

(1) As stated on Page 10, of the foregoing report, the Chief Officer's Log Book, (Fair Copy), was lost when abandoning ship.

When the Log Book was called for, following the survey held on "PYIDAWTHA" at Kyaukpyu on 8th May, the entries after 0400 hours on 6th May had not been made. These were written in after the Captain and Chief Officer had returned to Rangoon on 8th May. The Log Book (Scrap) was delivered to my Office on 9th May about 1100 hours - written up as per extracts attached to Survey Report - but unsigned. The next time I saw the Log Book was in the Offices of the Union of Burma Shipping Board on May 17th when it was observed that the Captain had signed on each page. When it was produced to Court, however, each page was signed also by the Chief Officer.

It is my opinion that the entries made in the Chief Officer's Log Book presented to Court are not a true record of Courses set and steered and positions obtained prior to the stranding.

(2) In answer to Question 2(b), Page 3, of foregoing report, Captain Keating stated that from "0440 hours to 0508 hours Course was $115^{\circ}T$." Again in answer to Question 4, Page 4, Captain Keating repeated this by stating "0440 hours Altered Course to $115^{\circ}T$." Referring to the attached extracts from the Chief Officer's Log Book, Sheet No.2 (numbered for convenience), it will be noted that the following entry has been made, "0440 hours Raised Reliance Shoal Buoy, A/C $115^{\circ}T$"

These statements all agree and were later confirmed by the Chief Officer who also stated in answer to Question 6, Page 10, that the Course was " $115^{\circ}T$ ". However, also in answer to Question 4, Page 4, Captain Keating stated that "Set allowed 15° ". As the direction of set during Flood Tide is to the North this 15° was obviously to the right. On a Course of $115^{\circ}T$ this should have meant steering 130° without allowing Compass Error. It was established to the satisfaction of the Court that the course steered was 115° - see Page 14, answer to Question 1 (b) by the Chief Officer.

According to the Chief Officer's Log Book (Extract Sheet No.2) the Compass Error on a heading of 100° was nil - it can safely be assumed that it was also nil on a heading of 115° . Therefore steering 115° , allowing $15^{\circ}R$ for set gives a True Course of 100° .

By referring to Admiralty Chart No.831 and plotting the stated position at 0440 hours as given in answer to Question 3, Page 4, it will be seen that a true course of $100^{\circ}T$ from that position passes over North Shoal.

(3) In answer to Question 1(c), Page 15, the Chief Officer stated "I believe the difference between the two compasses was 2° - the Steering Compass being 2° plus".

Again in answer to Question 6, Page 15, it was re-affirmed that the Steering Compass was 2° Plus.

Reference to Log Book (Extract Sheet Nos.1 & 2), it will be seen that the Steering Compass was 2° Minus or Left.



The Quartermaster, however, stated that before stranding he was steering 120° - Question 3, Page 11. This does not agree with the Chief Officer's answer to Question 6, Page 15, in which he stated that the course by Steering Compass was 117°.

(4) While there are numerous other points in the answers of both the Captain and the Chief Officer on which comments could be made, it is considered that the above will suffice to bear out the opinion of the undersigned that the Courses and Positions referred to were compiled "after the event" but were not sufficiently carefully thought out or rehearsed to be thoroughly convincing.

It is the private opinion of the undersigned that, at least from 0410 hours on May 6th, the vessel was being "piloted" and not "navigated", in other words, no bearings were being taken or charted. This, of course, is quite normal procedure for Coastal vessels, whose Masters generally are familiar with the Harbour Entrance, etc. used frequently by them.

Reference is drawn to the Chief Officer's answer to Question No.16, Page 16, in which he stated that he was "conning the vessel". One does not generally "con" a vessel when she has been on a steady course for about 28 minutes. This answer, coupled with the answer given to Question 14, Page 16, and the fact that the rudder was subsequent to the stranding found to be in the "hard at port" position (although the Captain stated privately that no helm orders were given before or after stranding) gives rise to the impression that just immediately prior to the stranding it was realised that the vessel was running into danger.

(5) In the opinion of the undersigned, the stranding of the "FYIDAWTHA" was due to gross negligence in the navigation of that vessel by both Captain Keating and Mr. Cant, Chief Officer.

In conclusion, the undersigned is of the opinion that the Union of Burma Shipping Board, Owners of S.S. "FYIDAWTHA", were in no way to blame, or partly to blame, for the stranding and had no part in that incident.

As a matter of interest, it is worth recording that on the final day of the Enquiry, the Assessors intimated their willingness to give their verdict then. The District Magistrate, however, stated that before making the findings public knowledge he would have to consult with the Minister, presumably the Minister of Transport & Communications. On the day that the verdict was eventually made known to the public, the District Magistrate told two of the Assessors, that the Government had advised him that they did not want a severe verdict in this case, but that some token sentence should be made.

Thomas Campbell
.....
SURVEYOR TO LLOYD'S REGISTER.



© 2020

Lloyd's Register
Foundation