

(No. 2524.)

"CASSIOPE."

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

IN the matter of a formal Investigation held at St. George's Hall, Liverpool, on the 21st and 22nd days of April 1885, before THOMAS STAMFORD RAFFLES, Esquire, Stipendiary Magistrate, assisted by Captains FRENCH and KIDDLE, R.N., Nautical Assessors, into the circumstances attending the supposed loss of the British sailing ship "CASSIOPE," of Liverpool, which has not been heard of since leaving Rangoon for Falmouth on 23rd February 1884.

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 said ship left Rangoon on the 23rd February 1884, and had not since been heard of. The Court thought it was probable that she encountered the cyclone that occurred in the Indian Ocean on the 23rd March following, when several vessels were damaged materially, and she probably foundered.

Dated this 22nd day of April 1885.

(Signed) T. S. RAFFLES, Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed)	A. P. FRENCH, JAMES KIDDLE, Captains R.N.,	} Assessors.

Annex to the Report.

The "Cassiope" (official No. 70,979) was a sailing ship built of iron in 1875 at Whitehaven, and registered at Liverpool, of 1,559.37 tons. She was the property of the Australasian Shipping Company, Limited, Mr. William Gracie, of Liverpool, having been appointed manager. She was originally built for Messrs. Heap and Sons, of Liverpool, and classed

^A at Lloyd's, and she was sold by them in 1882 to her late owners for 19,425*l.* She was commanded by Mr. William Withers, who held a certificate of competency as master, No. 6,899, and he had commanded her since she was built. She had a crew of 30 hands all told. She had always been employed in the Australian and Liverpool trade, coming home generally from Rangoon with cargoes of rice. She left Liverpool in October 1883 with a cargo of salt for Diamond Island, near Rangoon, and she sailed from Rangoon on her return voyage, with a cargo of 2,110 tons of rice, on the 23rd February 1884, drawing 22 ft. 5 in. aft and 22 ft. 3 in. forward, since which time nothing has been seen or heard of the vessel. After calling a gentleman

connected in 1875 with the company which built her, and Mr. Gracie, the manager—three depositions made abroad and duly sworn by a surveyor at Rangoon—a stevedore there, and the licensed pilot who took the vessel to sea, were put in and completed all the evidence to be had.

Mr. Paxton, for the Board of Trade, put in the following questions:—

1. When the vessel left Rangoon was she in good order and condition?
2. Was the system of ventilation adopted a safe and proper one, and was there any danger of the bags collapsing and setting cargo in motion?
3. Was the vessel overladen?
4. Had she, as laden with a cargo of rice, sufficient stability?
5. What was the probable cause of her loss?
6. What was the cost of the vessel to her present owners, and her value at the time of sailing on last voyage?
7. What insurances were effected upon the vessel and freight?

And Mr. Lightbound, who appeared for the owners, addressed the Court.

The Court gave judgment as follows:—

1. When the vessel left Rangoon she appeared to have been in good and seaworthy condition as to her hull and equipments. She was an extra strong ship.
2. The assessors were of opinion that the system of ventilation adopted in this vessel was by no means so safe and proper as the system of box ventilation. The bag system of ventilation is always liable to give way in heavy weather.
3. The Court considered that this vessel was deeply laden, considering that she sailed from Rangoon at a time of the year when cyclones might be expected in the Indian Ocean. It should, however, be added that McPhee the pilot said in his depositions that her load-mark was above water.
4. It appeared from the evidence that the stability of this ship when loaded had not been tested. When she was launched the lower masts were in her, and the top-mast pointed, and after launching the vessel was transported without ballast, so that in that trim she was evidently a stable ship. There was no evidence before the Court to enable them to form an opinion of her stability when loaded with a grain cargo.
5. It was probable that she was lost in the cyclone which occurred about the 23rd March 1884 when several vessels were damaged, but it can only be a matter of conjecture.
- 6 and 7. The vessel was purchased by her late owners in 1882 for 19,425*l.*, her original cost in 1875 having been 27,500*l.* About 150*l.* had been spent upon her since her last purchase. She was insured for 19,500*l.*, and the freight was insured for 4,250*l.*

(Signed) T. S. RAFFLES, Judge.

We concur in this report.

(Signed)	A. P. FRENCH, JAMES KIDDLE, R.N.,	} Assessors.