

LINER DID NOT SPEED, ISMAY DECLARES

New York Times

Friday 19 April 1912

Not the Custom of the White Star Line to Try to Break Records

TOOK LAST BOAT, HE SAYS

Awakened by Crash

Doesn't Know About Bulkheads

Ship Sank in 2 Hours and 25 Minutes

J. Bruce Ismay was asked at the pier last night whether he did not desire at this time to answer the charges that have been made that on the first trip of great liners it is the custom to speed in order to obtain the advertising which is bound to follow the saving of time.

"That statement is absolutely false," replied Mr. Ismay with more animation than he showed at any time during the interview. "I can speak for the White Star Line that such a proceeding is not the case, and that the Titanic at no time during her voyage had been at full speed."

He was asked a number of questions, to which he replied that he did not see the things he was questioned about.

"The ship sank in two hours and twenty-five minutes after the collision," said Mr. Ismay. An interviewer broke in to ask:

"Is it not true that she remained afloat long enough to save all if there had been enough boats?"

"I decline to answer," replied Mr. Ismay.

Mr. Ismay was then asked what boat, in their order of departure, he left the ship in, and, misunderstanding the question, he replied:

"I went in the starboard collapsible boat."

"Did you go in the first or the second boat?"

Mr. Ismay thought for a second and then said:

"I went in the last boat."

Can't Tell About Bulkheads

"Mr. Ismay, there has been much discussion as to the efficacy of the modern bulkhead and the automatically closing doors. Did the bulkhead doors work on the Titanic, and what was the reason for the rapid sinking of the vessel?"

"As to the bulkheads, I do not know how they held. I was in my room when the collision came. I believe that in this case the whole bilge of the ship was torn as she struck a glancing blow."

Mr. Ismay was asked how long after the collision the lights remained lighted.

"It was not twenty minutes," he replied. "It was not long after that."

Mr. Ismay said that he did not see the ship go down and heard no explosion. He was asked what the first sensation was, and he replied that, while there had been no great shock, he was, nevertheless, awakened.

"I woke and it felt as though the Titanic had struck a glancing blow and the ship was going heaving up."

Mr. Ismay could offer no suggestion as to the delay in sending wireless messages and he said he knew nothing of the Carpathia's refusal to answer questions from President Taft.

His Wireless Delayed

"I sent a message, a brief summary of the fact, telling that the vessel had been in collision and had sunk. This was at 11 A. M. on Monday."

P. A. S. Franklin, Vice President of the International Mercantile Marine here, broke in to say that that message was only received yesterday morning.

Makes Formal Statement

Then Mr. Ismay declined to answer any questions outside of a formal statement, excusing himself from discussing the wreck on the ground that the matter was now in the hands of the United States Senate committee. His statement reads:

"In the presence of and under the shadow of a catastrophe so overwhelming my feelings are too deep for expression in words. I can only say that the White Star Line and its officers and employes will do everything possible to alleviate [sic] the sufferings and the sorrow of the survivors and their relatives and friends. The Titanic was the last word in shipbuilding, and every requirement prescribed by the British Board of Trade had been lived up to. The master, officers, and seamen were the most efficient in the British service.

"I am informed a committee of the United States Senate has been appointed to investigate the wreck. I heartily welcome an exhaustive inquiry, and any aid that I or my associates or navigators can render is at the service of the public and the Governments of the United States and Great Britain. Under these circumstances I must respectfully defer making further statement at this time."

But after he left the ship and was on the pier with Vice President Franklin, he was again surrounded and asked the question as to "how he happened to be in a lifeboat when so many men were drowned."

In response to the first volley of questions he replied:

"The Titanic sank about midnight, or some little time after, and I think her bilge was ripped open."

Then the question was asked how he happened to be one of the "mostly women and children" who were saved, as some one [sic] put it. He talked in reply of the magnificent behavior of the crew and expounded on how brave they acted.

Again he was asked how he happened to be among the survivors, and Mr. Franklin broke in and said that Mr. Ismay was distraught with the excitement and shock and that such a question was unfair. Mr. Ismay suffered himself to be led away.

Senator Smith was asked whether Mr. Ismay had described what had occurred.

"Yes, he went into detail, but I prefer to have him tell you rather than myself," replied the Senator.

Courtesy of Mark Baber

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