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The 'Florizel' Enquiry.

(Wednesday's Proceedings.)

CAPT. JAMES' CAREER.

Chief Officer William James, sworn and on being examined by Mr. Dunlop, said: I was first officer on the Florizel on her last voyage. I am a master mariner. My certificate is No. 171. I have been in her on different occasions since 1911. I went to sea when 17 years old. In Dec. 1900 I came out to Newfoundland. I am a native of Greenwich, Scotland. I am 33 years of age. I was sent out by Baine, Johnston & Co., and I then served my apprenticeship on the Lathika, which lasted 5 years and 3 months. I passed as ordinary mate and got my certificate in 1906. I then went to sea in the s.s. Stord, owned by Revillon Bros., which voyage lasted a little over a month. I went to Hudson Bay and back as chief officer. I next sailed as mate in the Comestine, owned by A. Goodridge & Son; from her I went to the Corolla as mate. I next joined the Adventure as chief officer in 1905. I remained on her for one and a half years. I was at the ice in her. She is an ice-breaker. She had a cut-away bow and was specially strengthened. I had a lot of experience in slob ice in her. I was sometime in Goodridge's Bella Rose, and the Attila owned by Baine Johnston. I went to sea in the s.s. Aurora to London when she was sold. I went as chief officer. I joined the Red Cross Line and came out in the s.s. Stephano when she was new. I had experience in her in ice coming from Halifax and New York. I was appointed as third officer in 1911 to the Florizel. I was next transferred to the Rosalind. I was in her nine months, till navigation closed on the St. Lawrence. I was again transferred to the Stephano as 3rd officer but after one trip I was again transferred to the Rosalind and remained on her till she was sold in 1912. I was again sent back to the Florizel as third officer and remained on her till 1914. I was then transferred as second on the Stephano and was on her till she was torpedoed in October, 1916. I was put in charge of the Neptune in Dec., 1916 for one voyage. In February, 1917 I was in charge of her till I was transferred to the Florizel on her last trip. The Neptune and Ranger were wooden ice-breaking ships. I had experience in the ice with the Neptune.

HIS LAST VOYAGE.

I was on watch at 4 o'clock till 8 p.m. on Feb. 23rd. I was off watch at 8 till 4 o'clock in the morning. I was on watch when she left the harbor. The Captain and 3rd Officer came on the bridge. It was mild weather, soft and very light S.W. wind blowing. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon (Feb. 23rd), the glass stood at 29.90. I didn't notice any storm signals. We left the wharf at 7.30

yards of ice to know what the ship's speed is. I can observe that by the ice rubbing by the side of the ship. I did not take any notice of the vibrations of the engines.

At 4 o'clock a fairly strong breeze was blowing from East to S.E. with sleet. There was a good swell from the S.E. We just ran clear of the ice at 4 o'clock. We could see quite a distance about half or three quarters of a mile. I would see a light at that distance. I thought she was doing 9 knots or probably more. The log was cast at 4.30 by the Captain's orders. (The orders were given to the men on the lookout.) They mistook what the Captain said and cast the lead. The log was cast immediately the men reported casting the lead. That was between 5 to 7 minutes after. They reported 90 fathoms of wire. The Captain sent them right away to put the log over. It was 4.43 exactly, I took the time.

There were two quartermasters on the lookout—out on the bridge with me at that time. Messrs. Dooley and Gover. Molloy was at the wheel. Captain Martin came on the bridge at 4.10 from the chart room. The course was W.S.W. About 4.45 the Captain altered her course to W. by S. That was the only change during my watch. She was W. by S. when she struck, which was about 4.50, as close as I can go to the exact time. When nearing the place she struck she was gathering speed all the time on account of her being kept away. The telegraph showed full speed.

I have been on the Florizel when she was fitted with her summer and winter propellers. Her speed was about the same with each. I do not know what relations there is between the screw and the speed. I haven't the least idea of revolutions at all. There was no alterations in the weather conditions between 4 and 4.50. I was looking out ahead when she struck. I did see something white which I took to be ice. I heard no sound or anything to indicate we were near the land. At 4 o'clock from the conversation I had with Captain Martin I concluded we were on the N.E. end of Cape Ballard Bank.

AFTER SHE STRUCK.

The ship struck about 4.50, the Captain was on the bridge when we went ashore. The Captain rang full speed astern which was answered by the engine room. The Captain gave orders to get the boats ready and for everyone to get on lifebelts. The seas had smashed away everything, piling up wreckage and sweeping away some of the passengers and crew. It was not long before all the boats were gone. It was a case of holding on as best we could. We gave some assistance to those who came along and helped on the bridge. No place was safe, and many people who were holding on to the rails dropped from exposure while others died on the ship's deck. The sea came so frequently that you could not be of any assistance.

We helped Captain Kean and some others on the bridge. The bridge broke clear just at dawn. I managed to get towards the fiddley and remained there till we were taken off. I saw quite a number of passengers and crew, over 30, on the smoking room deck; they were washed away. It was too dark to see if they had life belts on. Sea after sea, you would see some of them going. I saw them go as I stood underneath the bridge. The last view when the smoking room house smashed away about 1 1/2 hours after she struck. Mr. Munn was among the last on the smoking room deck to be swept away. The smoking room deck sunk or collapsed. I was about the boats for ten minutes when they were carried away. The bridge went shortly after the smoking room. In the wheel house, chart room and on the bridge were Capt. Joe Kean, Major Sullivan, Mr. King, 2nd officer, 3rd Officer Jackman, James Miller, Jack Parsons, Charlie Snow and Molloy. There were others whom I did not know. Mr. Munn was the only one I was sure of in any other part of the ship; he was dressed in a long dressing gown which was tied in the middle. There was no confusion among the crew, they went about their duty till it was impossible to do any more. I saw some rockets fired from ashore. A rocket landed about 60 or 80 feet from the starboard side of ship, and I think there was one landed on the bow of the ship. I was on top of the fiddley casing on Sunday night or early Monday morning. The seas that struck the wheel house pushed me over it. I scrambled over the wreckage and got to the fiddley between seas.

When I got there I found three Spanish firemen and a long fellow like Moore, the cook, or steward or something like that. A sea took seaman Balle overboard. Another man hid in the ventilator. I then got down and went in below. The engine rooms and all were full of water.

Between 8 and 4 on Sunday afternoon I saw a dory coming down from the N.E., they did not get away near us. Just about dark two steamers came up the shore. It was well on in the night when I heard a whistle. It was sounding the Morse code. I could understand it. It asked how many were alive on board. One of the Marconi operators answered with a flashlight and signalled about 40 alive. Early in the morning two boats from the Prospero came alongside. One boat turned over. They had to abandon the attempt as the sea was too rough. The Home and

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Gordon C. were the first to reach the scene.

(Second officer James at this juncture described the heroic rescue work of those who came to their assistance.)

Three Spanish firemen died one after the other. One Spanish fireman was kept alive by breathing on him and wrapping him in canvas. James Dwyer, waiter; Ralph Burnham and I remained in the fiddley till we were taken off. Capt. Martin and others came in the fiddley. Capt. Martin was considering the advisability of swimming ashore. He left the Marconi room accompanied by Seaman Dooley and went forward.

(To Commander MacDermott).—I haven't the least idea how she came ashore. By the course she was steering it would take her eight or nine miles off the land. I had never known the current from N.N.W. to be reversed.

This concluded the examination by the Crown, and to-morrow Chief Officer James will be cross-examined by Messrs. Gibbs, Winter and Warren.

Noah Dauphine testified as follows: I am a native of Halifax County, N.S. I was a first-class passenger on the Florizel. My state room was opposite the Purser's office. It was No. 29. I was in bed at the time of the accident. I heard her strike. My room mate, Capt. Bellevue, came in and told me she was ashore. The ship was rolling considerably. I very seldom get seasick. Capt. Bellevue went outside on account of his bunk having got wet owing to a leaky port. I dressed myself, all except my shoes. I came along the social hall to the companion way and went aft on the port side to the smoking room. The lights were out. There was no disorder. I got through the crowd and got on top of the smoking room deck. There

were quite a few there. I saw Capt. Bellevue there and by sight I knew Mr. Munn. There were about 30 or 40 people there. I was there about half an hour. I saw a number washed overboard. There was only one man standing alive when I left the smoking room. It was Mr. Munn. There were several bodies lying around. I watched a moderate time and made my way to the top of the fiddley. I was alone. I made another run to the captain's quarters on the bridge. I got half way up the ladder. I stayed there till the wheel house collapsed, about 15 minutes. In company with Charlie Snow, I made another run back to the fiddley. Then I caught a wire and crawled into the ventilator. I was clear of the sea and did not get any water on me while there. I remained there till dark. Then I came down and got in the Marconi room. I saw Chief Officer James and another man standing in front of the funnel. At the time there were 37 in the Marconi room. No one was refused admission to the Marconi room. Major Sullivan came in after I got there. I saw a rocket come from the shore. I was taken off in the second boat.

(Cross-examined by Mr. Warren).—When I left the smoking room deck Mr. Munn was the only man on his feet. He was gripping the rails with his hands, about midships on the port side. I laid my hand on his shoulder and said, "Mr. Munn, it is time to get forward." He made no answer. I saw his face. I think he was alive. He had been there before daylight. When I got forward I did not look aft for some time. When I did look the smoking room was gone. I put on all my clothes except my boots. The seas were coming through the doors of the social hall, through the port door. There was no jam when I got to the smoking room—stairs. The



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S. MILLEY.

lights were in the social hall when I arrived there. I was among the first to reach the smoking room deck. There were women and children in the lee of the smoking room. I heard women crying. There were also women on the top of the smoking room. Snow was standing in the lee of the captain's quarters when I first saw him. Mr. Dauphine was then given permission to return to his home.

(Thursday's Proceedings.)
Chief Officer James, cross-examined by Mr. Gibbs.—I am a master mariner. I got my mate's certificate in 1912. I was going to sea since 1900. I noticed the glass about 4 o'clock on Saturday afternoon. The reading was 29.90. It indicated that the wind would be from the N.E. within 24 hours. It did not indicate bad weather. I examined hatches, etc., and reported everything all right to the captain. I then went to my room. I met the second officer, Capt. Kean and Mr. Munn on deck. Capt. Kean agreed with me that the wind would

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be strong from the N.E., about morning, thus giving us a fair time along to Halifax. I was called at 3.45. I dressed and went on the bridge. Second officer Mr. King was in charge. Two quartermasters were on the bridge. Seaman Molloy was at the wheel. I saw the captain about ten minutes after he came from the Chart Room. He was fully dressed. Mr. King went into the Chart Room to enter up his abstract log book. Capt. Martin mentioned how he had been steering during the night. I thought the course we were steering would take us well off Cape Ballard. He told me the reason why he steered the course was that he did not like going near the Bantams. He altered the course about 4.40. After that I noticed slob ice ahead. He said "What is that?" I said "It looks like ice." I examined it through the glasses and so did he. I took the time when the log was cast. It was 4.43. I took the time for the purpose of entering up the mate's log book. It was about 10 minutes after entering it in the log book that she struck. When she struck I said to the captain she is ashore. No one came on deck immediately after she struck. The purser was on deck; the captain said something to him about getting the boats and life belts out. About 4 o'clock I looked over the side of the ship to see what speed she was doing. She was then doing 9 knots or better. I have been in the Stephano as chief, second and third officer. She would steer S.E. 1/2 S. on leaving the Narrows, and about 1 1/2 miles off Cape Spear S.W. 1/2 S. Capt. Smith would go 2 to 2 1/2 miles off Cape Spear in foggy weather and continue that till we got abeam of Cape Ballard, generally 3 to 4 miles off. Foggy weather we would still keep in sound of the fog horn. The sky was dark and overcast at 4 o'clock. I

(Continued on 7th page.)

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