



ACTIVITY: Spear fishing

CASE: GSAF 1954.09.14.R

DATE: Reported September 14, 1954

LOCATION: The accident took place near Darnley Island (Erub Island) in the Meriam Island group of Torres Strait, Queensland, Australia.

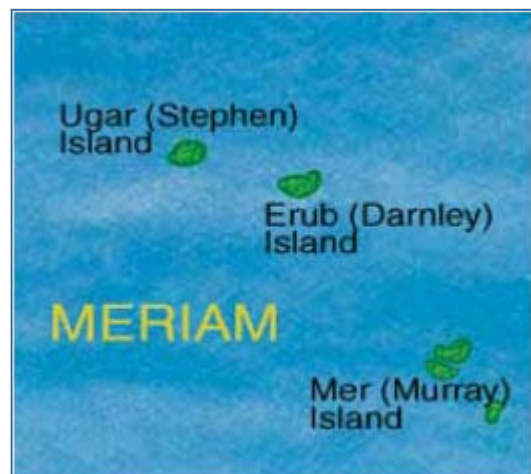
NAME: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: He was a native spear fisherman.

NARRATIVE: No details. When the Hobart fishing vessel *Toorah* stopped at Darnley island for water, a nursing sister asked the crew to take the man to the Thursday Island hospital. Unfortunately the *Toorah* ran aground at 01h00 on Long Island reef some 65 miles from Thursday Island, and the man died.

INJURY: Fatal

SOURCE: The Mercury (Hobart, Tasmania), Tuesday September 14, 1954, page 20



GROUNDED HOBART MERCY VESSEL NOW TOTAL LOSS

A **D**VICE was received from Queensland yesterday that the well-known Hobart fishing vessel **Toorah**, which went aground in Torres Strait a week ago, is now a total loss.

The **Toorah**, which was one of the best equipped fishing vessels to trade in South-Western Tasmania, was owned by Roche Bros., of Hobart.

She ran aground on Long Island reef, more than 3,000 miles from Hobart, and about 85 miles from Thursday Island, while on a mercy mission.

The vessel put into Darnley Island for water and a nursing sister asked the crew to take a native spear fisherman to the Thursday Island hospital. He had been badly mauled by a shark.

Shipping does not normally operate in these waters at night, but in the hope of reaching medical assistance an attempt was made to get to Thursday Island that night.

However the native died shortly after the **Toorah** went aground at 1 a.m. on Sunday week.

Hopes of recovering the vessel were maintained until a rescue boat returned two days ago and reported her a total loss.

Mr. M. Roche said last night that the **Toorah** had undergone a complete structural overhaul and conversion from steam to diesel power in 1947.

She was an outstanding boat in the history of cray fishing in the waters of South-West Tasmania, having pioneered a technique of long lining pots and tank holding of fish, which differed from the earlier methods used by well boats.

Mr. Roche said that the regulations restricting the use of

more than 30 crayfish pots had caused the abandonment of the system and this, together with similar restrictions in the trawling and scalloping industry, induced the owners to try new fields of operation.

This was the reason the vessel was sent to the Barrier Reef on treac fishing operations.

The **Toorah** figured in many rescue and lighthouse trips.

Only a few months ago she took the first bulldozer, and a number of prefabricated houses to Port Davey

RECORD YEAR BY G. J. COLES

RECORD sales, profit, and expansion, had made the financial year ended June 30, 1954, the greatest in the company's history, the directors of G. J. Coles and Co. Ltd., state in their annual report.

The report will be presented at the annual general meeting of the company in Melbourne on September 28.

Sales reached £28,502,425.

and the dividend on 8 per cent cumulative preference stock which took £12,000

Also in the amount is a payment of £369,841 for a final