

MISSING COLLIER. HOPE ALMOST GONE. Wreckage Not Identified.

No part of the wreckage sighted off the Victorian coast by passing vessels has so far been definitely connected with the missing collier Christina Fraser.

Fishermen at Mallacoota, who have had considerable experience of the coast between Gabo Island and Ram Head, patrolled the coast thoroughly yesterday and to-day, without finding any trace on the shores or at sea of the object reported by the Westralia. A land party on horseback also searched the coastline, but no wreckage was found.

There now seems to be no hope that the 17 members of the crew of the collier will be found alive. Although the search for the vessel has been abandoned, R. W. Miller and Co., Ltd., the owners, are anxious to investigate the wreckage reports with a view to finding out whether any part of the wreckage belongs to the Christina Fraser. Standing orders have been left at Eden and Mallacoota for launches to be sent out as soon as possible. The company's vessel, William McArthur, has left Newcastle with instructions to search for wreckage.

The master of the steamer Koranui (Captain Stein) produced the log of his vessel to the Deputy Director of Navigation (Captain G. D. Williams) yesterday. The Koranui was the last vessel to sight the Christina Fraser, both vessels being hove to at 1.50 a.m. on Saturday, June 24, about a mile apart in rough seas. The Koranui's position was then about seven and a half miles south of Gabo Island, the Christina Fraser being to the north of the Koranui. Great seas soon obscured the lights of the Christina Fraser from those on board the Koranui, and they did not see her again. Some deck cargo of the Koranui had been washed away by the sea.

It was the report of the master of the Koranui that formed the basis of the intensive search for the Christina Fraser by aeroplanes and by the steamer William McArthur. Since it has been definitely established that the Christina Fraser was hove to off Gabo Island, and the search has failed to reveal any trace of her, there seems to be little possibility that she is still afloat.

Of the wreckage reports, the greatest significance is attached to the one made by the Westralia on Sunday morning, to the effect that a piece of wreckage about 10ft long, and showing 3ft above the water, had been seen off Little Ram Head on the Victorian coast. Officials of R. W. Miller and Co., Ltd., state that there is little likelihood that it belonged to the Christina Fraser. The collier was a steel vessel, laden with coal, and the only parts which would float would be the chart house, the hatch covers, two lifeboats, and the working boat.

The chart house was secured so firmly to the steelwork with steel brackets that it would have to be smashed to pieces by the sea to be torn from the deck. It was thought that the wreckage seen had probably been washed from some other vessel, as there was a number of ships off that part of the coast during the storm in which the Christina Fraser disappeared.

An intensive search of the rocky coast and inlets on either side of Little Ram Head was carried out yesterday by a land party, which set out from Mallacoota Inlet about 9.30 a.m. on horses. The party patrolled the coast for about three miles on each side of the headland, and scanned the sea vigilantly without seeing any trace of the wreckage reported by the Westralia. The search occupied all day, and the party returned to Mallacoota Inlet at about 5 p.m.

Standing instructions have been left at Eden and Mallacoota by R. W. Miller and Co., Ltd., for launches to be sent out to search for wreckage. The launch from Eden will search in the neighbourhood of Disaster Bay, where a hatch was found, and the Mallacoota launch will search the coastline off Little Ram Head.

Last night the William McArthur was due to leave Newcastle after having replenished her bunkers. Instructions were given by R. W. Miller and Co., Ltd., to the master (Captain Bortyner) to search the coast thoroughly for wreckage. It is expected that the William McArthur will arrive off Gabo Island at daylight on Wednesday morning. It is considered unlikely that if the members of the Christina Fraser's crew took to the lifeboats they would have survived the rough seas.

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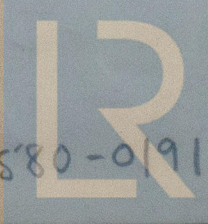
LOST COLLIER MARINE COURT'S PROBLEM

The Marine Court inquiry to determine the cause leading up to the disappearance of the collier Christina Fraser will be held in Sydney, probably within the next few weeks.

At this inquiry the loading of the vessel, her draught, together with the nature and extent of the repairs recently carried out on the collier, will be investigated. The vessel held the highest class in Lloyds.

Following the publication of the log of the Koranui, from which the ill-fated collier was last sighted, opinion in Sydney shipping circles favors the view that the vessel, which was apparently well-found, subsequently may have become disabled and foundered in the terrific cyclone off Gabo Island.

The departmental inquiry of the Deputy Director of Navigation (Captain G. D. Williams) was opened yesterday afternoon, when the statements of Captain Stein, master of the Koranui, and of Captain Smith, master of the Birchgrove Park, were taken. This inquiry will probably be completed by early next week.



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WS80-0191