

Steamer "NEDJAN", No.20778 in Register Book.

RETAIN

Some notes on the evidence given at the enquiry held at Gävle Magistrate's Court on the 18th March, 1954, into the loss of the above ship with all hands in the Bay of Gävle on the 9th January, 1954.

Askenberg. (Chief Mate from 2.50 to 11.53)

He had been 25 years at sea and held a Master's Certificate. Had sailed in the ship from 2.50 till 11.53 in the North Sea and Baltic trade.

All had gone well with the ship until the beginning of 1953, when she had a series of unfortunate accidents. She grounded in fog at Sundsvall on Whit Saturday and again in fog off Newbiggin in June.

These accidents had nothing to do with the ship's condition but were solely due to ill-luck.

The seaworthiness of the ship was satisfactory.

Extensive repairs to the bottom were effected at Newcastle in July as a result of the grounding off Newbiggin.

He had no feeling of apprehension regarding the safety of the ship, nor, as far as he knew, had the crew.

The ship was never overloaded.

Sometimes when loading a deck cargo was completed they had a list of about 5°, which was corrected by re-stowing part of the deck cargo.

The forward D.B. tank held about 67 tons of water ballast and the after about 70 tons.

The normal cargo of timber was 350 standards including deck cargo.

He had noted no defects in the ship during his period of service. She was strongly built and surveyed regularly at the prescribed intervals.

He knew of no apprehension among the crew regarding the ship's seaworthiness.

He had been in heavy weather with the ship without experiencing any difficulty.

She was as good a sea-boat as was normal for her size and age.

The steering gear was last examined 3.53.

On one voyage a steering chain shackle broke in heavy weather in the North Sea.

The steering chains were accessible but not the rods when a deck cargo was carried.



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The machinery ran well or not so well depending on the kind of crew they had but there had been no trouble due to the machinery not functioning.

The auxiliary steering gear was always tested when the ship was lying at a shipyard but had not been needed at sea. It was always kept in order.

On one occasion the ship had to go into Visby on account of developing a list. The reason for the list was not known but he thought it was probably due to water in the engine room bilges or the open bottom in the holds. The bilges were pumped out and the ship came upright.

The bilges were sounded every day at sea.

Helsing. (deck hand)

Had been 6-7 years at sea. Had had no special training. Was on "Nedjan" from 3.12.53 to 21.12.53 on a voyage Gävle-Antwerp-Emden-Åhus.

The grounding in the Scheldt was due to fog. They were aground about 24 hours and then continued the voyage to Antwerp. No examination was made.

The bottom was soft at first but finally they seemed to strike a stone forward. The engines were running full speed ahead at the time and the ship was going against the tide, the speed was considerably reduced before they struck the stone. Soundings taken showed an increase of 1 cm. in 4 hours.

On the voyage from Emden-Åhus they had had fairly heavy weather and the ship took on a list of 8° - 10°. The cargo and deck cargo was coke.

The crew were somewhat anxious after the ship took the list but not particularly so.

They thought the ship unlucky. There was no complaint as to her seaworthiness but he thought the engine and steering engine were bad. The steering engine had to be repaired between Emden and Åhus.

He signed off before Christmas 1953, having been persuaded by another young deckhand who thought the ship too old to be at sea, otherwise he would not have left the ship of his own accord. He had no other reason for signing off, and had not been afraid to stay with her because she was a bad sea-boat.

According to what the 2nd Mate had told him, about the 7th December, the auxiliary steering gear was rusted up. He did not know if it had ever been used.

Askenberg. (recalled)

The auxiliary steering gear had been thoroughly greased and placed in order at Aberdeen in Nov., 1953. They went over it every other month. The Captain was very particular about this. The gear could not rust up in the time that elapsed before the ship was lost.

Lindgren. (Owners' Agent at Norrsundet)

The ship arrived at Norrsundet on 27.12.53 and commenced loading. She was moored stern on to the shore with both anchors out and loaded from barges. On the 3rd day she dragged her anchors in high wind and the stern went aground.

After consultation with the Owners he arranged for a diver to examine the bottom, who reported that the ship was aground aft over a length of about 8 meters but there was no damage visible.

He also arranged for a survey by the Magistrate's Surveyors, who sounded tanks and bilges but he did not know if they took any other measures.

The ship finished loading on 9.1.54. In reporting to the Owners by telephone about his readiness to sail, the Captain did not mention anything about bad weather. He (Lindgren) had not mentioned this to the Owners either.

The Captain had said to him the ship was a good sea-boat and they would be all right.

He had heard nothing about the ship's being in bad condition. She had a 4° to 5° list when loaded. According to the Captain, the height of the deck cargo was much lower than normal on this occasion.

Everything on board seemed normal when the ship left. As regards the above grounding, contact with the Underwriters had been made by the Owners. The cargo loaded was 350 standards.

The diver stated that he had found a stone wedged between a propeller blade and the sternframe sole-piece. The Captain thought this was of no significance and would not have caused any damage.

Two examinations were made by the diver, one while the ship was aground and the other after she refloated.

Nordström (formerly an engineer on board).

He had been at sea 9 years and had a 3rd Engineer's certificate. He was on the "Nedjan" about 9 mos., from 5.52 to 2.53. There were no particular troubles in the engine room during this time. A leakage in the tank top 12.52 had been repaired by welding at Gothenburg.

The bridge in the port furnace of the boiler collapsed once, at the end of 1952. The engine was quite satisfactory and ran relatively well for its age.

In 2.53 the ship went to Sölvesborgs Värv on account of a leak. He left the ship because she was laid up, otherwise he would have stayed. He did not consider the ship was in any way dangerous, nor had he heard anyone express anxiety as to her seaworthiness.

The boiler pressure was about 11 kg/cm², it was easily fired and there was no difficulty in keeping steam.

The bilge pumps were in order and there was no trouble with the steering engine. He had nothing of note to report.

Ögren (Cargo dispatcher)

Had received a request from the Captain for 225 standards in the hold and 125 on deck, the order placed was 341 standards \pm 10 per cent.

350 standard were loaded.

He had no discussion with the Master or the crew regarding the condition of the ship.

When he went aboard the ship while she was aground he heard she had a list of 7°. He didn't see how the cargo was finally stowed.

Some of the deck cargo only was discharged after the grounding. The same cargo was subsequently replaced in the same position as before.

Several attempts had been made to get the ship off the ground with the help of a small tug and heaving on the anchors, which were successful after the discharge of 50-60 standards of deck cargo.

He was not present at the diver's examination but spoke to diver next day, who told him he had seen no damage. The stone was not mentioned then but he heard ^{about} it later. The diver thought it was of no importance.

The ship came off ground fairly easily and was drawn off straight ahead to avoid damage to the rudder.

The heavier timber was stowed in the holds and the lighter on deck.

Källström (Head of stevedore firm).

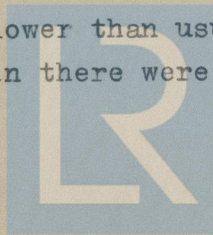
About 350 standards were to be loaded and loading started on 29.12.53. Everything went normally with the exception of a delay while a fractured winch steam pipe was repaired.

Loading stopped on the Saturday and the ship went aground on Monday. About 90 standards were removed and loading re-started on 7.1.54.

The cargo which had been removed was re-loaded exactly as before.

The Captain measured the height of the deck cargo and stated it was about 1 foot lower than usual.

According to the Captain there were about 225 standards in the hold and 120 on deck.



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The loading was carried out as usual and uprights and lashings were fitted in the usual way.

There was a small starboard list on completion, which was corrected by re-stowing some of the cargo.

He did not hear the Master or the Mate say anything about the condition of the ship. They were not dissatisfied with the ship, nor were the crew as far as he knew.

Hägglund (foreman stevedore).

Had worked as a stevedore for 40-50 years, of which 24 years as foreman.

The cargo was loaded according to the Master's order. The Master had marked the maximum height to which the deck cargo might be loaded but it never attained this height. Uprights and lashings were fitted as usual and were in good condition.

After the grounding, the cargo which had been removed was replaced as before.

He had no discussion with the Master or Mate other than regarding the cargo. The Mate mentioned that they had stowed more than usual in the holds.

There had been no trouble during loading except for the winch steam pipe previously mentioned.

The ship had a slight list which was corrected by re-stowing some of the cargo.

It was not unusual that ships had a list after loading.

He had no idea how much or if any water was in the ballast tanks.

Axman. (pilot)

33 years' experience as pilot.

He went on board with the Captain on 9.1.54.

He told the Captain he had heard of a storm warning in the vicinity of Finngrundet but he made no comment. At 1400 hours the Mate reported all ready to leave.

The ship had a slight list, which was not abnormal for ships of that type.

The Captain was never in any doubt that he should leave at 1400 hours and considered there was no risk from the weather.

The ship steered well and was not tender.

He accompanied the ship to south of Gåsholmen and left her at 1515 hours. Everything functioned well and the steering was satisfactory.

After he left the ship, she set a northerly course and the wind increased from about 15 to 20 metres/second. She did not make much headway but proceeded direct out to sea. He did not think there was anything strange about holding this course.

He watched the ship for some time but saw no signal and had no thought but that the ship would be all right.

He had heard no talk on board as to the seaworthiness of the ship. He saw nothing wrong with her and nothing untoward occurred while he was on board.

Thiman (diver).

He had had 10 - 15 years experience.

He made an examination of the "Nedjan" as she lay aground on 5.1.54. He knew the sea bottom there well. There was about 1 foot of loose mud on the bottom which was stirred up as he moved about and made visibility poor.

The sternframe and bar keel were aground for about 8 metres but not badly so. He saw nothing special.

A further examination was made on 6.1.54, after the ship was refloated, with the aid of a lamp. There was no damage to the rudder, sternframe, bottom or propeller. A stone was wedged between a propeller blade and the sternframe sole-piece. It was not a very big stone. He could not move it by hand but advised that the engine should be turned, when the stone would fall out and this was done.

He did not consider that the stone could have caused any damage but told the Master and the Magistrate Surveyors about it.

His examination covered the rudder, pintles etc. up to the water line. The hull was undamaged except for the paint being scratched over about 8 metres.

Lindström (Magistrate's Surveyor)

He was informed on 5.1.54 that the diver was making an examination but that it was too dark to see much.

The diver completed his next examination in the forenoon of 6.1.54 and he then went to Norrsundet and interview^{ed}/the diver and the Master.

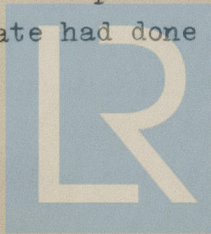
He was informed that the rudder was free while the ship was aground.

The Mate had tested the rudder and steering gear and found them in order, after the ship was refloated. He understood that the sea bottom there was made up of stones about 1 foot across.

After the ship was refloated, soundings of tanks and bilges were taken at intervals and no leakage found.

He and his colleagues did not personally carry out any test of the steering gear as the Mate had done so and found it in order.

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The stone which was wedged between the propeller blade and the sternframe sole-piece was mentioned but no significance was attached to it. He asked the diver if it could have affected the ship in any way.

On enquiry he and his colleagues learned that the ship would have her annual docking in the spring and they therefore made out their certificate of seaworthiness valid until the next routine docking.

Äng (Owners' Superintendent).

He had been in the Owners' employ since 1937 and Superintendent since 1948. They had always followed the recommendations of the Classification and Board of Trade Surveyors at surveys.

After the grounding at Norrsundet about 70 tons of water were pumped out of the after tank.

The Master himself always decided whether or not the weather was too bad for him to leave port. On this occasion the Master had said nothing of the weather when reporting to the Owners.

He knew nothing of the repairs to the steering engine stated by Helsing to have been carried out between Emden and Åhus in December 1953. This had never been reported and he thought the repair was probably the repacking of a gland or something equally trivial.

The steam steering engine was only used when entering or leaving port or in narrow waters. At sea hand steering was used.

The auxiliary steering gear was placed in order at each survey. Between surveys it was the Mate's job to keep it in order. The gear had never been rusted up but was easily placed in order at surveys by cleaning and coating with black oil.

The grounding in the River Scheldt on 9.12.53 had not been reported to the Owners.

The President of the Court then asked the undersigned to give an account of any matters regarding the ship which might be of interest to the Court.

Since the main question mentioned affecting classification was the condition of the main and auxiliary steering gears, it was thought best to confine remarks to this and the grounding in the Scheldt which had not been reported to the Owners.

The following statement was made:-

In January-February, 1952, the ship went through a complete Special Survey, during which fairly extensive repairs were carried out both to hull and machinery.

The rudder was lifted, all 3 pintles renewed and 1 gudgeon rebushed. The steam steering engine was opened up and overhauled,

the steering rods, chains etc. opened up, 4 block sheaves and 3 block pins renewed and 2 block sheaves rebushed. 3 metres of steering chain were renewed.

Both main and auxiliary steering gears were placed in good order.

In March, 1953, the ship had her annual docking at Sölvesborg, when ice and heavy weather damages were repaired, the steering chains etc. were opened up and 7 metres of chain renewed. Both main and auxiliary steering gears were placed in order.

In July, 1953, the ship was docked at Newcastle on account of having grounded off Newbiggin on 26.6.53 and the bottom damage was repaired. The main and auxiliary steering gears were generally examined on this occasion but not opened up because this is only required at 12 months' intervals.

On the 11th December, 1953, the ship was surveyed by Lloyd's Register at Antwerp on account of a slight grounding in the Scheldt some days previously. Bilges and tanks were sounded, no leakage found and a certificate of seaworthiness granted in the usual way.

COMMENTS.

From the evidence, it does not appear that the loss of the ship could in any way be ascribed to any known defect of the hull or machinery.

The last message received from the "Nedjan" indicated that she was drifting in heavy weather of gale force with a smashed rudder. It is thought that the stone which was found wedged between the propeller blade and sole-piece of the sternframe after the grounding at Norrsundet on 4.1.54, or the grounding itself, might have started a crack in the stern frame which would not be readily visible to the diver or have any effect on the steering while the pilot was aboard, but might lead to complete failure of the sternframe and rudder in the very heavy weather subsequently encountered by the ship.

GOTHENBURG.

25.3.54.



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