

Our story of the GLENCLOVA in this issue, puts us in mind of another Playfair steamer, the 1893-built GLENFINNAN (26), (a) ALVA (11), (b) MINNETONKA (14), (d) RENFREW. We featured GLENFINNAN in our issue of March 1995 as Ship of the Month No. 219. In that feature, we mentioned that, on May 18th, 1922, GLENFINNAN had been involved in a collision with the C.S.L. steamer MIDLAND KING some 70 miles southeast of Passage Island in Lake Superior. GLENFINNAN, commanded by Capt. J. N. Foote, was downbound from Fort William with grain for Port McNicoll, while MIDLAND KING was upbound light between the same two ports.

We have now learned more about this incident, via a clipping from the June 3, 1922, edition of "The Daily Times-Journal", Fort William, which comes to us from Albert Schelling, of Thundar Bay, via Skip Gillham. Not only does it give us more details of the event, but it also shows why Captain L. A. Demers, Dominion Wreck Commissioner, was held in such awe by sailors who had been involved in accidents.

"CAPTAINS AND MATE ARE SUSPENDED; HELD TO BLAME FOR COLLISION...

"Captain R. F. Pyette, master of the steamer MIDLAND KING, suspended for two months, to take effect June 2nd.

Norman H. Miller, first mate of the MIDLAND KING, suspended for three months dating from June 2nd.

Capt. J. N. Foote, of the steamer GLENFINNAN, suspended for two months, dating from June 2.

Donald McLachlan, first mate of the steamer GLENFINNAN, exonerated.

"The above were the decisions handed out by Captain L. A. Demers, Dominion Wreck Commissioner, at 9:45 last evening in the Port Arthur court house, at a special session of the Marine Court, which for the past two days has been in session in connection with the collision between the steamers MIDLAND KING and GLENFINNAN near Passage Island on May 18.

"Court rose at six o'clock last evening with all the evidence in, and Commissioner Demers, together with Captains W. J. Moles and A. I. Thompson assessors, spent over two hours at the Prince Arthur Hotel working out the finding of the court...

"In passing judgment, Commissioner Demers said: 'The court, having carefully weighed the evidence adduced, which is extraordinarily contradictory, finds that the master, R. F. Pyette, of the steamer MIDLAND KING, was not awake to the responsibilities of his position in leaving his post when his ship was surrounded by fog, and is therefore in default. His certificate therefore is suspended... Norman H. Miller, first mate of... MIDLAND KING, is found in violation of rules 19, 22, 23, 28 and the last paragraph of rule 20 of the Rules of the Road for the Great Lakes. The court will suspend his certificate... Captain J. N. Foote, of... GLENFINNAN, having failed to stop or reverse his engines when contrary signals were heard from the MIDLAND KING, and thereby violating rule 23, also rules 19 and 38, is found in default. His certificate is suspended... The first mate, Donald McLachlan, of... GLENFINNAN, is exonerated.

"The court has ever deprecated the system and custom of having the lookout or watchman on duty in the wheel or pilot house, especially on occasions when he can be stationed on the forecastle head without danger or even discomfort, and considers that ships navigating under such a system are not complying strictly to the rules concerning the keeping of a vigilant lookout. The court is further of the opinion that even the officers on watch should exercise their vigilance in the open where fog signal sound can reach them without danger of deflection.

"The court is pleased to say that the allegations of neglect as to the MIDLAND KING not making the necessary enquiries after the collision are not well founded. That the master took the necessary steps in that respect, is well proven.