

## GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 393.

The following Finding of the Marine Court of Enquiry into the sinking of the British Steamship *Pakshan*, is published.

By Command,

F. H. MAY,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 23rd June, 1902.

## FINDING.

We find that the British s.s. *Pakshan*, Official No. 82893, of London, of which JAMES GEORGE REID was Master, whose certificate of competency as Master is 094,439, was lying at a buoy in Hongkong Harbour on the evening of 2nd June.

That the Ship had on board undischarged cargo consisting of 700 bags of rice; she had also about 207 tons of bunker coal.

That at about 7 p.m., owing to the removal by the Third Engineer of the cover of the sea connection for the ballast tank, the ship began to take in water, and the attempts to stop it being ineffectual, she sank at her moorings in about 7 fathoms of water.

It appears from the evidence that the Master was on shore, that the Chief Engineer went on shore at 6 p.m., and the Second Engineer went on shore at 6.30, leaving the duty of filling the ballast tank to the Third Engineer, who had only been in the ship a few hours. The Second Engineer states that he distinctly told the Third Engineer to examine the valve in the intermediate box and not to touch the sea connection, but the Court finds it difficult to make this statement correspond with the action of the Third Engineer, who almost immediately afterwards went down and did not touch the intermediate valve box but did take the cover off the sea connection, as admitted by himself.

The Court having heard and carefully considered the evidence, is of opinion that the ship sank as the result of one serious blunder of the Third Engineer, preceded and followed by a series of hardly less serious faults on the part of others. The Court is impressed with the apparent want of resource shewn by those concerned. In Hongkong it is difficult to imagine not being able to engage the services of almost any number of steam-launches at almost any hour of the day or night, and a tow of about 1,000 yards would at any rate have got the ship into 3 fathoms less water than she went down in. No signals were made to attract attention, and no application made to the ships close by for assistance.

The Court considers that the leaving of the Third Engineer in charge of the important duty of examining the valves connecting with the ballast tank was a serious error on the part of the Second Engineer, and indeed they are unable to acquit the Chief Engineer of all responsibility on this score, for the Court is of opinion that he ought to have been aware of the fact that the ballast tank was being filled.

The absence of the crew is one of the contributing causes of the loss of the ship, had there been more help, more might have been done, and here again it is clear that application to the adjacent ships might have had beneficial effect.

The Court, however, is of opinion that these faults of commission and omission do not amount to a wrongful act or default, and the certificates of the Master, Officers and Engineers are not therefore dealt with.

Given under our hands at Victoria, Hongkong, this 19th day of June, 1902.

R. MURRAY RUMSEY, Retd. Com., R.N.,  
*President.*

F. JAMES, Lieut. (N.), R.N.

E. BEETHAM, R.N.R., Master.

W. D. WELSH, Master.

JOHN GOULD, R.N.R., First Engineer.

## GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 394.

The following Returns of Deaths, for the month of May, 1902, are published.

By Command,

F. H. MAY,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 25th June, 1902.