

(No. 7199.)

"PALGRAVE."

FINDING and order of a Naval Court held at the British Consulate, Coquimbo, on the 15th day of August, 1908, to investigate the circumstances attending the loss of the British sailing-ship "PALGRAVE," of Port Glasgow, Official Number 89843, when approaching the coast of Chile, and to enquire into the conduct of the master, certificated first mate, and the second mate and crew of the said vessel.

The "Palgrave" was a sailing vessel, barque rigged, of 3078 tons registered tonnage, Official Number 89843, built at Port Glasgow in 1884, and belonging to the port of Port Glasgow.

It appears from the evidence given before this Court, that she sailed from Newcastle, N.S.W., on or about the 4th June, bound for Coquimbo, Chile, with a cargo of coal, and a crew of 29 hands all told.

The voyage was accompanied by no untoward events until her arrival off the coast of Chile, on the 10th of August inst. At 8 a.m., the ship being considered to be about 50 miles off, the course was changed and by midnight she had approached the shore.

Under circumstances related further on, the ship ran ashore at a point situated some 12 miles to the southward of the Punta "Lengua de Vaca" light, and immediately became a total wreck, the crew being saved in the ship's boats.

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

That owing to the logbooks having been lost, no reliable information has been obtained as to the vessel's position at midnight of the 10th, at which time the vessel was stated to have been steering north with the land plainly visible.

That after midnight of the 10th, or at 0.15 a.m. of the 11th, the master ordered the course to be altered to N. by E., which the Court considers was an unsafe and improper course, having regard to the ship's close proximity to the land. The Court is also of opinion that the subsequent courses that were steered at the master's directions namely: N.N.E., N.E. by N., and N.E. were also unsafe and improper courses. The Court is further of opinion that the night was clear and that the land had been clearly visible for several hours previous to the stranding and that although the vessel was seen to be steering direct for the land no

attempt was made to alter the course until she was in the breakers.

The Court has been officially informed that the vessel stranded 12 miles to the south of "Lengua de Vaca" Point, upon which point there is exhibited a white "flash light" visible for 16 miles, but the evidence does not show that this light had been seen, and it would appear that no instructions had been given to keep a look-out for it.

The master states that the chart which he was using was a Blue Back Imray's chart, and that the light was not shown on this chart. The Court is also informed that the master had to provide his own charts.

The Court is of opinion that after midnight on the 10th the vessel was not navigated with proper and seamanlike care; that no means were adopted to verify her position before setting a course right on to the land. The Court considers that the loss of the vessel was caused by the reckless navigation of the master, and that he was to blame for her loss. The Court also finds, that after the stranding proper order was maintained, and that nothing could have been done to save the vessel before abandoning her.

The Court, in pursuance of the powers invested in it by section 483 (b) of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, therefore orders: That a copy of the report or a statement of the case upon which the investigation was ordered having been furnished to Mr. Robert Coutts, before the commencement of the investigation, his certificate as master number 97284, issued by the Board of Trade, and dated 26th July, 1879, be for the default aforesaid suspended for the period of six months from this day.

Termination of Finding and Order.

The Court, which opened at 9 a.m. on the 15th inst., rose at 5.30 p.m., having adjourned at noon for one hour. It resumed its sitting at 9 a.m. of Monday, the 17th inst., and concluded its proceedings with one hour's interval at 3 p.m.

The expenses of the Court, fixed at £12 3s. 0d. are approved.

Dated at Coquimbo this seventeenth day of August, 1908.

G. L. ANSTED, H.B.M.'s Consul,
President of the Naval Court.

WM. QUIGGIN,
Master, Cable Steamer "Retriever." } Members.
W. J. LINDSAY,
Master, Bark "Trongate." }

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 23rd day of October, 1908.)