

No. 59.



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Navigation Act 1912-1926.

PRESUMED LOSS OF THE S.S. "CHRISTINA FRASER."

The Court of Marine Inquiry held at Sydney on the thirty-first day of July, 1933, and first, second, third, and fourth days of August, 1933, before JAMES WILLIAM MALCOLM LAIDLAW, Esquire, Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, assisted by Captain G. B. MERCER, and Messrs. J. ANDERSON, and C. W. J. BARKER, Assessors, delivered the following decision relative to the presumed loss of the British steamer *Christina Fraser*.

2. Mr. F. P. EVANS appeared for the Director of Navigation; Mr. F. O. EBSWORTH for the Owners of the s.s. *Christina Fraser*; Captain W. G. LAWRENCE for the Merchant Service Guild of Australasia; Mr. H. H. MARSLAND for the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers; Mr. R. M. STONHAM for the relatives of Mr. R. D. McPherson; and Mr. J. JOHNSON for the Seamen's Union of Australia.

JOHN K. DAVIS,

Director of Navigation.

Melbourne, 8th August, 1933.

STATEMENT OF CASE.

This case relates to the disappearance of the British steamship *Christina Fraser* whilst on voyage from Bulli, New South Wales, to Geelong, Victoria, with a cargo of coal.

The *Christina Fraser*, Official No. 152012, was a single screw steamship, built at Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1925, gross tonnage being 716, net tonnage 299, length 182.2 feet, breadth 28.1 feet, depth 14.3 feet, and was owned by R. W. Miller and Company, Sydney.

The vessel was built to Lloyd's classification requirements, and was classed 100 A1 in that Classification Society at the time of the disappearance, having undergone No. 2 Survey at Sydney, New South Wales, during this current year, 1933.

The *Christina Fraser* left Bulli Jetty for Geelong about 8 p.m. on Thursday, 22nd June, 1933, and is stated to have anchored off the Jetty for about an hour, presumably for the purpose of clearing up the decks prior to proceeding on her voyage.

At the time of departure from Bulli, the vessel is stated to have loaded about 729 tons of coal and 9 tons of bunker coal.

At about 9 a.m. on Friday, 23rd June, 1933, the vessel was seen off Burrewarra Point, New South Wales, by the steam trawler *Durraween*. Burrewarra Point is about 100 miles south of Bulli, and the speed of the vessel up to that point would be slightly over 8 knots.

It has been stated that the vessel was in company with the s.s. *Koranui* off Gabo Island Light during the night of Friday-Saturday, 23rd-24th June, the *Koranui* losing sight of the *Christina Fraser* during a heavy squall at about 1.50 a.m., Saturday, 24th June.

Consequent upon the non-arrival of the vessel at her port of destination, Geelong, Victoria, an intensive search was carried out both by air and by sea, but no trace of the vessel has since been found.

The *Christina Fraser* was under the command of John Walsh Queen, the total complement of persons on board at the time of the vessel's disappearance being seventeen. The vessel has presumably been lost with all hands.

COPY OF DECISION OF COURT.

IN THE COURT OF MARINE INQUIRY, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES.

IN THE MATTER OF AN INQUIRY as to the presumed loss of the s.s. *Christina Fraser*.

THE COURT, having carefully inquired as to the said presumed loss:

FINDS the following answers to the questions submitted for its consideration:—

Question 1.—When the *Christina Fraser* left Bulli on 22nd June, 1933, was she in a good and seaworthy condition as regards hull, engines, and equipment?

Answer 1.—Yes.

Question 2.—Was she provided with the necessary boats and other lifesaving appliances and signals of distress, in accordance with the requirements of law?

Answer 2.—Yes.

Question 3.—Was she properly officered and manned?

Answer 3.—Yes.

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Question 4.—What was the description and amount of the cargo carried on the voyage?

Answer 4.—729 tons small coal.

Question 5.—Was the vessel overladen?

Answer 5.—No.

Question 6.—Was the vessel improperly loaded?

Answer 6.—No.

Question 7.—When and where was the *Christina Fraser* last sighted or heard of after leaving Bulli?

Answer 7.—24th June, 1933, 1.50 a.m., off Gabo Light.

Question 8.—What was the probable cause of the loss of this vessel, and on or about what date did it occur?

Answer 8.—The evidence adduced does not enable the Court to say the probable cause of the loss, but it probably occurred on or about the 24th June, 1933.

Question 9.—What was the cost of the s.s. *Christina Fraser* to her owners?

Answer 9.—£27,000.

Question 10.—What was her value when she last left Bulli?

Answer 10.—£30,000.

Question 11.—What insurances were effected upon and in connexion with the ship and her cargo?

Answer 11.—£25,000 on the ship, £500 on freight and cargo.

Question 12.—What were the names and ratings of the persons on board the vessel at the time of her disappearance?

Answer 12.—

Name.	Rating.
John Walsh Queen	Master.
Chas. Wm. Frost	1st Mate.
Arthur W. Lucey	2nd Mate.
Daniel Palmer	Bosun.
Charles A. Gale	A.B.
William England	A.B.
Albert Seager	A.B.
Paul Kuraimes	A.B.
John Stafford Huntley	O.S.
Frank Walker	1st Engineer.
Robert D. McPherson	2nd Engineer.
James Birrell	3rd Engineer.
William H. Olsen	Fireman.
William Bassett	Fireman.
Joseph Rogers	Fireman.
Charles James	Cook and Steward.
Ernest Collerson	Boy.

The Court desires to express its sincere sympathy with the relatives and friends of the members of the crew of the vessel.

The Court has expressed the opinion that the vessel was probably lost on or about the 24th June, 1933; she was last sighted by the s.s. *Koranui* at 1.50 a.m. on that date in heavy weather. Neither vessel was fitted with wireless apparatus. The casualty possibly occurred soon after 1.50 a.m. on the 24th June last when the *Koranui* was in the vicinity. Had both vessels been fitted with wireless apparatus possibly some assistance could have been rendered to the *Christina Fraser*. Having these circumstances in mind, the Court expresses the opinion that all seagoing vessels on the Australian coast should be fitted with wireless apparatus.

Dated this Fourth day of August, 1933.

J. LAIDLAW, S.M.,
Only Member of Court.

We concur in the above decision.

G. B. MERCER,
Assessor.

JAMES ANDERSON,
Assessor.

CLAUDE W. J. BARKER,
Assessor.

