

THE COLLISION BETWEEN THE YACHT HYGEIA AND THE STEAMER PENOLA.

The Marine Board on Monday, February 1, concluded the investigation respecting the collision between the schooner yacht Hygeia and the steamer Penola, which occurred off Cape Jervis on the 21st of last December.

The following is a digest of the evidence taken:—

Frederick Chapman said he was chief officer of the steamer on the occasion of the collision. He was in charge of the deck from 12 to 1 a.m. on the 21st December. The wind was west, moderate, with light passing showers. The moon had set, and Cape Jervis light was in sight. Was on the bridge when the Hygeia was first sighted, Capt. Snewin having left him about a minute before. The man on the look out reported a vessel ahead without lights, and immediately afterwards said she was close to the steamer Penola. Saw the vessel for the first time about a minute before the collision, but had not time to make out how she was heading. The Penola was steering N. by E. Reported to Captain Snewin that a vessel was ahead, and he came forward, after taking his glasses out of the case. Before getting any orders from Capt. Snewin ordered the helm to be ported. The order was obeyed, and the vessel answered immediately. Whilst going aft just afterwards, met Captain Snewin going forward, who ordered the whistle to be blown. That was done, and the engines were ordered to be stopped. The collision took place whilst he was standing by the whistle. Saw no more of Captain Snewin until he was brought on board after the occurrence. Missed him immediately after the collision. He would have been on the forepart of the bridge when the collision occurred. Saw no lights on board the Hygeia until she was close to the Penola, when he noticed a green light, but did not think it was in the screen. Thought it was going to be put in position. Saw no red light until after the vessel was clear. After the collision heard a voice saying, "Lower the boat," and three or four minutes after the Hygeia's boat was in the water, and subsequently picked up Captain Snewin. Had lights been shown would have seen them half a mile off. The wind was fair for sailing vessels either way. Was of opinion that had the steamer's course not been altered she would have gone right over the yacht. The Hygeia struck the steamer on the port bow before the fore rigging.

William Morton, able seaman, stated that he was on the look-out on the occasion, and reported to the mate that a vessel was ahead without lights. She might have been a mile off. There was a 3, 4, or 5-knot breeze at the time. It was from 7 to 10 minutes from the time he saw her until she struck. Heard the mate order helm hard a-port about 4 minutes before the accident. Had the helm not been ported the yacht would have been run down.

the accident. Had the helm not been ported the yacht would have been run down.

Hugh Williams said he was at the wheel on board the Penola when the collision took place. Did not see the other vessel until just before she struck. Saw no lights. The helm might have been ported about 10 minutes before she struck.

John Warwick second engineer of the Penola, said the engines were going at full speed when the order was given to stop. About a minute elapsed before the engines were stopped, and about two or three seconds afterwards he felt the collision.

William Milne, owner of the yacht Hygeia, said the vessel left Glenelg on Sunday, December 20, between 10 and 11 a.m. There was a tolerably good breeze from W. to S.W. at starting. G. Simmonds was in charge of the yacht, but was not on deck when the collision took place, and he did not know who had charge of the deck. McLeod was steering. Witness came on deck shortly before the collision. There was not much wind, four knots at the outside. It was a cloudy moonlight night, and objects could be seen at some distance. When he came on deck saw the Penola on the starboard bow. Continued looking at her until satisfied she would pass well to windward if both vessels continued on their course. His attention was called to the Cape Jervis light, and on again looking at the steamer she was crossing the bow of the yacht, having evidently ported her helm. It was ten minutes or a quarter of an hour from the time of first seeing the steamer until the collision took place. Saw two lights, one high up and the other low down, and his impression was that the lower one was green. The Hygeia was heading S. by W., close-hauled, with Cape Jervis light on the lee bow. [Mr. Milne here explained the position of the vessels on a diagram] He said the Hygeia's helm was not shifted to his knowledge. Heard the Penola's whistle just before the collision. Learnt afterwards that the Hygeia's side lights were not in position. Cape Jervis was about five miles distant. Had each vessel kept her course the Penola would have passed half a mile to windward.

George Simmonds, master of the Hygeia, said he went below about a quarter-past 12, leaving McLeod in charge of the deck. Wm. Sandspit was at the wheel. It was bright moonlight when he went below. Cape Jervis light was in sight. The vessel was heading S. by W., with the wind about S.W. by W. All plain sail was set, with a reef in the mainsail. The side-lights were not lighted, because it was a bright moonlight night. Did not leave orders to light them if it became cloudy. He had been on deck from 5.30 until midnight, and was lying on the locker with his clothes on when the accident occurred. He had been at sea 22 years, but did not hold a certificate of any kind. Knew something of navigation, and could ascertain his position if 300 or 400 miles from land, if provided with necessary instruments and books.

from land, if provided with necessary instruments and books.

Norman McLeod, able seaman—Came on deck at midnight. The captain went below shortly after, but witness did not consider he was in charge. Was on the look-out, and another man at the wheel. When going below the captain told him not to go too close to the land, and if there was no more wind he (witness) could put her about himself. Went to the wheel at 2, and at twenty minutes to 3 the man on the look-out came aft, and said he could see a light on the weather bow. Told him to light the side lights. He did so, but witness did not know whether they were in position when the collision took place. Did not see the light until Mr. Milne came on deck. Saw the green and masthead lights. The Hygeia's helm was shifted to port before the collision. Did so on his own responsibility. When the vessel struck the sails were aback, and the ship heading west. The wind was to the southward of west. The Penola was to windward, steering towards the land, when she shifted her course. Had the Penola's course not been altered the vessels would have gone clear.

William Sandsforde, able seaman, gave similar evidence, and said that after the Penola's lights were seen he was told by McLeod to light the side lights. Did so as quickly as possible, and held the green light up, so that it might be seen. This was about two minutes before the collision. In answer to Captain Simmonds, he said the steamer was on the port bow when he went below to light the lamps, but on returning she was two points on the starboard bow. Had no orders to call the captain.

Frederick Chapman, recalled, said, in reply to Mr. Hardy, that when he relieved the captain the Penola had been steering N.W. by N. until Cape Jervis bore east, when a course was shaped for the lighthouse N. by E. At 20 minutes before the collision thought the Hygeia would have seen their green light. About a quarter of an hour elapsed from the time the course was altered until the Hygeia was sighted.

Frederick P. Snewin, master of the Penola, stated that he was on deck when the collision took place about a quarter to 3 a.m. Had been on deck about three times previously. Was always on deck when going through the passage. The weather was misty, with occasional light showers. The Penola was going full speed, and the lights burning brightly. Was on the bridge abaft the funnel when the mate reported a vessel without lights ahead. From that time until the vessel was in collision about 30 seconds elapsed. Could not make out how the vessel was going. Was getting on the plank when he

was knocked overboard. Had been steering N. by E. for about a quarter of an hour before. Ordered the whistle to be blown. Did not know whether the engines were stopped or not. Did not think a vessel could be seen more than a quarter of a mile on such a night. Saw

a quarter of a mile on such a night. Saw something looming in the darkness immediately before the collision. Saw no lights. When picked up and taken to the Hygeia noticed she had no red light in position.

Frederick Chapman was further examined, but nothing new was elicited.

The enquiry was then adjourned until Tuesday, February 2, when the finding was read as follows:—

"The Court is of opinion that the collision between the steamer Penola and the yacht Hygeia, on the morning of the 21st December, was occasioned by the Master of the Hygeia neglecting to have the regulation side lights in position.—R. H. Ferguson, President; J. W. Smith, Nautical Assessor."

