

(No. 6027.)

“QUEEN CRISTINA” (S.S.).

Marine Board of Queensland.

Stranding of the s.s. “Queen Cristina.”

The annexed Report and Finding has been received from the Court appointed to hold an inquiry at Townsville into the circumstances attending the stranding of the s.s. “QUEEN CRISTINA,” on Lihou Reef, on the 23rd December last.

The Marine Board concur with the Court's finding.

By direction of the Board, at Brisbane, this 30th day of January, 1900.

SAML. A. PETHEBRIDGE, Secretary.

Report.

Having heard the evidence of John Breaks, master; George Kemp, mate; Bertram Chapman, second mate; Gordon William Scott, chief engineer; William Campbell, second engineer; Joseph Albert Wadelin, A.B.; and Chris Petersen, A.B., we find that the s.s. “Queen Cristina,” of Glasgow, official number 105,985, register tonnage, 2,291, Thomas and Robert Jack Dunlop, owners, left Shanghai on the 4th December, 1899, in water ballast, on a voyage to Newcastle, New South Wales, with a crew of 32 hands all told. All went well until the 22nd December, when the vessel was, by observation taken at noon that day, in latitude 15° 55' south and longitude, by chrometer, 154° 22' east, with wind freshening, barometer 29.70 slightly falling, but nothing to indicate the near approach of hurricane weather.

A course was set S. ½ E., but in consequence of the wind and sea increasing, she was hauled up to S. by E. ½ E.; at 8 p.m., wind and sea increasing, the vessel began to fall off, and orders to steer S.E. were given, but she continued to come up and fall off from S.S.E. to S. by W. By 8 o'clock on the morning of the 23rd the wind had increased to hurricane force, and the vessel became practically unmanageable. No observation could be taken at noon, but by dead reckoning the position was estimated to be latitude 16° 37' S. and longitude 153° 40' E., wind and sea increasing, vessel rolling, racing, and lurching heavily. At 5 p.m. breakers were seen, the lead was hove with no bottom at 60 fathoms, and the anchor let go with about 60 fathoms chain, but it did not hold, and the vessel struck heavily on the edge of the reef with her heel, and was then driven right on to the reef, where she now lies.

On the 1st January the second mate, fourth engineer, two A.B.'s, and two firemen left in one of the ship's boats for Townsville, where they arrived safely, and the master and the rest of the crew were brought to Townsville by the s.s. “Barratta,” which vessel had been sent to their rescue.

As far as can be judged the vessel is a total wreck.

Finding.

1. There appears no reason to doubt that the vessel's position was correctly ascertained at noon on the 22nd December. From thence to where she now lies is a distance of 158 miles and bearing about S. 57° W.; this gives a speed of 5 ¼ knots. By the evidence of the rate and the direction of the vessel through the water, it is evident that the casualty was caused by a strong current setting to the S.W. and aided by the heavy south-east and easterly sea. (Evidence of a current setting in this direction, about where the vessel's position was on the 22nd, is furnished by Captain McArthur, one of the assessors in this case, from his own experience.) And we find that the stranding of the “Queen Cristina” on the Lihou Reef on the 23rd December, 1899, was due to the strong south-westerly current and severe hurricane rendering the vessel unmanageable.

2. That every care and attention was paid by the master and officers to the navigation of the vessel.

3. That no blame attaches to the master, officers, or crew for the stranding of the vessel, and we therefore return their certificates.

R. T. HARTLEY, J.P.
F. GORDON, J.P.

We concur with the above finding.

GEORGE MCARTHUR.
F. J. BOWTON.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 4th day of May, 1900.)