

(No. 7446.)

"PALATINIA" (S.S.).

IN the matter of a Formal Investigation held at East London on the 18th March, 1911, before RODOLPH ROBERT BIRD HOWE, Resident Magistrate of East London, assisted by EDWIN RYDER LARGE (Lieut., Royal Naval Reserve), Master of the s.s. "Fort Salisbury," and LEWIS ALFRED MUNN, Port Captain, East London, as nautical assessors, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the s.s. "PALATINIA," at East London, on the 7th March, 1911.

The Court, having carefully investigated the circumstances attending the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds:—

That the "Palatinia," a British schooner, steel built steamer, about 2,332 tons, left Port Tampa, Florida, bound for Kobe, *via* Durban. The ship was in good order, staunch, and well found, sufficiently manned and furnished with all necessaries for the voyage. Nothing unusual occurred until about 12.50 p.m. on the 7th March, 1911, when, we are of opinion, the vessel struck a rock or rocks (the Court gives no credence to the theory that it was a sunken wreck) at a point approximately fixed by the master at a spot in the vicinity of Umlana River. That the striking of the vessel was caused by the wrongful act of the master in not setting a safe course from the definitely fixed position which he was in possession of when passing Great Fish River Point Lighthouse, at 11 o'clock the same morning. That the fact of his having steered various uncertain courses from Great Fish River Point Lighthouse until noon rendered his position at that time uncertain, that there was then (at noon) no means of establishing his actual position by bearings. From this indefinite position at noon he set a course (E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., by standard compass) which was apparently steered till the time the vessel struck. That the courses steered were closer to the shore than consistent with safety, and resulted in the loss of the vessel. That although the master stated that Madagascar Reef was not distinguishable from the rest of the shore when abeam, his distance from the shore could have been determined by means of two bearings of Madagascar Reef, one before and one abaft the beam. That when the vessel arrived off the Port of East London, she was drawing so much water that it was impossible for her to cross the bar and enter the harbour, and that the action taken by the master in beaching his vessel was the only one possible under the circumstances. Owing to the above finding the Court orders that the certificate of the master, Edward Lawson, be suspended for a period of three months from this date. The Court, however, recommends that during this period a first mate's certificate be issued to him.

R. B. HOWE, R.M.

E. RYDER LARGE,
Master s.s. "Fort Salisbury."

L. A. MUNN,
R.N. Capt., E. London.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the
19th day of May, 1911.)

(20049—4.) Wt. 15—53. 120. 5/11. D & S.