

“ALBANY” (S.S.)

Annex No. 17.

FINDING and Order of a Naval Court held at the British Consulate, Hiogo, on the 21st day of May 1891, to investigate the circumstances attending the loss of the British steamship “ALBANY,” of Leith, official number 84,947, when on a voyage from Kobe, Hiogo, to Shanghai, on or about the 15th May 1891, and to inquire into the conduct of the master, officers, and crew of the said vessel.

The steamship “Albany” was a vessel of 1,488·64 tons registered tonnage, official number 84,947, built at Linthouse, Glasgow, in 1882, and belonging to the Port of Leith.

It appears from the evidence given before this Court that she sailed from Kobe, Hiogo, on or about the 15th May 1891, bound for Shanghai with a cargo of general merchandise and a crew of thirty-four hands all told, three passengers, and a pilot; that she proceeded on her voyage about noon of the 15th May, and passed into the Inland Sea about 1 p.m., the weather being dull and threatening rain; that at 4.30 p.m. she passed Steep Bluff, at 5.20 p.m. Okishima, at 6.26 p.m. Nabeshima, and 7.50 p.m. Matsushima, the course then being set W. by N. magnetic, corrected by the captain, the steamer being in charge of the pilot, William Houghton, of Kobe, holding a coast-pilot certificate and a Japanese master's certificate, the captain having been unable to obtain the services of a licensed Inland Sea pilot. That at 9.25 p.m. she entered the Northern Passage, steering by land-marks as far as Kunishima, then steered a course S.W. by W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. (magnetic), by standard compass S.W. by W., to Black Rock. That on nearing Black Rock she altered her course to pass mid-channel, to pass between Kunoshima and Boulder Point, when the weather became hazy; that the land-marks could be seen quite distinctly; that now and then a slight haze came on. That the steamer then slowed for two or three minutes, and the captain sighted Matsushima on the starboard bow and told the pilot of it. That she then went full speed again; that the land appeared suddenly ahead and on the port bow, and that the helm was ordered hard-a-starboard; that the engines were then stopped and reversed, but that the steamer struck with considerable force at 11.43 p.m. on the southern point of Matsushima. That the steamer remained fast by the head, and listed considerably to starboard; that the captain thereupon ordered the boats to be lowered and the pilot to take soundings, which were reported to be 5 fathoms forward and 17 fathoms aft. That the captain, expecting the ship to slip off into deep water, served out life-belts and ordered the crew on shore. That the ship's log remained in the ship, and that the next morning, the 16th May, about 6 a.m., the steamer rolled over on her side, filled, and sank in a few minutes in 17 fathoms aft and 5 fathoms forward. That at the time the steamer struck it was hazy.

The Court, having regard to the circumstances above stated, finds as follows:—

That the steamship “Albany” was lost off Matsushima on the night of the 15th instant.

That no blame attaches to the captain, officers, and crew of the ship.

That the pilot mistook the northern end of the island for the southern owing to the state of the atmosphere, which, in the opinion of the Court, must have been denser than was at the time imagined.

Orders that the certificates of the master and officers be returned to them.

That the expenses of this Court, fixed at 6*l.* 4*s.*, are approved.

(Signed) J. J. ENSLIE,
Her Britannic Majesty's Consul,
President of Naval Court.

ROBT. NELSON, } Members.
G. ROY, }

