer with Basnett's patent sounding machine and the depth of water obtained was 18½ fathoms with bottom sand and gravel. The patent log then registered 37 miles from noon. At 4 p.m. the weather was thick with rain, and at 4.30 p.m. soundings were again taken with Sir William Thomson's and Basnett's patent sounding machines. The former gave 15½ fathoms and the latter 11½ fathoms, bottom fine sand. The patent log then registered 42 miles. A cast was then taken by hand, the deep sea lead being attached to the hand lead line and the depth obtained was 14½ fathoms, fine sand, the patent log registering 43½ miles. The ship was going full speed ahead at all the times that these soundings were taken. At 5.20 p.m. the weather was still thick with rain. Soundings were again taken with the deep sea lead, 12½ fathoms obtained, bottom fine grey sand. At this time the course was altered to North 35° West.

At 6.20 p.m. soundings were again taken and 12½ fathoms obtained. At 7.25 again sounded and bottom obtained at 13 fathoms. At 8 p.m., the weather still continuing thick with rain, and the ship still going full speed, soundings were again taken by hand and 12½ fathoms obtained. At 8.15 p.m. the course was altered to North 40° West and at 8.30 p.m. another cast of the lead was taken and bottom obtained at 11¾ fathoms, sand and broken shells. At 9 p.m. the course was altered to North 45° West and another cast of the lead taken which gave 10¾ fathoms, fine sandy bottom. At this time it was raining and very thick, the vessel still going full speed. At 9.15 p.m it was reported a flash light was seen about 3½ points on the port bow by Saltern, A.B., to the officer on the watch, but on cross-examination it was proved that this light was seen and reported some time after the vessel had stranded. At 9.30 p.m. on the 5th January the vessel stranded. The engines were immediately put full speed astern and were kept working ahead and astern during the greater part of the night but the vessel did not move. Subsequent to the stranding three steam tugs were employed at various times to try and tow the ship off but without success. At 1 p.m. on the 7th January the crew commenced to jettison the cargo from No. 2 hatch and from 50 to 55 tons was thrown overboard. The vessel at this time was bumping heavily and water gaining in all the holds. In addition to the steam tugs above mentioned the salvage steamer "I. J. Merritt" came off on January 6th, but the offer of her services for salvage was declined by the master. At 11 a.m. on January 8th all hands left the ship. At this time the vessel had a heavy list to port, the swell running over the port rail, all holds were full of water and there was about four feet of water in the engine room.

At the conclusion of the evidence the Board of Trade desired the opinion of the Court upon the following questions :—

(1) What number of compasses had the vessel, were they in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation

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of the vessel, and when and by whom were they last adjusted?

(1) The vessel had four compasses, one on the upper bridge, one in the wheelhouse and one aft, and one spare compass. They were in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel. They were last adjusted in June, 1906, by the then master (Robert Calvert) at sea, but there was no evidence before the Court to show the position of the vessel at the time.

(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?

(2) The master stated to the Court that he ascertained the deviation of his compass by observation from time to time and the errors were correctly ascertained and applied to the various courses. The compass deviation book kept on the ship was produced in Court.

(3) Was the vessel supplied with proper and sufficient charts and sailing directions?

(3) The vessel was supplied with proper and sufficient charts and sailing directions.

(4) Were proper measures taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at noon of the 5th January? Were safe and proper courses thereafter set and steered, and was due and proper allowance made for tide and currents?

(4) The position of the ship at noon of the 5th January was ascertained by dead reckoning, no observations being obtainable, but the Court is of opinion that the master should have taken soundings to verify his position as the vessel was just within the line of soundings at that time.

Safe and proper courses were not set and steered. Due and proper allowance was said to be made by the master for tide and current, but was not allowed for and applied to the courses on the chart.

(5) Having regard to the state of the weather after 8 p.m. of the 5th January last:—

(*a*) Was the vessel navigated at too great a rate of speed?

(*b*) Was the lead used with sufficient frequency and accuracy?

(5) (*a*) The vessel was navigated at too great a rate of speed after 8 p.m.

(*b*) The lead was used with sufficient frequency but the speed of the vessel was too great to ensure accuracy of the soundings taken.

(6) What was the light seen by Saltern, A.B., at or about 9.25 p.m. on the 5th January? Did he promptly report it to the officer on watch—if so, were proper measures then taken for the safety of the ship?

(6) It was clearly proved in evidence that the light was not seen by Saltern, A.B., until after the stranding of the vessel.

(7) Was a good and proper lookout kept?

(7) A good and proper lookout was kept.

(8) What was the cause of the stranding and loss of the vessel?

(8) The cause of the stranding and loss of the vessel was due

(*a*) To the fact that the master did not rightly appreciate the atmospheric conditions, and

(*b*) That the vessel was navigated at too great a rate of speed.

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

(9) After 8 p.m. the vessel was not navigated with proper and seamanlike care.

(10) Was the loss of the steamship "Anglo-African" caused by the wrongful act or default of the master and third officer or of either of them?

(10) The loss of the s.s. "Anglo-African" was caused by the default of the master. No blame is attached to the third officer as the master was in charge of the bridge during the whole of his watch.

(11) Did the master use all proper measures to get the vessel off the place of stranding before she was abandoned on the 8th day of January last?

(11) The master did not take proper measures for the salvage of the ship between the time of stranding and the 8th day of January last.

JOHN W. SQUARCE,
THOS. JOHNSTON, } Justices.

We concur in the above report.

WM. L. MAIN,
C. K. MCINTOSH, } Assessors.

(*Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 23rd day of March* 1909.)