

(No. 5892.)

“PORT ADELAIDE.”

FINDING and Order of a Marine Court of Enquiry held at Singapore on the 11th day of March, 1899, to investigate the circumstances attending the stranding of the British barque “Port Adelaide.”

The “Port Adelaide” was a barque of 1,235 tons, Official Number 87,718, registered at Glasgow. She left Cheribon on the 23rd December, 1898, bound for Delaware Breakwater with a full cargo of sugar. She had a crew of 20 men all told.

After trying to go through the Sunda Straits, and being prevented by head winds and contrary currents, the Master determined to go through Lombok Straits. When he reached the Straits he was met with head winds, calms and contrary currents, and was there for 20 or 30 days trying to get through.

At 6 p.m. on 7th February, bearings were taken of Lombok Island East Point, South by West, and Sumtawa Point S.E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. as shown in the Log. The wind was South-West, moderate breeze, cloudy with rain squalls. The wind appears to have fallen later. The ship was heading W.N.W. and making between two to four knots. At 1.30 a.m. on the 8th February, the vessel's stern struck a reef. She was under upper top-sails at the time. The crew took in all sail and took soundings and found 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms with a coral bottom. The wells were sounded and seven inches of water found. The ship commenced to bump heavily and the boats were got out and provisioned, and the crew got into them and pulled under the lee of the vessel and made fast to a line from the bows.

Just before daylight the crew returned on board and sounded again, finding the same water. Wells were again sounded and ship was found to be making little or no water.

From the mast-head, sunken black rocks were seen all round the vessel. The vessel was rolling and grinding, and the masts trembling. Bearings were taken of Lombok Peak, S.W. by W., and there was a small island astern, S.E. by E.

The crew stood by the ship all day and frequent soundings were taken. Towards evening, soon after 5 o'clock, the water was found to be rushing into the ship, and there were seven feet in the hold and water could be seen pouring in by the fresh water tanks.

There was danger of the masts coming down, and the Master decided to abandon the ship at 5.30. The vessel was then settling down by the head, and there was a slight list to starboard. The crew started in the boats and pulled for the nearest land, and landed at Tambora in the Island of Sumbawa, which the Master and First Mate reached about 4 p.m. next day.

The Second Mate's boat got parted from the others during the night, and reached Tambora two days later, having been unable to pull against the current. The ship's compasses were adjusted at Greenock on May 11th, 1898, before leaving on the present voyage.

The Court is of opinion that the vessel was navigated in a seamanlike manner, and that the course set was a safe and proper one. Every opportunity seems to have been taken to verify the vessel's position by cross bearings, and observation for error of compass taken at every opportunity.

The loss of the vessel appears to have been due to an abnormal current to the eastward. Everything possible seems to have been done under the circumstances for the safety of the crew and vessel after stranding.

The Court exonerates the Master and Officers from all blame.

E. L. BROCKMAN,  
Acting First Magistrate, Singapore, President.

HENRY BUTTERWORTH,  
Master and Lieutenant, R.N., } Assessors.  
ARKLEY SMITH, }  
Master S.S. “Abana.” }

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