

ing (Tuesday) they returned to the reef, and found the life-boat had broken adrift during the night, and was smashed up on the reef, thus cutting off communication. Vain endeavours were then made through the day to establish communication by means of floats. At 9 a.m. the Chief Engineer, Mr. W. Jenkins, in a brave attempt to land with a life-line attached to him was drowned in sight of all present, the line having parted they were unable to haul him back to the ship.

The s.s. "Venus" arrived through the day, and, at 4 p.m., she was despatched to Geraldton for the Rocket Apparatus.

At dark the rescue party returned to the Settlement, and at daylight next morning (Wednesday) again repaired to the reef, when it was found that the vessel had parted and the aft part from about the second fore-head bulkhead had broken up; but seven or eight of the crew could be seen on the fore-castle. The "Venus" returned to the scene of the wreck in the forenoon, and an unsuccessful attempt was made from the reef to establish communication by means of rockets. The "Venus" anchored close to the reef and remained all night with the rescue party on board. The next morning (Thursday, 6th instant) the "Venus" was again despatched to hurry up the Rocket Apparatus, leaving seven of the rescue party on the reef to render assistance, but on the way over she was informed by the "Wanda" that the "Penguin" with the apparatus would arrive that afternoon, and she remained outside to pilot her in. The rescue party remained on the reef during Thursday, and at about 5 p.m., the wind and sea increasing, the men on the vessel rang the bell and made signs that they intended to jump for it, this they did, and were all (fifteen in number), with some difficulty and the assistance of the rescue party, safely landed on the reef, when they reported the sad loss of the Master, Captain J. H. Walters, and the Chief Officer, Mr. D. W. Jones who had gone aft for shelter on Tuesday night, when that portion of the wreck broke away and was torn to pieces.

Eight of the men rescued were transported to the Settlement, and the remaining seven with the rescue party of seven remained on the reef all night and left for the Settlement on the Friday morning, from whence they were that afternoon, together with the others of the crew and the rescue party, transported to Geraldton by s.s. "Penguin," arriving there at 9.45 p.m.

Another lamentable circumstance in connection with this wreck to record is the loss of two men, S. Mann and R. Beyer, who at dusk on Thursday evening while endeavouring to row a dinghy from the Settlement to the reef with a view to carrying some of the men from there back to the Settlement, were (perhaps through the breaking of an oar or rowlock) blown to leeward, and though the boat was subsequently picked up no trace could be found of the men.

As previously reported, the "Penguin" was buoying in the harbour when the call for the rocket apparatus came to hand (noon the 5th inst.), but she was despatched to the scene from Fremantle at 3.30 p.m., and got away from Rottnest at 5.30 p.m. with the apparatus, but owing to the strong Sou'-Westerly winds (quite a gale) experienced, and the consequent heavy following sea which caused the engines to race, she was not able to make the Island before dark, and the Master rightly decided, as he was unable to approach the Island till daylight, to proceed to Geraldton and obtain the services of a local man as pilot and the latest news, this he did, and after leaving Geraldton at 2 a.m. on Friday morning picked up the "Venus" at daylight, who led him inside the reefs to the scene of the wreck, where she anchored at 8 a.m. The rocket apparatus was then transported to the reef, when it was found that the only part of the wreck standing was the forepart, and as no person was visible in the vicinity, the "Venus" proceeded to the Settlement, where the men who had camped on the reef the previous night had just landed, and these, the rescued and the rescuers, were taken by her back to the "Penguin," who, as previously stated, transported them to Geraldton, where they were all handsomely treated by the residents.

The officers and crew expressed their deep gratitude and appreciation of the treatment they received at the hands of Mr. Fallowfield and his party, the rescue party, and all concerned.

Owing to the sad death of the Master, Captain J. H. Walters, the Chief Officer, Mr. D. W. Jones, and the Chief Engineer, Mr. W. Jenkins; and the loss of the charts and records, material evidence is naturally wanting, but from the evidence adduced I find:—

- (a.) That the s.s. "Windsor" left Fremantle on Saturday afternoon, February 1st, 1908, for Hong Kong with a full load of sandalwood, being in every respect seaworthy.
- (b.) That the vessel, owing to the strong South-Westerly wind and heavy following sea which took her on the port quarter, steered very badly and griped to windward (Westward), and that in all probability the helmsman in endeavouring to check same gave her too much weather helm, and this with the inshore current took her to the Eastward of the course set.
- (c.) That the course set, if made, was fine, and it would have been more prudent, considering the short distance to be saved on a long run, the nature of the Islands, being low with outlying reefs, the state of the weather, and the dark night, to have given this dangerous locality a much wider berth.
- (d.) That everything possible was done from on shore to save life, and the actions of the rescue party are deserving of the highest commendation.
- (e.) That the brave effort of the late Chief Engineer, Mr. W. Jenkins, to establish communication by means of a life line attached to him, by which, unfortunately, he lost his life, should be recognised.

C. J. IRVINE,
Chief Harbour Master.

21st February, 1908.

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