

YH.

(No. 7594.)

“SALFORDIA” (S.S.).

IN the matter of a Formal Investigation held at Colombo on the 17th and 18th February, 1913, into the circumstances attending the wreck of the steamship “SALFORDIA.”

*Report of Court.*

The Court having carefully inquired into the circumstances attending the above-named shipping casualty, found as follows, for the reasons stated in the annexure hereto:—

(1) That the loss of the steamship “Salfordia” was due to default, in that no soundings were taken, having regard to the condition of the weather, to the fact that no observations for position of the ship were possible on the 9th January, 1913, and to the knowledge of the existence of uncertain currents off the east coast of Ceylon during the north-east monsoon, and that the course the ship was taking would bring her within soundings off the coast.

(2) That the captain of the ship was to blame.

(3) That the captain was not right in setting his course S. 16 E. (true) at 1.30 a.m. on the 10th January, 1913, without taking soundings.

(4) That soundings should most certainly have been taken until the captain had even approximately ascertained his position, for had soundings been taken they would have indicated the danger of the position even if they did not indicate the exact position of the ship.

H. A. Loos, D.J.

*Annexure.*

The steamship “Salfordia,” whose net tonnage was 2,365, and gross tonnage 3,665, and which belonged to Messrs. Sivewright, Bacon, and Company, of Manchester, was on her way from Calcutta to Colombo with a cargo of about 5,500 tons of coal, when she was wrecked off the east coast of Ceylon, having gone aground on the Alpee Shoal at 1.45 on the morning of the 10th January, 1913. She had no passengers on board, but carried a crew of 45 persons. As the weather was overcast and rainy no observations by the sun could be taken on the 9th January, 1913.

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and I am of opinion that when land was suddenly sighted at a distance of three miles, as the captain states, at 1.15 a.m. on the 10th January, 1913—admittedly, the captain did not expect to find himself nearer than eight or ten miles to the land—he committed a grave error of judgment in not immediately taking soundings in view of the fact that he was aware of the dangerous nature of the coast, of the existence of uncertain currents, and the absence of definite information, owing to the impossibility of taking observations since the 8th January, 1913, of the exact position of the ship at the time the land was sighted. There can be little doubt that if soundings had been taken before the course of the ship had been altered by the captain from the easterly one set by the second officer, as soon as he sighted the land, to S. 16 E. at 1.30 a.m., the captain would have ascertained the danger of the position in which the ship then was, and had he continued on the easterly course for a time, the safety of the ship would have been assured.

According to the captain, he believed that when he sighted land the ship was off Komari Point. As a matter of fact he was about 33 miles to the north of that point.

Had that well-known dangerous point been lighted, the fact that the light was not in sight would have indicated to the captain the error of his belief, and perhaps have put him more on his guard and averted the wreck of the steamship “Salfordia.”

H. A. Loos, D.J.

I, David Matthew Jansz, secretary of the District Court of Colombo, do hereby certify that the foregoing are true and correct copies of the proceedings had in connection with the wreck of the steamship “Salfordia” together with a report of the finding of the Court and the assessors report thereon as recorded in special case No. 553 of the District Court of Colombo.

D. M. JANSZ,  
Secretary.

District Court, Colombo,  
20th March, 1913.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 17th day of May, 1913.)