SYNOPSIS



The 24 year old, Antigua and Barbuda-registered general cargo vessel *Lagik* grounded at Port Sutton Bridge on the River Nene at 1932 UTC on 13 December 2000. The MAIB was informed the next day, and an investigation began. MAIB inspector Andrew Clifton was appointed the lead investigator.

Lagik was carrying a cargo of 2250.40 tonnes of steel products to be discharged in Port Sutton Bridge. The vessel was under pilotage in the River Nene on the last of a spring flood tide. As she entered the swinging basin at the port, to be swung prior to berthing, her bow grounded at a distance from the opposite bank equal to the ship's length. The tide quickly caught her stern and

she grounded aft within a few seconds. The vessel was effectively "wedged" in position. A combination of the weight of her steel cargo and the falling tide caused her to break her back at about 2315 that day. She settled further into the river on each successive tide, and was declared a constructive total loss. She blocked the River Nene and closed the port of Wisbech for 44 days.

There is conflicting evidence with regard to the events immediately preceding the grounding, which was caused by a loss of control during the turning operation.

Contributory causes of the grounding were found to be:

- the master taking the helm from the pilot as the vessel was about to enter the swinging basin;
- differing perceptions as to who had conduct of the navigation after the master took the helm;
- inappropriate manoeuvring for the prevailing conditions;
- the master either ignoring the pilot's advice or failing to exercise his right to intervene when he became concerned about the pilot's intended manoeuvre;
- no sprina line being used:
- no tug standing by ready for immediate use.

Contributory factors to the ultimate loss of the vessel were found to be:

- the master not pumping out the ballast in the forepeak immediately after the vessel had grounded;
- the master stopping the propeller immediately after the vessel had grounded;
- · the restricted width of the river and the effect of the flood tide; and
- no formal written risk assessment having been made for the turning operation at Port Sutton Bridge.