

British Wreck Commissioner's Inquiry

Day 9

Testimony of Joseph T. Wheat

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Examined by the SOLICITOR-GENERAL.

10868. Is your name Joseph Thomas Wheat?
- Yes.

10869. Were you assistant Second Steward?
- Yes, assistant Second Steward.

The Commissioner:
Does that mean a second class steward?

10870. (*The Solicitor-General - To the witness.*) Does that mean a second class steward or not?
- No.

10871. Just tell me who your superiors are in your own department?
- The Chief Steward, the second Steward, and the Purser.

10872. And you would come fourth, as it were?
- Well, after the pursers; there are a number of them, quite a number of pursers abroad.

10873. You mean the purser rating; I see. Putting aside the purser rating, you have the chief steward and the second steward?
- Yes.

10874. Was the chief steward saved?
- No.

10875. Was the second steward saved?
- No.

10876. At the time when this accident happened were you in your bunk?
- No, just about to turn in.

10877. You were just going to turn in?
- Yes.

10878. Did you hear the collision?
- Yes, I heard a noise.

10879. As you judged it at the time, what did you think it was?
- Well, I thought she had cast one of her propeller blades. It sounded to me like that.

10880. Have you been on a ship where that has happened?
- Yes.

10881. And you thought it was that?
- Yes, I thought it was the same thing.

10882. We must find out where your room was?
- On F deck down by the turkish baths.

10883. Is it the port or starboard side?
- Port side.

23 10884. I see "Turkish Bath Attendants" and I see "Second Steward" marked.
Those are on the side of the ship?
- Yes, on the outside.

24 10885. Then I see on the inside, "Two assistant second stewards"?
- Yes.

25 10886. That is your room?
- Yes.

26 10887. You had a mate in your room with you?
- Yes.

27 10888. Was he in the room with you at the time?
- Yes, he was in his bunk.

28 10889. You roused him, I think, did you not?
- Yes.

29 10890. Did he get up and find out what was the matter?
- Yes. I asked him if he had heard any noise, and he said "No."

30 10891. What deck did you go to?
- To E deck.

31 10892. That would be the deck immediately above you?
- Yes.

32 10893. And what did you learn when you got to E deck?
- Well, I met the night watchman. I think his name was Johnson. He told me she was making water badly forward.

33 10894. Was that man Johnson saved?
- Yes.

34 10895. I think we have had him here as a Witness; he is a Scotsman, is he not?
- Yes.

35 10896. You met Johnson?
- Yes.

36 10897. And he told you she was making water forward?
- Yes.

37 10898. Did you go forward yourself?
- Yes, I went forward myself.

38 10899. On the E deck?
- Yes, forward on E deck.

39 10900. And what did you find when you went forward on the E deck?
- I went down to the Post Office room, which is down on G. You will find a stairway leading from E down to the Post Office and baggage room.

40 10901. I want to trace this because I understand this is only a few minutes after the accident?
- Ten minutes or a quarter of an hour.

41 10902. You were on E deck. You go forward?
- Yes.

42 10903. And you go down as low as G deck?
- Yes.

43 10904. Now will you tell me again which is the stairway by which you go down from E deck?
- The first stairway leads down to the squash racquet Court and then continues on down to the Post Office and baggage room.

44 10905. Is the stairway immediately aft of the squash racquet Court?

- No, forward of the squash racquet Court.

45 10906. I thought forward of the squash racquet Court was a bunker head?
- When you go down to the squash racquet Court you turn to the right to get to the squash racquet Court.

46 10907. Is it the stairway which, when you get to G deck brings you close to the Post Office?
- Yes.

47 10908. You went down that stairway?
- Yes.

48 10909. And you think it was about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour after you had felt the collision?
- About that, I should think.

49 10910. Now will you tell us what you found when you got down to G deck?
- I saw the mail men dragging bags of mail up, which I took to be the registered mail. The water was already on that deck.

50 10911. It was already on G deck?
- Yes.

51 10912. Did you get down to the actual level of G deck?
- Yes, I was on G deck.

52 10913. You were standing there?
- Yes.

53 10914. Was there water where you were standing?
- No, it was just making up the stairs then, just making G deck.

54 10915. You mean coming up from below, the Orlop deck, to G?
- Yes.

55 10916. Is there a stairway which goes down again from G deck to the deck below?
- Yes, but that is behind those stairs. You turn round again to get down the stairs.

56 10917. I want you to tell us where you saw the water coming up as you say just making G deck?
- It was almost flush with G deck when I got on it.

57 10918. Do you mean where this stairway is which leads down?
- Yes.

58 The Solicitor-General:
Your Lordship has that, no doubt.

59 The Commissioner:
I have. This means that the water in this part of the boat had risen above the Orlop deck.

60 10919. (*The Solicitor-General.*) So I follow, at that part. Your Lordship observes this is the compartment of the ship which is immediately in front of the No. 6 section. No. 6 boiler section is the compartment next aft. (*To the witness.*) Did you spend long enough there to see whether the water was rising rapidly or slowly?
- Yes, it was rising rapidly.

61 10920. Did the water actually reach the deck you were standing on, G deck, while you were there?
- Yes, it was just on G deck.

62 10921. Just reaching it?
- Yes; it was over G deck before I left; it covered G deck.

63 10922. Then what did you do? Where did you go?
- I went upstairs to E deck again and went down to F deck to close the bulkhead doors on F deck by the turkish baths. There are two bulkhead doors there.

64 10923. And did you close those?
- Yes.

65 10924. Did you do that alone, or did somebody help you?
- I closed the inside one myself, and then to close the other we had to go on top and turn that one with a key. Mr. Dodd and Crosby, the turkish bath attendant, helped me.

66 10925. Is Mr. Dodd the second steward?
- Yes.

67 10926. Now we will first identify the two doors. They are on F deck, are they not?
- Yes.

68 10927. I see just in line with the turkish baths on my plan two watertight doors marked. One is a watertight door which is nearly amidships and the other is a watertight door more on the starboard side?
- Well, they are both on the starboard side.

69 10928. Yes, they are; quite right. Which was the one you closed first?
- The inside one.

70 10929. The one nearer amidships?
- Yes.

71 10930. And that one you closed unaided?
- Yes.

72 10931. Then did you pass at once to the other one which is on the outside?
- Yes.

73 10932. And that one you were helped to close?
- That was closed from E deck.

74 10933. It had to be closed from the deck above?
- Yes, they are closed with a key.

75 10934. Did you go up to the deck above and help to close it?
- Yes.

76 10935. Now at the time when you closed the first of those watertight doors on F deck, the one that you closed unaided, was there any water on F deck as far as you saw?
- No.

77 10936. You told us you thought it was about 10 minutes or a quarter of an hour before you went down and saw the water rising?
- Yes.

78 10937. Could you give us some idea, how long after that was, or should you say that you closed these watertight doors by the turkish baths?
- I do not suppose it would be more than five or six minutes.

79 10938. Then you were a few minutes down looking at the water?
- Yes.

80 10939. When you say you closed these doors, do you mean you did this out of your own idea?
- Yes.

81 10940. Or had an order been given?
- No, I did it on my own.

- 82 10941. As far as you know up to that time, had any order been given about closing watertight doors?
- No. I heard none.
- 83 10942. What was the next thing after that?
- After the bulkhead doors I proceeded up the stairs on to C deck. I had to pass D first, and before I got to C, Mr. McElroy was looking over the banisters.
- 84 10943. Is Mr. McElroy the purser?
- Yes. He saw me coming and told me to get the men up and get all lifebelts and all passengers.
- 85 10944. What do you mean by getting the men up?
- Most of them were down below at the time.
- 86 10945. By the men, do you mean the crew?
- Yes, our own department.
- 87 10946. You would be one of the superiors responsible for a lot of the stewards?
- Yes.
- 88 10947. You were to get them up?
- Yes.
- 89 10948. Did you pass the word round?
- Yes.
- 90 10949. You went to the stewards' quarters?
- Yes.
- 91 10950. And gave these orders?
- Yes.
- 92 10951. And did the stewards turn out?
- Yes, they were nearly all out when I got down there.
- 93 10952. They were nearly all out already?
- Yes.
- 94 10953. What was the next thing?
- They were all round the decks getting the lifebelts on the passengers, and getting warm clothing on them, which took, I should think, about half-an-hour. Then we got the word to pass all women and children on to A deck on the port side.
- 95 10954. I want to get it in order. At some time you returned to your own room, did you not?
- Yes, that may have been before I went to the glory holes.
- 96 10955. Try and get it in order for me, because I think you saw some water when you went to your own room?
- That was later on.
- 97 10956. Very well, tell it us in the right order.
- It was, I should think, about ten minutes or a quarter to 1 when I got the order from Mr. McElroy again to get all the men to the boats - to their stations.
- 98 10956a. That is, all your stewards?
- Yes.
- 99 10957. Did you pass that order along?
- Yes, for as many men as I could see there; and then I went down below again and went down to my own quarters. I think you will find there were about six or eight rooms down our quarters, the turkish bath attendants.
- 100 10958. There is a cluster of rooms on F deck there?
- Yes. I went and saw if all the people were out of those rooms first, and as I was coming up there was water running down off E deck on to F deck, down

- our section.
- 101 10959. Water running down off E deck to F deck?
- Yes.
- 102 10960. That is, from the higher to the lower?
- Yes, it had come from E deck and was running down on to F.
- 103 10961. Can you tell us where it was you found this water falling from E deck to F deck?
- It was running down the stairway.
- 104 10962. Is that the stairway near your quarters?
- Yes, the only stairway down there.
- 105 10963. (*The Commissioner.*) In great quantities?
- No, not very much.
- 106 The Solicitor-General:
Let us be sure I have the stairway which you are speaking of.
- 107 The Commissioner:
Is he saying there was water running from d to E deck?
- 108 The Solicitor-General:
No, My Lord, he has not said so yet; and I do not think he says so at all.
- 109 The Commissioner:
From e to F?
- 110 The Solicitor-General:
Yes. Your Lordship has the plan of E deck and F deck.
- 111 The Commissioner:
I have.
- 112 The Solicitor-General:
Will your Lordship look at the plan of F deck at the place where his own quarters were. It is the room marked "Assistant Second Steward." Now, next to that, immediately level with that is a stairway.
- 113 The Commissioner:
Yes, going up to E deck.
- 114 10964. (*The Solicitor-General.*) If you trace it on the corresponding plan of E deck you see it again. (*To the witness.*) Was that stairway which is opposite your quarters where the water was coming down?
- Yes.
- 115 The Commissioner:
Then it was coming down from E deck towards F deck down the stairway?
- 116 The Solicitor-General:
Yes.
- 117 The Commissioner:
But not in quantities?
- 118 10965. (*The Solicitor-General.*) I want to see what he says. (*To the witness.*) Was there a stream of water, or was it merely trickling?
- It was more than trickling, and it was not exactly a stream. It was more than trickling, though.
- 119 10966. Was it continuing to fall?
- Yes.
- 120 10967. When you were there?
- Yes.
- 121 10968. (*The Commissioner.*) What time was this?

- I should think it would be about a quarter or ten minutes to 1.
- 122 10969. A little more than an hour after the collision?
- Yes, about an hour, I should think.
- 123 10970. (*The Solicitor-General.*) Supposing the watertight doors in F deck had been shut, as you shut the two you know about, this water could not have come back along F deck, could it?
- No.
- 124 10971. But, of course, there are no watertight doors in E deck?
- There is one right forward on E deck alleyway.
- 125 10972. There is one?
- Yes.
- 126 10973. But the bulkheads as a whole do not go up to E deck?
- No.
- 127 Sir Robert Finlay:
I think two bulkheads do go up to E deck.
- 128 10974. (*The Solicitor-General.*) In a sense you are right, and in a sense, I am right. What I mean is you cannot, on E deck, shut the door. I said the bulkheads did not come up to E deck. What I meant was, the top of the bulkhead is the floor of E deck, level with E deck?
- You mean of the f deck bulkheads?
- 129 10975. I want you to help us about the water. You saw water that was apparently coming from E deck and falling down the stairway into F?
- Yes.
- 130 10976. But you did not find water backing along F deck?
- No.
- 131 10977. There are watertight doors on F deck, and you had shut two of them yourself?
- Yes, I thought the water had come up the stairway leading down to the Post Office, and then ran along E deck, and then down on to F.
- 132 10978. And, of course, if the watertight doors on F deck forward of that had not been closed then water could have made its way along F deck, and would not have had to mount the E deck, and then return to F deck?
- Yes, it would.
- 133 The Commissioner:
Is the suggested explanation that F deck, forward of the watertight doors which he had shut were by this time full of water, and that the water had risen up to E deck? Is that the idea?
- 134 The Solicitor-General:
That is the idea, My Lord.
- 135 The Witness:
No, My Lord; in the section forward of the bulkheads where I shut the doors, I do not think there was water there at all.
- 136 10979. Then we are agreed. Where did the water come from, that you saw falling down the stairway between E deck and F deck?
- I think that had come from the Post Office stairway.
- 137 10980. (*The Solicitor-General.*) That is right forward?
- Yes, and there is no bulkhead between the stairway and those stairs on E deck.
- 138 10981. I want to follow your idea; I think I do. You had already seen water in the stairway by the Post Office?
- Yes.

139 10982. And that is on G deck?
- Yes.

140 10983. And is there a stairway which mounts from that place near the squash Racquet Court up to F deck, and from there up to E deck?
- Yes.

141 10984. And assuming that the water rose high enough, is there anything there to prevent it from rising as high as E deck?
- No.

142 10985. But supposing that the water rose there as far as F deck, it could not run aft on F deck, because you had closed the watertight doors?
- It would come up the stairway. But the watertight doors are not near the Post Office.

143 10986. I know they are not?
- The watertight doors are further aft.

144 10987. I quite follow?
- There is nothing to stop the water from coming up to F deck.

145 [There was no question 10988.]

146 10989. What I want to see is why it did not come along F deck?
- Because the bulkheads were there.

147 10990. Because of the bulkheads, and because the watertight doors in the bulkheads were shut?
- Yes, but there are no bulkheads forward by the post office.

148 10991. No, but there is a bulkhead between the place where the post office is and where your quarters are?
- Yes, there are two bulkheads.

149 The Solicitor-General:
I think your Lordship's suggestion is the one the witness means to make.

150 The Commissioner:
What is that?

151 The Solicitor-General:
That the water did rise in that stairway till it got to E deck, and that it then passed aft and fell into F deck.

152 The Witness:
Yes.

153 The Commissioner:
That is what he means?

154 10992. (*The Solicitor-General.*) Yes. (*To the witness.*) You saw this water coming down from E to F. Were you there long enough to be able to tell us whether it was increasing in flow, or whether it was coming the same as it started?
- No, I did not wait to see.

155 10993. You were only there a minute or two, I suppose?
- Yes.

156 10994. Did you find any people in the quarters you had gone to search, or had they all left?
- They had all left.

157 10995. They had all turned out? -Yes.

158 10996. And did you return then to E deck?
- Yes, to the working alleyway.

159 10997. And did you go up this stairway, down which this water was coming?

- No, I went further aft than that.

160 10998. You went further aft and then went up another stairway?
 - Yes. I came up the stairs out of my room; water was coming down there, but that was different from F deck, and then went through the emergency door on to E deck, the working alleyway. You will find "Emergency Door" right at the top of the stairs.

161 10999. We do. Was that emergency door open or closed?
 - Open.

162 11000. So that you did, if I follow you rightly, Mount the stairs down which this water was coming?
 - Oh, yes.

163 11001. Then, when you got to E deck, the top of these stairs, you could tell whether the water was coming along E deck or not?
 - Yes.

164 11002. Was it?
 - It was coming from forward.

165 11003. From forward, along E deck?
 - Yes.

166 11004. Was it coming along that working alleyway?
 - No.

167 11005. Then where was it coming?
 - From the starboard side. The working alleyway was quite dry.

168 11006. (*The Commissioner.*) Was there a list by this time?
 - No, I did not notice any.

169 11007. (*The Solicitor-General.*) I want to trace that water. You saw it coming from forward, aft?
 - Yes.

170 11007a. The passage way which runs across?
 - Yes.

171 11008. Along, not the working alleyway, but the other alleyway, that is, on the starboard side?
 - Yes.

172 11009. And then, in order to fall down those stairs, it would have to turn a corner, would it not?
 - Yes.

173 11010. The passage way which runs across?
 - Yes.

174 11011. And then fall down those stairs?
 - Yes.

175 11012. When you got up to E deck was there a continuous stream of water doing that?
 - Yes, but it was not very much.

176 11013. (*The Commissioner.*) Give me an idea of the quantity, because I do not know what "very much" means?
 - Well, it would cover the stairs; just enough to cover them.

177 11014. Do you mean to say half of an inch or something like that?
 - Yes, something like that.

178 11015. And was it going down the stairs quickly, or merely trickling down?
 - No, it was running rather quickly.

179 11016. (*The Solicitor-General.*) You came up those stairs?

- Yes.

180 11017. Give us an idea in this way; you must have met something?

- Yes.

181 11018. Did it go over the tops of your boots?

- Not over the tops of my boots; over my instep.

182 The Commissioner:
Where was he when the water came over his boots?

183 The Solicitor-General:
He mounts up the stairs down which the water is coming.

184 The Commissioner:
Yes.

185 11019. (The Solicitor-General - To the witness.) Is that where the water reached up to your instep?

- Yes.

186 11020. (The Commissioner.) Not up the stairs?

- Coming up the stairs, yes.

187 11021. That is a good deal more than 1/2 of an inch; do you mean to say that the water on the stairs trickling down or coming down the stairs was so deep that it reached up to the top of your boots?

- No, I did not say that.

188 11022. I thought you said it came over your instep?

- It had run from the top of the stairs over the tops of my boots.

189 11023. (The Solicitor-General.) Do not use that word instep, because different people mean different things by it. Take the ordinary heel of an ordinary boot. You were probably wearing heels?

- Yes.

190 11024. Would it come to the top of the heel?

- About the top of the heel of my boot.

191 The Commissioner:
I am sorry to trouble you, but when you have finished asking questions, will you explain to me what you understand his evidence to mean, with a pointer on that plan.

192 The Solicitor-General:
Yes, My Lord; I will do my best. I think I can do it up to this point now, if your Lordship desires.

193 The Commissioner:
Well, it will assist me if you will do that, if you will take the pointer and point me out on the plan the locality of the watertight doors that were closed, and then show me in what direction he means to indicate the water was coming.

194 The Solicitor-General:
I see here marked on the plan "Squash Racquet," and your Lordship sees there is a stair. (Pointing to the plan on the wall.)

195 The Commissioner:
Tell me what deck you are pointing to.

196 11025. (The Solicitor-General.) I will. Your Lordship sees there is a stairway indicated by a number of ticks. I am now putting the

end of this pointer on the level of the Orlop deck. As I follow the witness, that is the lowest deck to which he went in his description. He says he saw water rising in this compartment at that point up those stairs. (To the witness.) Is that right?

- Yes.

197 The Commissioner:
Climbing up those stairs?

198 11026. (The Solicitor-General.) Mounting up those stairs. He had came to it, so he says, from his room, by coming down a couple of flights of stairs down here. He says the water was rising as he stood there, and that it reached as far as G deck. (To the witness.) Is that right?

- Yes.

199 The Solicitor-General:
That is to say it ran up to that point while he was standing there?

200 The Commissioner:
What deck is that?

201 The Solicitor-General:
That is G deck.

202 The Commissioner:
That is the deck above the Orlop deck?

203 The Solicitor-General:
Yes. Then he says he went on his own motion aft in order to shut two watertight doors which are on F deck, that is to say, which shut off this space. The watertight doors, as I follow, are somewhere back here.

204 The Commissioner:
Which is the bulkhead in which they are placed?

205 The Solicitor-General:
I think it is this bulkhead, and I think it will be found, if my friends are following on this plan, that that is the place.

206 11027. (The Commissioner - To the witness.) Can you follow this plan? I cannot see where the bulkheads are.

- Yes, I think it will be there. (The position was indicated to the witness.)

207 11028. (The Solicitor-General.) There is the first class entrance immediately after?

- Yes, it is just forward of the first class entrance.

208 11029. Then he came back along F deck to the point where the pointer is now, and the thing he shuts is a thing which in this diagram is marked with a thick black line. He shuts two of them, and then he says after that there were these orders given.

209 The Commissioner:
Where does that bulkhead stop?

210 The Solicitor-General:
That is the top of it, so that the floor above him, as your Lordship sees, is E deck, and the floor on which he would be standing when he shuts the doors is F deck.

211 The Commissioner:
Yes.

212 The Solicitor-General:
Then he says after some orders he returned to his own quarters, which are the other side of the ship; and when he got to his own quarters, which are on F deck, he found that water was falling down the stairway, which led from E deck to F deck. Perhaps the witness will tell me whereabouts the stairway would be.

213 The Commissioner:
I do not quite understand where that water came from that was coming down stairs. How did it get up?

214 The Solicitor-General:
It was coming from E deck. What I understand the witness to have said is, that he thinks that if the water, which he had observed mounting from the Orlop deck to G deck, continued to mount up that staircase there up to F deck, and then up to E deck, there would be nothing to prevent it running along E deck and falling down the stairway which led to F deck.

215 The Commissioner:
I see. Then the forward part of the ship, forward of the bulkhead in which he closed the watertight doors, Must have been full of water at that time. Is that so, Sir John?

216 11030. (The Solicitor-General - To the witness.) Would that be so, do you think?
- There is another partition between the mail room and the bulkheads that I closed. That has no bulkhead doors at all; it is just plain.

217 The Commissioner:
Take d bulkhead, Marked on the f deck. If you trace that d bulkhead upwards towards the port side of the ship, you come to a watertight door.

218 The Solicitor-General:
Yes, My Lord.

219 The Commissioner:
Was that shut or open?

220 The Solicitor-General:
I do not know at all. I do not know whether the witness can tell.

221 The Commissioner:
If that was shut, then, as I understand, water would not get into the space between e and F on that deck; but if it was open, then the water would come into both those spaces.

222 The Solicitor-General:
Might I just ask Mr. Wheat to look at the plan?

223 11031. (The Commissioner.) Then it would come into the space between d and E, and then mount and get on to E deck and begin trickling down the stairs? (To the witness.) Had she ever a list to starboard, as far as you know?
- No, My Lord.

224 The Attorney-General:
There has been no evidence of that yet.

225 The Commissioner:
Because I do not understand the alleyway on the port side being

dry.

226 11032. (The Solicitor-General.) I might ask him this to clear it up. (To the witness.) You have evidently the design of the thing in your head. As far as you know, supposing that water began to rise in that stairway which you spoke of near the mail room, is there anything to stop it from rising from the Orlop deck to G, from G to F, and from f to E?

- No.

227 11033. It is merely a question of whether there is sufficient water to rise?

- Yes.

228 11034. Is there any watertight door that could be shut to prevent that?

- No.

229 11035. So, as far as the stairway is concerned, it is open for the water to rise. Is there anything which would prevent water, if it got into the stairway on F deck from running aft on the f deck?

- Yes, there is an iron bulkhead there.

230 11036. (The Commissioner.) Is that the bulkhead in which there are no doors?

- Yes. We have no doors. I do not know whether there are any doors down below, but there are none in our department.

231 11037. (The Solicitor-General.) None on F deck?

- No.

232 11038. So that it is a continuous partition at that point?

- Yes, as far as our deck is concerned.

233 The Commissioner:
I do not know, Sir Robert, whether you could explain it.

234 Sir Robert Finlay:
I understand that what the witness suggests is that the water rose forward of this bulkhead d till it got to the level of E deck. It could not get through this bulkhead, therefore it rose vertically till it got to E deck, and then ran along E deck and then down.

235 The Commissioner:
I understand that, but does not it follow from that, that all the part of the ship which was forward of the point where the water was rising was full of water?

236 Sir Robert Finlay:
Not necessarily all, My Lord; it is highly probable.

237 The Commissioner:
I do not see what part of it could not be full.

238 Sir Robert Finlay:
What I mean is, if the water was coming in forward of this d bulkhead, getting into that division, it would rise.

239 The Commissioner:
As I suggest?

240 Sir Robert Finlay:
Yes, and then over the top of the bulkhead, along E, and down the staircase.

241 The Commissioner:

And that is what I understand him to mean.

242 Sir Robert Finlay:
That is my impression.

243 The Commissioner:
Whether it is right or not, I do not know. I think you are right in a way. I mean, it does not follow that the forward compartments were necessarily full, although no doubt they would be if the vessel was holed at that part, Sir.

244 Sir Robert Finlay:
Exactly.

245 The Commissioner:
If she had had a tear right along, opening those parts, those parts would be full as well.

246 Sir Robert Finlay:
They would be full on their own account, so to speak. I think the evidence does show she was ripped up; at least it suggests so far, that there was a rip up on the starboard side for a very considerable way.

247 The Commissioner:
Yes, and right from forward, along.

248 Sir Robert Finlay:
From forward. The same thing would in all probability have been going on in the forward compartments.

249 The Commissioner:
Yes.

250 Sir Robert Finlay:
What the witness describes would have taken place even if this compartment only had been open.

251 The Commissioner:
Yes, I think I understand it now.

252 11039. (The Solicitor-General - To the witness.) Have you a copy of the plan before you?
- Yes.

253 11040. Look at the plan of F deck for a moment, will you?
- Yes.

254 11041. Will you look where "squash racquet court" is marked?
- Yes.

255 11042. Now, I think the stairway which you are talking about is a stairway on the starboard side of that squash racquet court?
- Yes, the starboard side.

256 11043. Now, what I would like you to explain, if you will, is this: Imagine yourself on F deck, standing on F deck at that point. Is there any watertight door at that level?
- No.

257 11044. At that place?
- No.

258 11045. It is a solid bulkhead without any openings in it?
- There is an opening for the stairway to go down.

259 11046. Apart from the stairway?
- There is nothing else.

260 11047. Just look at the plan for a moment, because I cannot help
seeing in that line, just a little on the port side "W.T.D."

261 The Commissioner:
That is the one I was asking about.

262 11048. (The Solicitor-General.) That is what I want to follow -
on the port side of the squash racquet court?
- That would be in the third class; either the third class or one of
the fidleys.

263 11049. It is marked in our plan as being between the squash
racquet court and the place marked "Linen"?
- There is no bulkhead door down the squash racquet court.

264 11050. You know all about it, and we want to know about it?
- There is no bulkhead door there.

265 11051. "W.T.D." is marked here (Pointing on the plan.)?
- That must be the other side of the bulkhead. There is nothing
down there.

266 The Solicitor-General:
Sir Robert has suggested to me on the large plan what appears to
be the true explanation. I am still speaking of bulkhead D, as
shown on the plan of deck F. If one carries one's eye along that
bulkhead, from starboard to port side, it runs for a distance
straight across the ship, and then it takes a right-angled turn and
runs a little to the rear of the squash racquet court.

267 The Commissioner:
Yes, then it turns back again.

268 The Solicitor-General:
It turns back again, and it turns back again under the stairs.

269 The Commissioner:
It does.

270 The Solicitor-General:
That is to say, those stairs indicated close to the word "Squash"
are really stairs which start from the f level and mount up to the
E level, so that the bulkhead runs under those stairs at the side.

271 Sir Robert Finlay:
At the side?

272 The Solicitor-General:
At the side and then under them.

273 Sir Robert Finlay:
Immediately aft of the stairs.

274 The Solicitor-General:
Immediately aft of them, and then takes a turn under them when
those stairs have reached the next deck.

275 Sir Robert Finlay:
Yes, that is to say, on the port side of the stairs?

276 The Solicitor-General:
Then, still tracing out the bulkhead, immediately following that
there is a watertight door shown, which Sir Robert thinks must
have been shut, and I gather it is a watertight door which would
normally separate the third class from the first class?

277 The Witness:

No.

278 The Commissioner:
You notice there is a watertight door also in the bulkhead that starts from C?

279 The Solicitor-General:
There is, My Lord, in the same line, according to this plan.

280 The Commissioner:
Therefore you have a watertight door which, if opened, would have let the water into the space between C and D, and you have another watertight door which if opened would have let the water into the space between d and E?

281 The Solicitor-General:
Yes. Where this theory breaks down is, that the witness does not take the view that there is a watertight door there.

282 The Witness:
Do you mean down by the squash racquet court?

283 11052. Yes?
- There is no watertight door there.

284 The Commissioner:
Which is right, the witness or the plan?

285 11053. (The Solicitor-General.) We can only take the witness for the moment. (To the witness.) Supposing you were coming up by those stairs from G deck round the side of the squash racquet court, Mounting up; you know those stairs which are immediately on the after side of the squash racquet court, you see them there on the plan on F?

- Yes.

286 11054. Supposing that you had got on F deck there, not up the stairs but on F deck - let me show you where I mean (Indicating the position on the small plan.)

287 Sir Robert Finlay:
My Lord, we have a larger plan here. I do not know whether your Lordship would like to look at it.

288 The Commissioner:
I think I should. (Sir Robert Finlay handed the plan and explained it to the Commissioner.)

289 The Attorney-General:
Is your Lordship satisfied?

290 The Commissioner:
I think I know where the bulkhead door is. There is a door in the bulkhead at the bottom of the ship. There is none in the Orlop deck. The bulkhead as it rises into the Orlop deck has no doorway. When the bulkhead rises on to G deck it has no doorway in it at all; but when it rises on to F deck it has this doorway which you find in the plan in the d bulkhead by the linen room.

291 The Attorney-General:
Between the linen room and the squash racquet court on the port side.

292 The Commissioner:

Yes. Now that is the first open passage that there is in that bulkhead, after of course you leave the automatic door in the bottom of the ship. The door at the bottom of the ship would have been closed when the button was pressed?

293 The Attorney-General:
Certainly.

294 The Commissioner:
And you would have had then, with this particular bulkhead, a complete wall from the bottom of the ship, until you come to that watertight door which is by the linen closet?

295 The Attorney-General:
Yes.

296 The Commissioner:
And if that was shut - we do not know yet whether it was shut or not - we would have to get the water over the top of the bulkhead?

297 Sir Robert Finlay:
That is it.

298 The Commissioner:
In order that the water should find its way to the place where he saw it trickling down?

299 The Attorney-General:
That is right.

300 11055. (The Solicitor-General - To the witness.) You were a first class steward?

- Yes.

301 11056. You had nothing to do with the third class?

- No.

302 11057. Forward of this bulkhead, My Lord has been speaking about, it is third class, is it not, on the port side?

- On A deck?

303 11058. On F deck?

- I do not know of any door.

304 11059. I am not asking about any door. I say forward of the bulkhead it is third class?

- Yes.

305 11060. Then you know nothing about that?

- No.

306 11061. Your business is aft of that?

- Yes.

307 11062. Whether there is a watertight door there or not, was there at that time when you were there any opening there?

- No.

308 11063. You are sure of that?

- Yes.

309 The Solicitor-General:
I think your Lordship will find the watertight door shut from the third class side.

310 The Commissioner:
If there was no opening there it means the door was shut.

311 11064. (The Solicitor-General.) Yes, it is the same thing. (To the witness.) When you got up on to E deck did you see anything of any third class passengers?
 - There were a few there, five or six, I should say.

312 11065. Where were they coming from?
 - They were making from forward aft.

313 11066. Were they men?
 - Yes.

314 11067. Were they carrying their baggage with them?
 - They were carrying and dragging boxes and bags.

315 11068. Were they making their way aft towards the top deck?
 - Towards aft.

316 11069. Tell us shortly where you went?
 - From E deck up on to B deck up the service stairs.

317 11070. Tell us what happened there?
 - There I met Mr. Latimer on the b deck.

318 11071. He is your chief - the Chief Steward?
 - Yes, and he had his big coat on with a lifebelt over it and I told him to take his big coat off and put the lifebelt under it or his big coat would be no use to him. Then I went along forward and up the forward stairway up on to the boat deck and there I saw they were just filling No. 9 boat, starboard.

319 The Solicitor-General:
 I do not think we have heard anything about No. 9.

320 The Commissioner:
 I think this will be a convenient time to adjourn.

321 (The Witness withdrew.)

322 Day 11

323 Testimony of Joseph T. Wheat, recalled

324 Further examined by the SOLICITOR-GENERAL.

325 13186. (The Solicitor-General.) You will remember, My Lord, he described what happened up to the time when he saw the water fall down the stairway from A deck to F deck, and he had just told us that he had gone up the stairway on his way to the upper deck. (To the witness.) That is right, is it not?
 - Yes, Sir.

326 13187. I think you can tell us now [what] happened when you got to the boat deck?
 - When I arrived at No. 9 boat Mr. Murdoch was there with quite a number of our men passing women and children over from the port side into No. 9 boat.

327 13188. When you say "with a number of our men" does that mean with a number of stewards?
 - Yes; the victualling department.

328 13189. They were being put into No. 9 boat?
 - The starboard side.

329 13190. I think you had been getting your stewards up to their stations, had you not?
 - Yes, I had just come up from down below after doing that.

330 13191. Did you hear the orders which Mr. Murdoch gave as to

..Arrives 0:40 - 1:20

..Crew rescue action (gei

..Crew rescue action (

..Fill from A deck

..If no more women

..Women & Children

- what you were to do?
- 331 - Yes; he told me to take the rest of the boat's crew down on to the next deck as they had to send the people off A deck.
13192. This is a little important, and we must get it clear. The next deck would be a deck?
- Yes.
- 332 13193. Who was it you were to take down to A deck?
- Our own men.
- 333 13194. The stewards who were to go into different boats as crew?
- Yes.
- 334 13195. Did you do that?
- Yes. I took about 70 men down altogether, I think.
- 335 13196. Stewards?
- Yes.
- 336 13197. When you got your men down to A deck just tell us what you did - how you arranged them?
- When we got the men down to A deck, I lined them all up two deep round the boats, for fear there was a rush.
- 337 13198. Did that keep a clear space next to the boats?
- Yes, about six feet from the bulwarks.
- 338 13199. Had you heard the order that women and children were to go forward first?
- Yes, that was the general order right through - "women and children only."
- 339 13200. Having had your men up, as you say, two deep round the boats, what was done about the women and children?
- First I told the men off to make sure that the plug in No. 11 was in tight, and then I told five or six men, I cannot tell which, to get into the boat to hand the women and children in. Then the order was passed to pass the women and children along. After the women and children were all passed in we filled her up with as many as the boat would possibly hold, and Mr. Murdoch, looking over the top, said, "You have got enough there."
- 340 13201. All this time were you keeping your line of stewards?
- No; at that time I was standing with one foot on the rail and one foot on the bulwarks. We were passing women and children into the boat.
- 341 13202. You say you arranged your stewards to keep order with two lines; was that order kept after that?
- Yes.
- 342 13203. And were people kept back?
- Yes.
- 343 13204. Except the women and children?
- Women and children only were allowed inside the line.
- 344 13205. That, I think, was No. 11?
- Yes.
- 345 13206. Is No. 11 the boat in which you went away?
- Yes.
- 346 13207. Who ordered you in?

- 347 - Mr. Murdoch.
13208. We have already had some evidence about it from a Witness named Mackay, so that one only wants it very shortly. When your boat was lowered, you say Mr. Murdoch gave the order. Was she full?
- 348 - Yes, quite full she could not hold another soul.
13209. What were the proportions of women and children?
- 349 - I counted them at daylight as best I could. There were fifty-one women, nine children, seven stewards, two sailors, one fireman, and myself.
13210. Then there were no men passengers in that boat at all?
- 350 - Yes, there were three male passengers.
13211. I do not think you mentioned them?
- 351 - No, I did not.
13212. How did the three male passengers come to be there?
- 352 - I cannot say that.
13213. Was there good order kept in getting them into this boat, No. 11?
- 353 - Yes, very good order.
13214. Then No. 11 in due course was picked up?
- 354 - Yes.
Examined by Mr. SCANLAN.
13215. Your proper boat station was, I understand, No. 9?
- 355 - No. 11.
13216. This boat No. 11 in which you went off, I understand, had not a lamp?
- 357 - No, not to my knowledge.
13217. Nor a compass?
- 358 - No.
13218. Had it provisions?
- 359 - Well, I cannot say if there were any in the provision locker, because we did not look there.
13219. Had it water?
- 360 - Yes.
Examined by Mr. HARBINSON.
13220. Could you tell me if on the "Titanic" there was any general system of organisation amongst the stewards as to what their duties would be in case of emergency or danger?
- 362 - In regard to what?
13221. In case of danger - where their posts of duty would be in case of danger from fire or wreck?
- 363 - Emergency doors, do you mean?
13322. No. Was there any system of organisation among the stewards?
- 364 - No, only among the heads of the departments; it was left to them.
13223. There was no general system which had been established, was there, and positions allotted to the stewards in case of danger?
- Yes, all the stewards were allotted to boats; every man had his

..Crew rescue action ()
..Crew and class (gen

- boat.
- 365 13224. Do I understand that they were allotted to the boats in case of wreck?
- Yes.
- 366 13225. Then there is no general system or instruction given to them as to taking charge of the different classes and the different sections of the passengers?
- No, that is understood with regard to the first, second, and third; they are each in charge of their own departments.
- 367 13226. Is it after they have discharged the duty of looking after their own departments that they are supposed to start at the boats?
- Yes.
- 368 13227. Not before?
- No.
- 369 13228. Do you say that it was after the stewards had warned the different departments or classes that on this occasion they went up to the boat deck?
- Yes, they did not get their orders until everybody had a lifebelt on to the best of their knowledge, and the people were all taken up to the boat deck.
- 370 13229. Did you hear instructions given to the stewards to see that all the people were taken up to the deck?
- Yes, I heard that instruction given by Mr. McElroy about a quarter-past twelve, or round about that time; he sent us down to Mr. Harding to get lifebelts on the passengers and get them on deck.
- 371 Examined by Mr. CLEMENT EDWARDS.
- 372 13230. Whose duty was it to close the watertight doors on deck F?
- They belonged to the turkish bath man.
- 373 13231. You, in fact, closed them?
- Yes.
- 374 13232. Did you get any orders to do that?
- No.
- 375 13233 Had he had any orders, do you know?
- Not that I know of. He may have had orders; I did not see him around until afterwards.
- 376 13234. You closed them entirely at your own discretion?
- Yes.
- 377 Examined by Mr. HOLMES.
- 378 13235. Was your boat lowered empty from the boat deck to the a deck?
- Yes, there was nobody in it.
- 379 13236. And it was filled from A deck?
- Yes.
- 380 13237. The deck was quite open?
- Yes; just as it is there (Pointing on the plan.)
- 381 13238. Further forward there are windows?
- Yes, just as on the plans here.

382 13239. Did Mr. Murdoch come down on to A deck to give his orders?
- No.

383 13240. He gave them from the boat deck?
- Yes.

384 13241. Over the side?
- Yes, we could hear him shouting over the side; he looked over the side when the boat was full and told us to lower her away.

385 Examined by Mr. COTTER.

386 13242. Did you go down to the gloryhole?
- Yes, I went down twice.

387 13243. Did you see any water at all on A deck?
- No.

388 13244. Did you see any water in the lower gloryhole?
- Yes, but our men were not down there, and I had nothing to do with that.

389 13245. Is it not the Rule to provide that there should be boat drills on the ship in each department so that the men may be mustered at the boats and know the stations allotted to them?
- Yes.

390 13246. And they receive their orders as to what to do in case of emergency?
- Yes.

391 13247. So many men on the boat and the rest as stand by men?
- Yes.

392 13248. They receive their orders from the Chief Steward, the second Steward, or yourself, and you receive your orders from the Captain?
- Yes.

393 13249. If there had been proper boat drill in Southampton and the men had been properly organised do you not think that they could have saved a lot more people than they did?
- That is a very hard thing to say; I do not think so under the circumstances.

394 13250. My reason for putting the question is that some of the boats went away not properly manned and with not a proper complement of passengers?
- Yes.

395 13251. My suggestion to you is that if everybody had known their station and known their duty they could have manned those boats properly and got the proper number of passengers in them?
- With regard to the boats on the starboard side Nos. 3, 5, 7 and 9, I have the idea that those men were away, provisioning the boats, because there were none of our men taken away in them.

396 13252. Is it not the fact that there are only two provision men to each boat and others to man the boat?
- Yes.

397 13253. What system had they got there?
- That the boats crews of 3, 5, 7 and 9 should provision the lifeboats.

398 13254. And not get into the boat?
 - They will get into the boats afterwards.

399 13255. If you were having boat drill and the order came from the bridge that you were all to get into your stations at the boats, how many of the stewards' department would get into the boat?
 - I suppose they would all do so if they all belonged to the boat's crew.

400 13256. Have you taken part in boat drill?
 - Yes.

401 13257. Is it not the fact that there are so many men for all the boats?
 - No, I have never seen it that way; I have seen the whole boat's crew get in if it was a case of taking the boat.

402 13258. What constitutes a boat's crew?
 - I should think about 25 of our men are allotted to a boat.

403 13259. How many sailors?
 - I do not know.

404 13260. How many firemen?
 - I never saw the firemen muster at the boats.

405 13261. Have you taken part in a drill when everybody has taken their share of the work with regard to the manning of the boats?
 - Not in this ship, I think.

406 13262. Have you done it anywhere else?
 - No, I cannot say I have - not manning the boat.

407 13263. That is why I asked you the question - that if there had been properly organised boat drill and the men knew their stations I suggest more people would have been saved?
 - The men did know their stations.

408 13264. Did you have any bulkhead door drill?
 - Yes.

409 13265. On what day?
 - On the saturday morning we had fire drill and bulkhead door drill.

410 13266. Were all the bulkhead doors closed?
 - They were all closed.

411 13267. How do you account for the fact that when the ship came into collision with the iceberg they did not go and close the doors?
 - They would have to go by the orders.

412 13268. Is it not the fact that this drill is for the purpose, in case of emergency, of making them go to their stations?
 - They may have been at their stations; they may not have had the order, or they may have had the order.

413 13269. You did not hear the order given?
 - No.

414 13270. Surely the proper thing is to close the bulkhead doors first?
 - Yes, but that is just according to what the collision was - if they thought it was serious.

415 13271. I suggest to you that if they had closed the bulkhead

416

doors the ship might have been afloat yet?
- I do not think so.
(The Witness withdrew.)