

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 31.

With reference to Government Notification No. 2 of the 7th instant, it is hereby notified that RICHARD FREDERICK DRURY resumed the duties of Sanitary Surveyor on the 18th instant.

By Command,

T. SERCOMBE SMITH,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 20th January, 1899.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 32.

The following Finding of the Marine Court of Inquiry into the loss of the British Steamship *Glenavon*, Official No. 84,305 of Glasgow, is published.

By Command,

T. SERCOMBE SMITH,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 19th January, 1899.

FINDING.

We find that the British Steamship *Glenavon*, Official No. 84,305 of Glasgow, of which WILLIAM PITHIE was Master, the number of his Certificate being 07,101 issued at Aberdeen, left Hongkong on the 29th December, 1898, at about 5.23 p.m. bound for United Kingdom with a cargo of 3,300 tons.

The ship appears to have been well found with one exception, namely, that there was only one Compass on the Bridge which was of necessity therefore used for all purposes, steering as well as bearings, though it does not appear that this contributed to the casualty.

She appears to have been properly and sufficiently manned and was in a good and seaworthy condition.

That her draft of water on leaving was 20 feet forward and 22 feet aft.

That after passing Green Island Light at 5.54 p.m. a course was set S. 34° W. by Compass (or S. 30° W. true).

That at about 6.34 p.m. the course was altered to S. 15° E. by Compass, there being no error on this course.

That shortly after 7 p.m. the ship struck and sustained such severe damage that she foundered in about 50 minutes.

That the crew and passengers were saved with the exception of the Chief Officer, WILLIAM DIXON; one Quarter-Master, WILLIAM SMITH; the Second Steward, FRANK WILSON; and one Chinese, CHEUNG IP, No. 3 Fireman.

It appears from the evidence before the Court that the first course S. 34° W. was set by the Master as being a mid-channel course between Lamma and Chung Islands, and though this course in the opinion of the Court was not the best that could have been taken, it cannot be considered as an improper course.

From a position where the Eastern end of Chung Island would be abeam and 1½ miles distant, it was the object of the Master to alter his course to S. 15° E. so as to pass 2 miles East of Ling Ting Island. Again this course in the opinion of the Court was not the best that could have been taken as it passed only ¼ miles off the Northern Ling Ting rock, a distance which was little enough having in view a set of the flood tide to the Westward.

The Master gave orders to the Third Officer to take a 4-point bearing of Chung Island and to let him know when it was abeam. The Court is of opinion that, in the darkness and owing to high land at the back, a reliable 4-point bearing was not taken, and that consequently an erroneous position was arrived at, making the S. 15° E. course an absolutely dangerous one, and that such an erroneous position was the principal cause of the casualty.

The Court is of opinion that the Master did not exercise proper care in fixing this position. It cannot consider that a general direction to a Junior Officer to take a 4-point bearing of an Island itself more than 2 miles long and which was to be passed at a distance of only 1½ miles, indicates sufficiently careful and seamanlike navigation, though the Court believes that the Master's direction was carried out by the Third Officer to the best of his ability.

Further, it appears to the Court that it is at least probable that, there was a not inconsiderable lapse of time between the taking of the beam bearing of Chung Island and the alteration of the course to S. 15° E. and the ship continuing on the S. 34° W. course was continually making the S. 15° E. course more and more dangerous.