

(No. 7770.)

Schooner "EDGEWOOD."

REPORT OF COURT.

In the matter of a Formal Investigation held at Kingston, in the Island of Jamaica, on the 17th, 18th and 29th days of June, 1921, before Arthur Vincent KINGDON, Resident Magistrate for the Parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew, assisted by Captain Edmund A. DAVIS and Captain H. D. ACKERLEY, Nautical Assessors, into the circumstances attending the destruction by fire of the British four-masted schooner "Edgewood," at Port Antonio, on the night of the 18th April, 1921.

The Court having carefully enquired into the circumstances attending the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds for the reasons stated in the Annex hereto:—

- (1) That it is not able to say what was the origin of the fires that caused the destruction of the British schooner "Edgewood" on the 18th April, 1921;
- (2) That Christopher Richter, the master of the schooner, contributed to her destruction by his neglect and default in not taking precautions to arrest the fire or prevent its spreading;
- (3) That the acts and defaults of Christopher Richter, the master of the schooner, during her destruction by fire, amount to gross misconduct; and
- (4) That it is not able to say that the loss of the schooner was caused by the wrongful act or default of the master, Christopher Richter.

Dated this twenty-ninth day of June, 1921.

ARTHUR V. KINGDON,
Resident Magistrate for Kingston and St. Andrew.

We concur in the above Report.

E. DAVIS, Assessor.
H. D. ACKERLEY, Assessor.

ANNEX TO THE REPORT.

By the evidence, documentary and oral, it was proved:—

- (1) that a copy of the report on which this investigation was ordered, a notice of investigation and a statement of the questions intended to be raised by the Marine Board on the hearing of the investigation had been furnished to and served upon Christopher Richter, the master of the British schooner "Edgewood," before the commencement of this investigation;
- (2) that the destruction of the British schooner "Edgewood," which was then lying in the harbour of Port Antonio, was caused by a fire which started in the galley and extended to the engine room and fore-castle, all of which were on the deck of the ship; that efforts were made by some employees of the United Fruit Company and the men of the Port

Antonio Fire Brigade to extinguish it, and that those efforts would have been successful if continued, but that another fire broke out in the master's quarters in the after part of the ship, and those who were fighting the fire gave up doing so, as it was considered impossible for them with the appliances they had to put out that fire and the one in the fore part of the ship.

From the evidence given, the Court cannot say what was the origin of the fire in the fore part or after part of the ship. The mate, boatswain and steward, who were the only persons on board the ship when the fire started, and who might have thrown some light on the matter, did not give evidence, as they had left the Island before the Formal Investigation was ordered.

By the evidence of the master and that of the witnesses, Charles Arthur Brooks, Charles Bruce, Gerald Crawford, Launcelot Aquinas Malabre, and Henry Fremlin Bicknell, it was proved:—

- (1) that he (the master) did not take any active part in fighting the fire, but rather helped the spread of the flames by opening up and leaving open hatches, and leaving doors in his quarters open, creating a draught throughout the ship;
- (2) that though knowing thoroughly the construction of the ship, he did not at any time try to ascertain if the fire was spreading, or take any steps to prevent its spread;
- (3) that the vessel was not properly equipped with appliances to fight a fire, though the master held a seaworthy certificate granted by a surveyor in Jamaica; and
- (4) that the crew of the vessel do not appear to have been under any discipline, and no attempt was made by the master to organise his crew to fight the fire.

The Court finds that the gross dereliction of duty on the part of the master above referred to is gross misconduct, and therefore suspends his Certificate for twelve months.

ARTHUR V. KINGDON,
Resident Magistrate for Kingston and St. Andrew.
E. DAVIS, Assessor.
H. D. ACKERLEY, Assessor.

In the matter of a Formal Investigation held at Kingston, in the Island of Jamaica, on the 17th, 18th and 29th days of June, 1921, before Arthur Vincent KINGDON, Resident Magistrate for the Parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew, assisted by Captain Edmund A. DAVIS and Captain H. D. ACKERLEY, Nautical Assessors, into the circumstances attending the destruction by fire of the British four-masted schooner "Edgewood," at Port Antonio, on the night of the 18th April, 1921.

The Court orders that Christopher Richter, the master of the British schooner "Edgewood," do pay to the Marine Board the sum of one hundred and forty-one pounds on account of the expenses of this investigation.

Given under my hand this twenty-ninth day of June, 1921.

ARTHUR V. KINGDON,
Resident Magistrate for Kingston and St. Andrew.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on Thursday, the 1st September, 1921.)

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