

LOSS OF THE STEAMER *Lady Head*.

This vessel was totally wrecked on the 10th of August last, at Point Jaune, on the south coast of the River St. Lawrence. She had been previously run ashore near Seven Islands Bay, on the north coast, and sustained serious damage, besides having, on two other occasions, narrowly escaped shipwreck. The *Lady Head* was an iron vessel of about 300 tons, and was built in 1857, at a cost of \$68,000. Excepting the expense of running her, she was well adapted to the service. There was a crew on board of 26 men, including a Sailing Master, first and second Mates, under command of Napoleon Lavoie, Esq., as Stipendiary Magistrate. The following is the report of the inquiry into her loss, made by direction of this Department, before the Quebec Harbour Commissioners:—

QUEBEC, 16th October, 1878.

Pursuant to an Order in Council dated Government House, Ottawa, 3rd September, 1878, appointing the Harbour Commissioners of Quebec, a Court or Tribunal to hold a formal investigation into the wreck of the Steamship "*Lady Head*," in accordance with the provisions of the 4th Section of the Canadian Act 37 Vic., Cap. 39 and the 5th Section Act 32-3 Vic., Cap. 38, a quorum of the members of the Quebec Harbour Commissioners met at their office Custom House, City of Quebec, 24th September, 1878 and having the oath prescribed by law opened the investigation into the loss of the Steamship "*Lady Head*," continued it 25th and 30th of same month, and concluded on 14th instant, witnesses being Napoleon Lavoie, Fishery Officer; Cyprien Morin, Sailing Master; Achille Boucher, 1st Officer; Nazaire Deroy, 2nd Officer; Philippe Fraser, Sailor and L. A. Blanchet, Clerk in Marine and Fisheries Department, Quebec.

The Steamship "*Lady Head*," registered tonnage two hundred and eighty-three, owned by the Government of the Dominion of Canada for protection of the Fisheries, sailed from Ellis Bay, Anticosti, near the West Point Light at 7.35 p.m., 9th of Aug., weather fine and calm. At about 10.30 p.m., it became overcast and hazy, and a few minutes after midnight, fog set in, which momentarily increased in density, till one a.m., when engines were slowed; at about 1.30 the lookout man called out land ahead, the engines were stopped and reversed, but the ship immediately took the ground and remained fast on what was afterwards ascertained to be Point Jaune, eight miles west of Fox River, pumps, men and material were obtained in due course, every exertion was made to save her, but without avail, and she became a total wreck.

The "*Lady Head*" had a crew of 26 hands all told, was commanded by Napoleon Lavoie, Fishery Officer, who held his appointment direct from the Marine and Fisheries Department, Ottawa, and by same authority he selected officers and crew. No articles were signed, and the legal means of enforcing discipline on board was thus wanting. Commander Lavoie appointed Cyprien Morin, who held second-class certificate, as master to navigate the vessel; Achille Boucher as first mate, Nazaire Deroy second mate, neither of whom held certificates, and in event of the sailing master being off duty from sickness or otherwise, there was no one on board who could pretend to navigate the vessel with safety.

The Commander seems to have occupied a peculiar position, he only commanded in Port, and the sailing master had charge at other times; in this way, there was a divided authority, which was subversive of discipline.

On the night in question the 9th of August, Boucher the first mate went on duty at eight o'clock, off West Point Light, and the sailing master gave him the course to make Cape Rosier Light; in his evidence the sailing master states he had no confidence in the accuracy of his first or second mate, yet on this short voyage from Anticosti to Gaspé, he went below about 9.30 p.m., and did not return to the deck till 12.20 a.m., at which time the weather was very foggy, and on going on the bridge, where second mate was in charge, having relieved first mate at midnight; he found the