

(No. 5768.)

## "DAWN" (S.S.).

South } Marine Board. Grounding of the s.s.  
Australia. } "Dawn."

A PRELIMINARY inquiry was held at the Marine Board Offices, Port Adelaide, on Wednesday, the 29th June, 1898, before THOS. N. STEPHENS, Esq., J.P., President; and W. HAMILTON, J.P., J. H. PHILLIPS, J.P., Captain J. H. GIBBON, A. CAMPBELL, and W. R. CAVE, J.P., Wardens of the Marine Board, into the circumstances connected with the grounding of the s.s. "DAWN," on Ward Spit, near Port Pirie, on the 10th June.

The "Dawn," registered at Port Fairy, Victoria, official number 73,718, built of iron at Sunderland in 1876, is a vessel of 328 tons register, owned by Wm. Howard Smith & Sons Proprietary Company, Limited, of Melbourne, and was in the charge of Reginald Sculthorpe Heaney, who holds a certificate of competency as master, No. 04,078, issued by the Board of Trade in February, 1888, also a certificate of exemption from pilotage for Ports Adelaide, Pirie, Wallaroo, Germein, and Augusta. The vessel carried a crew of twenty-one hands, all told, consisting of the master, two mates, two engineers, and sixteen hands, including firemen, A.B.'s, cook, stewards, and boys; was fully manned, was well found in all respects, and was drawing 12 ft. 10 in. aft, and 8 ft. 9 in. forward. She was on a voyage from Port Adelaide to Port Pirie *via* Wallaroo with a general cargo of about 270 tons, and left Wallaroo at 1 p.m. on the 10th June. At 5.30 p.m., when steering north, the Lowly Point light bore by compass N. by E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. At 6.30 p.m. the course was altered to N.N.E., and this course was continued until 7.5 p.m., when the lighthouse bore N. by E.  $\frac{3}{4}$  E., after an E. by S. course was steered until 7.25 p.m., when Point Lowly lighthouse bore N. by W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  W. At 7.45 p.m., what was supposed to be the Port Germein light was bearing N.E. by E.  $\frac{3}{4}$  E. The course was then again altered to E. by N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  N., and fifteen minutes later the vessel grounded on Ward Spit in about 11 ft. 6 in. of water.

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At 7.45 p.m., the master being confident as to his position, did not use the lead. Had he done so it would have indicated that the vessel was not where he supposed she was. It is apparent from the evidence that the light seen was not that on the Port Germein jetty; as a matter of fact the vessel was not then within the radius of that light.

The reason given by the master for the position of the vessel is that an exceptionally strong flood-tide had caused her to over-run the distance estimated. The evidence shows that the tide in the gulf on this particular date was an exceptional one, and that the ordinary speed of the vessel under favourable circumstances was not more than nine knots an hour at the most; but the master thinks that owing to the influence of the tide before-mentioned, he must have made at least ten knots. The vessel grounded almost imperceptibly on a sandy bottom, and was towed off again by the steam-tug "Nelcebee" on the 14th June, at 2.15 p.m., and continued her voyage to Port Pirie without further assistance. No lives were lost, or injury sustained by anyone on board, and no damage was done to the vessel or cargo.

The vessel is valued at £5,000, and insured for £3,850. The Board, after carefully considering the evidence, find that the vessel was about one and a half miles N.W. of where the master supposed, but are of opinion that the mistake may have been caused by the exceptional tide, and a probable heeling error in the compass. The wind being strong from the N.W. caused the vessel to list to starboard, which would have the effect of putting her to windward of her course. Had the master, however, continued the E. by S. course, instead of changing it to E. by N. when he did, he would probably have seen the Port Germein jetty light, and thus avoided the grounding. The Board are also of opinion that had the lead been used, the master would have known that he was getting out of position. As in other respects the vessel appears to have been navigated with seamanlike care, the Board do not propose to refer the matter to the Court of Marine Inquiry.

JOHN DARBY,  
Secretary, Marine Board.

Marine Board Offices,  
Port Adelaide,  
7th July, 1898.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the  
16th day of September, 1898.)