

(No. 3546.)

“KENNETT” (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

IN the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Lecture Hall, Greenwich, on the 29th day of May 1888, before R. H. B. MARSHAM, Esquire, assisted by Captains METHVEN and RONALDSON, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British steamship “KENNETT,” of London, off Gando Point, Grand Canary, on 29th April 1888.

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 stranding arose from the ignorance of the captain as to the existence of the Gando Rock by reason of its not being shown on his chart, or mentioned in his sailing directions; and the Court finds the captain in default.

Dated this 30th day of May 1888.

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

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) R. METHVEN, } Assessors.
A. RONALDSON, }

Annex to the Report.

The “Kennett,” official number 87,171, was an iron steamship, built at West Hartlepool in 1883, and registered at the Port of London as of 1,794.85 gross, and 1,156.41 net registered tonnage. She was owned by Mr. George Steel, Mr. William Young, and others, Mr. Wm. Young being the managing owner. Her dimensions were—259.4 feet in length, 34.7 feet in breadth, 22.75 feet in depth, and her combined horse power 160. She was supplied with four boats and with three compasses that had been recently adjusted, and was in all respects in good seagoing condition.

The vessel, laden with a cargo of iron rails, left London on 9 April last, bound for La Plata. She had a crew of twenty-four all told, Mr. William Thomas Pearce, being master, and carried four passengers in addition.

All went well till the 19th April, when at 3 p.m. she left Puerta de la Luz, having called there for coals. The wind at the time was fresh at N.N.E., and the weather fine with a slight haze. The tide was at a little before the last quarter flood. A due course was set, and Melenara Point was rounded at an assumed distance of two miles, but cross bearings were not taken to determine the exact distance. At this time, 4.30 p.m., the captain altered the course to S. 3/4 W. magnetic. This course would have led clear of the rocks off Gando Point, had the distance been as the captain stated, two miles off Melenara Point when the vessel passed it, but in the absence of exact bearings this distance cannot be accepted. Proceeding on this course the vessel struck the rocks off Gando Point, which, according to the Admiralty Chart, lie at 6 cable lengths from the shore, the vessel going at the time full speed and about 9 knots. The engines were kept going to keep the ship on the rocks, and she sunk in about half an hour. Two life-boats were cleared away in time to receive the crew and passengers, who were all safely landed. The charts were not saved, but the log book was brought ashore.

This was the first time the captain had called at the Grand Canary Island in this vessel, and on leaving London he was contented with reading over the lists of charts on board without examining them. The chart by which he was navigating at this time was on quite a small scale—too small for coast navigation. It, however, showed the rocks off Melenara Point, and also several rocks between that point and Puerta de la Luz. South of Melenara Point the coast showed by this chart bold soundings, and was quite clear of danger. The

Sailing Directions on board were, according to the captain, by the same publishers as those of the chart, and no mention of any danger off Gando Point is given. Consequently the master was navigating his vessel without any consciousness of this danger.

At the same time, seeing that the ship struck a rock only 6 cables from the shore according to the Admiralty Chart of the island, he was navigating imprudently close to the shore, and further, was proceeding incautiously without any look-out on the fore-castle, the officer of the watch being occupied clearing up the decks, and he himself in unassisted charge of the vessel.

In the Admiralty Directions there is prominent mention made of the Gando Rock, and it is distinctly noted on the Admiralty Chart as being “A Wash.” According to the captain he estimated the tide when the vessel struck the rocks at about high water, referring himself to the state of the tide when he left Puerta de la Luz. In the periodic swell which so generally prevails on every coast, it is quite possible a sharp look-out might have perceived some indication of the danger the vessel was approaching. On the conclusion of the evidence, Mr. James, on behalf of the Board of Trade, put to the Court the following questions:—

1. Was the vessel properly supplied with charts and sailing directions, and did the master take proper measures to ascertain that the charts on board were sufficient for the voyage?
2. What number of compasses had she on board; where were they placed, and were they in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the ship?
3. When and by whom were they made, and when and by whom were they last adjusted?
4. Did the master ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time. Were the errors of the compasses correctly ascertained and the proper corrections to the courses applied?
5. Whether safe and proper courses were set and steered after leaving Puerta de la Luz, and whether due and proper allowance was made for tide and currents?
6. When was the course altered to S. 3/4 W.? Was such an alteration a safe and proper one, and was sufficient allowance made for tide and currents?
7. Whether proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel from time to time?
8. Whether the total neglect of the lead was justifiable?
9. Whether a good and proper look-out was kept?
10. What was the cause of the casualty?
11. Whether the vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care?
12. Whether the master and officers are, or either of them is, in default?

And stated that in the opinion of the Board of Trade the certificate of the master should be dealt with.

Mr. Crump appeared on behalf of the owners, and Mr. Nelson appeared for the captain.

The Court gave judgment as follows:—

1. The vessel was not properly supplied with charts nor with sailing directions, not having those most recently published. The chart of the Canary Island that the captain stated he had on board was on too small a scale for coast navigation, and the sailing directions said to have been on board were published in 1871 by the publishers of the chart. Neither the chart nor the sailing directions on board contained any mention of the Gando Rock, on which, in the opinion of the Court, the vessel struck. The Admiralty Sailing Directions, published in 1885, make prominent mention of the Gando Rock, and the Admiralty Chart, also published in 1885, shows that rock on it.

The master did not take proper measures to ascertain that his charts on board or the sailing directions were sufficient for the voyage.

2 and 3. She had three compasses properly placed and in good order, and they were adjusted by Mr. Gregor at Greenhithe, on 10th April.

4. No evidence was given as to the master's having ascertained the deviation or errors of his compasses by observations from time to time. The corrections used

for his compasses were taken from the deviation card, which had very recently been drawn up.

5 and 6. Safe and proper courses were set and steered until Melenara Point was passed, when the course was altered to one leading too close in shore. At the time of the accident it was high water, and no evidence was given as to there having been any current. The course was altered to S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. at 4.30 p.m.

7. Proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel.

8. In this case the use of the lead was not called for.

9. A good and proper look-out was not kept. There should have been a man on the look-out while coasting so close.

10. The cause of the casualty was the ignorance of the captain as to the existence of the Gando Rock by

reason of its not being shown on his chart or mentioned in his sailing directions.

11. Having a chart on so small a scale, the Court think that the vessel should not have been navigated so close to the shore.

12. The master only is in default. The Court do not propose to deal with his certificate on account of his long service, and because he does not appear to have had any previous casualty.

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

We concur.

(Signed) R. METHVEN, }
A. RONALDSON, } ASSESSORS.

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