

17 NOV 2008.

D. JENNINGS-BRAMLY  
T6 PEABODY ESTATE  
DALGARNO GARDENS  
LONDON W10 5LB

England

Dear Sir,

Mr Tom Fortunato's article, reprinted  
in two issues of *la catastrophe* this year,  
requires answering; indeed, requests a reply!

Here is one you may care to print: after  
checking, if you wish, the facts I state.

Yrs faithfully

D. Jennings-Bramly.

P.S. I intend to send a copy to *The Titanic Commutator*  
B.

**Titanic covers that missed the boat?**

As a long time collector and student of the Sower issue of France, my eye was immediately drawn to the cover at the head of Mr. Tom Fortunato's article entitled "Titanic covers that missed the boat" which was reprinted, in 2 parts, in *La Catastrophe* this year; the original to be found in *The Titanic Commutator*.

Having checked the 10 centime Sowers, in the hopes that they might be postal forgeries and finding them to be genuine, I turned to the article to attempt to find out why Mr. Fortunato declared the envelope, numbered 267914, a gem.

After reading through the 2 parts and having viewed the 8 covers which come up on the references he gives and having failed to raise the 9<sup>th</sup>, which does not really matter, because it is also stated to be an envelope, franked 25 centimes, to the Winter Co., I can answer his question: the question he poses in his first sentence - and my answer is - NO. I would not give a nickel for any one of the so-called "missed TITANIC covers" listed as 9 by him. Why not? Read on...

Let me deal with the "junk box" cover first: despite Mr. Fortunato's assertion, N<sup>o</sup>. 267914 has not been registered by the French State *Postes*. N<sup>os</sup> 267909 & 267925 are, also, not registered, because the Courier Convoyeurs (scallop rims) did not offer registration. The other 6 covers are not registered and none of the 9 were ever tendered for registration. Had any been registered, the fronts would have displayed evidence of it and the franking would have been 50 centimes (25c postage + 25c reg.); turning the covers over should have revealed handling by the registered mail branch of the U.S. Postal Service - they do not; all there is, are markings for ordinary mail.

The PARIS R.P. ETRANGER marks are made by the 2 heads of a cancelling machine working with no bars between heads. Cover 267942 shows the bars in situ. Using "registration" in a non-postal sense and taking into account the shape of the digits, I am of the opinion that the six-figure numbers have been applied by a registry in the Winter Co.

By 1912, the U.P.U. had been in existence for over thirty years and few countries had not joined. The benefits were great, especially as tariffs were now standardized between member countries. There were no more varying rates between shipping line and shipping line and even individual ships. The previous tedious and often fruitless searches for the fastest, safest and least expensive route and vessel were over. Prepayment reigned and superscription of Line, of Captain's favour, of shipping agent or vessel was extinguished.

The Post Office of a country did not designate or impose a particular vessel's name on an item of mail or a bundle of mail: their remit was to send the mail on the first available packet. Later, sometimes, arrangements might be made specially for propaganda; the S.S. "Normandie" is an example, but for anyone to advance such a theory in regard to the PTT and the TITANIC is ludicrous.

The choice of vessel, to carry one's mail, has always been the prerogative of the sender; governments have tried to control and have spied on mail from the earliest times. The suggestion that the word TITANIC hand-stamped on the 8 covers viewed was carried out by the Foreign Branch of the PTT Paris is completely untenable.

Since the RMS Titanic was British, there is no likelihood that *La Poste* would have arranged a special handling for mail which senders wanted to travel by the Titanic. Should anyone in France have desired ocean travel for their mail by that White Star liner, they could have arranged for it to take place, by posting to the liners' agency at Cherbourg; that patently was not so done.

Mr. Fortunato finds it interesting that after 20 years searching, only 9 covers, all to one firm, have been recorded. I find it suspicious and one more reason why I end up convinced that these covers had the hand-stamp TITANIC added to them with fraudulent intent, at some time shortly before they started to appear. What I am unable to decide is where the fraud originated: whether in America or Britain.

D. Jennings-Bramly, FRPSL

cc: The Expert Committee RPSL  
France & Colonies P.S.  
La Catastrophe