

Repercussions

As soon as the facts of the Titanic sinking were disclosed, people demanded to know exactly what had gone wrong and how such a tragedy could be prevented from happening again.

The first enquiry, commissioned by the US Senate opened less than a week after the sinking. The second, British enquiry started in May 1912. Survivors, crew and expert witnesses were questioned at both. Generally it was concluded that the collision had occurred because Titanic was steaming too fast for the sea conditions.

The American enquiry felt that Captain Smith had shown “indifference to danger” and “overconfidence” while the British enquiry decided he was not to blame for the accident. The White Star Line was cleared of blame, but found it difficult to overcome the bad publicity.

The British Board of Trade’s outdated regulations were blamed for the shortage of lifeboats. New regulations ensured that in future there would be a lifeboat space for everyone onboard passenger ships. Lifeboat drills were made compulsory.

The sailing route across the Atlantic was also changed – in the months where ice was a risk, ships had to take a more southerly route. In 1913 an International Ice Patrol was set up to check the southerly limit of ice and send out regular wireless reports. All these rules remain in force today.