

THRILLING STORY OF WRECK OF THE "CITY OF SYDNEY."

Ship Was Out of Her Course When she Piled Up on the Shag Rocks Near the Entrance to Halifax.

CAPT. MACDONALD REFUSE TO EXPLAIN THIS FACT.

Lifeboats Were All Ready to Lower When Ship Struck—No Delay in Getting Passengers Off.

Mr. Lesch, daughter of Mr. L. Taylor, wharfinger, at Job Brothers & Co.'s southside premises, one of the saloon passengers on the City of Sydney when she was lost, arrived by yesterday's express. She kindly furnished The Daily Mail with the following story of the loss, taken from the Halifax Chronicle of the eighteenth inst.:

Captain MacDonald, master of the Black Diamond liner City of Sydney, which was abandoned on the Sambro Ledges yesterday afternoon and was probably a total loss, was interviewed by a Morning Chronicle reporter at the Acadia Hotel. He refused to make any definite statement as to how his ship happened to be so far off her course as to strike Shag Rocks, five miles to the westward of the lightship "Halifax," the mark for which all ships steer when approaching the harbor from the southwest. He said, however, that the passage up from New York from Sunday noon when the ship cleared from the American coast, had been made in immense fog, and that when nearing Nova Scotia the denseness of the fog was accentuated. When asked as to the value of soundings of the Sambro Ledges and whether there were any currents at the time, he preferred to make no answer. His attitude was to give out no statement until the official enquiry, which will be held in a short time.

Lifeboats Ready.

Captain MacDonald says that almost immediately after the ship struck, the six lifeboats which she carried, were swung out on the davits, ready to be lowered, and that there was no delay when the passengers were being transferred from the stranded ship to the steamer Rosemary.

It has been ascertained that the bombs on Sambro Island were fired at regular intervals during Monday night and yesterday morning and that the Chebucto fog whistle was in full blast. Cases have been known, however, on the Nova Scotia coast, when steamers passing close to powerful fog signals and bombs, have been unable to clear them owing to peculiar conditions.

The commander of the City of Sydney stated last evening that there was little or no wind when the ship went ashore and that the swell was not very heavy at the time.

Going Dead Slow.

George Parsons, a passenger on the City of Sydney, who was on deck when she stranded, said that the ship was going dead slow and the shock was not severe. He had a premonition that the ship was in danger of some sort and about an hour before he left his berth, donned his clothes and went on deck. Only a short time before the ship piled up on Shag Rock, the leadman, according to Mr. Parsons, sounded in seventy fathoms.

It is the general belief of local shipping men that the City of Sydney will remain but a short time in her present exposed position. All efforts to save her cargo have so far failed and the prospects are for an easterly blow, so that the valuable goods in the ship's hold will probably be lost.

The steamer Cabot, one of the steamers which sailed from Halifax yesterday morning by the assistance of the City of Sydney, and owned by the Dominion Coal Co., the owners of the abandoned steamer, sailed yesterday afternoon from the scene of the wreck for the eastward on her regular service in the coal carrying trade.

At Scene of Wreck

A veritable flotilla of steamers, tugs, schooners, lifeboats and dories groped around the Sambro Ledges yesterday in an effort to save some of the ship's cargo. The dories, manned by coast fishermen, were the only successful ones, as the larger craft could not approach the steamer on account of the heavy swell which increased throughout the afternoon. The wrecking steamer Bridgewater, owned by C. Brister & Son, was the only steamer that remained on the scene overnight. All the other steamers either came back to port or proceeded on their voyages along the coast. The Government steamers Montmagny and J. L. Nelson, the tugs Togo and Scotsman, and the Furness steamer Swansea Trader, all returned yesterday. The Furness boat was the last to return.

She sailed from Halifax late in the forenoon in command of Captain

Harrison for Sambro, and passed some of the other ships on the way out. At one o'clock she found the City of Sydney, but was unable to come alongside. At three o'clock the swell became heavier and gradually increased throughout the afternoon, and when the Trader left at five o'clock, the City of Sydney was pounding her bottom out on the rocks. At that time the Bridgewater was anchored about a mile away from the wreck, and it is believed that she will stay by her all night.

Bad Position.

The City of Sydney was then in a bad position. The water was level with her after hatches. The heavy surge was continually lifting her and grounding her hull. The engines had

been raised several feet as a result of this. Shag Rock, on which the steamer struck, is a fairly large rock, above water at high tide, and situated about half a mile to the southwest of Sambro Island. The steamer lies across the outer edge of the rock and is pointing southeast.

It is understood that the fishermen of Sambro and vicinity have received permission to save all they can from the holds of the steamer, all the freight saved to be taken to a common depository in charge of a man appointed at Sambro. The goods saved will be marked with the name of the salvor and in due time each man will receive his percentage. It is understood that the cargo of the steamer includes oil, pork, beef and other provisions. She is fully loaded.

CITY OF SYDNEY RAN ASHORE IN DENSE FOG.

Fleet of Vessels Immediately Rushed to the Rescue of the Stranded Steamer.

WIRELESS PROVES VALUE IN BRINGING ASSISTANCE.

Good Order Maintained Amongst the Passengers—Most of Cargo Will Likely Be Lost.

Out of the density of fog that was almost phenomenal, flashed early yesterday morning along the Nova Scotian coast the wireless call of "S. O. S." from the Black Diamond liner City of Sydney, which while performing service under charter to the Red Cross Line had struck the dreaded reefs of Sambro Island.

Through splendid work of the Marine Department and local tugs and fishing boats, all the ship's company was saved, but the ship itself, and a large amount of the cargo will likely be a total loss. The cargo was one of the heaviest ever carried, and was mostly for St. John's, Newfoundland. Captain MacDonald arrived in the city last evening.

The City of Sydney was bounded

for Halifax from New York on her weekly trip to St. John's, Nfld. Within a few hours of her first port of call at 4.30 o'clock yesterday morning, she struck Shag Rock, a dangerous ledge a short distance from Sambro Light. With passengers and crew numbering all told eighty souls and a heavy cargo the position of the ship was considered very precarious. Although the sea was calm and there was little wind, yet a heavy ground swell lifted the liner and swung and pounded her from side to side on the rocks upon which she had become impaled, holding her amidships as on a pivot.

Calls For Help.

Baffled by the impenetrable density and blackness of fog and fearing that a sudden change of wind would be fatal to any rescue, immediate calls for help were sent out from the stranded liner. Within fifteen minutes from the time of the wreck, Mr. C. H. Harvey, Agent for the Marine and Fisheries at Halifax was directing the rescue work. The shore life-saving stations were notified, the Department's steamers were in wireless communication with the wrecked liner, and at the same time together with tugs of local shipping concerns were rushing to her aid.

Rescued Passengers.

Shortly before nine o'clock the wireless station at Campdown advised of the rescue of the passengers and all but eleven of the ship's company. The latter, including Captain MacDonald, true to the traditions of their profes-

sion, were standing by the ship until she was no longer safe. Among the many life saving agencies that were set in motion by the aid of wireless and telephone was the little lobster collecting boat of Neville's fleet, in command of Captain McPhee to whom fell the honor of rescuing the stranded ship's company. This 30 ton lobster steamer with her indomitable captain, and crew, heedless of the dangers that in the thick fog menaced themselves, was the first and for several hours the only boat to reach the side of the wrecked steamer. She remained about 100 yards off from the wreck, and in the lifeboats of the liner, already swung for action, the passengers and crew were transferred with considerable of their baggage.

Good Order.

In the meantime on the liner all had been order and courage. From the time the steamer struck, until the hour when the Rosemary tied-up at George S. Campbell and Company's wharf, there was not the least sign of fear displayed by anyone of the women or children and every thing was done by the male passengers, and the officers and crew of the ship to relieve the tension under which they were all more or less suffering until succour arrived.

The reports received at Halifax during the morning from the stranded steamer stated that she was in a dangerous position and half full of water. An hour after she struck wireless messages were received saying that the stokehold was filling and the engine room was flooded.

Full Aft.

By noon M. R. Morrow, agent at Halifax for the Dominion Coal Company, received a message from Captain MacDonald of the City of Sydney, saying that the steamer was full aft, her engine room was half full, and the forward hold had three feet of water. She had a general cargo, about 140 tons for Halifax and 1200 for St. John's, Nfld.

The steamers on the scene of the wreck were unable to effect anything because of the dense fog which prevailed along that section of the coast. There are seven ships hovering about, but the Sambro Ledges are a somewhat difficult problem in thick weather, and the maneuvering of these ships was hampered by conditions.

The boats yesterday on the scene were the D. G. S. Montmagny and J. L. Nelson, the tugs Togo, the Scotsman, the collier Cabot, and Rosemary. With the exception of the last named steamer, which put out of Sambro Harbor, all these were sent from Halifax.

The passengers were as follows:

Albert Blumlein, New York; Miss Margaret Heredge, New York; Albert J. Johnson, Philadelphia; Mrs. Lillian Leach and daughter Mildred, New York; James Baum, Philadelphia, and Mr. and Mrs. George Parsons, St. John's, Nfld. In the second cabin were the following, all of New York city: Mary Cranford, John Logan, Edward Kenney, Joseph McGrath and John O'Brien.

Mr. Harvey's Good Work

To the despatch and foresight of C. H. Harvey, agent for the Marine and Fisheries, is due the quick rescue of the passengers and portion of the crew from the City of Sydney. At 4.35 a.m. the steamer struck the rocks. At 4.45 a.m. Mr. Harvey received a message from Campdown that the steamer was ashore and sending out S. O. S. signals. Mr. Harvey immediately sent a message to Duncan's Cove Life Saving Station ordering out the lifeboat. He also ordered out the steamers Montmagny and J. S. Nelson from the Dockyard. He then notified the steamer's agents. At 5.05 he sent a message to the City of Sydney saying that assistance was being sent. Twenty minutes later the steamer sent out the message: "Please send life boats soon." At 5.05 o'clock the life boat put out from Duncan's Cove and at the same hour the Montmagny sailed from the Dockyard, little more than an hour after Mr. Harvey received the first news of the wreck.

Among the first boats to start for the scene were the tow boats Togo and Scotsman, belonging to the Halifax Tow Boat Company. At six o'clock C. H. Harvey despatched the Government steamer Montmagny to the wreck. She was followed by coasting steamer Atlantic belonging to J. A. Neville. The Dominion Coal Company's Cabot, which was discharging coal at the Company's plant, sailed from Halifax at seven o'clock. The last to leave was the Government steamer J. S. Nelson, which backed away from her pier at the Dockyard at about 7.15 o'clock.

Strong Breeze Blowing

At about nine-thirty yesterday morning The Morning Chronicle established telephonic communication with Sambro village, and it was learned that two boats had put out from the harbor towards the scene of the wreck. A strong southeasterly breeze was blowing and those at the village had fears for the safety of those on board the City of Sydney. The fog was extremely thick and it was impossible to see far out to sea, but it was reported at the village that the steamer had stranded on Shag Rock, one of the most dangerous of the Sambro Ledges and exposed to the full force of an onshore blow.

Among the officers of the City of Sydney are—Captain D. A. MacDonald, 1st Officer Scanlan, 2nd Officer Chapman, Chief Engineer John Scott, Purser David H. Jones, and Wireless Operators R. P. Douglas and Proctor Coates. Mr. Bennett, a son of Jos. R. Bennett, of Halifax, was an engineer on the City of Sydney. The City of Sydney was a steel ship of 2568 tons gross, 1634 tons net, 300 feet in length, with a beam of 41 feet and a draught of 21.6. She was built in 1890 at Newcastle by Swan and Hunter. Her hailing port is Montreal. The City of Sydney has had two other names. She was first known as the Admiral and later as the Rosalind. At that time she was owned by the Red Cross Line. It will be remembered that some years ago the Rosalind collided with the Senlac in a thick fog in Halifax Harbor. The Senlac was badly damaged and was beached in Mill Cove. About two years ago she collided with the tug D. H. Thomas in Sydney Harbor and several of the tug's crew were drowned.

Black Diamond Boat.

The Rosalind was subsequently sold to the Black Diamond line, which established a service between Montreal, Charlottetown, Sydney and St. John's, Nfld. During the winter months the City of Sydney and the Morwenna, the two boats in this service, have been chartered to the Red Cross line, while the regular steamers Stephano and Florizel are engaged in sealing off the Newfoundland coast.

A telephone message from Sambro at 2 p.m. yesterday stated the ship will be totally abandoned and the tug Togo was then alongside taking on board articles from the wrecked steamer. Some of the officers were on board the Togo and others would remove to her later on, the prospects being total loss of the ship.

No explanation has been given for the stranding of the City of Sydney. Only a quarter of a mile to the northwest of where she struck the bomb at Sambro Lighthouse was fired at regular intervals through the night and morning, and could be heard distinctly at Chebucto Head. The Lightship "Halifax," which is moored to the southeast of Sambro Island, was in position, and the City of Sydney was far out of her course to the entrance of Halifax Harbor.

Passengers Tell of Rescue

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