

MANY WILD RUMORS AT WASHINGTON

All of Which Are Lacking in Confirmation.

Navy Department Knows Nothing of a Battle.

Reported to Have Been Fought in the Windward Passage.

Also Sets at Rest the Rumor That the Mangrove Had Fallen Into Spanish Hands, Her Commander Having Been Heard From.

WASHINGTON, May 24.—There was lapse into sensational war rumors in Washington to-day after a week of comparative quietude. The rumors ranged all the way from the capture of the little Mangrove with a crew of thirteen men to the reported destruction of the entire Spanish fleet by Sampson's and Schley's combined forces. They were circulated with persistence, notwithstanding their denial as soon as they could be brought to the attention of any official capable of passing judgment on their accuracy. As the day rolled along the officials themselves became apprehensive, as was shown by the frequency with which they called for the latest newspaper bulletins. At the close of the day, however, it was again announced in the most positive manner that the Navy Department had no information to warrant the report of any sort of engagement in the Windward Passage. This did not specifically cover the waters of the West Indies, but in view of the fact that the department has also pledged itself to let the public know of anything in the nature of a general engagement, possibly the bulletin announcement is sufficient to cover the case.

When Secretary Long started for home after an exceptionally busy day, he stated to a group of newspapermen that the department has received no information of importance. In response to an inquiry as to where the Spanish fleet was located, Mr. Long replied that his belief was that it was still at Santiago de Cuba. Concerning the reported capture of the Mangrove and the loss of other ships, the Secretary dismissed these stories as purely conjectural, and not supported by facts. Word had come from the commander of the Mangrove since the time of the alleged capture, showing that the ship could not have been in the hands of the Spanish. Mr. Long paid a handsome tribute to the War Board, and stated that there was no purpose whatever of changing the present system whereby this board co-operates with him in giving every possible assistance and advice, mainly in the way of information to the Admirals in command. The office of the War Board, the Secretary pointed out, was not to fight battles; that was exclusively the province of the squadron commanders. The board acted merely in an advisory way, and at no time had assumed executive functions.

The Spaniards appear to be making ready for something more than a defensive campaign at home, or at least they are trying to create that impression by other means than news bulletins that issue almost daily from Madrid. The Navy Department now has, by its own reliable sources, reports of greatest activity in the Spanish navy yards, and the preparation for sea and for a long voyage of two of the torpedo boat destroyers. It is given out that they are to join Cervera immediately his squadron enters Cadiz harbor. Possibly this statement is made with a deliberate purpose of misleading American sailors into the belief that Cervera has taken his way homeward.

Inquiries as to the whereabouts of the Oregon brought a reply this afternoon to the effect that the battleship was safe. Nothing could be learned of her location. It is probable that the telegrams said to have emanated from the vessel were really filed at Key West, but were brought to that port on some dispatch boat from the Oregon, which is co-operating with our fleets.

The cutting of the cables at Santiago and at San Juan de Porto Rico, as reported to-day, was a military move of first importance. Blanco has yet one link left of communication with the outer world, but the Spanish commander at San Juan now finds himself totally in the dark as to conditions in Spain or in Cuba, while the value of o.yau. oxeiso - M. o. 1 that part as a place of refuge for the Spanish flying squadron is materially diminished. It is safe to say that the remaining cable at Santiago will be cut soon, like the others, so that if Cervera is misguided enough to have entered Santiago harbor, he will be

completely out of touch with his home Government on the one hand, and equally unable to communicate with Blanco at the other end of the island.

The Philippine expedition is now off in dead earnest. The sending of these ships will affect the Hawaiian question vitally. Like the Charleston, the transports must stop at Hawaii to replenish their coal bunkers from the great heaps of coal that Consul-General Howard has been piling up for months. If the Hawaiians, like us, take this coal without the pretext that we are using it to make our way to our nearest home port, as is required by international law in such cases, they will stand convicted of gross breach of neutrality, that in the eyes of nations allies them with the United States in hostility to Spain. The taking of coal by America ships at Hawaii to make an extensive campaign against the Spanish possessions, it is believed here, will result in compelling the United States either to assume a protectorate over the islands or to annex them.

The Navy Department at 3:15 this afternoon posted the following bulletin: "The department has no reason to believe that a battle has occurred in the Windward Passage.

"The auxiliary cruiser St. Louis has cut the cable at Santiago de Cuba and San Juan de Porto Rico.

"The transport City of Peking, with 1,200 troops on board, and the transports Sydney and Australia, also loaded with troops, are expected to sail from San Francisco to-day for Honolulu, from which point they will be conveyed to the Philippines by the cruiser Charleston."

Late this afternoon it was ascertained that the cable from Santiago that was cut by the American warship St. Louis was not the line controlled by the French company running from Santiago to Hayti through Guantanamo, but one of the two English cables running from Santiago south to Jamaica. This information was communicated to the officials of the Government by Mr. Lucienne, General Agent of the French Cable Company in the United States. General Blanco, therefore, is not isolated from the rest of the world but can still communicate with the home Government by either the French cable going to Hayti, or the English one running to Jamaica.

COAST SIGNAL SERVICE.

Efficient System for Observing Approach of Hostile Fleet.

WASHINGTON, May 24.—After several weeks of work along the coast stretch from Atlantic and Gulf coasts, the Navy Department has completed the most comprehensive and efficient system for observing the approach of a hostile fleet that has ever been put into operation. Another bureau, known as the Coast Signal Service, in charge of Captain Bartlett, who attends to this as well as the work of the Naval Board of Information.

The department has the services of 2,300 men stretched along the coast from Bangor, Maine, to Galveston, Texas. These are divided into thirty-four central stations, about sixty to one hundred miles apart along the coast. The stations are in turn connected directly by telegraph with the coast signal office of the Navy Department and operators are on duty night and day keeping the Navy Department in constant telegraphic touch with the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

Secretary Long projected this plan a month ago, and \$75,000 was set aside to establish the network of observation along the coast. After selecting the thirty-four central points from Maine to Texas, rush orders were given to build observation towers and towers for the observers. The naval miltairies were created for this purpose, and operators are now on duty at each of these stations. The towers are completed, and also the small houses for their living purposes. There are 233 of these militairies now in the service.

The next step was to have the light-telegraph system made adjacent to the coast observation. This was done through the co-operation of the Treasury Department, and the lighthouse force of 1,200 men scattered from Maine to Texas are assisting the work of observation. The life saving service was brought into similar co-operation, so that now 1,000 life savers are brought into the observation force. The thirty-four central stations with the numerous lighthouses and life saving stations make a complete chain of observation points, all connected by telegraph or telephone with one another and with the Navy Department.

By arrangement with the telegraph companies, the reports from these observers take precedence over private telegraphic business, so that the Navy Department is enabled to get immediate telegraphic notice of the approach of any hostile fleet or suspicious ship. The work of observation has been thoroughly systematized. Watchers are kept in the towers throughout the day and night. Life saving crews are assigned in night duty, and they patrol the beach throughout the night on the lookout for approaching ships. All the central points and the observers have been supplied with telegraph and full appliances for marine observation. They are also supplied with torches, rockets and other paraphernalia for signaling.

The results already secured have shown the efficiency of the plan. Naval vessels passing along the coast are able to signal day or night by torches and otherwise with the naval observers along the beach, and these signals are immediately telegraphed to the Navy Department here. Captain Bartlett sleeps throughout the night alongside the telegraph instrument, ready to convey to his superiors word of the approach of any hostile ship. The first thing in the morning reports are received from every point from Bar Harbor to Galveston, stating briefly that everything is quiet or otherwise. The night reports have been reported at times alarming. The observers report every suspicious light seen off shore, and frequently attach serious significance to it. Since Captain Bartlett has answered some of the severe reports with the laconic message "Sea serpent," the observers have been more cautious, and the reports show evidence of careful observation.

With the system in its perfected state the Navy Department feels assured that it knows exactly the condition of affairs along the entire Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The system is simply a precautionary one, as the Department had no reason to believe that Spanish ships were menacing ports along the coast.

MAIL FOR SOLDIERS.

Two Orders Issued by the Postmaster-General.

WASHINGTON, May 24.—Two orders in regard to the mail for and from the soldiers of the army have been issued by Postmaster-General Smith. One order takes the Philippines out of the category of places where mail communication with the United States is suspended, and the other revives a regulation permitting soldiers, sailors and marines to send letters postage on which is to be collected on delivery.

Following is the text of the order regarding mail postage to the United States forces at the Philippines: "In view of existing hostilities between the United States and Spain, which necessitates the presence of United States forces in service at and near the Philippine Islands, and of the fact that postal communication with said islands, as one of the Spanish colonies, is prohibited by my order, No. 161, dated the 26th ultimo, it is hereby ordered that articles of mail matter for or from persons connected with said United States forces shall be subject to the postage rates and conditions applicable to such articles in the domestic mails of the United States.

"The articles shall be sent to the commandants of the forces by every opportunity offered by the sailing of a United States vessel for said forces. The sailing dates of the vessels cannot be announced in advance, and the articles should therefore be forwarded promptly to San Francisco, in order that they may be dispatched thence to destination at the first opportunity.

"The regulations as to the mail for forces in the field in the territory of Act of Congress passed in 1879, and is as follows:

"Letters written by officers, commissioned or non-commissioned and privates in the military, naval or marine service of the United States to be transmitted unpaid must be plainly marked 'soldier's letter,' 'sailor's letter,' or 'marine's letter,' as the case may be, and signed thereunder with his name and official designation by a field or staff officer, post or detachment commander, or the commanding officer of the vessel on which he may be, and in the navy and marine service, by the officer in command of the vessel or surgeon on board, or officer commanding naval hospital or detachment on shore. Letters so certified will be forwarded charge with postage at single rates only, to be collected on delivery."

This regulation is in line with a bill introduced yesterday by Representative Lybrand of Ohio, extending franking privileges through the mails to officers and enlisted men of the United States forces.

QUIET DAY AT WHITE HOUSE.

The President Has Much Time to Devote to Reading Papers.

WASHINGTON, May 24.—President McKinley had an opportunity to devote to-day, for the first time since he left Mrs. McKinley took a drive, accompanied by several friends.

Representative Tawney of Minnesota presented Captain Hatch of Minnesota to the President. Mr. Tawney, in discussing the foreign annexation issue, gave his personal opinion in favor of the United States. The Foreign Affairs Committee on the Newlands resolution would be taken up in the House the latter part of the week, and time for debate would be allowed. He has made a personal canvass of the Republican side of the House, and found 180 Republicans ready to vote for annexation. About two-thirds of them, he said, favor immediate consideration. Contrary to a published report, Tawney has not reported to Speaker Reed the sentiment of the House in favor of annexation, but he believes a prompt consideration of the resolution will be allowed.

Senator Burrows of Michigan was with the President for some time, but on leaving disclaimed any knowledge of any information throwing light upon the war situation. Senator Burrows, however, made no concealment of his personal conviction that there should be 100,000 men promptly sent Manila to hold the Philippines.

Secretary Long, who had just returned from his home in Massachusetts, entered the Cabinet room a little late with Secretary of State Day. Secretary Long, before joining the President and Cabinet, said that the press dispatches from London about the reported destruction of Admiral Cervera's fleet was all the news he had on the subject, and that there had been nothing official to confirm it. The report attracted considerable attention among Senators and Representatives who have been eager for a conflict between the two navies. Several of the members of the attention of the President to it, but succeeded in getting no news.

After the Cabinet meeting to-day it was stated that no news of any importance had been received from any quarter. The rumor current in London that the American and Spanish fleets had come together, and that the Spaniards had been destroyed, is not credited by members of the Cabinet, who apparently have no reason to expect an early engagement. The fact, however, that the Government has no knowledge of the present whereabouts of Admiral Cervera's fleet leaves the question of the time when the Spaniards may be overwhelmed a matter of doubt. News is eagerly awaited, and some irritation is expressed that of the comparatively large number of swift boats which we have in southern waters has not been able to locate the enemy and so bring about a collision between the fleets.

SAMPSON AND SCHLEY.

Are Not Trammelled With Conflicting or Embarrassing Orders.

NEW YORK, May 24.—A Washington dispatch to the "Times" says: "News from Admiral Sampson and Commodore Schley is looked for at the Navy Department every hour, but no one at the department appears to be able or willing to say just where the news is to come from. All that can be positively ascertained there is that the United States fleets are somewhere out of Key West, looking for Admiral Cer-

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THE FIRST EXPEDITION TO MANILA.

Three Steamships Awaiting the Order to Sail.

City of Peking, City of Sydney and the Australia.

Twenty-Six Hundred Soldiers Now Aboard the Vessels.

A Great Ovation Given the Fourteenth United States Infantry and the Second Regiment of Oregon Volunteers When They Embarked.

SAN FRANCISCO, May 24.—The 2,000 men comprising the first expedition to the Philippines are sleeping to-night in their transport ships out in the bay, awaiting the order to sail. It was expected that they would depart to-night or early to-morrow, but delay occurred in loading some of the stores. However, the pilots have been ordered on board at 2 o'clock to-morrow, and within twenty-four hours the three big vessels—Australia, City of Peking and City of Sydney—will surely pass through the Golden Gate with their crews turned toward Manila.

The display of patriotism to-day was scarcely exceeded by that of yesterday, the occasion being the embarkation of about 1,400 more men. They comprised five companies of the Fourteenth United States Infantry, as well as the Second Regiment of Oregon Volunteers and a detachment of heavy artillery. Captain Murphy, senior Captain, was in charge of the Fourteenth Infantry Battalion. Major Robe remains behind.

The companies of the Fourteenth are: A, Captain Eastman; C, Lieutenant Biddle; D, Lieutenant Lasaun in command; E, Captain Miles; F, Captain Murphy. There is an average of seventy men to the company, or 350 men and the regimental band of twenty pieces.

The Oregon Battalion is in command of Colonel Summers. It comprises Companies A, B, D, E, G, K, H and L, on the steamer Australia, and Companies C, I, F and M, on the City of Sydney. There are 1,020 men in the regiment.

The last of the troops to proceed from the camp to the steamer was the detachment of fifty heavy artillerymen, under command of Captain Geary. They embarked on the City of Sydney.

As the California volunteers enthused the multitude and moved them to continual cheering, so the departure of their neighbors from Oregon and the regulars was the signal for an outpouring of citizens, who waved their hearty farewells all the way from the camps to the water's edge, none joining more heartily than the members of the Sixth and Seventh Regiments, who hope soon to follow. And at the wharves the great crowd yelled itself hoarse as the soldiers arrived. The final hurrah when the last buccard had come upon the scene was such as the soldiers will long remember.

It was dusk when the City of Sydney and Australia left their docks and took their places in the stream near the City of Peking. As they moved out into the stream bells were rung and whistles blown throughout the city. To-night the bay was alive with small craft and all the vessels and buildings along the water front brilliantly illuminated. Martial music was heard on the transports, and many good-bys were said.

Long before daylight the big camp at the Presidio was astir with the men in blue eager to put the finishing touches on their packing. The "regulars," consisting of the companies C, D, E and F of the Fourteenth Infantry, marched quietly out of camp at 6:30 this morning, and were well on their way to the Pacific Mail dock before the citizens of the town were aware that the movement had begun. The Oregon regiment, however, did not leave the Presidio until 8 o'clock, and by that time an enormous crowd had assembled along the line of march.

Just previous to starting the regiment was drawn up in form of a hollow square, and a beautiful stand of colors was presented to it by Colonel Coffey, formerly in command of the regiment. Then the signal "forward, march," was given, and to the strains of the "Red, White and Blue," the regiment swung into columns of fours and marched through the Presidio gates.

The people of San Francisco, realizing that the departing soldiers were already far away from their own homes, put an extra warmth into their greeting, and made the Oregon men feel that they had friends here also. As the troops marched out of the Presidio the men of the Seventh California Volunteers lined the roadway, and though envious of the good luck of their camp comrades in being selected to go before them, cheered them vigorously on their way.

When the down town section was reached bombs were fired, whistles blown and the crowds yelled words of encouragement to the marching soldiers. Women pressed forward into the lines and gave flowers to the men, while patriotic citizens brought baskets of oranges and other fruits and through the agency of small boys, distributed them to the departing warriors. The men from Oregon seemed to thoroughly appreciate the good feeling of the people of California, and in spite of their heavy loads of blankets and haversacks, marched with heads up and shoulders squared over the first stage of their long journey to the Philippine Islands.

There was another enormous crowd at the Mail dock, but profiting by yesterday's experience, a large force of police was able to keep the people within bounds. Arriving at the dock the Oregon regiment, with the exception of Companies F, I and M, boarded the Australia. The three other companies, together with the four companies of regulars and artillery, embarked on the transport, City of Sydney. Colonel Summers will be in command of the Oregonians, and Major Eastwick will be in charge of the three companies on the City of Sydney.

The transports went all in readiness for the troops, who marched on board with little delay. About noon the steamers left the docks and anchored out in the stream near the City of Peking. There the finishing touches would be given to the cargo, and the transports, and the three big steamships will start for Manila.

SAN FRANCISCO, May 24.—The cavalry parade ground, where the troops have been encamped at the Presidio, presented a very deserted appearance to-day. The removal of the Second Oregon Regiment and five General Corbin late this afternoon from Major General Otis at San Francisco, which conveyed to the War Department very general information. The dispatch is as follows:

"The steamer Sydney, with the troops on board and prepared to sail, is anchored in the bay beside the City of Peking. The Australia is loaded and expected to leave her dock at 4 o'clock this afternoon and anchor in the bay. I am not sufficiently informed when the Peking will complete loading naval stores, but understand that it will be this evening. The hour of departure of the three vessels depends upon the naval authorities. The strength of General Anderson's command is 117 officers and 2,382 enlisted men. The naval contingent consists of 11 officers and 76 enlisted men. Total for the three vessels 128 officers and 2,458 enlisted men."

Assistant Secretary of War Meiklejohn received a dispatch from Arthur Sewall at Bath, Me., candidate for Vice-president on the Democratic ticket in 1896, offering on behalf of Arthur Sewall & Co. the ship Roanoke, now at San Francisco, to the Government for transport purposes. The Roanoke is of 3,549 tons register, and has a capacity of 5,000 tons.

Mr. Sewall says the ship can be fitted up for about 2,500 men and 1,500 tons of freight. She is now under charter for New York, but Mr. Sewall expressed the opinion that he can arrange to cancel the charter if the Government is in need of more vessels.

Secretary Meiklejohn immediately telegraphed to San Francisco that an inspection be made of the ship, and if it should prove satisfactory the Roanoke probably would be chartered.

Colonel Hale of the Colorado Volunteers, has received instructions to have his men ready for embarkation on Thursday for Manila. This regiment is fully equipped, only lacking ammunition, which will be served to them to-morrow. It is said that they will sail on the steamer Roanoke, though that vessel has not been chartered yet.

The Red Cross still continues its patriotic work of supplying the soldiers. To-day they sent shoes to the Sixth California, which were most acceptable, as many of the men were badly in need of them. The Seventh Regiment is gradually getting equipped, as is the Sixth California. The heavy artillery, which will remain at the Presidio, is still quartered in the brick barracks. Major Rice as yet does not know whether it will be ordered out into camp at Fort Point. If it should be ordered out there it will be under the command of Colonel Miller.

The youngest volunteer of the present campaign has come to the front. He is Douglas Dodge, aged 7 years, and he was found to-day securely stowed away on the City of Sydney. When the young warrior was put aboard a tug to board the heavy gun, he stubbornly the big deckhand who had him in charge, still strong in his determination to go with the soldiers, who gave him three hearty cheers.

UTAH'S CAVALRY. SALT LAKE, May 24.—Utah's troop of volunteer cavalry, under command of Captain James H. Miller, left this afternoon for San Francisco. They are scheduled to arrive at that city Wednesday evening.

The troopers were escorted to their train by the Utah National Guard and the Union and ex-Confederate veterans. Practically the entire population of Salt Lake turned out to see the soldiers depart.

The volunteers' train consists of four passenger coaches, seven stock and two baggage cars.

READY TO SAIL. The Peking, Sydney and Australia Will Soon Be Off to Manila.

SAN FRANCISCO, May 24.—There is a bare possibility of the transport steamer City of Peking, City of Sydney and the Australia leaving this port to-night for Manila. Brigadier-General Anderson, who commands the expedition, said that if he could get everything in readiness for departure before sundown he would hoist anchor and clear for sea, but otherwise he will wait for high tide to-morrow morning.

Brigadier-General Anderson and his staff are quartered on board the steamer Australia, and will not again leave the vessel until she reaches Honolulu. General Anderson has made a final inspection of the troops under his command, and says that everything is as well as can be expected. The men are happy and beyond a little crowding on the City of Peking there is no complaint heard.

Orders have been issued to the commanders of volunteer troops quartered at the Presidio to transfer their effects and the men to Fort Richmond. Thus the entire volunteer force now gathered in this city will be mobilized and better under the heads of the different departments.

Negotiations are pending between the naval authorities and the owners of the steamer Roanoke, either to buy or charter. The Roanoke came to this coast from Baltimore about a month ago, and was intended for the Alaska trade. She is a fine passenger steamer, and very roomy.

TRANSPORT SHIPS. Negotiations Pending for More Steamers at San Francisco.

WASHINGTON, May 24.—We have not yet secured any new ships, but are still negotiating for the Colon and China," said Assistant Secretary Meiklejohn at the close of business to-day. The difficulty with the ships has been the question of price, the owners of them and the department officials being unable to agree on the rates to be paid.

Mr. Meiklejohn has not yet put into execution his threat to impress some of the steamers on the Pacific Coast into the service of the United States,

and he hopes that this will not be necessary, but that the companies will come forward promptly and offer their vessels to the Government at reasonable rates. It is believed to be likely, however, that a recommendation will be made to Congress granting an American register to the Tacoma, Victoria and the Arctyle of the Northern Pacific Steamship Line, so that they may be fitted out for use as transports as promptly as possible. The steamer Ohio, a vessel of 1,200 tons belonging to the Empire Transportation Company, has been offered to the Government, and the question of her acceptance is under consideration. She is at Seattle. A large number of ships have been offered to the department at reasonable rates, but they were in such condition that the officials promptly refused them on the ground that it would not be safe to send troops in them.

Should the Government decide that American register be given to all six vessels of the Northern Pacific Steamship Company, and they be secured for transport purposes, these, with the five ships already secured, and the China, Colon and Ohio, would furnish accommodations here, for between 15,000 and 17,000 men—just about the number which the War Department will send to Admiral Dewey. An effort will be made to secure these boats, but it is plainly set forth by Mr. Meiklejohn that the officials will not lose further unnecessary time but will instead ask that American register be given to certain foreign vessels or else impress American steamers into service.

A dispatch was received by Adjutant General Corbin late this afternoon from Major General Otis at San Francisco, which conveyed to the War Department very general information. The dispatch is as follows:

"The steamer Sydney, with the troops on board and prepared to sail, is anchored in the bay beside the City of Peking. The Australia is loaded and expected to leave her dock at 4 o'clock this afternoon and anchor in the bay. I am not sufficiently informed when the Peking will complete loading naval stores, but understand that it will be this evening. The hour of departure of the three vessels depends upon the naval authorities. The strength of General Anderson's command is 117 officers and 2,382 enlisted men. The naval contingent consists of 11 officers and 76 enlisted men. Total for the three vessels 128 officers and 2,458 enlisted men."

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SITUATION AT MANILA. It Is Getting Desperate, on Account of the Scarcity of Food.

NEW YORK, May 24.—A copyrighted dispatch to the "World" from Hongkong, dated May 24th, says: "The situation at Manila is desperate. A tug to which an amount is exhausted while all the canned stuff is nearly gone. Two weeks will exhaust the available supply.

"The volunteers demanded food, but the Spanish Government authorities refused to give it and riots are threatened. Another dispatch from Cavite, preparing to wait on United States Commodore Williams, as the citizens fear an outbreak. The insurgents control the surrounding country and Chief Augusti, sent by Consul Wildman here, has arrived with his staff to organize the rebels. Residents of Cavite are preparing to wait on United States Commodore Williams, as the citizens fear an outbreak. The insurgents control the surrounding country and Chief Augusti, sent by Consul Wildman here, has arrived with his staff to organize the rebels. Residents of Cavite are preparing to wait on United States Commodore Williams, as the citizens fear an outbreak. The insurgents control the surrounding country and Chief Augusti, sent by Consul Wildman here, has arrived with his staff to organize the rebels. 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