

## The Wrecked Steamer Alpha

Chief Officer Wilkinson Writes From Union of the Disaster.

The most authentic news to hand so far of the disaster which befell the steamer Alpha, is thus told in a despatch received by the owner of the steamer, Mr. Gennell of Vancouver, from W. B. Wilkinson, chief officer. The letter which is dated from the Hotel Wilson at Union Bay on Sunday night, December 16th, says: "This fearful disaster will surprise you. The good SS. Alpha went on shore at Yellow Rock at 6:45 p. m. last night during that heavy southeast gale; nine men were killed, and the ship was lost. Mr. S. Barber, Mr. J. Barber, Gunner, the three engineers, two A.B.'s and one stowaway. Everything that humanly could do was done for them, but without avail. The balance of the crew came down with myself to Union Bay. Ford's boat, on arrival here I find that the wires are broken down.

"I came here to wire, but find all the stand by vessel on the island on which the Yellow Rock light house stands.

"The hull of the ship is just under water at low water. Fore and aft masts gone; and the beach is thick for a couple of miles with wreckage and cargo. I should not be surprised if the bottom was torn out of her. Mind this is only a surmise.

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## SALES BY THE GUTHBERT-BROWNE CO. LTD.

LEADING AUCTIONEERS. STOCK AND SHARE BROKERS, ETC.

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DO NOT MISS THIS SALE.

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Continual complaint in the local about the steamer's steering gear. As for the wheel, why two men couldn't hold it, it was a bad steering wheel in any kind of weather, and it was a common thing for it to go off a couple of points or two points and a half. The men kicked about it every time they came down from a trick at it. They said that it steered bad enough in good weather, what would it be in a gale?

The statements made by Donovan are very similar to those of C. B. Swanson, a seaman who also left the vessel here. He said that the vessel would not haul around with her steering gear in less than twice or three times as long as the vessel would ordinarily. Her wheel and steering gear were bad. That is why he left the vessel, Sullivan, the drowned seaman, had told him, he said, that the Alpha was one of the hardest vessels to steer that he had been on.

From other sources it is learned that not only were the Alpha's chances of safety handicapped by the alleged bad steering gear, but although Captain York had no local knowledge other than that gained in two trips made by him, he stated that he was able to take the steamer up to Union Bay, and on the statement Mr. Barber refused the services of a local navigator who had come down to the wharf for the purpose of going as far as Union on her as pilot.

The troubles of the unfortunate Alpha began very soon after leaving here, for the tug Constance engaged in leason and buoy work in lieu of the Quadra, reports having spoken the steamer drifting dangerously ahead of the island between 11 and 12 noon on Saturday. The Alpha was then blowing signals of distress and the tug Constance was reported to have offered assistance. Captain York, who was on the bridge, said that assistance was not needed, the vessel having been blown only on account of her bearings having heated. The steamer was not seen again after passing through the strait, until her remains were seen sticking up above the water after the wreck, although at the time the disaster occurred the steamer was reported to be lying on the other side of the island.

A number of those lost on the steamer are quite well known here. Mr. Barber and J. H. Barber, his brother, hail from Ontario, having come to the Coast at the time of the Klondike rush. The family was highly respected, being on intimate terms with the local community. Mr. Barber was a prominent citizen of East York. Mr. Gennell has telegraphed to Hon. Mr. Mulock for particulars. Mr. Samuel Barber, second mate, was a native of the rocks. The members of the crew all stayed on the island with the lightkeeper over Sunday, and it was not till late evening that they were taken away by a steamer and brought into Union. Some of them are in a very low condition from their sufferings, and Harry especially, was battered against the rocks until he was frightfully bruised, while he was trying to get the line ashore.

According to the story heard by the master of the ship, who took the chief officer's letter to the steamer, the steamer Alpha passed on the wrong side of the Yellow Island light. Captain York was watching for the light, and the steamer was driving his vessel through the channel at a fast clip. He could not see the light from the right, and the steamer, instead of the lighthouse acting as a warning, he tumbled right over the rocks at his base. A storm was blowing, but it had not attained its greatest force at that time. The poor fellows who perished are said to have refused to leave the ship.

Mr. Gennell, in an interview, said that the Alpha was not insured, but it was not correct to say that she was uninsured. Three surveys had pronounced her sound, and when she put back to Victoria she was examined by Mr. Hardies of Hardies and Thompson. This is the letter which was written after the examination of the vessel here:

"At the request of Mr. Barber I went thoroughly over the steamer Alpha on her return here on the 7th instant. She was reported to be leaking badly. I have to report as follows: Ballast pumps and cup valves broken; the engine, and the Donkey pumps were found very much run down and were repaired. After being examined by the surveyor, I made a thorough examination from forward bulkhead aft, and could find no leak in hull, and from observations taken at intervals of five hours I saw no perceptible rise in the water in the bilges. I am of the opinion the water found its way into the ship from some discharge compartments in the engine room."

Mr. Gennell said it was important that the public should know of Mr. Hardies' examination; it would disabuse their minds of the impression, if it was entered, that the ship was in a bad way. Mr. Gennell was the real owner of the vessel but had given Mr. Barber a half interest for \$20,000, which amount was paid in two instalments of \$10,000 each. The vessel was examined by Mr. Hardies, and he was made over. Mr. Barber having only put up securities and guaranteed certain interest.

W. Gordon, the former chief engineer who is now serving a term of ten weeks with hard labor for having deserted, says that not only were her steam pumps worn, and valves made useless, that no section could be obtained and the pumps were unable to be used when the water rose in her hold necessitating her return from the Cape, but many were the complaints he heard of bad steering gear.

Fireman Donovan, who was seen last night at the lockup, as he had been confined in yesterday by the police, after he deserted from the steamer believing her to be unseaworthy. He was standing firing in two feet of water when the steamer returned to port from the Cape. The water had cornered the coal bunkers and there was not a pound of coal left when the vessel reached the wharf. As to the cause of this water coming in, the water found its way into the hold through the bottom. "The engine, Gordon, could tell about this," said the fireman with a wink. "I know quite a little myself about that."

"While I was on the steamer there was

have means. The other fourteen men who made up the ship's company and the Alpha are Japanese. They were Bremen, deck hands, etc.

Mr. Taira, of Messrs. Jin & Tamura, consignees, in the Alpha, by the late Express to meet the Alpha in the Strait.

The cargo was insured for about \$150,000. D. G. S. Quadra, which has just returned from the North, sails at daylight this morning for the scene of the wreck. She will secure all the bodies of the dead that can be obtained and take them and the survivors to Vancouver. The steamer's services were proffered to Mr. Gennell by Capt. Gaudin, local agent of marine and fisheries, who at once replied as follows: "Chief officer and survivors of Alpha reported at Union. Can get no boat here. Can you proceed to scene of disaster and bring bodies here? Will greatly oblige. Answer, J. Gennell."

In reply, Capt. Gaudin said the Dominion steamer would sail at daylight. This will bring her to the scene of the wreck at night, whereas if she has sailed early in the night she would have arrived in daylight, and thus saved one day.

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FINE CHRISTMAS TREES. Smilax, etc. ready now; genuine English mistletoe to order. Price 25c. J. T. Higgins, 401 Cook and Fort streets. d20

VALUABLE OLD VIOLIN for sale cheap; can be seen at Lombard's music store, Fort street. d20

FOR SALE—Good mortgage, for \$1,250 for cultivation; land 30 acres, near Victoria, 104 Yates street. d20

FOR SALE—Two good express wagons, for general purposes. Apply Wades Harness Shop, 104 Yates street. d20

FOR SALE—Jumps Bar, 9-roomed house, with all modern conveniences; excellent location; close to the centre of the city; 104 Yates street. d20

FOR SALE—Saddle horse, 16 hands, good jumper, quiet, easy to ride; would suit a gentleman. Apply to "P.H.P. Work Point Baracks. d20

FOR SALE—New three story brick block, with cement basement 12x25x25 on Hastings Street, near 11th Street. Apply to "P.H.P. Work Point Baracks. d20

FOR SALE—Young heifer; good milkier. J. Lukes, Gordon Head. d20

FOR USEFUL CHRISTMAS PRESENTS—Go to Mrs. Hewitson, 25 Broad street; select from her large stock of Christmas wrappings, hosiery, combinations, etc. at low prices. d20

FOR SALE—Smart-looking, two-wheeled cart; can be seen at Mable's, 115 Johnson Street. d20

FOR SALE—A three-legged rooster, 7 months old. Apply to John W. 150-152 House, Cariboo road. d20

FOR SALE—Team heavy horses, some good bays and cart horses. Apply B. O. Mar. 401 Yates street. d20

FOR SALE—Modern residence, with five acres of land; very convenient, including steam heat, beautiful location, commanding the finest view of the city. Will be sold at cost of house alone. Particulars on application to Holstern & Co. d20

FOR SALE—Very desirable building lots on the beach, near 11th Street. Apply to "P.H.P. Work Point Baracks. d20

CANARIES FOR SALE—Good singers. Apply to 844 Douglas street, upstairs. Mrs. Lane. d20

FOR SALE—Victrola cards, copper plates, etc. Apply to "P.H.P. Work Point Baracks. d20

FARM FOR SALE—118 acres; will be sold cheap. J. E. Church, 14 Troncon avenue. d20

PEDIGREE COLLIE PUPS FOR SALE—Apply to "P.H.P. Work Point Baracks. d20

FOR SALE—Pony and buggy. Address "P.H.P. Work Point Baracks. d20

LODGES AND SOCIETIES.

VANCOUVER & QUADRA LODGE, No. 1, A.F.M., meets 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m. at the Victoria Hotel. W. M. A. MAXWELL, W.M. Secretary. d20

WANTED—A combination safe; state price and dimensions to Box 100, P.O. d20

WANTED—To sell, 100 corn-fed hogs, whole or by the side. G. McLean, Victoria. d20

JAPANESE wants situation, to do any work in family or on farm. Apply 45 Store street. d20

LOCAL FIRM requires auditor. Apply "Auditor," Colonist office. d20

WANTED—Parties requiring Japanese or Chinese help, either as cooks or in any other capacity, may be accommodated by applying at rooms 1 to 4, No. 1 Pandora street. d20

WANTED—A plain cook; good wages. Apply 125 Quadra. d20

AN EDUCATED GENTLEMAN wishes to correspond with a lady of musical ability with a view to matrimony. Address: A. Colonist office. d20

TEACHER WANTED—A female teacher is required for the Lac La Hache public school, duties to begin on January 7. Salary, \$80 per month. Gavin Hamilton, secretary board of trustees. d20

WANTED—Second hand typewriter. Address P. O. Box 452, City. d20

YOUTH required in a merchant's office; must be educated, intelligent and write a good hand. Apply to Merchant, Colonist office. d20

WANTED—By a middle-aged woman, a lady's maid, a housekeeper, a dress S. M. this office. d20

FARM WANTED—We have several buyers for improved farm property in Saanich and Victoria districts. Address, with particulars to "Advertiser," Victoria. d20

WOMAN wants any kind of work, by the day, washing, ironing or cleaning. Apply 476 View street. d20

WANTED—Furnished house for two or three persons; cheap; near the city. Apply to "P.H.P. Work Point Baracks. d20

AGENTS WANTED—To sell our Boer-Belgian War and Family Record Book. Our agents make from \$100 to \$200 a month. Apply to "P.H.P. Work Point Baracks. d20

50 FORT STREET—The People's Book and Shoe Shop and Repair Depot is the best place to buy men's boots and shoes, where the sale price is marked in plain figures on each pair. In seven large cases inside, showing open till 8:30 p.m. daily. Bring your old shoes to be repaired. Not mended by silver tongue. The People's Book and Shoe Shop, 50 Fort Street. d20

TO LET OR LEASE.

TO LET—Furnished rooms, 80 Douglas Street, near 11th Street. d20

COMFORTABLE, HEATED ROOMS, with or without board; first class cooking. Apply 173 Pandora avenue, on car line. d20

TO LET—Five roomed house, with bath, \$4.50 per month. Four roomed cottage, \$3.50 per month. Call on J. T. Higgins, 401 Yates street. d20

COMFORTABLE furnished front rooms, with use of kitchen, if required. 139 Michelson street. d20

POUR ROOMED COTTAGE—Furnished suitable for single men or small families; including water, gas, bath, etc. Apply to J. T. Higgins, 401 Yates street. d20

MISCELLANEOUS.

XMAS ENTERTAINMENT—Calvary Baptist church hold its annual Christmas dinner and entertainment on Saturday, Dec. 22, at 8 p.m. The programme, wholly by the children, will begin at 8 p.m. and the collection will be taken for missions. d20

DRESSMAKING PARLORS FOR BUSINESS—As Mrs. Fraser is retiring from business on Jan. 1, the rooms now occupied by her at 101-103 Pender street, will be let for rent, furnished. Apply Miss McDonald, 45 Menzies street. d20

LESSONS IN BALL ROOM AND FANCY DANCING—Miss G. G. Fox has re-opened her school, at 36 Douglas street. d20

DR. GOITSON removes corns, bunions and in-growing nails without pain. Parsons, No. 3 and 4, Victoria street. d20

MA'AME HEILER is now prepared to execute all orders on reasonable terms for accoucheur, midwife, or for the dressing and embalming of the dead. Address, Messrs. B. Williams & Co. d20

THE YORK LAUNDRY MACHINERY & Supply Co., Limited, 82 Church street, works, North 7th. d20

EDUCATIONAL—Miss G. G. Fox has re-opened her school, at 36 Douglas street