

C.S.

WHALING

(Hektor and Hvalen Whaling Co.,)

1924.

No. 306/24

ASST WHALING OFFICER
S. Shetlands.

SUBJECT.

1924

HEKTOR AND HVALEN WHALING CO.,

13th March

Reported total loss of catcher
"Bransfield."

Previous Paper.

MINUTES.

*Telegram from Asst. Whaling Officer S. Shetlands
of 13th March 1924 ——— Encl ①*

*Telegram from Asst. Whaling Officer S. Shetlands
of 13th March 1924 ——— Encl ②*

*Telegram to Asst. Whaling Officer S. Shetlands
of 14th March 1924 ——— Encl ③*

*Telegram to Asst. Whaling Officer, S. Shetlands
of 14th March 1924 ——— Encl ④*

*Letter from Asst. Whaling Officer S. Shetlands
of 14th March 1924 ——— Encl ⑤*

*Letter from Asst. Whaling Officer, S. Shetlands
of 10th April 1924 ——— Encl ⑥*

Telegram from Capt. Ovre of 'Ronald' ——— Encl 6a

Copy of Article 51 Norwegian Marine Insurance Regs 6b

*E.E. Submitted
9th April
Officer
16 April 1924*

*Three copies should be made of enclosure ⑤
two for the Norwegian Consul and one for
the owner of the Bransfield*

16 April 24

*P.A. 10/5/25
P.A. 2/5/25
P.A. 9/6/25*

Subsequent Paper.

Letter to Messrs N. Bugge 23 April 1924 (7)

Letter to Norwegian Consul 23 April 1924 (8)

Extract from Acting Governor's minute of 16th April, 1924.
M. S. 307/24.

The Registrar should also see the report of the deaths
of members of the Bransfield for registration.

... ..

Registrar

To see

9th 13.
Dir's sec
23 April 1924

Return of paper
asked for 26/4/24
R.B.

Copy of Report by Mr Sot Riches. (9)

Letter to Capt Chre 26 April 1924 ... (10)

Letter to Norwegian Consul 26 April 1924 (11)

Letter to Norwegian Consul 25 April 1924 (12)

Registrar

To see

9th 13
Dir's sec
28 April 1924

Hon. Col Sec.

Deaths Register, and extract of
Registers of Deaths filed herewith

Gov. B. Binns
30/4/24

Letter from Norwegian Consul to Registrar
29 April 1924 (13)

Registrar

Has a copy of the certificate been forwarded to Consul?

G.M. 17
Dicksen
30 April 1924

Hon. Col. Dec.

Yes.
E. B. Baines
Reg. Registrar: May 1924

Copy of Registry of Deaths.

(14)

G. B.

Home
G.M. 17
Dicksen
2 May 1924

If it is not too late to alter the Registry I would prefer that an official minute paper should not be quoted as a document of the kind and also that Norwegian Consul or Consul for Norway be substituted for Norske Konsul. Mr. S. H. Riches (Chalmers) office could be quoted as an informant.

W.H.H. 2 May 24

Colonel Postmaster.

Referred

G.H. 13

Dickson

3 May 1924

Hon. Col. Sec.

alteration made accordingly.

E.B. Binion 3/5/24

Copy to the Council

10/5/24

Registrar

Will you please send an
copy of amended certificate to
Council.

G.H. 13

Dickson

12 May 1924

Hon. Col. Secy.

Copy sent as directed

E.B. Binion

14/5/24

Letter from N. Bugge of 27 May 1924 - Encl (15)

COPY

Original in M.P. 302/23 (Encl 10.)

(1)

TELEGRAM.

From : Mr. S. H. Riches, Whaling Officer, South Shetlands

To : The Colonial Secretary

Dispatched : 13th March..... 19 24 *Time.* 5. p.m.

Received : 14th March..... 19 24 *Time.* 12 noon.

SECRETARY

PORT STANLEY

Gale raging here since Friday 7th reached height
11th "Ronald" driven ashore refloated 12th regret
to report total loss "Bransfield" and four crew
including Captain.

Riches.

COPY

Original in M.P. 302/23 (Encl. 11.)

TELEGRAM.

2

From : Mr. S. H. Riches, Whaling Officer, South Shetlands

To : The Colonial Secretary

Dispatched : 13th March..... 19 24 *Time.* 8 p.m.

Received : 14th March..... 19 24 *Time.* 12.5 p.m.

SECRETARY

PORT STANLEY

Manager Hektor Company wishes to use Almirante
Goni in place of lost Bransfield

Riches.

copy

Original in M.P. 302/23 (Encl. 12.)

3

TELEGRAM.

From : The Colonial Secretary

To : Mr. S. H. Riches, Whaling Officer, South Shetlands

Dispatched : 14th March.....19 24 *Time.* 2.30
p.m.

Received : 19 ... *Time.* ...

RICHES

WHALING OFFICER

SOUTH SHETLANDS

GREATLY REGRET LEARN LOSS OF BRANSFIELD AND FOUR
OF CREW PLEASE CONVEY SYMPATHY TO CAPTAIN RONALD

SECRETARY.

COPY

4

Original in M.P. 302/23 (Encl. 13.)

TELEGRAM.

From : The Colonial Secretary

To : Mr. S. H. Riches, Whaling Officer, South Shetlands

Dispatched : 14th March..... 19 24 Time. 2.30
Received : 19 Time. p.m.

RICHES

WHALING OFFICER

SOUTH SHETLANDS

YOUR TELEGRAM OF 13th MARCH NO OBJECTION ONPART
OF GOVERNMENT TO HEKTORS EMPLOYMENT OF ALMIRANTE
GONI IN PLACE OF BRANSFIELD.

SECRETARY



s/s "Ronald".

at Deception Island.

March 14th. 1924.

5

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that, in the absence of the Magistrate, I considered it advisable to take down the several statements from survivors of the lost whaleboat "Bransfield", and which I enclose herewith.

I would also desire to bring to the notice of His Excellency the Acting Governor, the conspicuous behaviour of the Chief Engineer of the above vessel, in his attempts to save life, with a view to the matter being brought to the notice of the Norwegian Government, of which country he is a subject.

When one considers the conditions prevailing during the hurricane in a land-locked corner of Port Foster (Deception Island) - and a comparatively insignificant expense of water to that of South Bay - where one ship with 2-6" and 1-3" wire hawsers holding her port quarter to the shore, snaps them as though they were mere spun yarn, and two other ships each with two anchors down have to steam to them to ease the strain on the cables, one can realise the fearful plight of these whaleboats sheltering in South Bay with its large area of water - some 5 by 7 miles in extent - and these men swimming about in icy cold water and a mountainous sea.

In regard to the position of the wreck, she lies at a depth of 15 to 20 fathoms of water, and having regard to the large amount of pack ice, and the number of bergs which drifted into the Bay during the ensuing week, carried by the strong southerly winds which succeeded the hurricane, I am of opinion that the vessel is a total loss, and that salvage operations are impossible.

I have the honour to remain,

Hon:- Colonial Secretary,

Stanley.

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

S. W. Nichol
Whaling Office



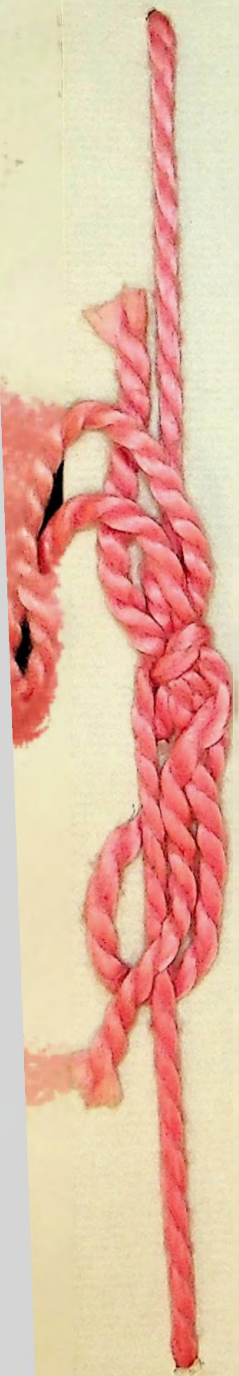
Depositions of four survivors, out of the six saved, from the Steam Whaler "Bransfield" taken onboard the Factory "Ronald" at Reception Island on the 13th. day of March 1924.

The "Bransfield" was a vessel of 55 tons Nett., manned by a crew of 10 all told, she was built in 1911 and was last employed in hunting and taking whales in the waters of the South Shetlands and Grahamsland during the season 1923/24.-

She was sheltering in South Bay, Livingstone Island on the 11th March, from a storm which had been raging for some days, the wind having increased to hurricane force, when she suddenly capsized on that date and sank within a few minutes in 15 fathoms of water, four lives being lost, including that of the Captain.

KOLBJÖRN WIVESTAD:- Sworn.

I am the Mate of the "Bransfield". We left the "Ronald" early in the morning of Saturday the 8th on a whaling cruise, shortly afterwards we fell in with bad weather in the Boyd Strait which compelled us to run for South Bay, reaching there in the evening. We left there again at 7 am. on Sunday morning, but had to return again at 11 am. on account of the weather. During the Sunday the wind increased to a steady gale and a full head of steam was maintained. On the Monday the 10th., the wind veered to the East and back to NE. returning back to the West, and increased in violence, sweeping down in whirlwinds from the mountains. On the Tuesday 11th at 5.30 am. we lifted the anchor and dropped the ship astern, away from the shore, at this time the wind was blowing with hurricane force, and at





II.

at 9.30 am. commenced sheering dangerously, first one way and then the other, the engines were then started to keep her head to the wind and to relieve the strain on the anchor. Captain Gjersøe, Gunner Samvelsen, Sailor Andreassen and myself were on the bridge, as we were all becoming anxious. The Chief Engineer and one fireman were in the engine room standing by the engines. We saw that the ship was in a dangerous harbour on account of the whirling wind, being anchored at this time in 15 fathoms of water. At 10.30 am. a sudden whirlwind coming from the mountains turned the ship right over on her beam ends, the masts coming down in the water, at this time I was on the bridge with the other three and seeing the ship was doomed I with Captain Gjersøe and the Sailor Andreassen jumped overboard. When I reached the water I swam away from the ship. I looked around and saw the ship was still remaining on her side with the masts in the water. I then swam back to her and held on to the bridge rails, the ship appeared to be trying to get back on an even keel.

I last saw the Captain swimming past me towards the lifeboat which was secured in the skids, and this was the last I saw of him, the ship then started to settle down by the stern and I saw the lifebelt box drifting towards me. I took the belts out and scattered them about the water so as others could get hold of them. I secured one myself and left the bridge rails swimming with the belt in my hands, the ship then took a perpendicular position, and the last I saw of her she had her bows in the air and I was sucked down with her as she disappeared. I then came to the surface and saw nothing but floating wreckage and afterwards saw a whaleboat coming towards me and I then swam towards her. When I got close I saw a line thrown to the steward and Sailor Petterson



III.

Peterson who were in the water. I hailed the whaleboat ("Ovas") as I do not think they saw me owing to the high sea running, and she was drifting away. The whaleboat "Graham" came up and picked up fireman Randles and I drifted astern. The "Ovas" then came round the stern of the "Graham" and I was pulled out of the water with a houthook by some of her crew.

From the time the "Bransfield" heeled over, to the time she disappeared was about two minutes.-

The vessels sheltering in South Bay were the "Scott" "Weddell" - "Ovas" and "Graham".

Read over to, and signed by the deponent.

H. O. Wierstad



CHRISTOPHER LAURITSEN:- Sworn.

I am the Chief Engineer of the "Bransfield". We left the "Ronald" on the 8th on a whaling cruise, early in the morning, meeting with bad weather. We put into South Bay in the evening. We remained until 7.0 on the following morning (Sunday) when we went out, but had to return between 10 and 11 am. the weather during the time continued bad, the wind blowing a gale during the Monday, and the wind was sweeping down from the mountains in whirlwinds. I thought the ship would be able to ride out the storm. On the Tuesday morning, the 11th., the wind increased to hurricane force and we became anxious for her safety, the Captain Gjersoe, Gunner Samuelson, Mate Wivestad and Sailor Andreassen went on the bridge, at 5.30 am. we lifted the anchor and dropped astern, as we thought we were too close to the shore, the ship was sheering about a good deal. At 10.0 am. I had orders from the bridge to go slow astern, as her bows had fell away from the wind, afterwards I had orders to go half speed ahead, followed by signals to slow and very slow, the latter being continued so as to take the strain off the anchor, signals were afterwards received from the bridge to full speed, half speed and continued at slow speed, whilst attending the engines I felt the wind strike the ship and she turned over on her port side and the sea came down into the engine room, I climbed the engines over ~~them~~ and reached the door leading to the deck and opened it, and I saw the ship was doomed, I was forced back by a big sea which filled the doorway and I then climbed out through the engine room skylight, at the time fireman Strömberg was in the engine room and he followed me out, I then climbed up to the lifeboat and



and tried to cut it adrift, but before I could do so the stern settled down and I was left struggling in the water.

I then swam towards the whaleboats which were about 300 yards distant on our port quarter, and I came across some wreckage which I secured and clung to, I afterwards saw Fireman Easles in difficulties, so I gave him my wreckage and then swam towards the 2nd. Engineer who was just going down, I tried my best to support him but he was done and, owing to the heavy sea running, I was compelled to let him go and he then sank, I continued on towards the whaleboats and was picked up by the "Graham".

The "Brenfield" turned right over on her side and went down in less than one minute stern first, and there was no time to clear away the lifeboats, I think she sank in about 15 fathoms of water. We had about 55 tons of coal in our bunkers when she capsized, out of 80 tons - her capacity.

Read over to, and signed by the deponent.

Christoffer Lauritsen



HANS. R. RAASIERG :- Sworn.

I am a Fireman of the Whaler "Eransfield", we left Deception Island on a whaling cruise on the morning of Saturday March 6th., after getting into the Boyd Strait the weather came on very bad and we made for South Bay, we remained there until the following morning - Sunday. We left again early in the morning, but had to put back before dinner owing to the wind increasing, by night on the Sunday the wind had increased to a gale and was coming down from the glaciers in whirlwinds, all day Monday it was blowing a hurricane and the ship was swinging all over the harbour, first to port and then to starboard, sometimes coming round broadside on to the sea.


On the Monday night I was on duty in the stokehold and the night was very bad, I came off duty at 8.0 am. on the Tuesday morning and went to bed, the next thing I remember was being woke up through the ship turning over on her side and the sea pouring down the fore-castle, I then rushed up on deck and went straight over the side into the water.

I commenced to swim but the heavy seas were carrying me under and I began to get exhausted and was sinking I think for the last time when the Chief Engineer came to my assistance and gave me a piece of wood to cling to, if he had not given me that piece of wood, I don't think I should be standing here to-day.

After swimming about with the side of the piece of wood, for some time, I saw my shipmate/^{Andresson} struggling in the water near me and he afterwards sank, and a little later I was pulled on to the whaleboat "Graham".

Read over to, and signed by the deponent.

Hans Raasierg



ALEX PETERSON:- Sworn.

I am a seaman of the Whaler "Bransfield". We left the "Ronald" in the morning of Saturday March 8th. at about 5 am., on a whaling cruise, finding the weather bad after we had got outside, we went into South Bay where we remained until the next day - Sunday. We left there again early in the morning, but had to put back before dinner time owing to the weather still being bad, remaining throughout the Sunday night, and all day Monday, during this time the wind was increasing to hurricane force, blowing down off the glaciers, and causing the ship to sheer about in a dangerous manner, and bringing her round broadside on to the wind and sea.

On Tuesday morning at about 5 am., the anchor was lifted and was again dropped in 15 fathoms of water, whirlwinds came down from the mountains in greater force and the sea increased by 8 am., when I went off duty and turned in to bed. Some time after I had got to sleep, I was thrown out of my bunk, I scrambled up the ladder to the deck and a sea pushed me back again, a fireman then rushed up the ladder in front of me and I followed him up. When I got on deck for the second time I heard the Steward shout for a knife to cut the lifeboat away and someone shouted: "now she's going".

I then sprang into the water and saw the Captain in the water near the stern of the ship, and she was settling down aft so I commenced to swim away. I later saw the Mate in the water holding a lifebelt, and I was looking for wreckage to cling to when I saw the whaleboat "Oves" coming towards me, they threw me a rope which I got hold of and I was then pulled onboard.



II.

I am unable to say how long it took the "Bransfield" to sink, but I think it would be three or four minutes. The ship went down before there was time to release the lifeboats from the skids.-

Read over to, and signed by the deponent.

Alex Pettersson



Crew List of "Bransfield" at time of disaster.

Captain	Carl Olaf Gjersøe.	+ Lost.
Mate	Kolbjörn Wivestad.	
Gunner	Niels E. Samuelson.	+ Lost.
Sailor	Alex Petterson.	
"	Mathias Andreassen.	+ Lost.
Chief Eng.	Kristoffer Lauritsen.	
2nd. Eng.	Georg R. Kristensen.	+ Lost.
Fireman	Hans A. Strömberg.	
"	Hans R. Rasmussen.	
Steward	Olaf Olafsen.	



6

S/S "Ronald".

at Reception Island.

April 10th. 1924.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the enclosed telegram, received from Captain Chre of the "Ronald", in which he asks for a Magistrate's report on the possibility of salvaging the whaler "Transfield".

I also enclose a copy of Article 51 mentioned in the telegram; in my covering letter of the 14th. March, it will be observed that I have expressed an opinion as to the salvaging of the above wreck.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant

To:- Colonial Secretary.

Stanley.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "S. A. Miches". The signature is written in dark ink and is underlined.

Whaling Officer.

Utfylles av Skibsstasjonen.

Kr.

Sendt til TSA

Radio-Telegram

Sign.:

1 / 4 kl. 10.15

Klasse Skibsstasjon

av

Nr. 1 31/30 Ord Kl. 10.25 / 192 24. Tjb.:

Adresse

(fullstendig og tydelig)

Steamer Ronald

South Shetlands.

Underwriters want Magistrates report Bransfield cannot

be salved within time mentioned article fiftyone

Sjoforsikringsplan stop Bring such report Montevideo

for John Busse Baynes. Tassarbeit (acknowledge receipt

of telegram.)

Fogub.

Skibstakst

Kysttakst

Telegriftakst

Tilsammen

66

Translation of Article 51 - Norwegian Sea - Insuranceplan
of 1907.

If the Insurance Company at their own expence and liability will undertake to salvage the insured vessel, it is the duty of the Insured in every way to ease the Insurance Company in doing so, the salvage, however, must be commenced as soon as possible, and the insured person can claim compensation for total loss, if the salvage is not fulfilled within 6 months from the date the Insurance Company are informed about the accident.-

306/24

23rd April, 24.

Gentlemen,

I am directed by the Acting Governor to enclose a copy of the depositions of four of the six survivors from your whale catcher "Bransfield" which sank in South Bay, Livingstone Island, South Shetlands on the 11th of March. His Excellency learned with deep regret of the loss of the vessel with four members of her crew.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

C. R. L. Brown,

for Colonial Secretary.

Messrs. N. Bugge,

Hektor & Hvalen Whaling Company,

Tonsberg,

Norway.

306/24

23rd April,

24.

Sir,

I am directed by the Acting Governor to enclose two copies of the depositions of four of the six survivors from the whale catcher "Bransfield" which was lost in South Bay, Livingstone Island, South Shetlands, on the 11th of March. His Excellency desires that your attention should be drawn to the conspicuous behaviour of the Chief Engineer of the vessel. in his attempts to save life, with a view to the matter being brought to the notice of the Norwegian Government.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. R. L. Brown,

for Colonial Secretary.

H. H. R. Gresham, Esq.,
Consul for Norway,
Stanley.

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

(Sealed here)

EXTRACT FROM REPORT BY ACTING DEPUTY COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS AND RECEIVER OF WRECKS, SOUTH SHETLANDS, ON THE LOSS OF THE WHALE CATCHER "BRANSFIELD" BELONGING TO THE HEKTOR WHALING COMPANY, AT SOUTH BAY, LIVINGSTONE ISLAND, SOUTH SHETLANDS, ON THE 11th of MARCH, 1924.

....

In regard to the position of the wreck, she lies at a depth of 15 to 20 fathoms of water, and having regard to the large amount of pack ice, and the number of 'bergs which drifted into the Bay during the ensuing week, carried by the strong south-easterly winds which succeeded the hurricane, I am of opinion that the vessel is a total loss, and that salvage operations are impossible.

(sgd) S. H. RICHES,

Acting Deputy Collector of Customs and Receiver of Wrecks.

The above is hereby certified to be a true copy of the report by the Acting Deputy Collector of Customs and Receiver of Wrecks on the condition of the wreck "Bransfield."

G. R. L. Brown,

for Colonial Secretary.

306/24.

26th April,

24.

Sir,

With reference to the telegram dated the 1st of April, which you received from your owners, regarding the possibility of salvaging the whaler "Bransfield," I am directed by the Acting Governor to attach herewith a certified true copy of the report by Mr. S. H. Riches, Acting Deputy Collector and Receiver of Wrecks, on the condition of the wreck.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. R. L. BROWN,

for Colonial Secretary.

Captain Ohre,

s.s. "Ronald"

at Stanley.

306/24

26th April,

24

Sir,

With reference to my letter of the 23rd of April, I am directed by the Acting Governor to attach herewith a copy of a letter (with enclosure) which has been addressed to Capt. Ohre of the s.s. "Ronald" respecting a telegram which he received from his owners regarding the possibility of salvaging the "Bransfield."

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. R. L. BROWN,

for Colonial Secretary.

H. H. R. Gresham, Esq., J.P.,
Consul for Norway,
Stanley.

(X) 12

THE NORWEGIAN CONSULATE.

STANLEY. 25th April, 1924.

306/24.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant, enclosing two copies of the depositions of the six survivors of the whale catcher "Bransfield", for which I have to thank you.

I: I shall be glad if you would inform His Excellency the Acting Governor that I shall make a point of drawing the attention of the Commercial Office of the Norwegian Ministry to the Chief Engineer's endeavours to save life.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Consul for Norway.

THE HONOURABLE

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY

STANLEY.

THE NORWEGIAN CONSULATE.

STANLEY, FALKLAND ISLANDS.

29th April, 1924.

Sir,

I beg to inform you that Captain Ohre of the s.s. "Ronald" attended at the Consulate on the 27th Instant, and stated that one of the catchers belonging to the Hektor Company of Tonsberg, the "Bransfield", capsized and sank immediately in South Bay, Livingstone Island, South Shetlands on the 11th March 1924.

The following persons lost their lives by drowning:-

- Mathias Andreassen, Seaman, of Stokke pr. Tonsberg. 119
Born 7.7.05.
- Georg Kristensen. Engineer, of Vallo pr. Tonsberg. 27
Born 1.2.97.
- Niels Samuelsen. Gunner. of Stokke pr. Tonsberg' 58
Born. 31.7.66.
- Carl Olaf Gjersoe. MasterMariner. of Notero pr. Tons- 36
berg. Born 29.5.88

2. I shall be obliged if these deaths could be registered and a copy of the certificates forwarded to me for transmission to the Norwegian Government.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. R. Graham

Consul.

The Acting Registrar General.

STANLEY.

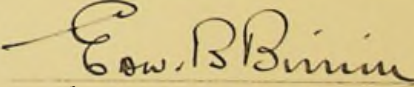
306/24

REGISTRY of DEATH.

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

Waterlow & Sons Limited, Printers, London Wall, London.

No.	When died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or profession and Country.	Cause of death.	Signature, description, and residence of informant.	When registered.	Signature of Registrar.
28	11th. March 1924	Mathias Andreassen	M	19	Seaman Norway	accidental drowning	S. H. Riches Whaling Officer also letter from Norwegian Consul	30th. Apr. 1924	Edw. B. Binnie
29	11th. March 1924	Georg Kristensen	M	27	Engineer Norway	accidental drowning	S. H. Riches Whaling Officer also letter from Norwegian Consul	30th. Apr. 1924	Edw. B. Binnie
30	11th. March 1924	Niels Samuelsen	M	58	Gunner Norway	Accidental drowning	S. H. Riches Whaling Officer also letter from Norwegian Consul	30th. Apr. 1924	Edw. B. Binnie
31	11th. March 1924	Carl Olaf Gjersee	M	36	Master Mariner . Norway	Accidental drowning	S. H. Riches Whaling Officer also letter from Norwegian Consul	30th. Apr. 1924	Edw. B. Binnie


 Edw. B. Binnie
 Ag. Registrar General.

Sonley, 30th. April 1924

19

ETABLERET 1852.

N. BUGGE

INDEHAVERE F.BUGGE & H.KROGH-HANSEN

HVALFANGST-SKIBSREDERI
ASSURANCE
VICEKONSULATER FOR
SPANIEN & PORTUGAL

TELEFONER:
CENTRALBORD No 1. 3. 231
TELEGRAMADRESSE
„EGGUB“

1-A/RO.

Tonsberg, 27th May 1921

The Colonial Secretary's Office,
Port Stanley,
Falkland Islands.

Sir,

We thank you for your favour of 27th April enclosing
copy of the Despatches of the Survivors from our whale catcher
"Prensfield" which sank in South Bay on the 13th of March.-

We are, Sir

Your obedient Servants,

N. Bugge