

## THE OFFICIAL INQUIRY.

MR. McDONALD, in opening the Court, said that the inquiry was to be held under the thirty-eighth chapter of the Dominion Acts of 1865, and would have the force of an English Board of Trade Inquiry. He had not received a commission for the court, but he had received an official telegram stating that it was on its way, and if all parties would consent, he would go on at once and rely on the commission being received in good time.

MR. RITCHIE, for the Captain, consented.

MR. BLANCHARD said that unless there was a full and unequivocal consent he would object to going on. It might appear when the commission was received that there were special instructions which would require us to begin again.

All the parties consented, and Captain James A. Williams was called, sworn, and read a statement.

In reply to questions by his counsel, he added:—I was on the bridge up to 20 minutes past 12. Up to midnight it was brilliant starlight; after that there was occasional sight of the stars. When I left the bridge I went in the chart-room, thirty feet abaft the bridge, on the upper deck, within easy call of the officer on deck. I got up at 2 o'clock, looked into the wheel-house, and then lay down for an alarm. In making my calculations I estimated her speed to be 11 knots; she had increased gradually from  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 12 knots; the third officer reported that she had run 122 miles at 12 o'clock; that agreed with my calculations. I expected the ship at 3 o'clock would be 18 or 20 miles south of Sambro, and intended to lay by until daylight. I had not my clothes off at all. I had every reason to put confidence in the second officer. He had made two voyages in the ship. I had always found him a steady, sober man. The bridge was 36 feet above the level of the sea. I knew I was approaching shore. The clearness of the night and the certainty of seeing the light were my only reasons for not sounding. I am now satisfied that when I went into the chart-room I was mistaken in the locality of the ship. She must have been further northward and westward than I thought. I knew the coast was an iron-bound and dangerous one, though I had never been on it. [Here the Captain took a chart and explained the position of the ship.] I would not have got into forty-five fathoms of water until I was thirteen or fourteen miles south of Sambro, where I should stop the ship. If I had been sounding regularly from 12 to 3 o'clock, I would have been on deck, and the ship would not have gone ashore. There were three quartermasters and the second and fourth officers on deck. It was my second voyage to America in that ship.

*Cross-examined by Mr. Blanchard.*—I had the latitude by observation and by chronometer when I bore up for Halifax. The charts have all been lost. The ship increased her speed after I bore up for Halifax, because we were not then so anxious to economize coal. The speed at twelve o'clock was about twelve knots. I reckoned then we were forty-eight miles off Sambro, then bearing north, five degrees east. I did not shift the course. I considered we would pass five miles east of Sambro ledges. I had never before brought ships into Halifax, or been on this coast. The third officer had been in the harbor twice. None of the other officers had ever been here. I did not use the lead at all in coming to