

COPY

Lloyd's Register of Shipping

LOS ANGELES HARBOR
524 W. SIXTH STREET

SAN PEDRO, CALIFORNIA

June 2nd, 1933.

A. Lester Best Esq., Lloyd's Agent,
Transportation Building,
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

Dear Mr. Best:

The following is a summary account of my trip to Santa Barbara and Point Arguello, at the request of Messrs. Johnson & Higgins, for the purpose of making an examination of the S.S. "NIPPON MARU" as she lies aground.

Proceeded to Santa Barbara and met Mr. Iwakami and Mr. Pickering representing the Owners of the vessel and Mr. Beckley of Messrs. Merritt Chapman & Scott Corporation. At 11:30 p.m. proceeded with Mr. Beckley in the launch "ETHEL A" and arrived at the "PEACOCK" off Point Arguello at 8:00 a.m. May 31st, 1933.

In company with Mr. Gardner acting as Salvage expert for the Owners, and with the Captain and Officers of the vessel proceeded in a small motor launch from the "PEACOCK" to the "NIPPON MARU" and boarded vessel.

The weather was fine and the surface of the water smooth and at times glassy, but a heavy swell made boarding and leaving the vessel difficult. Even the small launch used was handled with difficulty alongside the wreck.

Position

The "NIPPON MARU" ran ashore at full speed and has run up a considerable distance. At high tide she is out of the water altogether at the fore foot and is drawing approximately 19 ft. aft. She has a list to starboard of about ten degrees and the fore and after angle is a little less than three degrees. She is nearly square with the shore, fore and aft.

She is supported on the rocks under the fore cargo hold and from there aft is unsupported back to the engine room. Here the vessel is firmly on a rock ledge. Aft of this the vessel is afloat.

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The time of my examination was shortly after low tide. Our approach was on the starboard side and by standing off in the launch and waiting for the larger swells the bottom of the vessel was bared and it was possible to look right underneath her. This part of the bottom which is approximately under the Nos. 1, 2 & 3 tanks does not appear to be damaged. Persons familiar with conditions in the locality state that the weather was good and the swell is what can be expected at any time.

Damage

In the fore hold the double bottom tank top is set up and when the swells struck the bottom of the vessel water was squirting into the port bilge at the margin.

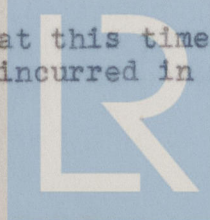
The engine room is flooded and the water rises and falls with the tide. At high tide the water rises at midships to the top of the thrust recess and at low tide (at the time of my visit) the water amidships was at the centre of the thrust shaft. The diver who made an internal underwater examination reports he could see light through the port bilge in the machinery space but owing to piping etc., could not reach the spot. He also reports that the floor of the engine room is set up for about 26 ft. x 6 ft. on the port side. There is no apparent indication of any disturbance of the boilers or engines. With the swell the water surges into the engine room and as the surge leaves the vessel all the surface of the water gathers toward the locality of the hole. The double bottom under the engine room is full. The fuel tank aft of the engine room leaks slightly. The No. 4 tank is full to water level and while this water does not follow the tide it has some rise and fall. The No. 5 tank has some ballast about 300 to 400 tons and is tight. The cargo hold at after end is tight. The after peak is full of water but is tight.

Possibility of Salvage

In my opinion the possibility of getting this vessel off is not favorable.

There is a high tide on June 7th & 8th with a rise of seven feet and this will be the only time that there is any chance of moving the vessel. The swell varies all the time and if the Salvors can get a good pull on beach tackles in conjunction with a heavy swell and with all weights possible removed from the vessel she may possibly move.

Should there be no move at this time it is my opinion that no further expense should be incurred in attempting to save the vessel.



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A.L. Best Esq.

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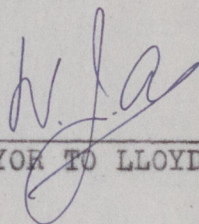
S.S. "Nippon Maru"

Diagram

The diagram attached is not intended to be to scale or more than a free sketch of the position. The soundings were taken by the Salvors in conjunction with Mr. Gardner and are reasonably correct in the heavy swell condition. No work of any description can be undertaken outside the hull of the vessel as the surge of the swell and the backwash from the rocks make it impossible for a diver to even enter the water.

The heavy weather that might come in this neighborhood would be on the port quarter of the vessel. The swell comes only slightly to the port side and is nearly fore and aft. Very heavy weather might force the vessel off the rock amidships but the sea and shore conditions would then be so severe that nothing could approach anywhere near the vessel.

Yours very truly,



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