

1. Number of pages. 12
2. Date of repair. 29.9.36
3. Initials of Reference. [initials]

M.R.O. 1-82,400-22-11-80

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	528	Press Mis.
Dated	23.5	1866

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,

23rd May 1866.

No. 131. Read the following letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary, Natal, to the Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Natal, 5th March 1866.

I have the honor to transmit, by direction of His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, the accompanying printed copies of a Report of a Court of Inquiry into the cause of the wreck of the Ship *Adelaide*, with coolies from Madras, at the Port of this Colony, on the 3rd ultimo.

Two copies

GOVERNMENT NOTICE, No. 25, 1866.

His Excellency the Administrator of the Government has directed the publication of the following Report of the Court appointed to inquire into the cause of the wreck of the Ship *Adelaide*, on the 3rd February 1866.

By His Excellency's command.

COLONIAL OFFICE, NATAL,
23rd February 1866.

(Signed) M. H. GALLWEY,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

Report of the Court of Inquiry into circumstances connected with the wreck of the Ship "Adelaide" at this Port, held at the Resident Magistrate's Office, 13th February 1866, in accordance with Colonial Secretary's letter of 6th February 1866.

From the evidence taken at the inquiry the following facts are elicited :—

The British Barque *Adelaide*, of London, 775 tons register, No. 15,696, and commanded by Robert J. C. Tilmouth, arrived on the 2nd February at the outer Roadstead of this Port, from Madras, with 345 coolies. She was brought up at the usual anchorage by the sailing directions on the chart, with the port anchor and 75 fathoms of chain out. Royal yards were then sent down, as well as studding sail-gear. As the wind freshened during the evening, the starboard anchor was let go, and 30 fathoms of chain veered out, as well as paying out to 105 fathoms on the port anchor. During the night the wind moderated, as it drew off the land. The next morning (the 3rd), the Steamer *Pioneer* went out, with lighters in tow, for disembarking the coolies. The Port Captain also went on board the *Adelaide* on granting pratique. He examined the chains and gave directions regarding them; also to pick up the starboard anchor, if the weather continued fine. The Coolies were then landed, and Captain Tilmouth left the ship with the Port Captain, having necessary business to transact on shore, leaving orders for spare cable to be got on deck, and the third anchor ready for lowering, also top-gallant yards, and any other spars that might be necessary, to be sent down.

During the day, and particularly towards the afternoon, the wind increased, accompanied by a heavy cross sea, arising from a strong southerly current, causing the *Adelaide*, as well as the other vessels at the anchorage, to ride heavily. Between 3 and 4 P. M., the port chain parted somewhere under water. Cable was then immediately veered out to the starboard anchor to 105 fathoms. Shortly after this was done, the starboard chain also parted, close to the hawse pipe.

Sail was then made, with the intention of weathering the Bluff, but the vessel canted the wrong way, with her head to the northward, in shore. It was then attempted to wear ship, but she would not come round, owing, in some measure, probably, to the end of the port chain dragging on the ground. This was slipped, but it availed nothing,—the vessel was already too far in the bight, and, in a few minutes more, struck and became unmanageable, drifting and striking over the shoal ground until she reached the beach, where she soon bilged. During the night, at low water, the crew were all safely landed.

We have now to advert to the causes which led to the wreck :—

The *Adelaide* had been moored in a proper berth, approved of by the Port Captain, and was the outermost of the five ships then at the anchorage. Her chains were good and full-sized (1½ and

1½). With the port chain, she had ridden in Madras Roads during a cyclone. The usual precautions seem to have been taken for the security of the ship. Both anchors were down, and upper yards lowered, at the instance of the Port Captain; spare cable was also got on deck.

After the landing of the coolies, the weather, which had moderated since the preceding day, became suddenly worse. The wind increased to a gale at N.E., and, acting upon a strong southerly current, caused a heavy cross sea, in which the ship pitched and labored heavily. To this latter circumstance must the breaking of the chains, and consequent loss of the ship, be attributed, inasmuch as being in ballast, and consequently high out of the water, the wind had greater power on her than the other vessels at the anchorage, which were deeply laden. Being a light ship, and short floored, the opposing influences of wind and current also caused her to sheer about at her anchors, instead of riding with a steady strain on the chains, as well as to pitch heavily into the short cross sea running at the time. By these abrupt jerks the chains were broken. The port chain unfortunately parted just as they were ready with 45 fathoms of spare cable to veer out. The reason that this spare chain was not made ready sooner, was that it was stowed away under the starboard chain in the locker, and had to be got round from the starboard to the port side, and this, with the other work—as sending down top gallant yards, &c.—fully occupied the time since breakfast.

After the chains parted, every effort was used to make sail, but unfortunately without success. The ship in the first place canted the wrong way, and could not wear by reason of the port chain trailing on the ground. When that was slipped, she was too far in the bight of the Bay for any chance of weathering the Bluff. In a few minutes she struck, and finally came upon the Back Beach, where she now lies a wreck.

We have only now to add that, in our opinion, the wreck of this ship was the result of accident, and that there is no blame attributable either to the Master, Officers, or Crew. We have consequently returned to Captain Tilmouth his Certificate of Competency.

(Signed) J. DAVIES,
Acting Resident Magistrate.

(„) G. RUTHERFORD,
Collector of Customs.

DURBAN, 19th February 1866.

(„) W. BELL,
Port Captain.

(„) E. P. LAMPOR, J. P.,
Agent to the Liverpool Underwriters' Association.

“ADELAIDE” INQUIRY.

Addendum to Report.

In consequence of Mr. Lamport having declined to sign the Report, on the ground that the port chain not having been slipped at an earlier period was the cause of the ship's not getting to sea, we have deemed it necessary to take further evidence on this point, viz., the Pilots (Messrs Anderson and Hodge), and James Simpson, the carpenter, which is appended hereto.

This evidence strengthens the conclusion previously formed by us, that the loss of the ship arose from accidental causes, and that everything was done by the Officers and Crew that seamanship could suggest under the emergency.

(Signed) J. DAVIES,
Acting Resident Magistrate.

(„) G. RUTHERFORD,
Collector of Customs.

DURBAN, 21st February 1866.

(„) W. BELL,
Port Captain.

[Memorandum].

My objection to agree at once to the draft Report, was founded upon the following evidence :—

First,—Of the Officer in command, Charles Parsons : “ When she parted the starboard chain, my first orders were to go aloft and cut the gaskets of the top sails, and likewise of the staysail and jib. When I saw the ship canting the wrong way, I ordered the carpenter to slip the port chain, to let her cant round. The sails then on the ship were the topsails and topmast staysail. It was fifteen or twenty minutes before we could get the chain clear of the windlass. During this time, the ship was drifting on shore, and when clear of the chain, struck in about five minutes afterwards.”

Second,—Of the carpenter, J. Simpson : “ We tried to slip the port chain when it was found the ship would not cant. It took me about five minutes altogether to get rid of the chain. The ship struck not many minutes afterwards.”

I considered from this evidence that it would have been better had preparations to slip the port chain been made concurrently with the preparations to set sail, and that delay in getting rid of the port chain *might* have been the cause of losing the chances of safety in putting to sea. I am now satisfied, from the evidence of the Pilots, that, in the present instance, this was out of the question, in any case, and therefore sign the Report.

(Signed) E. P. LAMPOR, J. P.,
Agent for the Liverpool Underwriters' Association.

Evidence taken before the Court of Inquiry on the loss of the “ Adelaide,” wrecked on the Back Beach of the Port of Natal—before the Acting Resident Magistrate, Durban, the Collector of Customs, the Port Captain, and E. P. Lamport, Esquire, appointed by Letter of His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, dated the 6th day of February 1866, and held at Durban on the 13th February.

RESIDENT MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE,
DURBAN, February 13th, 1866.

Robert John Cousens Tilmouth, having been duly sworn, states, to the Collector of Customs,—
I was Captain of the late Barque *Adelaide*, of London, 775 tons, official No. 15,696. I produce my Certificate of Competency as Master, dated 3rd February 1858, (put in, marked A.) No. 6904. I took on board 345 coolies at Madras, for this port. We arrived at the outer anchorage on the 2nd February, and landed the coolies on the 3rd. We anchored in 10 fathoms water. The bluff bearing S. W. ½ S. I anchored by the sailing directions on the Chart. I anchored with the port anchor, with 75 fathoms cable out. Sent down Royal yards and stunsail gear. About 8 o'clock that evening the wind was freshening, and I let go my starboard anchor, and veered out 30 fathoms on that anchor, and 105 on the port anchor. The wind drew off the land during the night, and subsided. The starboard chain was 1½ inch, and the port chain 1¾ inch. These chains were passed by the Government Surveyor in Madras. I produce a report of survey, (put in, marked B.) I purchased the starboard chain in Madras, and rode out one cyclone with 105 fathoms out. I left the vessel with the coolies on Saturday morning, the 3rd instant. I produce two links of the chain. The chain parted at the third link from the shackle. I now speak of the starboard chain. The port chain was the first that parted. The port chain was brought from England. In the interim between my coming on shore and the afternoon of same day, the wind and sea increased so that the steamer could not go out. I had, therefore, no opportunity of rejoining the ship. There were four other ships outside, including the Mail steamer. My ship was the outermost of all. During Saturday, it struck me from the shore that she was sheering about while riding at anchor, and I attributed this to the current and the ship being so light. I had perfect confidence in my Officers; they were with me through two cyclones, out of which we came without damage. I saw the ship come on shore, and I believe that nothing could be done to prevent the catastrophe. I think it right to add that, before I left the ship, I gave orders that the whole of the cable should be got ready on deck, and the third anchor made ready for lowering. I also left orders for sending down top gallant yards and any spars that might be necessary to be sent down, and not to spare

labor. I left the chart of the bay on the table, with the position of the ship marked thereon, and the lead over the side.

To Mr. Lamport—I was first boarded by the port authorities on Saturday morning. I heard no objections made to the anchorage. I received instructions from the Port Captain to pick up the starboard anchor if the weather was fine, and to ride with 105 fathoms on the port chain, and send down the top gallant yards. The Port Captain looked at the chains. As the chain clinched on the mast was smaller and more worn than the rest, he directed that it should not be veered out. This refers to the port chain. The topsails were perfectly ready for setting.

To the Acting Resident Magistrate—I rode out a cyclone at Madras on the port chain till ordered to slip.

To Mr. Lamport—I attribute the parting of the cables to the short jumping sea and the heavy current setting down the coast, throwing more strain on the cables. The ship was drawing 17ft. 6in. on even keel, I call her ballast trim 17ft.

(Signed) R. J. C. TILMOUTH.

(„) J. DAVIES,

Acting Resident Magistrate.

Charles Parsons, having been duly sworn, states to the Collector of Customs,—I was first Officer of the late ship “*Adelaide*.” I have an only Mate certificate, No. 11,390. I joined the ship in London, as second Officer, on June 5th, 1865, for Negapatam; from thence we went to Madras, and took on board coolies for Natal. We arrived in the outer roadstead on the 2nd February, and came to anchor same day about 9 o'clock A. M. We anchored according to sailing directions. We came to anchor with the port anchor, and veered out 75 fathoms of cable. The weather was fine, with a fresh breeze from the eastward. We let go the second anchor about 8 o'clock P. M., the breeze increasing with a hasty jumping sea. We had 30 fathoms on the starboard anchor, and 75 more on the port, making 105 fathoms in all on the port chain. The ship rode easier, but still jumping and pitching heavily. Things remained in this way till next morning, when we landed the coolies about 6 o'clock A. M. The Port Captain came off with the boats. He gave directions to have up the second anchor, and send the top gallant yards down, but the breeze freshened, and we could not do it. We only succeeded in getting up five fathoms, when the purchase bar of the windlass broke. The Captain went on shore, and left orders to get up all cable on deck, and to shackle on to the port chain 45 fathoms spare cable; he also gave orders to have a spare anchor ready; he also gave orders to have the top gallant yards sent down, and, if I thought the weather came heavy, to send down the top gallant masts. The breeze kept freshening, and sea rising after the Captain left. I got the chain up, and 45 fathoms shifted, as directed. I just got the chain ready to veer out when the port chain parted. This was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of Saturday, the 3rd February. We veered out to 105 fathoms on the starboard chain. After 10 or 15 minutes this chain parted close to the hawse pipe outside. The 105 fathoms shackle was close outside the hawse. I was on the forecastle at the time, and saw this. That is the piece of the chain left (identifies chain produced). The port cable parted under water. When the cables parted, I directed the hands to make sail, but she canted the wrong way, with her head to the northward in shore. Every effort was made to get her round, but without effect, as she had got too far in the bight before we had slipped the port cable. Just after we slipped, she struck. I think it was about four or five minutes. She then became unmanageable, and we kept striking until we got on to the beach. Signals were made from the shore not to leave the ship, and that evening at low water the crew all landed safely. The crew were perfectly sober at the time, and obedient to all orders. I attribute the loss of the ship to the current and short sea which occasioned her to pitch more heavily than she otherwise would have done. I was present in her during a cyclone at Madras, which she rode out, but she pitched more heavily and frequently in the roadstead here. I consider that short seas of this kind are more liable to cause a cable to part than a steady strain on it. We had no pilot on board.

To Mr. Lamport.—There was a very heavy wind at the time she parted. It blew E. by N. If we were at sea, we should carry two close-reefed topsails and reefed foresail, and no more. The

sea was very heavy and very short; we were shipping water right over the bows, not heavy water. The ship pitched heavily, but did not roll much. She was sheering about from one side to the other. I put a hand to the helm to try and keep her steady. Before she parted I was frightened she would part, she jumped about so much. I could not say where she parted the port chain; it was under water, and we afterwards slipped that chain. There was a buoy to the port anchor; I cannot say whether that buoy is there yet or not. When she parted the starboard chain, my first orders were to go aloft and cut the gaskets of the topsails, and likewise of the staysail and jib. When I saw the ship canting the wrong way, I ordered the carpenter to slip the port chain, to let her cant round. The sails then on the ship were the topsails and topmast staysail. It was fifteen or twenty minutes before we could get the chain clear of the windlass. During this time, the ship was drifting on shore, and when clear of the chain struck in about five minutes afterwards. There was a great deal of current setting in the bight at the time. The inferior chain noticed by the Port Captain was all abaft the windlass. The chain outside, by which she was riding, was the regular cable of 1½ inches; it was in good condition, and not much worn. I don't know the age of the chain; it was in the vessel when I joined her. The shackles were examined on the voyage out, and also on the voyage down from Madras. The carpenter examined them. Either the Captain or myself were present the whole time. The shackle pins seemed perfectly good. We put new wooden pins; they were hard wood; they were all re-placed. There was no chance of getting the vessel off. There was eight feet of water in her about a quarter of an hour after she struck. She was hogged between the foremast and mainmast. I thought it was the heaviest jerk we had had when she parted. I was on the forecastle at the time. The crew behaved very well, and obeyed orders. We had twenty-eight sailors, all Malays, with the exception of one European. I had just got the end of the spare chain shackled on to the port chain when she parted. I worked at it as hard as possible in the meantime. I should have veered out additional chain on both cables if the chain had not parted. I started on this job immediately after the crew had had their breakfast, and it took me all the time till two o'clock to set it up, with other work, as sending down top-gallant yards. I had then to get it round from the starboard to the port side. I began to get frightened she would part about two o'clock P. M., as she began to labor more heavily. There was a heavy strain on the windlass whilst she was riding. She rode by the windlass. We had no spring on board to ease the strain on the windlass. In consequence of the Captain buying at Madras a new starboard chain, we had 75 fathoms of extra chain on board. It was stowed under the starboard chain in the locker. That was the reason why it took us so long to get it up.

(Signed) C. PARSONS,

Chief Officer.

(„) J. DAVIES,

Acting Resident Magistrate.

James Simpson, having been duly sworn, states, to Mr. Lamport,—I was Carpenter on board the late Ship “*Adelaide*.” I joined her in London in June last. I examined the chains during our voyage from London, and likewise on the voyage from Madras. The Chief Mate and Captain were present. I knocked the iron pins out of the shackles, and re-placed the wooden pins. They were all in good order before arriving in this port. I was on deck when the port chain parted. We paid out chain on the starboard side to 105 fathoms; five or ten minutes afterwards, the starboard chain parted. We tried to slip the port chain when it was found the ship would not cant. It took me about five minutes altogether to get rid of the chain. The ship struck not many minutes afterwards. Before she parted, the sea was very heavy, large rollers and breakers coming in. Being a short ship, the sea caught her between fore and mainmast, causing her to jump, and thereby producing a sudden jerk. A heavier jerk parted the second chain than the first. She rode with the same chains in Madras, but with a longer sea.

(Signed) J. SIMPSON,

Carpenter, late ship “Adelaide.”

(„) J. DAVIES,

Acting Resident Magistrate.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
23rd May 1866.*

PORT CAPTAIN'S REPORT.

On the morning of the 2nd instant, a Brig and Barque in sight, bearing N.E. about 12 miles; the wind at the time moderate from that direction; both vessels standing in for the anchorage. The Barque proved to be the *Adelaide*, from Madras, with coolies for this Port. As she approached the anchorage the wind increased rapidly; and seeing there would be no chance to land the coolies that day I made the signal, "keep to sea until the weather moderates." This signal was not answered. The vessel continued on her course to the anchorage; and after taking in sail, and preparing to anchor, I caused the signal to be annulled. She was brought up in a proper berth.

I then made the signal, "veer out 100 fathoms of cable, and send down top-gallant yards." About 4 p.m. I made the signal, "prepare to disembark at day-light to-morrow morning;" and as I had not received a direct answer by signal as to their state of health on board, I sent for the District Surgeon to attend.

On the morning of the 3rd, at 4.30 (light airs from the N. N. E.) I took two lighters in tow, and went out to the *Adelaide*. I went alongside; and after putting the usual questions to the Captain and Doctor, I found there was no sickness on board to cause further delay, and signalled to the *Pioneer* to tow the lighters alongside, and commence disembarking at once. The Captain informed me that he could not make out the signals we made to him the day previous, on account of the flags at signal-station being end on. I then turned my attention to the cables, and found she had brought up with the port anchor, and that during the night the starboard anchor was let go. The vessel was then lying with the 105 fathom shackle on the windlass on the port chain, and about 30 fathoms on the starboard. I observed that the chain attached to the 105 fathom shackle, abaft the windlass, on the port side, was inferior to that which had been veered out; I therefore requested that it should be replaced by a heavy chain, which the Captain informed me he had on board. The weather at this time was very fine, and as I did not expect the wind to increase from the eastward, instructed the Mate to pick up the starboard anchor, to prevent it from getting foul. The Barometer at this time was at 29 degrees 90 minutes. I then returned to the shore, accompanied by the Captain. The Captain repeated the orders to the Mate, on leaving the ship, about the cables. By 8 a.m., all the coolies were in port. About 10 a.m., the wind and sea increased rapidly, and by noon it had risen to a fresh gale. At 2 p.m., the vessels at the outer anchorage appeared to ride very heavy, mainly caused by a strong southerly current, which threw up a heavy cross-sea. About 4 p.m., the *Adelaide* parted one of her cables, and 20 minutes afterwards, the second cable gave way.

The sea at this time was very heavy, and we cannot have a better proof of this, than in the case of the Barque *Monsoon*; this vessel pitched her jibboom under the cable she was riding by, snapping it off by the cap, and carrying away the foretop-gallant-mast with it. The Mail Steamer *Anglian*—supplied as she is with extra ground-tackle—also parted about 8 p.m., the same evening, and having steam up, put out to sea. The *Adelaide* was a high wooded and short floored ship. Vessels of this class ride heavily at their anchors, and ought not to be employed in this trade.

I cannot attach any blame to the Captain or Officers.

(Signed) W. BELL.
Port Captain.

At the Point, 21st February 1866, before John Davies, Acting Resident Magistrate, George Rutherford, Collector of Customs, William Bell, Port Captain.

William Anderson, having been duly sworn, states—I have been a Pilot for about 12 years, and know most of the circumstances connected with the wrecks during that time. The chances of vessels getting to sea when they part and their heads cant the wrong way are very slight. I do not know of any case of the kind except the *Bermondsey*, and she parted close to the hawse pipe. I have never been on board a vessel outside that has parted and become a wreck. I saw the *Adelaide* when she parted and came ashore. I consider it was almost impossible for her to have got to sea. The circumstances I mean are that,

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
23rd May 1866.*

from her light trim, she would be very difficult to wear round, and by the time she wore round she was too far in the bight. If I had been pilot of the ship on that day, with the sea on there was, and the other circumstances, I would not have tried to go to sea. From the time she parted to when she struck was about a quarter of an hour. If they had got her round and tried to go to sea they would have got on some other place (probably the Bluff rocks.)

(Signed) W. ANDERSON,
Pilot.
(,,) J. DAVIES,
Acting Resident Magistrate.

James Simpson, having been duly sworn, states—I commenced slipping the port chain immediately the jib was hoisted. I did not wait for any orders, as it was my particular duty, and whilst I was slipping the chain the sails aft was being made. I did not want any assistance. I knocked the shackle pin out, and then the end over the windlass, and then it ran out at once. It did not take me five minutes. I don't think the chain had anything to do with the vessel not wearing, as after the chain was slipped it made no difference, the ship not coming round, and continuing to drift in towards the shore. The ship was one that would not wear without head way on her, but drifted to the beach in spite of all we could do, and soon after struck. She would not answer her helm.

(Signed) J. SIMPSON,
Carpenter.
(,,) J. DAVIES,
Acting Resident Magistrate.

"ADELAIDE" INQUIRY.

At the Custom House, 21st February, 1866.

William Hodge, having been duly sworn, states,—I have been a Pilot at Port Natal 17 years, and I know the circumstances attendant upon wrecks that have taken place during that time. I do not recollect any vessels that have parted that have been able to get rid of their chains and get to sea, except the *Bermondsey*, and her chain parted close to the hawse pipe. I recollect the "*Bentinck*," the *Hardwicke*, "*Sebastian*," and "*Fusilier*" coming ashore. They all had parted cables dragging along the ground; and the last mentioned vessel, a foul anchor as well. In 99 cases out of 100, a ship is too far in the bight to have a chance of weathering the Bluff, even if they do get clear of their chans. The reason is that with a chain dragging, they cannot get way enough to wear, and they seldom have hands enough to make proper sail and attend to the chains as well. I saw the "*Adelaide*" come on shore. I should think it was about 10 minutes, but not more than a quarter of an hour after she parted, that she struck. I consider that sail was quickly got on the ship, that she was smartly handled, more so in fact than many ships that have come on shore under the same circumstances. My opinion is that the vessel had not the slightest chance of getting to sea, and that she would never have weathered the Bluff. My reason for saying so is that from her light trim, being in ballast only, she set away to leeward, instead of making head-way, and fell off in the trough of the sea. Had I been the pilot on board, I should never have attempted to weather the Bluff with such a ship, and such a sea running at the time, because, had she not weathered it, she would have struck on the Bluff rocks, and every soul on board must have been lost.

(Signed) W. HODGE,
Pilot.
(,,) J. DAVIES,
Ag. Resident Magistrate.

No. 132.

ORDER THEREON, 23rd May 1866, No. 528.

Communicated to the Protector of Emigrants.

(True Extract).

Chief Secretary.

To the Protector of Emigrants.

*Colonial Office Natal**March 5th 1866-**Sir,*

*I have the honor to transmit
by direction of His Excellency the
Administrator of the Government
the accompanying printed
copies of a Report of a Court of
Enquiry into the cause of the
 wreck of the ship "Adelaide"*

*The Honorable**With**The Secretary to Government**Madras*

*2
Two Copies*

with coolies from Madras at
the Port of this Colony on
the 3rd Ultimo.

I have the Honor to be

Sir

Your obedient Servant

M H Gathrell

Acting Colonial Secretary

Public 1868 Post
from
Colonial Secy at
Batavia

25 March
12 April 1868

Enclosure

copy 533.

Stewart's coffee garden
perhaps a kind of digging
into the corner of the work
of the Dutch Adelaide
with earlier from
Hawson.

No 528 dated 23 May 1868.

Communicated

To the Protector of Sui.

-Sui.

N.

11/1

To the Secy of Sui. 5th Sept 1868

With an order

131/132

5/15/1868
222.