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ROTHERY,
Wreck Commissioner.

HMORE POWELL,
D PARISH,
BERT VAUX,
} Assessors.

(No. 1156.)

# "CYPRIAN" (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

In the matter of the formal investigation held at the Chancery Court, St. George's Hall, Liverpool, on the 12th, 14th, 15th, and 16th of November 1881, before H. C. ROTHERY, Esquire, Wreck Commissioner, assisted by Rear-Admiral MORESBY, Captain CASTLE, and J. H. HALLETT, Esquire, as Assessors, into the circumstances attending the stranding and loss of the steamship "CYPRIAN" in Carnarvon Bay on the 14th of October 1881, when twenty lives were lost.

*Report of Court.*

The Court, having carefully inquired into the circumstances of the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds, for the reasons annexed, that the loss of the said ship was due to the water having been allowed to get into the stokehole, partly through the fiddley gratings not having been covered up as soon as they might and ought to have been; partly by the ends of the alleyways not having been closed with iron doors, so that the water accumulated in the engine room compartment to such an extent as to put the fires out; and that the vessel, having thereby become unmanageable, was driven by the force of the gale into Carnarvon Bay, and wrecked on the beach.

The Court is not asked to make any order as to costs.

Dated the 16th day of November 1881.

(Signed) H. C. ROTHERY,
Wreck Commissioner.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) J. MORESBY,
JOHN S. CASTLE,
J. H. HALLETT,
} Assessors.

*Annex to the Report.*

This case was heard at Liverpool on the 12th, 14th, 15th, and 16th of November 1881, when Mr. Squarey appeared for the Board of Trade, Mr. Gray Hill for the owners and the second mate, and Mr. Kennedy for the representatives of the master of the "Cyprian." Fourteen witnesses having been produced by the Board of Trade and examined, Mr. Squarey handed in a statement of the questions upon which the Board of Trade desired the opinion of the Court. Five witnesses having been examined on behalf of the master, Mr. Gray Hill and Mr. Kennedy addressed the Court on behalf of their respective parties, and Mr. Squarey having replied for the Board of Trade, the Court proceeded to give judgment on the questions on which its opinion had been asked. The circumstances of the case are as follows:—

The "Cyprian" was an iron screw steamship, belonging to the Port of Liverpool, of 1,433 tons gross, and 940 tons net register, and was fitted with engines of 170 horse-power. She was built at Seacombe, in the county of Chester, in the year 1874, and at the time of her loss was the property of the steamship "Cyprian" Company, Limited, Mr. F. W. Jeffery, of No. 27, James Street, Liverpool, being the manager. She left Liverpool at 2 p.m. on the 13th October last, bound to Gibraltar and other ports in the Mediterranean, having on board a crew of 27 hands all told, and about 1,200 tons of general cargo, besides 580 tons of bunker coal, and drawing we are told 18 feet 6 inches forward, and 19 feet 6 inches aft, with a freeboard of about 5 feet. At the time of leaving it was blowing a fresh gale from the westward, but there was nothing to indicate the approach of very bad weather; on the contrary, we are told that the glass that morning had risen slightly, it having been 29·60 the night before, and in the morning 29·68. At 9 p.m. she passed the Skerries, and at 11.15 was off the South Stack, distant about 10 miles, and the vessel was then heading S.W. ¼ W., or S.W. ½ W., the wind blowing a gale from W. by S. to W.N.W., with a falling barometer. At midnight the vessel was holding her course, the stokeholes were free of water, and everything appeared to be right; but about 1 a.m. it was observed that the water was coming down through the fiddley gratings into the stokehole; and at 2 a.m., according to the 3rd engineer, who had then the watch, it was coming down in tons. Before 3.15 a.m. we are told that the engines were able to keep the water under, but by this time the water had gained rapidly, and was about up to the stokehole plates, upon which the 3rd engineer determined to go and call the chief; but as he was going up to do so, he observed steam issuing from the stokehole, and on returning to examine it he found that one of the pipes of the starboard boiler had burst. He then called both the chief and the second engineers, who, on finding that the water was rapidly running out of the starboard boiler, deemed it expedient to draw the fires. This, of course, increased considerably the amount of the water in the stokehole, and by this time it was over the plates. The chief engineer then directed the donkey man to go and light the donkey fires; but on his going to do so he found that the furnace bars had been displaced by the wash of the water, and, notwithstanding all his efforts, he was not able to light them. In the meantime the engineers had been endeavouring to stop the tube of the starboard boiler, which they succeeded in doing in about three quarters of an hour; but by this time the water had risen some two or three feet above the stokehole plates, and on attempting to re-light the starboard furnaces it was found impossible to do so, the wash of the water putting out the wing furnaces of the port boiler also. In the meantime the second officer, whose watch began at 4 a.m., observed that the covers of the fiddley gratings were off, and he accordingly ordered the carpenter to put them on, and that was accordingly done. This was between 4 and half-past 4.

At about 5 a.m. the second officer observed that the vessel's head was falling off before the gale, and he ordered the man at the wheel to put the helm hard down, but it seemed to have no effect upon her, for she lay with her head about three points off her course. He accordingly called the captain, who came on deck, and on being told that there was not sufficient steam on, he went into the engine-room, and after being there about a quarter of an hour he returned to the bridge and told the second officer that they were doing something to the engines, but that they were in hopes that it would soon be all right, and he then went into the chart-room and lay down. Matters, however, did not improve, for about 7 a.m. the vessel lay broadside to the sea, the wind blowing a perfect hurricane from the S.W., and the glass being at 28·64. At 8 o'clock the second mate was relieved, but he had hardly gone below when he heard a noise on deck, and on going up found that one of the rods by which the midship wheel is connected with the rudder aft had broken on the starboard side. Orders were at once given to connect the after wheel, and this seems to have been effected without delay, but a portion of the chain connecting the midship wheel with the rudder head having got under the cog-wheel broke it in two, and in five minutes the after wheel was rendered useless. Relieving tackles, however, were at once put on the tiller, and the helm was lashed hard over to port. Between 10 and 11 we are told that the fires were all out, and the vessel then lay like a log, broadside to the sea, with the helm lashed hard-a-port. At about 1 p.m. all hands, with the exception of the master and chief mate, and one hand who was left to look after the relieving tackles, went into the engine-room to assist in baling; but at about 2 p.m. the chief mate, and, as one of the witnesses says, the captain also, came to the door of the engine-room and informed them that land was in sight, that they were drifting towards it, and that all hands had better come up, upon which they all came out of the engine-room and went on to the bridge. Some discussion seems then to have taken place as to whether it would not be better to set the fore trysail and jib for the purpose of running into Porth

L 367. 926. 150.—12/81. Wt. 203. E. & S.

Dinlleyn, and the second mate has told us that he thought that it would have been better to do so, but instead of that the main staysail was set, which would have the effect of keeping her head to wind; and on their then attempting to set the fore trysail it was found for some reason or other impossible to run it up. A cast of the lead was then ordered to be taken, and we are told that they at first got 50 fathoms. Afterwards other casts were taken until they got 24 fathoms, and then 16 fathoms; on which the captain ordered the port anchor to be dropped; and as soon as the lashings had been cast off the anchor fell overboard by the rolling of the ship, and after about 60 fathoms of the chain had run out it parted. Thereupon orders were at once given to drop the starboard anchor, and this was done; but when about 40 fathoms of chain had been paid out that also parted, and the vessel then lay a complete log upon the water. An attempt was then made to get the port life-boat out; and having raised it out of the chocks and swung it out, the forward falls were let go before the after falls, and the boat fell head downwards, and, striking against the side of the 'midship house, was stove. The after falls were then cut, and she dropped into the water, but quite useless, and with a hole in her. The vessel then continued to drift before the wind and sea, until at about five or half-past she struck some 2½ miles to the southward of the promontory of Port Dinlleyn. Immediately afterwards a sea struck her, smashing the boats on the starboard side; it then lifted the ship off the ground, and as she came down again she parted in two in the way of the bunker hatches. At about this time the master and the greater part of the crew jumped into the water to make for the land, which was about 100 fathoms off, and there then remained on board only the second officer and the second engineer, and about five or six hands. The men thereupon, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the second officer, proceeded to get out the pinnace, which was the only boat remaining; but they had hardly lowered it into the water when it capsized, and they were all thrown into the water. Soon afterwards a wave struck the ship, carrying away the foremast, and at the same time washing the second officer and the second engineer overboard. Ultimately, however, eight succeeded, with the assistance of the people on shore, in reaching the land, namely, the second officer, the third engineer, the donkey-man, an A.B., two firemen, the engineers' steward, and a stowaway, who had turned up some two hours before the vessel had struck. The vessel became a total wreck, and has been lost, together with the whole of her cargo.

Such being the facts of the case, the Board of Trade have asked us a great number of questions, not, as I understand, with the view so much of making any charges against the persons implicated, but rather for the purpose of obtaining from the Court an expression of its opinion upon all the points that have been raised in the course of this very important inquiry. And the first question which we have been asked is, "Was the "'Cyprian,' when she left Liverpool, in good and sea-"worthy condition,

"(*a*) with respect to her boats and their lowering apparatus;

"(*b*) with respect to the condition of the sails, and their sufficiency in the event of the engines breaking down;

"(*c*) with respect to the boilers and machinery;

"(*d*) with respect to her 'midships and after steering gear;

"(*e*) with respect to her hull and deck houses, and the manner in which the latter were secured to the frame;

"(*f*) with respect to her pumps."

The vessel, as I have stated, was built in 1874, and at a cost of 36,000*l*.; and although not classed at Lloyd's, she was, as we are told, qualified to be, and was, in some respects, superior to a 100 A 1 ship at Lloyd's. We are told also that she had always been properly kept up; and there is no evidence before us to shew that she was not in a good and seaworthy condition when she left Liverpool, in regard, first, to her boats and lowering apparatus; secondly, to her sails; thirdly, to her boilers and machinery; fourthly, to her steering gear both amidships and aft; fifthly, to her hull and deck houses, and the manner in which they were secured to the frame; and sixthly, in regard to her pumps, which we are told were capable, when in proper working order, of throwing no less than 2,204 gallons of water per minute. As to whether the vessel's sails were sufficient in the event of the engines breaking down, all that we can say is that she had the usual sails for a vessel of her class—sufficient to steady her in a seaway, but not sufficient to navigate her or to enable her to beat off a lee shore in the event of her engines breaking down.

The second question which we are asked is, "Was a proper and sufficient examination made, previous to her sailing, of the ship, her engines, boilers, and equipments?" On this point we have had the evidence of Mr. McLay, the owners' overlooker, and of Mr. Greig, the assistant engineer superintendent, and both these gentlemen say that they carefully surveyed and inspected the vessel previous to her departure. A list of requirements was, it seems, sent in to them after her arrival from her previous voyage on the 7th October, and we are told that all those requirements were complied with. We have therefore no reason to think that she was not properly and efficiently examined and overhauled previous to her departure on her last voyage.

The next question which we are asked is, "Were the coverings of the stokehole gratings and other deck openings sufficient in strength, and so fitted as to be easily and efficiently protected from the sea; and if so, were such fittings made use of as soon as they ought to have been?" It seems that immediately abaft the bridge house, and separated from it by a space of about 9 feet, was what has been called the engine-room deck house, which was about 18 feet wide, and had a passage on each side of about 6 feet. Originally the sides both of the bridge house and of the engine-room deck house were quite unprotected; but in the year 1875 a "half round" was carried from the covering board at the sides of the ship to the top of the deck houses, leaving however the alley-ways thus formed on each side open at the ends. The contents of the engine-room deck house were as follow:—Foremost of all was the galley; then the funnel compartment with fiddley gratings 11 feet by 4, one before the other abaft the funnel, and immediately above the forward and after stokeholes; then the donkey boiler house; then the engine-room gratings, and last of all the engineers' quarters. On the top of the engine-room deck house, and immediately over the lower fiddley gratings, were two upper fiddley gratings of the same size as those below, and standing on combings about 15 to 18 inches high; and over the engine-room gratings was the skylight fitted in the usual way with thick plate glass, protected on the outside by wires. The upper fiddley gratings had iron storm shutters composed of three pieces moving on hinges, and which in case of emergency folded over and covered the whole of the fiddley gratings; besides which there were tarpaulins to put over them, and which, as appears from the list of requirements handed in, had been supplied new for the present voyage. The lower fiddley gratings however had no covers of any kind, so that any water that might find its way into that part of the engine-room deck house, either through the upper fiddley gratings or in any other way, would necessarily go down through the lower fiddley gratings into the stokehole. Now we were told by the second mate, whose watch commenced at 4 a.m., that at that time the fiddley gratings were not covered, and that seeing that the water was going down through them, he ordered the carpenter to put the covers on; but the third engineer told us that before this, and indeed as early as 3.15. a.m., water had been coming down through the fiddley gratings in tons, but that he had not sent up on deck to ask that the covers should be put on. Whilst then we think that the coverings of the stokehole gratings were sufficient in strength, and capable of being readily put on so as efficiently to have protected the gratings from the sea, we think that they were not made use of as soon as they ought to have been.

The fourth question which we are asked is, "Was the alley-way on either side of the vessel sufficiently protected from the sea?" We were told by Mr. Gray Hill that it is not usual for the ends of the alley-ways to be closed with doors. But whether this be so or not, it is abundantly clear that in the present case they would have been of the greatest service, and would very probably have prevented this casualty. It would seem that the only way into the engine-room, the donkey boiler space and the galley, was through doors opening into these alley-ways, through which it was almost impossible to pass owing to the large bodies of water with which they were constantly filled, and which a door at each end would probably have kept out. The second mate also has told us that at about 11 o'clock he saw a rent at the bottom of the engine room house just abaft the galley door, which was some 4 feet long by 3 to 4 inches wide at the deepest part, and through which the

water would, as the alley-ways filled, pour into the compartment where the fiddley gratings were, and thus run down into the stokehole. He said that he had only an instant to look at it, for that it was dangerous to remain any time in the alley-way. Another of the witnesses, the donkey man, told us that one of the doors opening into the alley-way was hanging by only one of the hinges, leaving a gap of about 9 inches at the top. Whether then there was a rent at the bottom of the house, as the second officer says, or whether one of the doors in the alley-way was banging by one of its hinges, as the donkey-man tells us, and the water thus got into the engine-room deck-house, it is obvious that doors at the ends of the alley-ways would have been of the greatest service. We think, therefore, that the alley-ways on either side of the vessel were not sufficiently protected from the sea, and that had she had proper doors at the ends of the alley-ways to prevent the seas getting into them this casualty might not have occurred.

The fifth question which we are asked is, "Was it a proper thing to leave John Black, the third engineer, in charge of the engine-room, having regard to the fact that he held no certificate, and had only joined the ship at the commencement of the voyage in question?" It appears that this vessel had three engineers, the first and second being certificated, but the third had no certificate. It seems that it is the practice where there are three engineers on board to have three watches, each engineer taking a watch; and as the Act does not require all the engineers on board this class of vessel to be certificated, I cannot see that there is any ground for complaint that this man was allowed to keep a watch. No doubt he was very neglectful in his duty in not asking to have covers put upon the fiddley gratings when he saw, as he says he did, the water coming down through them in tons, and in allowing the water to rise up nearly on a level with the stokehole plates before calling the chief engineer, but there is no blame that we can see in having allowed him to keep a watch.

The next question which we are asked is, "What was the cause of the giving way of the tube of the starboard boiler; and was it promptly and efficiently repaired; and was it necessary to draw the fires for that purpose?" It is not possible to say what caused the tube of the starboard boiler to give way as it did. It must, however, be remembered that the boilers were the same as had been put into her originally in 1874, and being therefore seven years old the tubes would require to be looked after, and they might reasonably be expected to give way and to require repairs at any moment. No doubt it was promptly and efficiently repaired; it was, however, not necessary to draw the fires for the repair of the tube, but because it was found that the water was rapidly falling in the starboard boiler, and it was not possible to say without doing so what was the extent of the injury, especially to the after part of the boiler.

The sixth question which we are asked is, "What was the cause of there being so much water in the stokehole and engine-room?" No doubt the water at first got into the stoke hole and engine-room through the covers not having been put upon the fiddley gratings; but after these had been put on by order of the second mate, no more water could get down that way; but if there was this rent in the alley-way along the bottom of the engine-room deck house spoken to by the seeond mate, or if, as the donkeyman has told us, one of the doors in the alley-way was hanging by one of its hinges, there is quite enough to account for the quantity of water in the stokehole and engine-room seeing that the alley-ways we are told were constantly full of water.

The seventh question which we are asked is, "Was every effort made to keep up steam in the port boiler, and to get the starboard boiler into working order again?" We think that every effort was made to keep up steam in the port boiler, and to get the starboard boiler into working order again; but the difficulties against which they had to contend were very great, owing to the quantity of water in the stokehole, it being, we are told, some 2 or 3 feet above the stokehole plates, making it extremely difficult for the firemen to stand there.

The eighth question which we are asked is, "What was the cause of the giving way of the 'midships, and subsequently the after steering gear?" The cause of the giving way of the 'midship steering gear was, no doubt, the great strain which there had been upon the rods which connected it with the rudder head aft, owing to the helm having had to be kept for so many hours hard-a-port. The breaking too of the after steering gear was owing to a portion of the link of the chain which connected the rods with the quadrant having got under the cog-wheel and broken it in half. In neither case, however, does it appear to us that blame attaches to any one. We were told that they had been very carefully overhauled before the vessel left, and that the chains had been passed through the fire to detect any defects which might escape an external examination.

The ninth question which we are asked is, "Was the after wheel promptly and properly connected, and was every effort made to keep the ship under command?" The after wheel appears to us to have been promptly and properly connected, and when that carried away relieving tackles were at once put on the tiller to get the ship under command; and we are told that they held until the vessel went ashore.

The tenth question which we are asked is, "What was the cause of the water rising to such an extent as to put out the boiler fires, and was every effort made to keep the water under; and what was the cause of the choking of the pumps?" The pumps no doubt became choked by the coal and the ashes that had been raked out of the starboard furnaces being washed off the stoke hole plates into the bilges, and as the starboard fires were out, and only a small amount of steam given off, the pumps would certainly not throw as much water as they would do when in proper working order. The fault in the first place was in the third engineer allowing the water to rise almost to a level with the stoke hole plates before calling the chief engineer, but after that the engineers seem to have done all they could to keep the water under. It does, however, seem to be a matter of regret that the crew were not sooner sent into the engine room to bale the water out. The evidence is that the fires were out between 10 and 11 a.m.; but it was not until about one o'clock that the crew were sent into the stokehole to bale.

The eleventh question which we are asked is, "Was proper sail set, and as soon as it ought to have been done, after the fires were put out, and was a signal of distress hoisted?" I think there can be no doubt that a signal of distress was hoisted; and, though it may not have been seen from the shore, we have the evidence of the third engineer that he put it up by the master's orders, and of one of the A.B.'s that he afterwards went up when one of the ends had got adrift and secured it. Then, as to the sails, we are disposed to think that the second mate, who has given his evidence in a very creditable and straightforward way, gave very good advice when he recommended that an attempt should be made to set some of the head sails, with a view, if possible, of getting into Porth Dinlleyn. It is quite possible, as the mate has told us, that they might not have been able to set them, and even if they had, it is not certain that the vessel would have answered her helm and paid off before the wind, at the same time we think the effort should have been made, for had they succeeded in getting into Porth Dinlleyn roads, where we are told there are 4½ fathoms of water at low spring tides, it is possible that she might have been able to ride out the gale; and at any rate it would have given the men a better chance of saving their lives, instead of letting the ship drive on shore, wherever the wind and waves might take her; and we do not know why it was not attempted.

The twelfth question which we are asked is, "Were the anchors and chains ready for use, and what was the cause of both anchors being lost?" The reason why the port cable broke was probably because of a kink having been formed in the chain locker. It was suggested that the chain had run out owing to its not being secured in the locker, but there is not a particle of evidence to prove this; on the contrary, the second mate told us that to the best of his belief only 60 out of the 135 fathoms of which the chain consisted went overboard, and no one could know better than he, seeing that he was standing by the compressor. As regards the starboard chain, it is proved that it parted after only about 40 fathoms had been run out and forward of the windlass; and no doubt it was the violence of the gale which caused it to break.

The thirteenth question which we are asked is, "Were proper measures taken to get the boats out, and what was the cause of the port lifeboat being broken, and was there a sufficient supply of life belts and life buoys on board?" The port lifeboat appears to have been lifted out of the chocks and to have been properly swung out, and whether the forward fall was let go before the after fall, which would most likely jam the latter, or whether it was that the donkey man and engineers' steward, who were at the after falls, did not

work them properly, we have no reason to suppose that it was owing to any defect in the gear that the boat was not properly lowered. Once with its bows downwards it would swing with the vessel as it rolled, and would almost inevitably be stove. As regards the life belts and life buoys, it would seem that there were 22 life belts and six life buoys put on board the vessel, or 28 in all, and the crew consisted of only 27 hands. Very few vessels, I should have thought, go to sea with more life belts or life buoys than there are persons on board. And it has been proved that there was more than a sufficient supply, for some of the persons on board, and amongst others the captain, even when they had a chance of having one, preferred to be without it; and the second mate has told us that he believes his life was endangered by having put on one, for that he was taken back again four times by the receding wave, the belt making him so light as to prevent him getting a firm grip of the shore.

The fourteenth question which we are asked is, "Was the vessel navigated with proper and seamanlike care, and was every available means taken by the master and officers to save the ship and prevent loss of life?" We think that the third engineer is to blame for not having when he saw, as he says, the water coming down the fiddley gratings, sent to tell the officer on deck thereof and asked to have the covers put on, and for not having, when the water was rising in the stokehole, sent to call the chief engineer; that, probably, was the primary cause of the loss of this vessel. We think also that the master is to blame for not having, when he was called by the second officer at about five o'clock, and after he had gone down into the engine-room and seen the state of affairs there, at once taken steps to ascertain the cause of the water coming in and to stop it; instead of which he merely told the second officer that there was something wrong in the engine-room, which would soon be remedied, and then turned into the chart-room and lay down. We think also that he is to blame for not having made an effort to get into Porth Dinlleyn, even though that effort might not have proved successful. The poor man, however, is not here to answer for his conduct; and not knowing what explanation he might have to offer, we are unwilling to press them too strongly against him.

The fifteenth question which we are asked is, "Is there any foundation for the allegation of drunkenness made against (1) the master, (2) the mate?" Evidence has been given by a number of witnesses, by persons who have known them for years, and who have associated with them, and served with them, that both the master and the mate were men of high character and exceptionally sober, seldom if ever drinking any fermented liquors. The men, too, who were on board with them, and who speak to their having been under the influence of liquor, all say that they never on any previous occasion saw them in such a state. It is impossible to disregard such evidence. On the other hand, whilst all speak of the mate as having been intoxicated, four out of the eight who were saved say that the master was under the influence of drink, three others are not prepared to say either one thing or the other, and one witness, the second mate, whose evidence in the opinion of the Court is most entitled to credit, has told us that in his opinion the master was not under the influence of drink, but that he was excited. Taking all these circumstances into consideration, and looking to the very high character which the master has previously borne, we are disposed to take the more lenient view of the case, and to hold that, although he was in a state of great excitement, he was not under the influence of drink, and that the men mistook his excitement for the effect of drink. We agree with Mr. Kennedy in thinking that there has been no conspiracy on the part of the men who have sworn to his having been intoxicated, but that they were mistaken. As regards the mate, we much fear, notwithstanding the high character that has been given him for general sobriety, that we have no option but to say that he was intoxicated at a time when the vessel and the lives of all on board were in imminent peril. Mr. Gray Hill has asked us to make all due allowance for the difficult circumstances in which he was placed, the exceptional character of the weather, and his having been exposed for so many hours to so frightful a gale. Possibly too it may have been that, being generally an extremely sober man, and unaccustomed to the use of spirits, a very small quantity might have affected him more than it would another man. Whilst, therefore, we are of opinion that one of the greatest offences which an officer can commit is to be intoxicated when the ship and the lives of those on board are in danger, the mate is not here to answer for his misconduct, and we are therefore disposed to make every allowance for him under the circumstances.

The sixteenth question which we are asked is, "Was proper discipline maintained on board the vessel up to the time of her striking?" There certainly seems to have been some lack of proper discipline on board. Whether this was owing to the refractory conduct of the crew, or to the condition of the mate, or to the apparent conflict between the mate and the master, it is difficult to say; but there was not that discipline on board this vessel which there ought to have been.

The seventeenth question is, "Was every possible effort made by those on shore to render assistance and to save life, (1) as regards the lifeboat, (2) as regards the rocket apparatus?" It seems that, in the afternoon of the day on which the "Cyprian" went ashore, the lifeboat at Porth Dinlleyn had gone out, in answer to signals from a small steam tug which was lying in the Roads, and had rescued her crew of four hands. We are told that the crew of the lifeboat on that occasion were 14 in number, one short of their proper number, and that of these eight were almost useless. We are also told that on their return the men separated and went to their homes, and that it would have been impossible, in so thinly populated a neighbourhood, to have got together another crew to go out to the "Cyprian," and that, even if they had been got together, such was the violence of the gale at the time that no boat could have lived in it. As regards, too, the men charged with the rocket apparatus, we think that they did everything that it was in their power to do. It was very difficult to know where the vessel would come ashore; and, as the keeper of the apparatus has said, it is not as though they had a road along the beach by which they could have followed the ship as she drifted towards the south, but they had to follow the road inland; and having then taken a bye-road, which led them down to the beach, where they thought she would come ashore, they found that she had drifted past it, and they had then to retrace their steps into the main road, and follow her further down. We do not think, therefore, that the people in charge of the rocket apparatus are to blame for not having arrived on the spot where the vessel struck before she got there, and that, even had they done so, they could have been of no service, as the vessel broke up, and the people jumped or were washed overboard within a very short time after she struck.

The last question which we are asked is, "Did the coxswain of the lifeboat take proper measures to muster a crew, and is the Porth Dinlleyn lifeboat, in the opinion of the Court, provided with a sufficient number of efficient hands to make it available when required?" The coxswain of the lifeboat has told us that he had on that day only three charges of gunpowder in his possession, and that they were all expended in summoning the crew to go off to the assistance of the small steamer. But even had he had any amount of powder, we doubt very much whether it would have been possible to have summoned a crew to have gone out to the assistance of this vessel. As to whether the Porth Dinlleyn lifeboat is provided with a sufficient number of efficient hands to make it available when required, we are told that she has a coxswain, who receives 8*l.* a year, and an assistant coxswain, who received 2*l.* a year, and that she depends for the rest of her crew upon any persons whom they can pick up at the moment, and that they have frequently to take shoemakers and carpenters. In a neighbourhood like this so sparsely populated, where there are no fishermen and where, although some of the inhabitants are seafaring men, they are frequently away in vessels, it seems impossible, unless you have a body of men on regular pay always at hand, to find an adequate crew to go out to the assistance of a vessel in distress when required. We think, however, that in the present case even if they had had the best crew in the world, it would not have been possible, with such a gale as was then blowing, to have gone out, and we do not think, therefore, that any blame attaches to the people for not having done so.

The Court was not asked to make any order as to costs.

(Signed) H. C. Rothery,
Wreck Commissioner.

We concur.

(Signed) J. Moresby,
John S. Castle,
J. H. Hallett,
} Assessors.