

# THE TITANIC.

## FINDINGS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE.

### SENATOR SMITH'S CRITICISMS.

### THE BOARD OF TRADE CENSURED.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

WASHINGTON, MAY 28.

The report of the Committee upon the Titanic disaster was presented to the Senate to-day. It is a comparatively brief document, and the somewhat florid speech with which Senator Smith accompanied its presentation only served to accentuate the sobriety of its tone and to lend substance to the theory that Senator Smith's colleagues played a more marked part in its preparation than they did in the investigation, which, it will be remembered, the chairman often conducted single-handed.

### THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS.

The Committee reaches the following main conclusions:—

- (1) That the Titanic virtually ignored the ice warnings.
- (2) That, owing to the non-watertight character of the deck at which the transverse bulkheads ended, the supposedly watertight compartments were not really watertight.
- (3) That after the impact no general alarm or systematic warning to passengers was given.
- (4) That the Californian saw the distress signals of the Titanic and failed to respond to them "in accordance with the dictates of humanity, international usage, and the requirements of the law."
- (5) That lack of preparation was most noticeable in regard to the loading of the boats, and that failure to utilize their full capacity sacrificed several hundred lives.
- (6) That, had there been much sea, it is questionable whether any boats would have reached the water without being damaged or destroyed.
- (7) That, in the belief of the Committee, proper discipline would have admitted of the concentration of survivors in some of the boats, so that the rest of the boats might have been free to go to the rescue after the Titanic had foundered.
- (8) That the telegraphist of the Carpathia failed to show proper vigilance in handling the important

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### RECOMMENDATIONS.

From these conclusions certain recommendations are obviously inevitable. In regard to safety appliances, it is suggested that boat accommodation be provided for every one; that at least four sailors be assigned to each boat; that the crew be drilled at least once a month in lowering and rowing; that passengers be apportioned to boats before sailing by groups of rooms; and that all ships with more than 100 passengers be compelled to carry two searchlights.

In regard to wireless telegraphy, the Committee thinks it essential that there should always be somebody on duty at the apparatus, which should be provided with auxiliary power independent of the main engines, and that there should be legislation against amateur operators and for the secrecy of messages.

### STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS.

The Committee, however, lays most stress upon the necessity of the following structural requirements:—

All steel ocean, coastwise, or seagoing ships carrying 100 or more passengers should have a watertight skin inboard of the outside plating, extending not less than 10 per cent. of the load draught above the full load waterline, either in the form of an inner bottom or of longitudinal watertight bulkheads, and this provision should extend from the forward collision bulkhead over not less than two-thirds of the length of the ship. All steel ocean, coastwise, or seagoing ships carrying 100 or more passengers should have bulkheads so spaced that any two adjacent compartments of the ship may be flooded without destroying the floatability or stability of the ship. Watertight transverse bulkheads should extend from side to side of the ship, attaching to the outside shell. Transverse bulkheads forward and abaft the machinery spaces should be continued watertight vertically to the uppermost continuous structural deck. The uppermost continuous structural deck should be fitted watertight. Bulkheads within the limits of the machinery spaces should extend not less than 25 per cent. of the draught of the ship above the load waterline and should end at a watertight deck. All watertight bulkheads and decks should be proportioned to withstand without material permanent deflation water pressure equal to 5 ft. more than the full height of the bulkhead. Bulkheads of novel dimensions or scantlings should be tested by being subjected to actual water pressure.

There is also a recommendation that in the event of any country with which the United States have a reciprocal arrangement about the mutual acceptance of certificates failing to revise its regulations in conformity with the above suggestions, the reciprocal arrangement with that country be abrogated.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE REPORT.

The report is largely cast in narrative form, and one feels that on one or two occasions the Committee reached conclusions which it forbears to state. The way, for instance, in which the story of the preparations for the Titanic's voyage is told leaves the impression that the Committee is inclined to think that the Titanic's steaming and turning trials might have been severer, that greater pains might have been taken to break in the crew, that the Board of Trade inspection was rather perfunctory, and that the White Star Line ought to have been more careful in issuing Monday's reassuring reports.

### SENATOR SMITH AND THE BOARD OF TRADE.

Senator Smith in his speech was less restrained. "We shall leave," he says, "to the honest judgment of England its painstaking chastisement of the British Board of Trade, to whose laxity of regulation and hasty inspection the world is largely indebted for this awful fatality." Senator Smith is most bitter about the lack of discipline which, he thinks, obtained among the officers and crew after the impact. Both Senator Smith's speech and the Committee's report contain a passage couched in the warmest praise of Captain Rostron of the Carpathia for the prompt and efficient way in which he came to the rescue.

### THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

As far as can be gathered the report has impressed the Senate and is likely to give a renewed impetus to the proposals for legislation which the disaster has already produced. Of these the most important Bills are the Alexander Radiotelegraphic Bill designed to bring the United States into line with the Berlin Convention, a Bill regulating wireless apparatus in ships, and a Bill based upon the Second Article of the Brussels Convention, making it a misdemeanour for captains not to go to the rescue of ships in distress.

All these Bills are likely to pass this summer, though there is in some quarters a feeling that it might be as well to suspend action upon the second Bill pending an international conference. Its terms are briefly that American and foreign steamships using American ports and carrying more than 50 souls shall be equipped with wireless installation fitted with auxiliary power and in charge of two operators.

### A TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN ROSTRON.

LATER.

The Senate has passed a resolution of thanks to Captain Rostron of the Carpathia, and has voted \$1,000 (£200) for the purpose of presenting him with a medal.

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(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

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