

(No. 6629.)

"PACIFIC" (S.S.).

Marine Board of Queensland.

THE annexed report has been received from the Court appointed to hold an inquiry, at Rockhampton, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the S.S. "PACIFIC" on a reef in the Bunker Group, supposed to be the Llewellyn Reef, on the 31st August, 1903.

The Board concur with the Court's report, but consider the master, Richard Henry Smith, displayed great carelessness in the navigation of the vessel, for which they suspend his certificate of competency, No. 402, issued in New South Wales, for nine (9) months from the date of the casualty.

By direction of the Board, at Brisbane, this 6th day of October, 1903.

ARCHD. MORGAN,
Secretary.

Report.

Having taken the evidence of Richard Henry Smith, master; Thomas Stewart, only mate; James Ireland, engineer; Matthew Downie, ordinary seaman; Henry King and Thomas Liston, A.B.'s, we find that the screw steamer "Pacific," registered tonnage 149, official number 46969, left Brisbane on the 29th August last, on a voyage to Townsville, with a cargo of about 96,000 ft. of pine and hardwood, 4 tons of joinery, and 30 tons of bunker coal, on a draught of about 10 ft. 6 ins. aft, and 9 ft. forward, and that at 7.30 p.m. of the 30th the master, from an approximate position 8 or 9 miles N.E. of Sandy Cape Lighthouse, steered N.N.E. by compass 9 miles, then altered the course N.N.W. 16 miles, then at 7.30 p.m. set the course W. by S. by compass. The master states, in setting this course, he allowed half a point for Easterly deviation, and half a point for leeway, and considered the ship was then making a West magnetic course. This course should have carried the vessel $7\frac{3}{4}$ miles South of Lady Elliott's Island, and at 4.15 on the morning of the 31st she should have been

S. $\frac{3}{4}$ E. 27 miles from Llewellyn Reef, allowing that the master's estimate of the ship's steaming (8 knots) is correct, instead of which the vessel struck that reef at that time.

This is in accordance with the oral evidence of the master; but in plotting on the chart (for the information of the Court) the courses he steered, the master placed the position he expected the ship to have been at 4.15 a.m. on the 31st, 42 miles S. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. of Llewellyn Reef.

The mate, however, states in his evidence that, from 8.30 p.m. till midnight of 30th, the course steered was West by compass. We find no evidence to show how the ship got so far from the courses steered, but have grave doubts that such courses were steered.

Finding.

We consider the master should have verified his position by a four-point bearing of Sandy Cape, and that the patent log should have been streamed, especially so as only an approximate position was taken for a departure from Sandy Cape; and in not doing this we consider he exhibited carelessness, and for this we consider him deserving of censure, and order him to pay half the cost of this inquiry—namely, six pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence (£6 17s. 6d.).

The Court wishes to place on record that, in their opinion, all vessels, especially iron ones, should have more than one compass, and that every vessel, after slipping, should be swung. The evidence shows that in this case an iron winch had been placed on the bridge since she was last swung.

A. E. SYKES,
Shipping Inspector, } Justices.
W. B. TURNER,

We concur in the above finding.

J. WILLIAMS, } Assessors.
C. NORRIS,

Dated at Rockhampton, this 8th day of September, 1903.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade, on the 2nd day of February, 1904.)