

(No. 5900.)

"LA SERENA" (S.S.).

REPORT of a Court of Investigation held at the Court House, Broome, on Wednesday, the 19th April, 1899, before Michael Scales Warton, Sub-Collector of Customs, and Arthur Male, a Justice of the Peace, to investigate the formal charges preferred against John Thompson Simpson, the Master of the steam-ship "La Serena" (the number of whose certificate is 50, Queensland), and drawn under the 1st Section of 28th Victoria, No. 2; and to investigate the circumstances attending the stranding of the s.s. "La Serena" near Adèle Isle, on the 10th April, 1899, the said J. T. Simpson being Master of the said steam-ship at the time.

The Court, having assembled at 10.30 a.m. on the 19th April, 1899, appointed Robert Barter, master mariner, whose certificate of competency is 30,912 (Plymouth); and Henry Lee, master mariner, whose certificate of competency is 230 (Adelaide), as nautical assessors to the Court.

The Accusation.

To John Thompson Simpson, master of the s.s. "La Serena" (of Adelaide), the number of whose certificate is 50, Queensland.

15th April, 1899.

Whereas at a preliminary inquiry into the stranding of the s.s. "La Serena" (near Adèle Isle, on the afternoon of the 10th April, 1899), before Michael Scales Warton, Sub-Collector of Customs, and Arthur Male, Justice of the Peace, it was made to appear to them, from statements made before the Court, to be requisite and expedient to charge you with the following specific facts which caused the stranding.

Therefore take notice that, in accordance with 28 Victoria, No. 2, and 51 Victoria, No. 6, a "Formal Investigation" will be held at the Court House, Broome, on Wednesday, the 19th April, 1899, at 10 a.m., to inquire into the following charges:—

1. For that you, the said John Thompson Simpson, when passing Adèle Isle, did not give a wide enough berth to the reef that surrounds it, more especially as the tide was falling, and also setting you towards the reef.

2. For that, when passing Adèle Isle you did neglect to put a man on the look-out, or to heave the lead, when cautioned by your Admiralty Chart (No. 1,047) that the coast was very imperfectly examined and charted, and that "shoaler water" had been reported across your course.

3. For that you took a dangerous, an unnecessarily dangerous, course, when you attempted to cross "the foul and dangerous ground between 30 and 65 miles westward of Champagny Isles" and Adèle Isle, mentioned in the "Australia Directory," Vol. III., p. 215.

M. S. WARTON,
Sub-Collector of Customs.
ARTHUR MALE,
Justice of the Peace.

Finding of the Court.

Read in open Court, and in the hearing of John Thompson Simpson, master of the steam-ship "La Serena" (of Port Adelaide.)

We find that the s.s. "La Serena" was stranded on the reef extending from the south-east end of Adèle Isle while on a voyage from Derby to Wyndham, but has since been got off.

We find that charges Nos. One, Two, and Three are substantiated.

However, in consideration of the practically unknown force and direction of the tides prevailing in the locality, and the absence of reliable information for its safe navigation, we do not consider it necessary to deal with the master's certificate, but we hereby reprimand the master (John Thompson Simpson) for his error of judgment, and order him to pay all the costs of the inquiry and investigation, amounting to seventeen guineas.

M. S. WARTON,
Sub-Collector of Customs.
ARTHUR MALE,
Justice of the Peace.

We entirely concur in the above Finding.

ROBERT BARTER, } Nautical
HENRY LEE, } Assessors.

Broome, 19th April, 1899.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 16th day of June, 1899.)

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