W. & S. Ltd.

No. D/93/24.

(It is requested that, in any reference to this letter, the above Number and the date may be quoted).

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
STANLEY, FALKLAND ISLANDS,

3rd March, 1925

Sir,

With reference to Mr. H. Henniker-Heaton's notes of the 21st November and the 1st December, I am directed by the Governor to enclose two copies of a report by the Deputy Receiver of Wrecks at South Shetlands, on the loss of the whale catcher "Graham", which is believed to have foundered on the night of the 7th November, 1924, off the coast of Joinville Island, South Shetlands.

With enclosure.

2. The "Graham" was a vessel of 54 tons net register, belonging to the Southern Whaling Company of Sandefjord.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

for Colonial Secretary.

The Honourable
H. H. R. Gresham,
Norwegian Consul,
Stanley.

REPORT BY DEPUTY RECEIVER OF WRECKS ON THE LOSS OF THE WHALE CATCHER "GRAHAM" NOVEMBER, 1924.

COPY.

Port Foster,
Deception Island,
South Shetlands,
December, 24th, 1924.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward the attached statement made before me by Captain Ole Andersen, Manager of the Sydhavet Whaling Expedition, operating in this Dependency, in connection with the loss, with all hands, of the Whaler "Graham," presumed to have foundered between the 6th and the 8th of November, 1924.

The "Graham" was a vessel of 54 tons net, owned by the Sydhavet Whaling Company of Sandefjord, Norway. She was last employed hunting and taking whales in the waters of the South Shetlands and Grahamsland, and carried a crew of ten all told. She left Admiralty Bay, King George Island, South Shetlands - at which port I was then stationed - early in the morning of the 6th November, after which she was never seen again. At the time of her departure the weather was fine, the master's intention being to make for Joinville Island, thence to Elephant Island, after which he proposed operating on the bank 30 miles south-west of the latter Island. Shortly after leaving a storm arose accompanied by a blizzard from the south-east, the temperature falling below zero. This continued until the morning of the 8th. Many of the whaleboats that happened to be near this base returned to their respective factories, coming into harbour heavily coated with ice from the water line to truck and listing dangerously, as the result of salt water breaking over them and freezing, added to which was the driving snow.

Had/

Had these boats been caught further off by the storm, there is not the least doubt that there would have been heavier casualties to report. The "Graham's" course from Admiralty Bay would be south-east - directly in the path of the storm - and it has been estimated that she would have been near the coast of Joinville Island on the night of the 7th, at a time when the storm had reached its height. Therefore, the consensus of opinion is that she foundered during that night, at a time when she had reached the edge of the ice, and which was barring all possible chance of access to the harbours in that island, which conditions had been reported some days previous to the 6th.

Having interviewed some of the gunners that experienced the earlier stages of this storm, they are all agreed that it was the worst that they could remember. In view of the vessel's presumed position on the night of the 7th, having been caught in the open sea and nearer to the storm centre, with all hope of obtaining shelter having vanished, with the heavy ice gradually increasing about her upper works, it is the universal belief that she capsized.

On the 10th of the month all boats had been accounted for except the "Graham", and knowing the intention of the Master to proceed to the southeast, considerable anxiety was felt for her safety. About this time a conference of Managers took place, and it was decided to detach a whaleboat from each Company operating to search. In the meantime I had proceeded to Deception Island, and shortly afterwards received a joint request from these Managers to obtain the services of as many boats as possible from the factories here.

These/

These were gladly offered, three boats being placed at my disposal. Owing to the Admiralty Bay boats taking up the search east of that place, one of these three boats was instructed to search round Trinity Island, then to follow the coastline east through the Orleans Channel and along the Trinity Peninsula. The other two were directed to examine Livingstone, Greenwich and Nelson Islands.

On the 16th the whaler "Bjerk" reported having picked up a lifebuoy belonging to the "Graham," 10 miles east of Bridgeman Island, and at a later date the "Charcot" reported having passed wreckage which she identified as the vessel's bridge, off the east end of the Trinity Peninsula. During this time the search was continued by the ten whaleboats, in the hope that the crew of the ill-fated vessel might have got away in the boats. This hope was abandoned when on the 26th of the month the whaler "Harpon" reported the finding of the "Graham's" lifeboat in the ice, 30 miles north of Joinville Island with a frozen corpse inside. The sighting of this boat by the "Harpon" brings to light a tragic incident, for it was first seen by none other than the brother of the dead man in the boat. He was reclining on his side with one arm resting over the gunwale, and was fully dressed excepting for his boots which were minus. The boat's falls had been cut the lower blocks being in the boat, and all movable fittings of the boat were missing. the provisions contained in the boat's tank had not been touched.

The body was identified as Albert Johansen, a young sailor of the "Graham," and was interred at Deception Island on the 29th November, 1924, in the presence of a large gathering of the man's countrymen, work ceasing on

all/

all ships to enable them to attend.

I have, etc.,
(Sgd.) S. H. Riches,
Deputy Receiver of Wrecks.

The Receiver of Wrecks,
Stanley.

STATEMENT BY CAPTAIN OLE ANDERSEN, MANAGER OF THE SYDHAVET COMPANY'S WHALING FLEET RESPECTING THE LOSS OF THE WHALER "GRAHAM," NOVEMBER, 1924.

Ole Andersen:- Sworn.

I am the Manager of the Sydhavet Company's Whaling Fleet and Master of the Floating Factory "Svend Foyn" and arrived at Admiralty Bay, South Shetlands, on the 25th of November, 1924, from the Falkland Islands. On the morning of the 6th at 3.0 a.m. the "Graham" left the "Svend Foyn" on a whaling cruise, the first of the season, the Master telling me just before departure that he proposed making for Joinville Island, then going on to Elephant Island, and then operating on the bank south-west of that Island. After leaving port she was never seen again, so far as I am aware, and I then caused boats to go in search of her, having a whale boat from each of the other nine companies offered me for that purpose.

At the time the "Graham" left port the weather was fine, but towards mid-day a storm sprang up, with heavy snow, and blew with increasing fury until towards night of the 8th, the wind being south-east, which was directly in front of the vessel, and the temperature below zero. I am of opinion that the vessel foundered when she would be nearing the coast of Joinville Island on the night of the 7th and at a time when the storm was at its height. On the 17th November I had delivered to me a lifebuoy belonging to the "Graham," by the gunner of the whaleboat "Bjerk" having found it 10 miles east of Bridgeman Island, and on the 26th of the same month the whaler "Harpon" brought in a lifeboat belonging to the lost vessel. This boat contained the frozen body of a sailor which I identified as having belonged to the

crew/

crew of the "Graham." He was resting across the gunwale with one arm over the boat's side without boots. The boat's falls had been cut, the lower blocks being in the boat; the other fittings of the boat were missing: the provisions in the boat were untouched.

I am unable to offer any explanation as to the cause of the disaster, the boat being well found, other than the severe climatic conditions prevailing at the time, of which the "Graham" must have experienced the full force.

(Sgd.) O. Andersen,
Manager.

Office of the Registrar General,

Stanley, May 18th 1925.

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit herewith the undermentioned copies of deaths registered in this Office of Norwegian subjects who died during the 1924-25 Whaling Season at the South Shetlands:-

Albert Johannesen,	Sailor S.S."Graham"		Date of Death presumed to be between the 6th and 8th of November 1924.
Karsten T.Marka,	Steward	do.	
Kristian M.Evensen,	Mate	do.	
Kristian Walbom,	Master & Gunner.	do.	
Haakon S.Strand.	Fireman.	do.	
Ruben A.Larsen	do.	do.	
Karsten Andersen.	2nd Enginr	do.	
Erling Hansen,	Engineer.	do.	
Thorstein Trondsen,	Sailor	do.	
Alfred Hansen.	do.	do.	
Einar Mathisen	3rd Mate of S.S."Svend Foyn"		Died 4th April 1925
Erling Ostern	Doctor of s.s. "Southern Queen"		do. do.
Carl Paul Hansen	Trimmer of s.s. "Orn II"		Died 18th April 1925

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2. The only body recovered of the crew of the s.s."Graham" was that of Albert Johannesen, Sailor. This body was interred at the South Shetlands.

THE NORWEGIAN CONSUL,

PORT STANLEY.

3.

3. The body of Einar Mathisen, 3rd Mate of the s.s."Svend Foyn" was interred at the South Shetlands. The body of Doctor Erling Ostern was conveyed by the s.s."Southern Queen" to Norway for interment. The body of Carl Paul Hansen, Trimmer of s.s."Orn II" was interred at Port Stanley.

4. No information was available as to the ages of the crew of the s.s."Graham".

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant.

R. Craigie Halkett

Registrar General.