

The Indo-China Steam Navigation Co., Ltd.

(INCORPORATED IN ENGLAND)

JARDINE, MATHESON & CO., LTD.

GENERAL MANAGERS

*Original not received*  
Indo-China S. N. Co. Ltd.,

HONGKONG *DV*

SHANGHAI, 11th November 1938

NO. 1960 GENERAL.

REF. NO. 3 (S.F.)

Re "KIAWO" Aground at Fumientan - 26/9/38

With reference to our letter of the 5th inst. we have now to advise and confirm exchange of the following further telegrams:-

Hankow to Shanghai 5/11/38

1532 "Kiawo" referring to their letter of 20th October from Chungking winter guards what are your instructions stop.....

Shanghai to Hankow 7/11/38

1526 "Kiawo" Your 1532/5 letter of 20th October not received therefore please telegraph brief particulars stop.....

Hankow to Shanghai 8/11/38

1104 Your 1526/7 Chungking letter 20th October recommended secure guards of 16 men at dollars 200 monthly from Fengtu Magistrate in preference to guard from Navigation Bureau at Chungking stop. We concur do you agree stop. We have received a telegram from Ichang "Kiawo" Hung Chong salvage account referring to our letter of 30th September rendered as terminating 31st October pending decision contract for salvage amount to 12,354 dollars and 40 cents may we settle to what account stop.....

Hankow to Shanghai 8/11/38

1436 "Kiawo" General Average understand Chungking Agents have fixed 25 per cent deposit stop.....

Hankow to Shanghai 8/11/38

1421 Our 1145/4 River Inspector reported Chungking Commissioner of Customs summarised as follows: "Kiawo" position is such that extremely dangerous to wait water level refloating at



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Hankow to Shanghai 8/11/38 (Contd.)  
which she stranded stop. It is necessary to lower vessel bodily by rocks removal extent feet 180 by 40 by 20 deep stop. Work can be performed by local labour authorities at Fengtu agree stop. Rock removal will not affect River adversely stop. Estimate work will take 4 months to complete recommend I.C.S.N.Co.Ltd. be granted permission proceed with message ends. From Ichang permission has not been granted to date but we do not anticipate any difficulty this connection message ends. From Hankow our estimate Rock removal will cost about dollars 20,000.

Hankow to Shanghai 9/11/38.  
0914 We have received a telegram from Ichang "Kiawo" River Inspector Court held 3rd November finds first pilot guilty grave error judgment stop. Extenuating circumstances taken into consideration also previous excellent record with result severely censured warned and note made in his record.

Shanghai to Hankow 10/11/38.  
1636 "Kiawo" for purposes of our recommendations to Underwriters request Chungking to ascertain whether vessel saleable as she lies and at what price stop. Firm offers not required but only an indication stop.

You will note that it is apparently the opinion of the River Inspector that the only feasible method of salvage would be to cut a slot or basin in the reef about 180 feet long by 40 feet wide by 20 feet deep, in which to lower the vessel down to a level that will allow her to float off safely. It will be appreciated that this involves the hazardous undertaking of lowering the damaged and weakened ship bodily down a distance of nearly 20 feet by comparatively inexperienced salvors.



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Apart from the extremely hazardous nature of this operation in the hands of the only available labour - the Hankow repair firm of Hung Chong, who have no great experience in salvage work - our Superintendents are of the opinion that the ship herself will still present grave difficulties in that -

- (a) Even if the shafts are straightened it is doubtful whether the ship can be properly aligned to allow them to fit. The Surveyor to Lloyd's Register has expressed the view that after being aligned by native blacksmiths at Chungking the shafts will probably have to be condemned, as these vessels are constructed as lightly as possible within Lloyd's requirements and have therefore little surplus strength in this respect.
- (b) The operation of lowering the damaged ship, if not carried out with great skill, may easily result in further distortion of the vessel.
- (c) The improbability of having full or even adequate engine efficiency after refloating makes towage to Ichang practically essential. But it will be both difficult and expensive to charter a ship for this purpose owing to the risks involved and the large size of vessel which would be required.

By the next mail we shall send you a copy of an excellent photo of the "KIAWO" which has been handed to us by a Special Correspondent of one of the Home papers, and this will help you to visualise the position. This gentleman apparently passed the scene when the water had fallen about 20 feet below the level at which the ship struck. Please note that this picture is copyright so far as the Press are concerned.

We are also enclosing 3 copies of Captain Lamble's report which has now come to hand, together with 3 copies of our Marine





opinion that this salvage would be a very risky undertaking. Before sending his advices to London, Mr. Lacey is obtaining an estimate for the permanent repairs from the Shanghai Dockyards Ltd.

Our telegram of 1636/10 to Hankow requesting information regarding the possibilities of obtaining a price for the ship as she lies, was despatched with the object of being able to further clarify the position to the Salvage Association, and we now await Chungking Agents' reply.

Joss. There is one point that might well cause some trouble. The work of cutting the slot in the reef is likely to involve the demolition of the buddha after which the rapid is named. Superstition being what it is in China, reaction to the destruction of the local "god" is unpredictable. (From the photograph it will be seen that the head of the buddha lies directly underneath the Forward hold.)

Encl.  
c.c. Hankow.

RF/CD

General Managers, Indo-China S. N. Co. Ltd.



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