

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Marine DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 288

Press
~~MIS~~

Dated 10 . 9 . 1861.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

27/6/24

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Marine Department,
10th September 1861.*

No. 25. Read the following letter from J. J. FRANKLIN, Esq., Superintendent of Marine; to J. D. SIM, Esq., Secretary to Government, Marine Department, Fort Saint George, dated 23rd August 1861, No. 2,379.

The Government in their Proceedings of the 7th June last, No. 194, directed an investigation under Section 101 of Act I of 1859 into the circumstances attending the loss of the

Deposition of F. E. Cook, 1st Officer.

Do. C. Courtney, 2nd Officer.

Do. E. Stickwood, Carpenter.

Do. J. Ridgway, A.B.

Do. J. Smith, A.B.

Do. W. T. D. E. Southerland, o.s.

Do. W. King, o.s.

Extract from the Log Book.

Memorandum by Chief Mate.

Letter from the Captain.

Opinion of the Court.

British Barque "Albion," which vessel was run ashore between 2 and 3 o'clock, A. M., on the morning of the 4th May, not on that night as originally supposed. I have now the honor to forward the depositions and other papers connected with the case and to suggest that they be sent to the Board of Trade to be finally dealt with.

2. The Court appear to have taken much pains in the inquiry and to have come to a sound conclusion in the opinion they have recorded, not only in regard to Captain Adams, but with reference likewise to the Chief Officer. The evidence clearly shews that the former was habitually intoxicated, and that in consequence he was incapable of navigating his Ship in safety.

3. Mr. Horsley explains the delay in transmitting these papers to have arisen from his having been occupied on other duties in the district, which prevented his meeting the Master Attendant at Cocanada for some time.

OPINION.

Mr. Cook the 1st Mate of the Barque "Albion" which was wrecked about three or four miles to the westward of the Narsapur Obelisk on the 4th May 1861, charges Captain Adams, Master of the said Vessel with drunkenness and wilfully running the Vessel on shore. In his deposition the 1st Mate reiterates his written charge with some additional matter elicited in the course of examination. It appears from his statement that the Vessel left London in the month of November 1860 and that nothing of any consequence occurred on board till after they sighted Madeira on the 17th November. He goes on to say that on the 22nd December some spars were carried away while the Captain was drunk in the Cabin. This fact he cannot prove and he attributes the accident to bad steering on the part of the man at the wheel. On the following day, a similar accident occurred while the Captain was in his Cabin and incapable of giving orders from drink. This the Carpenter Edward Stickwood also witnessed. On March 13th the Vessel was nearly on the little Basses with breakers one-third of a mile a head. It was his watch below. He came on deck at once, provided for the safety of the Vessel, and went below to report the circumstance to the Captain, but found him insensible from drink. This, he says, can be proved by the 2nd Mate. On March 17th reported shoal water to the Captain, and from his way of speaking supposed he was drunk, and on the following day spoke to the Captain about his drinking, which made him rather angry, but that, after that there was an improvement in his conduct. The Captain was drunk almost every night while at anchor at Negapatam and rolling about the decks and about this time all the Ship's liquor was finished. Notwithstanding he was again in the habit of getting drunk and when off Pondicherry, the Captain being intoxicated on deck and having given the course N. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. when the Ship was in three fathoms, that half an hour afterwards he, the 1st Mate, changed the course to N. E. and by N. The Captain was intoxicated when they anchored in the Madras Roads, and after leaving Madras the Captain was drunk. Where all this liquor came from he is not able to say. He now comes to the 3rd May the day previous to the Vessel being wrecked. He mentions the different courses given by the Captain and then goes on to say that at 8 p. m., on May 3rd, his watch on deck he hove the lead, found 35 fathoms water, took the altitude of a star and went below and showed the position of the Ship to the Captain on the chart. The Captain who was sober, seems to have differed

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with the 1st Mate as to the position of the Ship and would not alter the course, although the 1st Mate told him that on the present course in two hours they would be on shore. At midnight he went below and shortly after heard the Captain go on deck. He was awaked by the Ship striking and goes on to describe how the Vessel missed stays, then stayed, paid off, ran further on the shore and became unmanageable. He is of opinion that the Ship was not properly handled and might have been saved if proper measures had been taken. Nothing was done to save the Ship for eight days and when they attempted to heave the vessel off with anchors, they found it impossible to do so. The 1st Mate apparently kept a private log in which he noted down the misconduct of the Captain. The 2nd Mate recollects having seen the Captain drunk or the worse for liquor on five or six different occasions. He kept a Memorandum of accidents and he recollects when certain accidents occurred, the Captain was drunk. On one occasion the Captain was dead drunk. It was his watch on deck from 12 to 4 A. M. on the 4th May, and the Captain came on deck shortly after 12 o'clock. The Chief Mate whom he relieved gave the course N. by E., and told him to keep the lead going every hour. The Captain sat in a chair and though not drunk, appeared as if he had had some liquor. Before 3 o'clock the Captain went below, but while he was on deck the lead had been hove, at 1 o'clock found 14 fathoms, at 2 A. M. 10 fathoms, and after the Captain went below sounded 3 fathoms which he immediately reported to the Captain who at once came on deck. He gives much the same account as the 1st Mate as to what occurred afterwards, stating also that no measures were taken to heave the Ship off till eight days after she struck. These are the most important statements in the case. It is unnecessary to enter into the particulars of the evidence of the Seamen. Their statements are all to the same effect, viz., that the Captain was frequently either drunk or the worse for liquor during the voyage from England. They all say he had been drinking when the Ship struck and one goes so far as to say he was speechless drunk. The statement of the Carpenter seems to be rather wild and is altogether unsatisfactory and he is evidently inclined to go beyond the truth from ill-will towards the Captain. The defence is simply a denial of the whole charge. The Captain gives his version of the different facts mentioned by the Officers, and further states that the supply of liquor on board was so small that it was impossible that he could have been drunk so frequently during the voyage, considering the length of time that the supply lasted and attributes the whole charge to ill-will. As to the Ship going on shore, he first gives a strange statement as to the course he intended the Ship to be steered, apparently considering it unnecessary to see for himself what course was being steered and says he was surprised when it was reported to him that the vessel was shoaling fast. He also did all in his power to save the vessel without touching on the fact that eight days elapsed before an anchor was put out. He mentions that the Chief Mate asked for £ 50 to sign the Log, but calls no witnesses to prove that fact. He refers also to some discrepancies in the evidence of a very trifling nature.

There is not the slightest doubt that animus is at the bottom of all the proceedings of the Chief Officer, but it does not follow from this that the facts spoken to never occurred though they may be a little highly colored. It is certainly strange that the Chief Officer should keep a private log in which he noted down all the peccadillos of his Commander, that though he had opportunities of bringing the charge of drunkenness against the Captain at Negapatam and Madras, he was silent on the subject till after the loss of the ship, that he should refuse to sign the log book though he acknowledges the truth of its contents and that he should say the Captain was sober when the ship struck when the 2nd Officer and all the crew say that the Captain was speechless drunk, or drunk, or the worse for liquor. These contradictions show that he is a man upon whom no reliance whatever can be placed and his conduct is rendered still more contemptible when he gives as a reason for his bringing the charge against the Captain his regard for the interests of those concerned in the welfare of the vessel, but still they in no way detract from the main features of the charge particularly when his statement is so thoroughly backed by those of the 2nd Officer and the crew. The evidence of the 2nd Officer is most satisfactory in every way and great reliance may be placed on it, as he is clearly not biased either one way or the other. As has been already shown a very bad feeling existed between Captain Adams and the Chief Officer and great stress is laid upon this by Captain Adams, but it does not in any way appear that this bad

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feeling extended to the second Officer and crew with the exception of the Carpenter John Smith; one of the crew who was shipped at Madras, and had consequently only been on board a few days, says the Captain was speechless drunk when the Ship went on shore. On such a short acquaintance it is almost impossible that bad feeling could be the cause of these words. Captain Adams in his defence very wisely omits to impute any motive to the crew for giving evidence against him further than in stating that they were probably aware of a private journal having been kept by the Chief Officer and so a combination arose. How the one circumstance could arise out of the other, is not explained, and it is impossible to make out, how any connection can exist between the two facts. Captain Adams' explanation of the cause of the wreck, makes matters very much against him. He denies that he was drunk and that the first Officer pointed out the position of the Ship on the chart and he attributes the accident to inattention to his orders. But on this point he is evidently not very clear. If he is, as he says, no stranger to the Coast, he must have known that 35 fathoms was not good water near Narsapur and what could be the necessity of hugging the shore and that a treacherous one when he had a fair wind does not appear. As to the delay in taking measures to heave off the Ship, the use of the Ship's anchors hanging at her bows, seems to have escaped his notice altogether.

It is clearly and most satisfactorily proved that Captain Adams was constantly drunk while in command of the late Barque "Albion" on her voyage from England to Madras and also that he was the worse for liquor when the "Albion" went on shore near Narsapur point.

It is also clearly shown both by the evidence and the Log Book that Captain Adams did not take any immediate measures to save the vessel after she had struck, thereby grossly neglecting the interests of those concerned in the welfare of the late Barque "Albion."

(Signed) W. D. HORSLEY,
Ag. Head Assist. Magistrate.
(Signed) H. THOMSON,
Master Attendant.

No. 26.

ORDER THEREON, 10th September 1861, No. 288.

The Government confirm the report of the Court appointed under Act I of 1859, to inquire into the circumstances which led to the loss of the British Barque "Albion" off Narsapore.

2. A copy of the report, with the depositions and other documents received with it, will be forwarded to the Secretary of State, for submission to the Board of Trade.

(Signed) J. D. SIM,
Secretary to Government.

Exd. F. Car tledge.

Pro of Govt. of June 21 1861 N.Y. 48

Note. Liked 19 Sept. 1861
Marine Dept. 10 Sept. 20/61

The question
for decision of
Govt. is whether
they will confirm
the decision
or not.

J.W.S.

The decision is
a good one & I
would confirm it

25 Will

Wm

228 - Aug 1861
R.D. Sept.

Marine 1861 Department

10 Sept

(3)

From

The Superintendent of Marine

The Secretary to Government,

Marine Department,

Port Saint George

Dated 23^d

Aug. 1861

10 P.M.

N^o 262 A-2379

Submits the depositions &
other papers relative to the
loss of the barque "Albion" &
conveys in the opinion of the Court
in regard to the Captain as well
as the Chief Officer.

Suggests to transmit the papers
to the Board of Trade for dis-
posal.

For orders

Marine Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read letter from the
Suptd. of Marine — Inter 23rd Augt. '61
No. 2379.

Order — 10th September 1861. No. 288.

The Govt. confirm the
report of the Court
appointed ~~by them~~
under Act I of 1859
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circumstances which
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British Barque "Al-
lion" off Nuraapore.

2. A copy of the Report,
with the depositions &
other documents receiv-
ed with it, will be for-
warded to the Secretary
of

M.S. in ori-
ginal - not
to be printed.

State, for submission
to the Board of Trade.

I D.S.

Re Subtitled. of Marine. }
" Collr. of the Code. }
very distinct. }

Received by the
Office of the
Department of the
Interior

Marine 1861. Department

No. 288.

PROCEEDINGS OF GOVERNMENT

Dated 10th of April 1861.