

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Agarwal DEPARTMENT.

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Dated	9-11-	1860.

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Marine Department,
9th November 1860.*

No. 23. Read the following letter from J. J. FRANKLIN, Esq., Superintendent of Marine, to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 1st November 1860, No. 4,734.

I have the honor to inform you that the Order of Government, directing an inquiry into the circumstances attending the wreck of the Barque "Hopewell" on the reef off Kalpeni was received at Cochin too late, as the Commander and Crew had already left for Bombay, an opportunity having occurred of sending them free of expense by the Steamer "Tilly," which the Master Attendant at that Port very properly took advantage of.

2. But although Captain Castor in his report to me of the loss of the Vessel, did not express any doubt of the wreck being otherwise than the result of accident, he evidently on subsequent consideration thought the circumstances suspicious, and before the Commander and Crew were allowed to leave, their depositions were taken and are now with Captain Castor's letter forwarded.

3. On carefully examining these depositions, it appears to me that either the Commander was utterly incompetent to navigate his Ship, or that she was run on shore purposely. The Islands of Underoo and Kalpeni are only 38 miles apart; he passes the former at 2 p. m.; obtains bearings by his own shewing at 4 which must have shewn him, if he gave it a thought, that he had a set to the Eastward, and yet with Kalpeni ahead took so little heed that no exact course was insisted on. In laying off on the chart his positions taken from his bearings of the land, it is manifest that the courses steered must put him on the reef, when by running a little off the wind at the right time, that is in the afternoon, he might have gone to leeward of all danger.

4. I would recommend that these papers be sent to the Board of Trade for such measures as they may think proper to take in the matter.

From JOHN CASTOR, Esq., Master Attendant, Cochin, to J. J. FRANKLIN, Esq., Superintendent of Marine, dated Cochin, 20th October 1860, No. 250.

In my communication* dated as per margin, I have had the honor to inform you, with reference to the Order of Government, dated 29th September, No. 337, that the Commander, Officers, and Crew of the late Bark "Hopewell" had left this Port for Bombay, I was therefore unable to carry out the instructions therein conveyed.

2. The narration of the circumstances attending the loss, as furnished to me by the Crew, having appeared very unsatisfactory, I was induced to hold an inquiry while all parties were present, not so full perhaps, as I would have done, had the Government Order reached me in time, but sufficient to elicit the main facts as they occurred.

3. The written statements obtained from the Commander, Officers, and the principal portion of the Crew, I now beg to submit for the information of Government. These statements were recorded in the presence of the Commander.

4. The Bark "Hopewell" of 481 tons, Captain Barron, left Bombay on the 6th September 1860, bound for London. While in harbour there, the evidence shows that she was making water at the rate of 3 feet in 24 hours; moreover, the Vessel was very tender under sail. From the date of her departure to the 10th, the weather appears to have been fine. On that date, the Island of Underoo was sighted at noon, and passed at about 2 p. m. The course given was S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. The wind, as appears by evidence, was light, and unsteady, and did not allow the Vessel, for some short time, to lay the prescribed course; consequently she broke off to S. $\frac{1}{2}$ E., with the yards sharply braced. About 6 p. m. the wind becoming free, the course was altered to South.

5. The Island of Underoo appears to have been in sight until about 5 p. m. About 8 hours after Underoo was lost sight of, the danger on which the Ship was lost, was seen on the lee bow, the night being very fine, and the Ship running free, with a studding sail set, and with

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an altered course from that given at noon, viz., from S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. to S., and apparently no allowance being made for the Easting run. It would seem that an interval of only a few minutes elapsed from the first appearance of the danger, to the Vessel being irretrievably lost on the reef. Such is a short precis of the occurrences as deduced from the evidence.

6. In reviewing the foregoing facts, I am constrained to remark, that the route adopted by Captain Barron, was, in my opinion, unusual. Vessels leaving Bombay bound for Europe, invariably select the passage between the coast and the Laccadives. It is not desirable that, low Islands on this coast should be approached during the S. W. Monsoon, when mist and haze, with dark cloudy days, and uncertain currents prevail. Regular observations could not be expected at this season, and the recorded experience of former navigators indicates a far safer route. What led Captain Barron of the "Hopewell," to abandon a perfectly safe channel, and adopt one of a perilous character, which he might have avoided, can only be determined by a more complete and searching investigation than I felt myself at liberty to institute, before receiving the necessary authority. However, it is clear that the Island of Underoo was sighted in fine weather, and passed within 5 or 6 miles, and whether the courses steered from this fresh departure were shaped with that foresight to avoid the danger ahead, I shall next examine.

7. After having passed Underoo, and finding the wind baffling, unsteady and light, prudence and care should have dictated a course—as a safer one—to pass to leeward of Kalpeni; and even when it was determined to pass to windward, a much wider course, than $\frac{1}{4}$ of a point, should have been shaped.

8. There is a considerable disagreement in the statement of the Commander, from those of the Officers, and two of the Crew who steered the Vessel between the hours of 4 and 8 P. M., on the 10th. Captain Barron states that the course was altered, from S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. to South at 8 P. M., whereas the evidence goes to shew that it was at about 6 P. M. when this alteration took place; moreover, Captain Barron's statement is conflicting in itself. After stating that the course had been altered to S. at 8 P. M., he further on states that, at midnight, he was "still steering S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W."

9. Kalpeni bears from Underoo nearly S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W., and the courses steered would bring the mean, to the same bearings which the Islands stand to each other. The distance the Ship passed from Underoo, being only 5 or 6 miles, could make little or no difference on the line of the course shaped. Under such circumstances no other result could have followed than the catastrophe referred to. The statement of the Commander that the Ship had been run off her course, without his knowledge, is negated by the evidence on record.

10. It is remarkable that during the interval of about two hours which elapsed between the striking of the Ship and putting out the long boat, that neither the Ship's, nor the official, Log Books were considered important enough to save, nor yet the Chart by which the Vessel was navigated; but, a preference would seem to have been given to papers, relating to advances made to the Crew, and the Ship's disbursements. I should have thought that the Chart at least would have been thought of essential service to guide them to a port, when it was determined to take to the boat. This deprives us of the only documentary evidence, tending to throw light on facts connected with the wreck.

11. I beg also to enclose three depositions taken upon oath, in my capacity as Justice of the Peace, with reference to the leaky state of the Vessel, before her departure from Bombay. I was induced to be particular on this point, as it affected her seaworthiness to perform her intended voyage. The Chief and Second Officers, with the Carpenter declined signing the protest drawn up by Captain Barron, as they considered the Vessel was not staunch and tight, which she was stated to be, in that document.

12. The inquiry which I made not being held under authority, I am unwilling to express an authoritative verdict, which, under the circumstances, would otherwise have been imperative on me; but I beg to submit my opinion that, the occurrences bearing on the loss of the vessel demand a strict and sifting investigation.

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Cochin, 17th September 1860.

I, Joseph Barron, Master of the late Barque "Hopewell" of 481 tons, declare that the above named Vessel, left Bombay at noon on Thursday the 6th instant, and proceeded on her voyage bound to London with a cargo of Seeds, and bales of wool and rags, and experienced moderate breezes with occasional squalls and rain, until the 9th instant, when the weather became finer and the wind lighter; on the 10th at noon, being in latitude 11°00' N. and longitude 73°27'30" E. saw the Island of Underoo, bearing according to the Mate's account S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ S. I then gave the course S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. At 4hs. P. M. Underoo bore N. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., the Ship averaging since noon according to the log 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ knots; at 8hs., altered the course to South, considering that the Ship would on that course pass the Island of Calpeni about 10 P. M., at about 12 miles distance, at the same time telling the Officers that we should pass about that time, and that would be the last danger, after passing which, should the wind become scant they might allow the Ship to run off her course rather than brace the yards sharp up (it appears that the Chief Officer allowed the Ship to run off her course to S. $\frac{1}{2}$ E., without reporting it to me), midnight fine but dark, Ship carrying star-board fore-topmast studding sail, course S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W., distance, since 8hs. 4 knots per hour, no land in sight, still steering S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W.

11th. 1hr. A. M., was awoke by feeling the Ship strike, ran on deck and found that the Ship had struck on a reef, the surf breaking about 2 cables length to leeward bearing East, the Ship's head payed off to East and finally to N. E., and fell over with her deck to underward, got the boat out and cut away the fore and main masts, the Ship now began to break up and we were compelled to get into the boat just as we stood, without water and only a few tins of preserved meat, lay by the Ship until about 3hs. A. M., in the hope of getting some water when the Ship broke up and we were compelled to leave and steer for Cochin with three oars and in the course of the day made a small sail with such of our clothing as we could spare. Friday 14th, 9hs. A. M., arrived in Cochin.

(Signed) JOSEPH BARRON,
Master.

Statement of Mr. James Mezke, Chief Officer of the Bark "Hopewell" of 481 tons, Captain Barron, holding a Certificate of competency.

I was Chief Officer of the Bark "Hopewell," Captain Barron. The Vessel left Bombay on the 6th September 1860. The Ship was making 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches water per hour before the Vessel sailed. Nothing material occurred until we sighted the Island of Underoo, which we sighted on the 10th of September, bearing west end, S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ S., distance about 8 miles, we were abreast of the Island at 1-45 P. M., distance about five or six miles. The course steered from noon was S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. at 4 P. M., the middle of the Island bore N. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., distance about 6 miles. From 4 P. M. until 6 P. M., I was off the watch. From 6 to 8, the course steered was South. From 8 to 12, I was off the watch. I took charge of the deck at 12, or midnight. The orders delivered by the Second Mate were—Steer South and not to brace the yards forward if the wind headed, but not to mind a point or so if the Ship could not lie her course, and the Captain had said that we were clear of all danger. Fore-topmast studding sail was set about 1 A. M., whilst I was attending to the pumps, Robert Collins A. B., who was at the wheel called out, Mr. Meeke there are breakers on the lee beam. I immediately went on the poop and he called out again, repeating the same words. I went and looked over the lee quarter, and saw the breakers, telling him at the same time to put the helm down and called out forward to brace the yards up sharp, which were braced in two points, at the same time going down the poop when immediately the Ship struck. I was just going to call the Captain when he came out of the Cabin, and ordered the fore-topmast studding sail to be taken down, the Ship striking at the same time. We proceeded to get the long boat out, the Ship fell over with her decks to underward, having a strong list a port. In course of about one hour and half, the boat was got out, the Ship immediately bilged and filled and fell over on her beam ends, and we were compelled immediately to

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I hereby declare that I saw the land bearing on lee quarter whilst standing on main deck of Bark "Hopewell," Captain Barron, the time I should think was about $\frac{1}{2}$ past three p. m., Monday, September 10th.

The mark of × WILLIAM GRANT, Ordy.

I hereby declare that I saw the land bearing nearly right astern, whilst I was on top-gallant forecastle of Bark "Hopewell," Captain Barron, the time I should think was about 5 p. m., Monday, September 10th, 1860, and the distance was about 9 miles.

Cochin, September 15th, 1860.

(Signed) EDWARD FOOTE, A. B.

Statement of Archibald Sinclair, Carpenter on board the Bark "Hopewell," Captain Barron.

The Vessel's leak in Bombay harbour averaged one inch and half per hour, while taking in cargo. The night we left Bombay, being tender, the Vessel laid over to that degree that the water could not be reached by the pumps, at 8 the water was all over to the lee bilge, we tried to pump but could get no water out. At 11 p. m., on the 6th September, we pumped two hours before the pumps sucked, the Ship was still lying over. From this date to the day she was lost, whenever there was any sea the leak increased to five inches an hour, and when there was no sea the leak averaged to about three (3) inches. The Vessel was pumped every hour at sea, it became necessary to pump the vessel as often as I have mentioned.

(Signed) ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR.

The above particulars, I declare on oath to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Signed) ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR.

Taken on oath before me at Cochin, this 17th day of September 1860.

(Signed) JOHN CASTOR,

Justice of the Peace.

The deposition of James Meeke, Chief Officer of the Bark "Hopewell," of 481 tons, belonging to the Port of London, and which was commanded by Joseph Barron.

As near as I could possibly judge the leak of the Vessel in Bombay harbour, four days previous to our sailing, was one and half inch per hour. After the Pilot left, she laid over considerably, the leak increased to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches per hour in fine weather; when there was any sea to three inches or more. The Ship was pumped every hour at sea.

(Signed) JAMES MEEKE,

Chief Officer.

Taken on oath before me at Cochin, this 17th day of September 1860.

(Signed) JOHN CASTOR,

Justice of the Peace.

The deposition of John Brown, Boatswain, and Second Officer of the Bark "Hopewell" of 481 tons, belonging to the Port of London, which was commanded by Joseph Barron.

The Vessel increased her leak as she took in her cargo; day after day she increased more and more until we had to pump her morning and night, while in Bombay harbour. After we got to sea, the leak increased more still, until we had orders to pump her every hour. I could not say exactly at what rate she was leaking having a great list at times, but whenever she was upright, there was always plenty of water found in the pumps.

(Signed) JOHN BROWNE.

Taken on oath before me at Cochin, this 17th day of September 1860.

(Signed) JOHN CASTOR,

Justice of the Peace.

(True Copies.)

(Signed) JOHN CASTOR.

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No. 24.

ORDER THEREON, 9th November 1860, No. 397.

Resolved that copies of Mr. Franklin's letter and of the depositions received with it, be forwarded to the Secretary of State, for communication to the Board of Trade.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

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No 397 - 9 November 1860 -
Resolved that copies of
Mr. Franklin's letter & of
the depositions received
with it; be forwarded to
to the Secretary of state,
for communication to
the Board of Trade.

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The Supt. of Marine. depd 10th