

(No. 5012.)

“DORUNDA” (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1887.

IN the matter of a formal Investigation held at Westminster Town Hall on the 5th day of November, and at Greenwich Lecture Hall on the 8th day of November 1894, before R. H. B. MARSHAM, Esquire, assisted by Captains WARD and RONALDSON, into the circumstances attending the stranding of, and consequent serious damage to, the British steamship “DORUNDA” on the 27th of September 1894, at or near the Estellas Rocks, near the Burlings, Portugal.

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 cause of the said casualty was that the master, Mr. John Templeton, over-estimating the distance of the vessel from the Burling when the light was abeam, did not make a sufficient alteration in the course to avoid danger. The Court finds the master in default, and suspends his certificate for six months.

Dated this thirteenth day of November 1894.

(Signed) R. H. B. MARSHAM, Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) C. Y. WARD, } Assessors.
A. RONALDSON, }

Annex to the Report.

This Inquiry was held at the Town Hall, Westminster, on the 5th day of November, and at the Lecture Hall, Greenwich, on the 7th day of November 1894; the Hon. A. Lyttleton appearing for the Board of Trade, whilst Sir Walter Phillimore and Mr. Barsdorf represented the master and owners.

The “Dorunda,” of Glasgow, official number 73,795, was an iron screw steamship, built by William Denny and Brothers at Dumbarton in 1875.

She was of the following dimensions: length 368.5 ft., breadth 37.3 ft., depth of hold from tonnage deck to ceiling 20.9 ft., and depth from upper deck to ceiling 28.5 ft.

Her registered tonnage, after deducting 1,125.72 tons for propelling power and crew spaces, was 2,010.35 tons. She was propelled by a pair of compound vertical direct-acting engines of 400 nominal horse power.

She was owned by the British India Associated Steamers, Limited, Mr. George Sutherland Mackenzie, of 13, Austin Friars, London, being the manager.

She had seven boats hung to davits ready for immediate use, and was fully equipped with life-saving appliances required by the Act.

The “Dorunda” left Brisbane on the 31st of July last, bound to Plymouth and London with a general cargo, under the command of Mr. John Templeton, who held a certificate of competency as master No. 20,767.

She had a crew of 68 hands all told; there were also 32 passengers on board.

All went well on board until the date of the casualty.

At 10.5 p.m. on the 26th September last Cape Roca on the coast of Portugal bore East (true) at a distance of 1½ miles to 1¾ miles, ascertained by four-point bearings.

The weather was fine and clear with light airs and a smooth sea. A N. 1° W. (true) course was then set and steered; the engines were at full speed, the vessel making 10 knots an hour through the water.

Shortly after passing Cape Roca the master went below, giving orders to the third officer who was in charge of the deck to keep a good look-out for ships and land.

At midnight the second officer took charge of the deck; shortly afterwards, the Burlings Light was

sighted bearing ¼ to ½ a point on the starboard bow. The master was called and went on deck, and after taking a good look at the light again went below, not having made any alteration in the course but ordering the second officer to call him at 2 a.m.

The master states that he calculated the Burlings Light at 12.7 a.m. was distant 24 miles, and that with the data of course, bearing, and distance 20 miles, he consulted the traverse table, and found therein that by continuing the course the vessel would pass 7.7 miles to the west of the Burlings; but when in consultation with his solicitors in London it was pointed out to him that the course steered would only take the vessel a little more than two miles to the west of the Burlings he then discovered that he had entered a wrong page of the table.

He must, however, have been altogether wrong in his estimate of the distance of the Burlings at 12.7 a.m., for the distance of the Burlings from Cape Roca is 33 miles, and the vessel had run 20 miles, leaving only 18 miles.

At 1.20 a.m. the second officer called the master and reported to him that the vessel was close to the Burlings, and that he could see the Farilhoes right ahead at an estimated distance of seven to eight miles. The master went on deck, but, as he states, he could not see the Farilhoes. The same course was continued. At 1 h. 28 m. 30 s. a.m. Burlings Light was four points on the starboard bow, and at 1.35 a.m. it was abeam, which gave the distance from the light a little more than one mile at that time.

The second officer reported this to the master, who replied “Nonsense!” he confidently believing the vessel to be 2½ miles off.

However, he altered the course half-a-point to the west—to N. 7° W. (true).

Shortly afterwards the master saw the Farilhoes, as he states, two points on the starboard bow, and distant five to six miles; but this is evidently an over-estimate, as the Great Farilhoe is only four miles from the Burlings.

Some five or ten minutes after passing the Burlings the look-out reported “Rocks ahead!” The order was given to put the helm hard to starboard, but before the order could be accomplished the vessel struck the rocks.

The engines were stopped, and soon after the vessel passed over the rock. The engines were then put to “full speed ahead,” and a course was steered to pass round on the north side of the Farilhoes.

The holds were sounded; the fore compartment of the main hold was found full of water, and water was coming into the after compartment. The engine-room and after-holds were dry.

Six of the boats were lowered to within a few feet of the water ready to leave the vessel, and the passengers and most of the crew were put into them. The master decided to take the vessel to Lisbon, and a course was steered to the southward, but successive soundings showed two, three, four, and five feet of water in the main hold, upon which the master determined to beach the vessel.

She was accordingly steered towards Peniche, and beached about 4 a.m. on the 27th September in a sandy bay close to Fort Consolation.

Before the vessel was steered for Peniche, the boats were cast off, and the passengers and crew eventually landed safely. The master, first and second officers, the carpenter, first and second engineers, one quartermaster, and two firemen remained on board with the remaining boat until the vessel was beached. All the crew and passengers landed in safety, and subsequently a portion of the cargo was salvaged.

Some doubt exists as to the rock on which the vessel struck. The second officer thought it was the Estellas, but the master thought it was the sunken rock to the westward of the Farilhoes. The Court, after considering the evidence adduced is inclined to adopt the master’s view.

These were the facts of the case, and on the conclusion of the evidence the Hon. A. Lyttleton, on behalf of the Board of Trade, put to the Court the following questions:—

1. What number of compasses had the vessel on board, where were they placed, were they in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel?

2. Did the master ascertain the deviation of his compasses from time to time, were the errors correctly ascertained and the proper correction to the courses applied?

3. Whether proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 10.5 p.m. of the 26th September last?

4. Whether a safe and proper course was thereafter steered, and whether due and proper allowance was made for tide and currents?

5. Whether proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 12.5 a.m. of the 27th September and from time to time thereafter?

6. When were the Farilhoes Rocks sighted, how did they bear, did the master take prompt and proper measures to keep the vessel out of danger at that time and at or about 1.35 a.m. when the Burlings Light was abeam?

7. Whether the master was on deck at a time when the safety of the vessel required his personal supervision?

8. What was the cause of the casualty?

9. Whether the vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care?

10. Whether the master is in default?

Sir Walter Phillimore and the Hon. A. Lyttleton having respectively addressed the Court, judgment was given as follows:—

1. The vessel had three compasses: one, the standard, (Sir William Thompson's patent) on the fore part of the bridge, one in the wheel-house on the bridge, and the third aft. They were in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the ship.

2. The master ascertained the deviation of his compasses from time to time, the errors were correctly ascertained, and the proper corrections to the courses applied.

3. Proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 10.5 p.m. of the 26th September last.

4. A safe and proper course was steered up to the time the Burlings Light was sighted, but not subsequently.

No allowance was made for currents.

5. Proper measures were not taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 12.5 a.m. of the 27th September, nor thereafter, until about 1.30 a.m., when the second mate by four-point bearings fixed the position of the vessel to be west (true) of Burlings Light, distant about mile.

The Farilhoes Rocks were sighted at 1.20 a.m. by the second mate, bearing north (true). The master being then called went on deck, but took no measures at that time to keep the vessel out of danger, as he did not himself see the rocks.

At about 1.35 a.m., when the Burlings Light was reported by the second mate to be one mile distant, and when the master states that he first saw the Farilhoes, the course was altered half-a-point out to the westward, which was quite inadequate.

7. The master was on deck at a time when the safety of the vessel required his personal supervision.

8. The cause of the casualty was that the master, over-estimating the distance of the vessel from the Burlings when the light was abeam, did not make a sufficient alteration in the course to avoid danger.

9. The vessel was not navigated with proper and seamanlike care after the Burlings Light was sighted.

10. The master is in default, and the Court suspends his certificate for six months.

(Signed) R. H. B. MARRIAM, Judge.

We concur.

(Signed) C. Y. WARD, }
A. RONALDSON, } ASSESSORS.

“LILY

“OSW

The Merchant S

In the matter of a for
on the 21st, 22nd
1894, before Thom
pendiary Magistra
C.B., Captain C
Nautical Assessor
ing the loss of the
“MAY,” of Cardiff, t
steamship “Oswa
tober 1894, whereb

The Court, having c
cumstances attendi
casualty, finds, for
hereto, that the coll
judgment on the part
Morrison, which, in t
amount to a default.

Dated this 24th day

We concur in the

(Signed)

Anne

This case was held at
Thomas William Lewis
assisted by Admiral G
Captain Brooks, on th
December 1894.

Mr. Vachell appear
Trade, Mr. Ingledew fo
of the “Oswald,” and

The “Oswald” is a
No. 96,554, and registe
was built of steel at W
285.5 ft., breadth 37.2 f

She has three engine
vertical inverted cylin
her gross tonnage bein
tered tonnage 1157.15
schooner.

She is owned by Mr.
Mr. John Turnbull, of
being managing owner.

The “Oswald” left
14th of September 18
Frederick John Lewer,
of competency, No. 0
11,000 quarters of barle

All went well until 8
the vessel being then i
time a bright light was
bow about two miles di

out to be the maste
cutter “Lily and May,”
Cardiff at 1.30 p.m. on
mand of Mr David F

owner, with a crew of th
Channel seeking.
The “Oswald” was
officer, William Henry
mate's certificate, and
course, and was going
8 knots. The weather

breeze; the night was d
The “Lily and May”
with the wind on the
making about 2½ knot
being about half flood.