

(No. 5116.)

"AWHINA" (S.S.)

AND

"PRINCESS" (S.S.)

REPORT and Decision of the Marine Board of New South Wales in the matter of the collision between the steam tug "AWHINA," official No. 87,528, and the harbour steamer "PRINCESS," official No. 74,924.

An inquiry was held by the Marine Board into the circumstances attending the collision between the abovenamed steamers, and they ascertained that the "Princess" is a harbour steamer of 27 tons, chartered by the military authorities to visit the different forts in Port Jackson; and on the 18th December last she was leaving Chowder Bay *via* Steel Point for Sidney with a picnic party of officers' children, when she was run into by the "Awhina," which caused her to heel considerably, and throw several passengers into the water. The "Princess" was cut into to such an extent that the master at once beached her, and, although the fires were put out by water, there was enough steam left to accomplish this. There is no doubt the transverse watertight bulkheads saved this vessel from foundering in deep water. The people were rescued by the crew of the "Awhina" and passing boats, except four, who were drowned.

The "Awhina" is a screw tug boat of 136 gross tonnage, registered in Newcastle, belonging to Mr. John Dalton. She was inward bound for a tow in Neutral Bay, and received no damage.

The Board reported that the collision was brought about by the wrongful act or default of Charles Peterson, the master of the "Awhina:" 1st. In committing a breach of the 16th Article of the Steering and Sailing Rules by not keeping out of the way of the "Princess" when she was on his own starboard hand; and, 2nd, in not stopping and reversing in time to prevent the collision when it became necessary to do so by the 18th Article of the said Steering and Sailing Rules.

Considerable excitement has been imported into this lamentable case in consequence of the allegations which have been circulated to the effect that the master and crew of the "Awhina" did not render prompt assistance to the unfortunates who were thrown from the "Princess" into the water by the shock of the collision.

The Board, after mature deliberation, are glad to be able to state that there are no reasonable grounds for believing such discreditable rumours. The crew of the "Awhina" did all they could to save life; they threw lifebuoys, lifebelts, and ropes, and otherwise assisted the unfortunate people struggling in the water, and one of them, by the captain's order, jumped overboard and rescued a child that was seen to be sinking.

Charles Peterson's certificate, No. 130, master, coast trade, issued by this Board, was suspended for twelve months.

(Signed) GEO. S. LINDEMAN, R.N.,
Secretary.

Sydney, 4th February 1895.