

(No. 5093.)

“ESCORT.”

MARINE BOARD OF QUEENSLAND.

REPORT and Finding relative to the stranding of the schooner “ESCORT” on the reef off Double Cone Island, on the 13th November 1894.

Having heard the evidence of the master, mate, boat-swain, and an A.B., the Board find that the “Escort” was a wooden schooner of 130 tons, built in 1849, official No. 1216, owned by Mr. T. G. Kelly, and registered at Sydney; Hillel Fredrik Liljeblad, master. She left Newcastle on the 30th September, with 189 tons of coal and 20 kegs of gunpowder, bound for Cairns. The vessel was in a very leaky condition when she left Newcastle, and continued so until she was lost; all attempts to stop the leak during the passage proving ineffectual.

At 10.30 p.m. on the 13th November the vessel stranded shortly after high water on the reef extending not more than two cables south-westerly from Double Cone Island.

This reef was not clearly shown on the Admiralty Chart, No. 347, by which the master was navigating, but was on the following sheet, No. 348, which, though on board the vessel, was not referred to.

The Board consider that the vessel was prematurely abandoned. The master should have jettisoned cargo and attempted to float his vessel on the following a.m. tide, which would have been higher than the preceding one.

The disaster is attributable to over-confidence on the part of the master in sailing his vessel too close to Double Cone Island at night-time. The Board find the master in default for careless navigation; and his certificate as master, No. 240, issued by the Marine Department of New Zealand, is hereby suspended for six months from the 13th ultimo.

By direction of the Board, at Brisbane, this 11th December 1894.

(Signed) SAML. A. PETHEBRIDGE,
Secretary.