

LLOYD'S LIST LAW REPORTS

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1965

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LLOYD'S LIST LAW REPORTS

Editor: E. S. MATHERS
of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law
Assistant Editor: G. M. HALL
of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law

[1965] Vol. 2]

FRIDAY, AUGUST 13, 1965

[PART 1

COURT OF APPEAL

May 4 and 5, 1965

SAUL v. SAINT ANDREW'S STEAM FISHING COMPANY, LTD.

(THE "ST. CHAD")

Before Lord Justice WILLMER, Lord Justice HARMAN and Lord Justice WINN, sitting with Mr. W. J. A. WOOD, M.B.E., Fishery Assessor

Master and servant—Unnecessary risk—Injury to spare hand on trawler struck by heavy sea—Liability of employers.

Practice—Assessors' advice.

Personal injuries sustained by plaintiff spare hand on defendants' motor trawler St. Chad, when he was struck by heavy sea while working in fish pounds in foredeck, in storm (wind, force 10)—Claim by plaintiff alleging that defendants were liable in that, in those weather conditions, their skipper was negligent (a) in navigating on automatic steering and in not having helmsman operating wheel manually; (b) in proceeding too fast; and (c) in ordering men into fish pounds—Denial of negligence by defendants.

——Held, by Sir Jocelyn Simon, P., (a) that skipper was not negligent in using automatic steering; (b) that St. Chad was not proceeding at excessive speed; and (c) that skipper was not negligent in ordering men into fish pounds; and that, therefore, plaintiff's claim failed.

Appeal by plaintiff, alleging that skipper was negligent in ordering men to work on fore-deck in weather conditions prevailing.

 had overstated that risk), and (b) risk to men if heavy sea broke over fore-deck (the evidence was that that was an exceptional event); that skipper could be held to be negligent if it could be shown that he ought reasonably to have foreseen that risk of injury to men amounted to a real probability; that that was not proved; and that, therefore, plaintiff's appeal should be dismissed.

Per WILLMER, L.J. (at p. 6): The advice which we have received from our Assessor is, as I understand the authorities, to be treated with exactly the same degree of respect as that of the Assessor in the Court below, neither more nor less. The advice of our Assessor is not to be regarded as superior merely because he happens to be advising a superior Court. His advice and that of the Assessor in the Court below must both be considered as part of the totality of the evidence in the case.

This was an appeal by the plaintiff, Mr. Aquila Saul, from a decision by Sir Jocelyn Simon, P. ([1965] 1 Lloyd's Rep. 107), dismissing his claim for damages against the defendants, Saint Andrew's Steam Fishing Company, Ltd., in respect of personal injuries which he sustained on the defendants' motor trawler St. Chad, when he was struck by a heavy sea while working in the fish pounds in the fore-deck, in a storm (wind, force 10).

The plaintiff had alleged that the defendants were liable in that, in those weather conditions, their skipper was negligent (a) in navigating on automatic steering and in not having a helmsman operating the wheel manually; (b) in proceeding too fast; and (c) in ordering men into the fish pounds.

The defendants denied that the skipper was negligent.

Sir Jocelyn Simon, P., dismissing the plaintiff's claim, held (a) that the skipper was not negligent in using automatic

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The "St. Chad"

[WILLMER, L.].

steering; (b) that the *St. Chad* was not proceeding at excessive speed; and (c) that the skipper was not negligent in ordering the men into the fish pounds.

The plaintiff appealed on the following grounds:

- (a) The learned President should have found that it was negligent to cause or allow the plaintiff to work on the fore-deck of the *St. Chad* in the circumstances which he, the learned President, found to have been prevailing at the time of the accident.
- (b) Having found that the wind at the time of the accident was of strong gale to storm force, the learned President should have found that the risk of a sea breaking over the fore-deck of the *St. Chad* and causing injury to the plaintiff was a foreseeable risk.
- (c) The learned President should further have found on the evidence that the wind at the time of the accident was of violent storm force.
- (d) The learned President should have found on the evidence that the risk of a sea breaking over the fore-deck of the St. Chad was in fact foreseen by the skipper of the St. Chad who nevertheless ordered the plaintiff to work on the fore-deck of the St. Chad.
- (e) The learned President should have found that there was no real risk of any kind to the safety of the St. Chad or her crew if the work on her fore-deck had been left until the weather moderated, and should have found that the skipper of the St. Chad failed to take all reasonable care for the safety of the plaintiff when he ordered him to work upon the fore-deck of the St. Chad in the circumstances prevailing.
- (f) The learned President was wrong in holding that there was an element of danger to the *St. Chad* if the nets had broken loose, about which there was neither evidence nor argument at the trial of the action.
- (g) The learned President was wrong in holding that the method of conducting the navigation of the *St. Chad* by her skipper, i.e., single handed on the bridge with the steering in automatic, was a method consistent with taking all reasonable care for the safety of the plaintiff while he was working on the fore-deck of the *St. Chad.*
- (h) The learned President should have found that if the *St. Chad* had been on hand steering and with at least two persons keeping a look-out on the bridge the

- approaching sea might have been observed sooner and/or soon enough for appropriate action to have been taken to avoid the accident to the plaintiff.
- (i) The learned President was wrong in holding that the economic interest of the plaintiff in the catch, about which there was no evidence, was a proper factor to take into consideration in judging whether the skipper had taken all reasonable care for his safety.
- (j) The learned President was wrong in disregarding the evidence of apprehension felt by the plaintiff when he was ordered to work on the fore-deck of the *St. Chad* in the circumstances prevailing.
- (k) The learned President was wrong in finding that the slight list to starboard observed only by the chief engineer of the St. Chad was caused by a blocking of her starboard scuppers or of water being held only on the starboard side of her fore-deck, when the list to starboard, if any, was far more consistent with the sea having struck her port bow.
- (1) The learned President should on the evidence have found (i) that there was virtually no risk of the scuppers of the St. Chad being blocked, and (ii) if water came on to the deck of the St. Chad, there was no reason to believe that it would be caught in the starboard side of her fish pounds rather than the port side.
- (m) The learned President should have found that the plaintiff's accident was caused by a failure on the part of the skipper of the *St. Chad* to take all reasonable care to protect the plaintiff from a risk, which was clearly foreseeable and was in fact foreseen.
- Mr. Peter T. Bucknill, Q.C., and Mr. Gerald Darling (instructed by Messrs. Devonshire & Co., agents for Messrs. Pearlman & Rosen, of Hull) appeared on behalf of the appellant plaintiff; Mr. Waldo Porges, Q.C., and Mr. Michael D. Thomas (instructed by Messrs. Theodore Goddard & Co., agents for Messrs. Andrew M. Jackson & Co., of Hull) represented the respondent defendants.

JUDGMENT

Lord Justice WILLMER: This is an appeal from a judgment of the President of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division, given on Dec. 9, 1964 ([1965] 1 Lloyd's Rep. 107), whereby he dismissed a claim for damages for personal injuries brought by the plaintiff against the