

(No. 7397.)

“REGULUS” (S.S.).

REPORT of a Marine Court of Inquiry held at St. John's, Newfoundland, into the circumstances attending the stranding and loss of the s.s. “REGULUS” of St. John's, Newfoundland, on the rocks known as “Hayes’ Reef” in Leeward Cove, south of Petty Harbour Motion, on 23rd October, 1910.

16th November, 1910.

SIR,

I beg leave to report that in pursuance of the Commission—herewith returned—which Your Excellency has done me the honour to issue to me appointing me a Marine Court of Inquiry into the loss of the s.s. “Regulus,” I have, with the assistance of my two assessors Captain English and Alexander McLachlan, Esquire, investigated the circumstances connected with that lamentable casualty :

That the “Regulus” was an iron screw ship of 1367 tons gross, registered in St. John's, built in Sunderland, 1878, her crew 19 all told.

That she was well found and equipped when she left New York in October last where she had been repaired after a collision with the s.s. “Karema” and passed Lloyd's Survey at that Port :

That she had her full complement of crew when leaving on her last disastrous voyage, John D. Taylor, master.

The following witnesses have been examined in the course of the Inquiry:—

William H. Mitchell, diver, H.M.S. “Brilliant.”

Arthur E. Neil, gunner, H.M.S. “Brilliant.”

A. J. Harvey, agent for owners of “Regulus.”

James Roberts, master of tug “John Green.”

James Ricketts, mate of the “John Green.”

Daniel McDonald, engineer of “John Green.”

Patrick Howlett and Henry Chafe, planters, resident in Petty Harbour, well acquainted with the dangerous part of the coast on which the “Regulus” was lost.

Robert G. Rendell, president of Tug Company.

William G. Strong, manager of the Tug Company.

Arthur Boyd, Lloyd's surveyor for this port.

Alex. D. Brown, superintendent marine department Rd. N. Company.

Henry Winsor, planter, constantly trading along the coast between Aquaforte and St. John's.

Emanuel Collins, of Flat Islands, Placentia Bay, who, falling in with the disabled ship, took a message from her to Bay Bulls, which was forwarded to the owners, made a deposition herewith included before the local justice.

Some letters and exhibits are forwarded herewith* for transmission to the Honourable Board of Trade, along with the depositions of witnesses.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the following

Finding of the Court.

The s.s. “Regulus,” on her voyage from Bell Island to Sydney, N.S., in ballast, passed Cape Spear at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday, the 23rd ult. At 2 p.m. the same day a telegram was received from Bay Bulls, sent by Captain Taylor, her master, reporting the tail shaft broken, and demanding assistance. The agent of the ship, Mr. A. J. Harvey, had two steam tugs, the “John Green” and the “Ingraham,” promptly dispatched. H.M.S. “Brilliant” was then in port ready to render assistance if called upon, but the two tugs, had they both fallen with the

disabled vessel, would have sufficed for the work of the rescue. The “Ingraham” did not see her and may be dismissed from consideration.

After passing Cape Spear the “John Green” met fog, which thickened as the evening advanced.

The captain of the “Regulus” had given his position as 3½ miles N.W. by W. from Bay Bulls North Head. When the “John Green” came as near that position as could be judged in the fog, which was now dense, the “Regulus” could not be found, and the tug cruised around for several hours until she picked up, about 10 p.m., the lights of the disabled ship. The tug went alongside, and after a conference with Capt. Taylor, undertook to tow the “Regulus” to St. John's, and her line was put aboard the ship at 10.30 p.m., the fog being very thick and heavy seas making.

When the “John Green” left St. John's the wind was moderate and southerly, but when she fell in with the “Regulus” a strong breeze was blowing, still from the southward, fog dense and sea heavy.

At this juncture it was possible to choose between three modes of procedure which one should be pursued.

The first was that the “Regulus” should remain at anchor for the night, the “John Green” standing by her.

The second, that the tug should take off the captain and crew, land them in Bay Bulls, returning in the daylight to the rescue of the ship.

The third and most hazardous, to take a tow from the “John Green,” which, in the opinion of the Court, was not heavy enough for the work when the weather conditions were, in respect of fog, wind, and sea, so adverse.

Unfortunately, the last was the procedure resolved upon at 10.30 p.m.

To make matters worse, it took from one and a half hours to two hours to hoist the anchor, and by midnight the wind had veered S.S.E. and then to S.E., and the strong southerly breeze had turned to a gale, increasing in violence.

Had the cable been slipped instead of the anchor being weighed, there had been a saving of most precious time.

No one now living can inform the Court why this was not done.

For about two hours the tow proceeded at 2 to 2½ miles an hour, a rate of progress that allowed both the tug and her tow to make considerable lee way towards the land, which at 2.30 a.m. was sighted by the tug on her port bow. She ported to escape the rocks, and as she did so the hawser parted. While engaged in hauling in the line the tug observed for about five minutes the ship's light, which then suddenly disappeared.

From the position of the propeller, which was seen *in situ* on Tuesday, 25th ult., it is certain that the “Regulus” and her crew of 19 met their fate on the rocks known locally as “Hayes’ Reef,” in Leeward Cove, just south of Petty Harbour Motion.

The Court is advised, and considers that the course steered by the tug was not a safe and proper one to clear Petty Harbour Motion. Had the fatal casualty not occurred before the Motion was reached, the tug would have shared the fate of the “Regulus.”

To clear the Motion an east course should have been steered instead of the N.E. by E. course actually pursued.

J. G. CONROY,
Marine Court of Inquiry.

The delivery of this judgment on Monday evening last closed the inquiry.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your Excellency's obedient servant,
J. G. CONROY.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 13th day of December, 1910.)

* Not printed.