

During the time Lieutenant Hill was making his statement the First Lieutenant of the "Miranda" entered the Captain's cabin and stopped the investigation, informing the members of the Colonial Executive, who were conducting the inquiry, that it was contrary to the regulations of the service to hold an official investigation on board a man-of-war unless the senior officer of the ship was present. He would take his seat during the remainder of the inquiry and allow the evidence taken in the cabin to stand good; but for the rest, it must be considered null and void. The Hon. the Native Minister explained the facts in relation to the inquiry: that they had written permission from Captain Jenkins to hold the inquiry, and that they had reported themselves and their business to the officer on deck on coming on board.

Lieutenant Hill said he had stated what he thought the Colonial Government wanted to know regarding the signal station and the course of the ship, and he declined making any further statement.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary and the Hon. the Native Minister requested Lieutenant Hill to volunteer a statement regarding the "Wonga Wonga," which that officer declined to do before consulting with Captain Jenkins, who was ashore at the time.

After waiting for some time for Captain Jenkins' arrival, and he not coming, the inquiry was continued.]

MR. AMPHLETT, (Paymaster of H.M. late ship "Orpheus,") made the following statement:—I think it was half-past four when we met Captain Wing, the pilot. We met him coming out at about 4.30, and I saw the "Wonga" coming from the sea into the Heads at the same time. I consulted with Mr. Hill, and it was agreed that I should go on with two sick boys on to the "Harrier." The tide was against me, I had a good sail in the boat and a leading wind; and Lieutenant Hill taking Mr. Wing into the pinnace, went out to save lives. We then went to the "Wonga," and I pulled into the pilot station. I saw young Wing. He came running down, and asked what the ship was. He said that she was setting down fast. I asked him what time it was, and he said five o'clock. I said, "Can you go up and pilot me to the 'Harrier?'" He said he would send his brother, as he could not come himself. I said, "How was it you did not make proper signals to us when we were coming over the bar?" He said he did make proper signals. I said, "We never saw them." He said "You came in by Captain Drury's directions." I said, "Yes," and as he recognised me, I added, "the same as the old 'Niger' used to come." He said, "Yes, I recollect well the 'Niger' coming across the same place, and we all thought at the flagstaff that she had struck." He says, "I thought you were only skirting the reef;" he says, "Many ships come in as close as you did, but skirt the reef, either coming to the South or North as the wind allows."

*By Mr. Domett.* When we were sailing in in the pinnace there was no signal.

*Lieutenant Hill:* From 2.30 till 5 o'clock there was no signal flying. There were 256 all told on board; 256 were victualled last Sunday week, and 69 have survived. There were lost from the gun-room 7 officers, 10 from the ward-room, 5 from the engineers' mess, 1 warrant officer, and 1 commodore. 33 men were picked up by the boats, the remainder of the men were boats' crews.

*Mr. Amphlett* continued: The Commodore sent me ashore, as I knew the place, to get assistance, whale boats especially. When we met Mr. Wing I asked him if he had communicated with the "Harrier" or town? and he said that no communication could be made, and that in fact there was nobody to send. We asked him about a life boat, and he said that it would take twelve men two days to get it down. [Lieutenant Hill, on being appealed to by Mr. Amphlett in reference to the statement of Mr. Wing about the life boat, said he could not say what the exact expression was, but it was of such a nature that he at once concluded the force at his disposal could never get it launched.] *Mr. Amphlett* continued: We met Mr. Wing going out to our assistance at half-past four. He was just on the Orwell Bank, where we were aground in the pinnace. He said that when the flood tide came she would break up, and asked was there a boat in her. We all pulled out to go to the "Wonga," which went in by the South Channel again, and we thought that she was going up to Onehunga. We stood up in the boat, and she was past the Heads a long way. That was about five o'clock. She took the pinnace in tow, and several up in the whale boat.

In reply to the Hon. the Native Minister, Lieutenant Hill stated that the draft of the "Orpheus" was 21 feet.

[*Memo.*—This concluded the inquiry, the officers of the "Orpheus" declining to make any further statement.]