

(No. 488.)

“LYNN REGIS,” (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

In the matter of a formal investigation held at the Public Board Room, Post Office Chambers, in the borough of Middlesborough, on the 19th and 20th days of January 1880, before CHARLES JAMES COLEMAN, Esquire, assisted by Admiral POWELL, Captain BEASLEY, and Captain CASTLE, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the steamship “LYNN REGIS,” on the Ile aux Moutons, on the 21st December 1879.

*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 certificate of the master, Charles Gane (33,965), should be suspended for four calendar months from the date hereof, and the Court recommend that he be granted a first mate's certificate during this period.

Dated this 20th day of January 1880.

(Signed) CHARLES JAMES COLEMAN,  
Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) R. ASHMORE POWELL, }  
          " JOHN S. CASTLE,        } Assessors.  
          " THOS. BEASLEY,       }

*Annex to the Report.*

The “Lynn Regis” was an iron screw steamer built at Middlesborough in the year 1879. Her registered tonnage was 349.1. She was schooner-rigged, and fitted with a pair of compound engines of 75 horse-power combined. Her official number was 77,333. She was owned by William Foxton Beaumont, of King's Lynn, and others, the former being managing owner. The “Lynn Regis” was in good order. She had three compasses (1) the pole, which was about 7 feet above the upper bridge, (2) the steering, which was on the lower bridge, and (3) the after. The vessel was swung in the Tees on the 16th October last before proceeding on her first voyage, and deviation cards were supplied for the pole and steering compasses.

The captain stated in evidence that he took means on various occasions to ascertain the deviation of her compasses, and he found them to agree with the cards given to him by the adjuster in October.

On the 20th December the “Lynn Regis” left Bilbao with a cargo of 550 tons of iron ore, her draught being 12 feet 11 inches forward and 13 feet 2 inches aft. She had a crew of 14 hands, including the master, Charles Gane, who holds a certificate of competency, No. 33,965.

At 8 a.m. she crossed the bar, and at 8.10 she was abreast Galea Point, which bore E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  N. 1 mile. A N.  $\frac{1}{4}$  W. course by pole compass, or N. by W. magnetic, was steered till noon, when the patent log showed 35 miles. The log was reset, and the course altered to N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. by pole, the steering compass showing a course N.  $\frac{3}{4}$  E., which the captain stated in evidence would have given a magnetic north for both compasses. This does not agree with the deviation cards. The pole compass it is true would have been magnetic north at a N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. course, but the steering compass would have given a N. by E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  E. course. From noon of the 20th to noon of the 21st the ship made, according to the log, 214 miles. At 10.30 a.m. on the 21st the weather became hazy, and according to the evidence of the look-out man a distance of from 100 to 150 yards could be seen. At that time the captain was in charge of the ship; the engines were first put at half speed and then eased down to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  knots. At noon the course was altered by pole compass N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. to N.W. by N. At 12.20 the captain and mate went down to dinner, leaving the boatswain, an uncertificated

officer, in charge of the ship. Some minutes after they had been below a cry of land or rocks ahead was given by the look-out man. The captain came at once on deck; the boatswain had given orders to reverse the engines and put the helm hard-a-starboard, but before way could be stopped the vessel struck on the rock. The engines were astern for some hours, but the vessel could not be moved, and made water rapidly. About 5 p.m. the captain finally left the vessel and landed on Ile aux Moutons, where there is a lighthouse. There was no evidence to show what became of the vessel.

The Board of Trade desired the opinion of the Court on the following questions:—

1. What was the cause of the stranding of the steamship “Lynn Regis,” on the Ile aux Moutons, on the 21st December 1879?

2. Whether the stranding of the said steamship was caused by the wrongful acts and defaults of Charles Gane, the master—

1. On neglecting, after the weather came in thick on the said 21st of December, to verify the assumed position of his vessel by a cast of the lead, especially after the warning as to the existence of error in the compasses, afforded by the steering compass showing a N.  $\frac{3}{4}$  E. course when the pole compass was at N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E.; and

2. In neglecting to remain on deck on the said 21st of December at a time when, owing to the thickness of the weather, the safety of his vessel required his personal supervision?

In the opinion of the Board of Trade the certificate of Charles Gane should have been dealt with.

To which questions the Court replies as follows:—

1. The stranding of the steamship “Lynn Regis” was caused by her being out of her course.

2. The Court is of opinion that the stranding of the said vessel was caused by the wrongful acts of Charles Gane, the master—

1. When the weather came on thick on the 21st December he ought to have verified his position by taking a cast of the lead, more especially when he knew that the course by the steering compass did not agree with that shown by pole compass, when both were corrected by the deviation card.

2. We think that either the captain or the mate ought to have been on deck in the circumstances.

The facts of the case are simple enough. The “Lynn Regis” starts on a voyage from Bilbao to the Tees with a cargo of iron ore, all seems to have gone well until 10.30 a.m. the day after she sailed, when a fog comes on and no object is visible at a greater distance than 150 yards.

The captain admits that he found out that there was a difference between the compasses, and in this state of things at 20 minutes past 12 p.m. he takes the mate below to dinner, and after a short absence the vessel runs into the Ile aux Moutons Rock and becomes a total wreck.

It appears to me that the captain in the circumstances committed more than an error of judgment, he was guilty of great negligence.

When he found he was in a fog, and could not have been certain of his position, owing to that and the discrepancy in his compasses, he was bound to have taken a cast of the lead, but instead of doing this the vessel is handed over to an uncertificated officer, with the result I have already mentioned.

The captain appears to be a man of good character, and is said to be a good and careful sailor. I am sorry I cannot say that I think he acted like a careful man upon this occasion, but taking into consideration the testimonials he has produced, I think his certificate should be suspended for four months from this date, and recommend that a certificate of first mate should be granted him.

Dated this 20th day of January 1880.

(Signed) CHARLES JAMES COLEMAN,  
Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) R. ASHMORE POWELL, }  
          " JOHN S. CASTLE,        } Assessors.  
          " THOS. BEASLEY,       }