

CHAP. 110.

An Act to amend the Merchant Shipping Acts. A.D. 1871.

[21st August 1871.]

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the Merchant Shipping Acts:

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Preliminary.

1. This Act may be cited as the Merchant Shipping Act, 1871. Short title.

2. This Act shall be construed as one with the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, and the Acts amending the same, and the said Acts and this Act may be cited collectively as the Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1871. Act to be construed with Merchant Shipping Acts.

3. This Act shall come into operation on the first day of January one thousand eight hundred and seventy-two. Commencement of Act.

Registry (Part II. of Merchant Shipping Act, 1854).

4. Every British ship shall, before registry, be permanently and conspicuously marked, to the satisfaction of the Commissioners of Customs, as follows; that is to say, Particulars to be marked on ship before registry.

Her name shall be marked on each of her bows, and her name and the name of her port of registry shall be marked on her stern, on a dark ground in white or yellow letters, of a length not less than four inches, and of proportionate breadth.

Her official number and the number denoting her registered tonnage shall be marked on her main beam.

A scale of feet shall be marked on her stem and on her stern post, in Roman capital letters or in figures, six inches in length, the lower line of such letters or figures to coincide with the draught line denoted thereby.

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The Board of Trade may, however, exempt any class of ships from the requirements of this section, or any of them.

If the said scale of feet is in any respect inaccurate, so as to be likely to mislead, the owner of the ship shall incur a penalty not exceeding one hundred pounds.

The marks required by this section shall be permanently continued, and no alteration shall be made therein except in the event of any of the particulars thereby denoted being altered in the manner provided by the Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1871. Any owner or master of a ship who neglects to keep his ship marked as aforesaid, and any person who conceals, removes, alters, defaces, or obliterates, or suffers any person under his control to conceal, remove, alter, deface, or obliterate, any of the said marks, except in the event aforesaid, or except for the purpose of escaping capture by an enemy, shall for each offence incur a penalty not exceeding one hundred pounds; and any principal officer of Customs may detain a ship which is insufficiently and inaccurately marked until the insufficiency or inaccuracy has been remedied; provided that no fishing vessel duly registered, lettered, and numbered in pursuance of the "Sea Fisheries Act, 1868," shall be required to have her name and port of registry marked under this section.

Ship's draught of water to be recorded.

5. The Board of Trade may, in any case or class of cases in which they think it expedient so to do, direct any person appointed by them for the purpose to record, in such manner and with such particulars as the Board of Trade direct, the draught of water of any sea-going ship, as shown on the scale of feet on her stem and on her stern post, upon her leaving any dock, wharf, port, or harbour for the purpose of proceeding to sea; and such person shall thereupon keep such record, and shall from time to time forward the same, or a copy thereof, to the Board of Trade; and such record, or any copy thereof, if produced by or out of the custody of the Board of Trade, shall be admissible in evidence of the draught of water of the ship at the time specified in the record.

The master of every British sea-going ship shall, upon her leaving any dock, wharf, port, or harbour for the purpose of proceeding to sea, record her draught of water in the official logbook (if any), and shall produce such record to any principal officer of Customs whenever required by him so to do, or in default of such production shall incur a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds.

Rules to be observed in naming of ships.

6. With respect to the names of British ships, the following rules shall be observed:

(1.) A ship shall not be described by any name other than that by which she is for the time being registered:

(2.) No change shall be made in the name of a ship without the previous permission of the Board of Trade signified in writing under their seal, or under the hand of one of their secretaries or assistant secretaries. Upon such permission being granted, the ship's name shall forthwith be altered in the register book, in the ship's certificate of registry, and on her bows and stern:

(3.) If in any case it is shown to the satisfaction of the Board of Trade that the name of any ship has been changed without such permission as aforesaid, they shall direct that her name be altered into that which she bore before such change, and the name shall be altered in the register book, in the ship's certificate of registry, and on her bows and stern accordingly:

(4.) Where a ship having once been registered has ceased to be so registered no person, unless ignorant of such previous registry, (proof whereof shall lie on him,) shall apply to register, and no registrar shall knowingly register, such ship, except by the name by which she was previously registered, unless with the permission of the Board of Trade granted as aforesaid.

Every person who acts or suffers any person under his control to act in contravention of this section, or who omits to do, or suffers any person under his control to omit to do, anything required by this section, shall for each offence incur a penalty not exceeding one hundred pounds, and any principal officer of Customs may detain the ship until the provisions of this section are complied with.

Application for a change of name shall be made in writing to the Board of Trade. If the Board are of opinion that the application is made on reasonable grounds they may entertain the same, and shall thereupon require notice thereof to be published in such form and manner as they think fit.

Masters and Seamen (*Part III. of Merchant Shipping Act*, 1854).

Survey of ships alleged by seamen to be unseaworthy.

7. Whenever in any proceeding against any seaman or apprentice belonging to any ship for desertion, or for neglecting or refusing to join or to proceed to sea in his ship, or for being absent from or quitting the same without leave, it is alleged by one fourth of the seamen belonging to such ship, or, if the number of such seamen exceed twenty, by not less than five such seamen, that such ship is by reason of unseaworthiness, overloading, improper loading, defective equipment, or for any other reason, not in a fit condition to proceed to sea, or that the accommodation in such ship

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is insufficient, the court having cognizance of the case shall take such means as may be in their power to satisfy themselves concerning the truth or untruth of such allegation, and shall for that purpose receive the evidence of the person or persons making the same, and shall have power to summon any other witnesses whose evidence they may think it desirable to hear; the court shall thereupon, if satisfied that the allegation is groundless, proceed to adjudicate, but if not so satisfied shall cause such ship to be surveyed.

Provided that no seaman or apprentice charged with desertion, or with quitting his ship without leave, shall have any right to apply for a survey under this section unless previously to his quitting his ship he has complained to the master of the circumstances so alleged in justification.

For the purposes of this section, the court shall require any of the surveyors appointed by the Board of Trade, under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, or any person appointed for the purpose by the Board of Trade, or, if such surveyor or person cannot be obtained without unreasonable expense or delay, or is not, in the opinion of the court, competent to deal with the special circumstances of the case, then any other impartial surveyor appointed by the court, and having no interest in the ship, her freight, or cargo, to survey the ship, and to answer any question concerning her which the court may think fit to put. Such surveyor or other person shall survey the ship, and make his report in writing to the court, including an answer to every question put to him by the court. The court shall cause such report to be communicated to the parties, and unless it is proved to the satisfaction of the court that the opinions expressed in such report are erroneous, the court shall determine the questions before them in accordance with those opinions.

For the purposes of such survey, a surveyor shall have all the powers of an inspector appointed by the Board of Trade, under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854.

The costs (if any) of the survey shall be determined by the Board of Trade according to a scale of fees to be fixed by them, and shall be paid in the first instance out of the Mercantile Marine Fund.

If it is proved to the satisfaction of the court that the ship is in a fit condition to proceed to sea, or, as the case may be, that the accommodation is sufficient, the costs of the survey shall be paid by the person or persons upon whose demand, or in consequence of whose allegation, the survey was made, and may be deducted by

the master or owner out of the wages due or to become due to such person or persons, and shall be paid over to the Board of Trade.

If it is proved that the ship is not in a fit condition to proceed to sea, or, as the case may be, that the accommodation is insufficient, the costs of the survey shall be paid to the Board of Trade by the master or owner.

Power for naval courts to direct survey of ships.

8. Any naval court may, if they think fit, direct a survey of any ship which is the subject of an investigation held before them, and such survey shall be made in the same way, and the surveyor who makes the same shall have the same powers, as if the survey had been directed by a competent court in the course of proceedings against a seaman or apprentice for desertion or a kindred offence.

Safety (*Part IV. of Merchant Shipping Act*, 1854).

In cases of collision master to give name, &c. of vessel.

9. In every case of collision between two vessels it shall be the duty of the master of each vessel to give to the master of the other vessel the name of his own vessel, and of her port of registry, or of the port or place to which she belongs, and also the names of the ports or places from which and to which she is bound.

Any failure to give such information, except under circumstances which render it impossible or unnecessary to do so (proof of which shall lie on the master failing to give it), shall involve the same consequences as failure to render assistance to the other vessel, or to the master, crew, or passengers thereof.

In this section the term "vessel" includes any vessel used in navigation, however propelled.

Power to Board of Trade to declare ship unseaworthy.

10. If complaint is made to the Board of Trade that any British ship is, by reason of the defective condition of her hull or equipments, unfit to proceed to sea, the Board may cause such ship to be surveyed by one of the surveyors appointed by them, and if such surveyor report that the hull or equipments of such ship is or are in such a state that she could not proceed to sea without serious danger to human life, the Board of Trade may declare such ship to be unseaworthy, and thereupon any principal officer of Customs may detain such ship.

Every such complaint shall be in writing, and shall state the name and address of the complainant, and a copy of the complaint, including the name and address of the complainant, shall before or during such survey be given by the Board of Trade to the master or to an owner of the ship.

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If, upon such survey, such ship is found to be seaworthy, the expenses of the survey shall be paid to the Board of Trade by the person making the complaint, without prejudice to any right of suit or action against him by any person aggrieved by the complaint.

If, upon such survey, such ship is found to be unseaworthy, the expenses of the survey shall be paid to the Board of Trade by the owner of the ship.

Any shipowner who is dissatisfied with the decision of a surveyor under this section may appeal to any of the courts mentioned in this section having jurisdiction in the place where such ship was surveyed, and such court may, if they think fit, appoint one or more competent persons to survey such ship anew, and any surveyor so appointed shall have the powers of a surveyor appointed by the Board of Trade. Upon any such appeal the court may make such order as to the detention or discharge of the ship, as to the payment of any costs and damages which may have been occasioned by her detention, and as to the payment of the expenses of the original survey and of the survey anew, as to the court seems just.

The courts to which appeal may be made shall be—

In England, any court having jurisdiction under the County Court Admiralty Jurisdiction, 1868:

In Ireland, any court having jurisdiction under the Court of Admiralty (Ireland) Act, 1867:

In Scotland, the court of the sheriff for the county.

Sending unseaworthy ship to sea, a misdemeanor.

11. Every person who, having authority as owner or otherwise to send a ship to sea, sends her to sea in an unseaworthy state so as to endanger the life of any person belonging to or on board the same, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, unless he proves that he used all reasonable means to make and keep the ship seaworthy, and was ignorant of such unseaworthiness, or that her going to sea in an unseaworthy state was, under the circumstances, reasonable and unavoidable, and for this purpose he may give evidence in the same manner as any other witness. A misdemeanor under this section shall not be punishable on summary conviction.

Repeal of certain sections of 17 & 18 Vict. c. 104. and 18 & 19 Vict. c. 91.

12. On and after the first day of January one thousand eight hundred and seventy-two, the twenty-fifth and thirty-fourth sections of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, and the thirteenth section of the Merchant Shipping Act Amendment Act, 1855, shall be repealed.

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