

## GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.--No. 524.

Required for the Observatory a strong active youth of good education.

Salary \$50 per month.

For further particulars apply to the Director of the Observatory.

Applications, with testimonials, to be sent to the Director of the Observatory not later than Noon of the 28th instant.

By Command,

A. LISTER,  
*Acting Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 21st December, 1889.

## GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.--No. 525.

The following finding of a Marine Court of Enquiry is published for general information.

By Command,

A. LISTER,  
*Acting Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 21st December, 1889.

## FINDING.

We find that the British ship *Nylghau*, Official No. 80,617 of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, of which WATSON BAKER BUTLER, whose Certificate of Competency as Master is 1,990 of Canada, was Master, left Singapore on the 1st November, 1889, bound for Hongkong with a crew of 17 all told, and a full cargo of timber.

That having worked up the Luzon Coast until the 24th November in Lat. 17.43 N. and Long. 119.58 E. having got the N.E. monsoon, the ship was headed across the China Sea for Hongkong, but that on the evening of the 25th at about 8.10 she struck on the Pratas Shoal and was there abandoned.

It appears from the evidence of the Master, who is the only competent witness before the Court on the subject, that at noon on the 25th November, the ship was in a position in Lat. 20° 16' N. and Long. 118° 0' E. That at 4 P.M. on that day, she was further allowed to have gone 18 miles N.W. In this position, the Master seeing that the wind was falling, and the ship "breaking off," determined to pass to the southward of the Pratas Shoal, and with that intention set the course due West.

This assumed position at 4 P.M. was 49 miles E. by S.  $\frac{1}{4}$  S. from the Eastern Extreme of the Pratas Shoal and seeing that the ship struck somewhere on the Eastern Edge of the Shoal at about 8.10 P.M., this would make the distance of 49 miles run in rather more than 4 hours which seeing the state of the wind and weather, the Court consider, is extremely improbable; and they are inclined to the belief that either the Master's observations placed the ship too far to the S.E. or that the ship experienced a W.N.W. set during the afternoon of 25th. A set which the Admiralty Chart 1661B states was experienced by H.M.S. *Encounter* in February, 1883, (the period of the N.E. monsoon).

It appears that the compasses had not been adjusted for more than one year and though it is probable that this did not contribute to the casualty, we are of opinion that therein the Master did not use due caution.

The ship does not appear to have been prematurely abandoned and after the casualty all steps were taken that the circumstances permitted for the safety of the crew.

The entire crew left the ship in two boats, one of these has not been heard of since the morning of the 27th when she was sighted apparently "all well" by the Master in the other boat. Unsuccessful search has been made for her by H.M.S. *Cockchafer*. She was in charge of the Mate John Briggs and contained 6 seamen in addition, and appears to have left the ship properly found.

We are of opinion that the Master would have displayed sounder judgment, if he had carried out the recommendations given on the chart and in the sailing directions to pass to the Southward of the Pratas Shoal. But we consider this omission to have been an error in judgment and not a wrongful act or default, and we do not deal with his certificate which is therefore now returned to him.

Given under our hands at Hongkong this 16th day of December, 1889.

R. MURRAY RUMSEY, Ret. Com., R.N.,  
*President of Court.*

J. W. McFARLANE, Navg. Lieut., R.N.

JOHN ROBB,  
W. M. SMITH, R.N.R., } *Masters Mariner.*