

king illus

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light from Dog Island lighthouse he rushed to give the alarm, and to do so he had to travel 20 paces to the alarm bell. By the time he returned to the fore-castle head the vessel struck. The first impact was only slight, and the crew scarcely noticed the jar.

A second later the vessel, with her engines going, stopped dead as she struck a huge rock jutting out of the water. The ship trembled as she struck, and then made a see-saw motion as if balancing on the rock amidships.

"We thought we had struck a mine," declared a member of the crew.

Orders were given immediately to man the lifeboats, which were lowered. The ship, however, appeared not to be sinking, so the boats were kept in readiness for relief by a tug from Bluff, which arrived after midnight, and later towed the lifeboats to port.

MUCH-NEEDED MERCHANDISE

TEA AND CREAM OF TARTAR ABOARD

The news of the stranding of the Waikouaiti caused consternation among the business community of the city this morning, for a considerable quantity of much-needed merchandise is reported to be on board the vessel.

Among the cargo is a considerable quantity of tea for local merchants, upon which they were relying for much-needed stocks to carry them over until well on into the new year.

There is also a considerable quantity of rum on the ship, a big proportion of the new season's figs for the local market, and, most important of all, it is said, a quantity of cream of tartar, local stocks of which are practically exhausted.

If these and other merchandising lines are completely ruined it will mean a big loss to traders, possibly not from a monetary point of view, but because in this period when licenses to import are necessary and goods are hard to procure, there may be very little prospect of replenishing them.

"There has not been a boat from Australia for some time," one merchant said this morning, "and the Waikouaiti is bound to be chock full of merchandise."

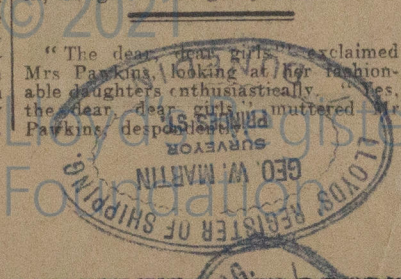
There are mails on board the vessel, but no advice had been received by the Post Office at noon that any had been lost.

A single-screw steam ship of 3,926 tons, the Waikouaiti was built in December, 1914, as the Armgard, by the German company, A. K. T. Ges. Neptun, of Rostock, and in 1919 was purchased in the Prize Court by the Union Steam Ship Company from the British Admiralty, when she was ceded by Germany as part of war compensation.

She is 362ft long, with a breadth of 35.1ft, and a depth of 23.6ft. Since acquired by the company she has been carrying general cargo in the Sydney-Newcastle-South Island ports trade, and is well suited for the requirements. She is registered in Wellington, and was commanded on this voyage by Captain J. Bruce.

In her many voyages the Waikouaiti survived some heavy batterings on the Tasman. Only last year, on June 23, she arrived at Bluff after encountering the heaviest storm in 20 years. Usually she made the voyage in five days, but was delayed a full day on this occasion, when solid 10in x 2in Oregon planks were crumpled like matchwood, and 6in x 6in uprights were also stove in, along with the galley door.

"The dear, dear girls!" exclaimed Mrs Parkinson, looking at her fashionable daughters enthusiastically. "Yes, the dear, dear girls," muttered Mr Parkinson, despondently.

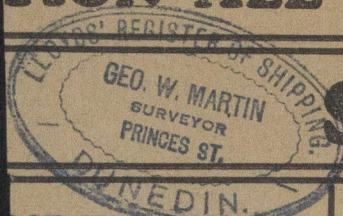


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