



BELIEVES IT ACCIDENTAL

Secretary Long Adheres to His Theory Concerning the Wreck of the Maine.

NO FURTHER LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT

War Rumors Without Foundation—High Praise for Captain Sigsbee—Vultures Hovering Over the Wreck—Sensational Stories Contradicted.

Washington, Feb. 18, 1898.

The feature of the day at the Navy Department was the large number of rumors of a warlike tendency that came to the attention of the officials. So formidable had grown the list that at the close of office hours Secretary Long was induced to make the following statement as the easiest manner of disposing at one time of all these stories:

"Really no information has been received since Captain Sigsbee's first dispatch adding anything to our knowledge of the disaster. All we know is that the Maine blew up. There is abundant room for speculation of all sorts, but no conclusion can be arrived at until an examination has been made by the divers and more facts obtained. It is simple fact to say that such a thing might happen by design or it might happen by accident. As yet there is no indication of design. Therefore my impression has been all along and I rather thing the general opinion preponderates in the same direction that it must have been accidental."

"At the Cabinet meeting to-day the matter was not discussed, except as any body of men talk about an event of that kind and most of that talk related to the terrible loss of life and to expressions of sympathy for the sufferers."

"It certainly was a very kind thought in the President to send flowers to the families of Captain Sigsbee, of Executive Officer Wainwright and of the last seamen whose residences are in Washington."

"You may say absolutely that there has been no secret Cabinet meeting; that nothing has taken place in the Cabinet that the public have not been informed about; that the whole policy of his department has been to give the public all the dispatches; that the department has no more knowledge on the subject of the cause of the disaster, or even of the circumstances attending it than have the public, and that the report which was to the effect that Captain Sigsbee had warned the department that the Maine was in danger from submarine mines or torpedoes is report never having been received from him or from anybody else."

The Secretary also denied briefly and comprehensively wild rumors that he had requested the Chief of Police of New York to guard the Viceroy, and that he had selected Constructor Bowles to go to Havana and raise the Maine. The last work of the day for him was to consult the representatives of the wrecking companies, who probably will have charge of this work and endeavor to arrange for both of them to work together so as to secure the use of each peculiar plant and to save time.

HIGH PRAISE FOR SIGSBEE.

The Secretary, when asked what was the department's estimate of the conduct of Captain Sigsbee in the terrible situation in which he had been placed, replied:

"I think I express the feeling of the President, as well as my own, when I say that Captain Sigsbee has conducted himself as an officer of our navy should. He was the last to leave his ship when she went down. His dispatch to me was so complete that, since then I have thought of no question of fact to ask him which is essential to the situation and which he could answer, which is not covered by that dispatch."

His tone, too, is that of a discreet and level-headed man who realized the impression a word from him at that time would have on the public mind. Nothing is harder than for a naval officer to lose his ship, so that I have great sympathy for him. I await with confidence further reports."

During the day the department was in receipt of a number of telegrams from different parts of the country asking in behalf of relatives of the dead sailors that their remains be brought back to the United States for interment, among them were queries from friends of the two officers, Merritt and Jenkins. The department forwarded these to Captain Sigsbee, whose reply was that the officers' bodies had not been found; that as to many others identification is not possible, and throwing great doubt upon the practicability of taking any of the remains away from Havana. While no decision has yet been reached formally upon the application of the Spanish government for authorization to examine the wreck of the Maine to ascertain the cause of the explosion, the officials seem inclined to regard her request as one that could not properly be refused, and it is likely that each government will make an investigation of this character concurrently.

The miniature United States flag on the model of the battleship Maine, in the main corridor of the Navy Department, was lowered to half mast during the day by direction of the Secretary of the Navy. The handsome model has been a centre of interest for the throngs at the department within recent days, and the small flags have continued to

fly at the mastheads in apparent irony of the actual condition of the Maine. A movement was started to-day to drape the model in mourning, after the manner that the model of the British ship Victory was draped at the World's Fair. Secretary Long did not approve of this, however, as it suggested an ostentatious display of the circumstances. But he gave his consent to lowering the miniature colors, and accordingly the stars and stripes flying from the stern of the Maine's miniature counterpart was lowered.

FUNERAL OF THE VICTIMS.

General Lee was heard from in the shape of the following cablegram at 1:06 o'clock this afternoon:

"Havana, Feb. 18, 1898.

"Assistant Secretary of State, Washington:

"Great popular demonstration at funeral yesterday. Military, naval, fireman and civil organizations generally represented. Bishop of Havana, General Parado, next in command to governor-general, autonomist cabinet, civil governor, mayor and other prominent persons walked in procession part of route in accordance with custom to testify sympathy. Forty bodies buried. Many coming to surface of water since, but now difficult to recognize. Will be buried with religious services as collected. (Signed)

"LEE."

SEARCHING FOR BODIES.

Havana, Feb. 18.—The men searching for bodies have also recovered a number of sad relics of the Maine, including a medical chest, enlistment records, a gold watch and chain and five portraits.

Approach to the Maine is now prohibited inside a distance of 100 metres, excepting in the case of boats of the United States navy, or boats having a special permit. This action is taken as a precautionary measure against any accident occurring during the inspection by the American divers and to prevent any interference with the work ordered by Captain Sigsbee.

Patrick Gaffney, coal passer; Roberts, a fireman, and McManus, a mariner, are reported to have died at the hospital.

The Consul-General said to-day that he had not heard of any eight inch hole being found in the bottom of the ship, and that the United States court of naval inquiry would have charge of all questions affecting the loss of the Maine.

The Mangrove sails this evening for Key West with Edward Mattson, B. R. Wilber, J. C. White, Daniel Cronin, John Coffey, J. H. Glover, Alfred Hersey, James Rowe, Charles Pilker and William McGuinness. Two more of the wounded sailors died this evening. Up to the hour at which this dispatch is sent—2:30 p. m.—130 bodies have been recovered. Each is placed in a coffin and carried to the Colon Cemetery, where Chaplain Chadwick, of the Maine, conducts funeral services similar to those of yesterday's ceremony.

Admiral Manterola refuses to allow the divers sent here by American newspapers to make any investigation near the wreck, at least until Captain Sigsbee shall have finished his official investigation. This morning Lieutenant Commander Wainwright, Lieutenant Holman and Chief Engineer Howell went with divers to search for the bodies of Lieutenant Jenkins and Assistant Engineer Merritt, but the guards would not allow them to make the search and they returned to the consulate and lodged formal complaint with Consul General Lee. However the agreement reached between Captain Sigsbee and General Blanco was to be allowed to use any divers, even the divers sent here by the American newspapers in his official investigation. Captain Sigsbee and the commander of the Fern, accompanied by General Lee, visited the Captain General this morning and had a conference, at which it was decided that the American press divers should not be allowed to go inside the wreck, though any diver appointed by Captain Sigsbee is to have full liberty of the movement. The government has wired to Washington requesting permission for Spanish divers to examine the wreck outside and inside.

A revolting incident of the day has been the presence of vultures wheeling in the air above the wreck.

At 8 o'clock this evening 135 bodies had been recovered.

Alfred J. Holland died at the military hospital to-day. There remains at the San Ambrosia William Mattison, Francis D. Cahill, Frederick C. Heber, and James W. Allen, still in a serious condition, but better than they were yesterday. George W. Koebler, John Heffron and Jeremiah Shea are somewhat improved. Dr. Mass does not despair of saving them all.

SECARD PREPARING PRECEPT.

Key West, Fla., Feb. 18.—Rear Admiral Secord is preparing a precept, or advance order, for assembling the court of inquiry here into the loss of the Maine. The warships Iowa, Indiana and Massachusetts are expected to-night or to-morrow morning. Their officers and those of the cruiser New York will probably compose a majority of the court.

As regards the story that one of the crew of the Maine saw a small object emitting smoke approaching the warship just before the explosion, the correspondent of the Associated Press has interviewed the man in the hospital who was said to have circled the report and has had from him an absolute denial.

SPAIN AFRAID OF BRIBERY.

Madrid, Feb. 18.—The newspapers here are urging the Government to adopt great precautions when the American divers arrive and not to allow them to descend alone and examine the Maine. "As divers sent by private persons might be bribed to report a variance with the actual facts and might even do something to the hull, which would serve as a confirmation of their report."

THE TORPEDO IDEA.

Jacksonville, Fla., Feb. 18.—A special to the Times-Union and Citizen from Key West says:

(Continued on Sixth Page.)

HONOR OF THE NAVY ASSAULTED IN THE SENATE

Mason Unwilling to Trust Naval Officers to Investigate the Maine Disaster.

WANTS AN INVESTIGATION MADE BY A COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS

Wolcott and Lodge Defend the Men Who Defend the Flag—Splendid Tribute to Sigsbee and His Men of the Maine—The Ship to Be Raised.

Washington, Feb. 18, 1898.

A debate, decided in its sensations, was unexpectedly precipitated in the Senate today over the consideration of the resolution of Mr. Allen (Nebraska), directing the Committee on Naval Affairs to investigate the disaster to the battleship Maine. An arrangement had been made for the adoption of the resolution, with a minor amendment, without debate. Mr. Mason (Illinois), however, proposed a substitute providing for an investigation to be conducted by a joint committee of the two branches of Congress. Upon this the Illinois Senator, disregarding an appeal not to force a discussion at this time of so melancholy an affair, delivered a speech in which he said that the people demanded the truth concerning the explosion and declared that they would not be satisfied with the investigations to be conducted by the officers of the navy, who would virtually try their own case, and would cover up any blame that the facts might show attached to them.

He fiercely denounced the policy of the Government in dealing with the Cuban question, into which he went at length, and declared that the United States had adopted the policy of Spain in putting everything off until to-morrow.

Sharp replies to Mr. Mason's charges were made by Mr. Wolcott (Colorado) and Mr. Lodge (Massachusetts). The resolution which precipitated the discussion finally went to the calendar.

Soon after the Senate met Mr. Hale (Maine) introduced a resolution appropriating \$200,000 for the purpose of raising the Maine and transportation and burial of the dead. The resolution passed.

The resolution offered yesterday by Mr. Allen (Nebraska) directing the Committee on Naval Affairs to make an immediate examination of the disaster to the Maine was laid before the Senate.

Mr. Mason (Illinois) proposed an amendment striking out all after the word "resolved," and inserting the following:

"By the Senate and House of Representatives concurring, that a joint committee of five consisting of three members of the House of Representatives and two members of the Senate be appointed to investigate the disaster to the battleship Maine."

Mr. Hale expressed the hope that Mr. Mason would not press his substitute. The disaster, he said, was even now being thoroughly investigated by the executive department of the Government, and that as soon as tangible results were reached the facts would be communicated to Congress.

Mr. Hale urged Mr. Mason to withdraw his substitute, as it would only tend to embarrass the executive department.

Mr. Mason followed Mr. Hale in a speech replete with sensational and pyrotechnic utterances. He said, in beginning that he had no disposition to inflame a situation already so exciting, but he felt that his substitute was fully justified by the feelings and desires of the people. "I understand," said he, "that the Navy Department is making an investigation of the disaster, but I also understand that Congress has authority to make an investigation. It is a Congressional investigation that the people are demanding. They are fast coming to the conclusion that matters concerning this Cuban affair, including the deLome letter incident and the loss of the Maine, which they ought to know, are being concealed from them. The people want to know the facts and they will know them."

Mr. Mason said there was no calamity so great as a failure on the part of those in power to appreciate the real situation when it was so serious as it now is, and no sorrow so profound as that over indifference to this situation.

The people were sick and tired of secret investigations and reports by cipher and of having information suppressed and then doled out to them as some executive officer might think suitable. He wanted a Congressional investigation and wanted it open to the world. An investigation by Congress would only strengthen the finding of the Navy Department in case the explosion proved to be an accident. He had no desire to stir up trouble, but would insist, as he had done before, upon the stopping of human slavery and inhuman warfare in the adjacent island.

The record of the Spanish nation, continued Mr. Mason, who appeared to be laboring under considerable excitement, is one of continuous treachery, and we have experienced that treachery in our history for the past hundred years. It had been made evident that the Spaniards could not be trusted in any capacity and for this reason we should now have American divers investigating the hull of the Maine, and not depending upon those of an unfriendly power. We are told, he said, that the naval board may be able to reach Havana by next Monday. "Ma-

nana," he exclaimed, "Manana! tomorrow—always to-morrow. That is the Spanish motto and we are falling into it."

In the meantime who knows but that some more dynamite will be put in and the evidences of the catastrophe averted. He repeated that he wanted immediate action, but did not want to be on the committee. He did not want to be anywhere that a Spaniard could reach him.

He closed with an appeal for a prompt inquiry and said that he thought the Senate, which had voted \$200,000 to save the property of the United States, could and should vote \$200,000 if necessary to save its honor and its dignity.

Mr. Mason had scarcely taken his seat when Mr. Wolcott addressed the chair.

"Mr. President," he said, and the words shot forth like a bomb to be exploded in the Senate. It was evident from the Colorado Senator's countenance and manner, to say nothing of the intensity of his voice, that he was laboring under considerable feeling.

He had listened to Mr. Mason with ill-concealed feelings of emotion, his face growing redder and redder and his brow more and more like a thunder cloud as the Illinois Senator proceeded. He spoke with great rapidity and occupied only a few minutes of the Senate's time, refusing to be interrupted and speaking very sharply when Mr. Mason sought to divert him. Mr. Wolcott spoke as follows:

"Mr. President, the resolution of the Senate from Illinois, however inopportune it may be, at this time, in the opinion of some of us, might well have been permitted to pass without comment had it not been for the remarkable utterances which he has given to the effect, that the people of these United States have lost confidence in one of the great departments of the Government."

Mr. Mason made repeated efforts to interrupt the speaker, but without success.

Mr. Wolcott then continued: "I desire to resent as utterly unfounded the suggestion that there is a patriotic citizen in the broad confines of this land who has not the fullest and most splendid and glorious confidence in every department of this Government and in the Department of the Navy particularly. It has been true in every administration since the time of Washington. The people of the United States have never yet been called upon to distrust one of the co-ordinate branches of this Government, and they never will while the flag floats. Least of all is it decent, in my opinion, that in this chamber there should be insinuations cast at this critical time that there is a lack in the minds of the people of the United States of confidence in the navy of our country."

President, from the time of Paul Jones until now our ships have sailed in every war face always to the foe. The records of our naval battles are the most glorious history in the page of any country for the last 100 years, and from the earliest days until now there has never been a step backward. Today as always the officers of our navy are honorable, courageous, upright men and above all they tell the truth. The Captain of this ill-fated battleship was walking his deck at 10 o'clock on the night when this awful explosion happened. It may be that his public career is ended forever, but the awful disaster that overtook his ship will count for nothing by comparison with the degrading insinuation made here that an officer of our country, with the oath and with the flag above him, would lie and cast responsibility where it did not belong. Ah! Mr. President, we can stand much of discussion and debate, we can endure much of public discussion when there should be silence, but there is one thing this country can never stand, and that is to listen and without resentment, to an insinuation that the officers of our navy are not men of honor and integrity and of truth. The officers appointed to investigate will do their duty. I do not know what sums the Senator from Illinois may have drawn to find the expression of an opinion that there is lack of confidence in the personnel of our navy, but I know he cannot find an honorable or a decent or a patriotic citizen who will stand up before the country and endorse for an instant the utterances which the Senator has made."

Mr. Wolcott said that war might come soon, but when it comes, the cause of this country must be eternally grounded in the right.

Mr. Wolcott was followed immediately by Mr. Lodge (Massachusetts), who also sat very restive under Mr. Mason's reflections upon the Navy Department.

He, too, spoke with intense earnestness, saying: "Mr. President, I have no desire and no intention of saying one word in regard to the war that is raging in Cuba. No one can detect the horrors enacted in that island more than I. No one desires more than I to see the Spanish power swept from that island, as it has been from all the States of South America. But, Mr. President, that question is not here. We are face-

to face at this moment with a great national calamity. The American people have received the awful news of the sinking of the warship Maine with a splendid silence and self-restraint both in Congress and throughout the country. They are waiting sternly, quietly to know the truth, and the truth they will have. This is not a question which involves Cubans or Spaniards. This is a question which involves brave American seamen gone to their death in a foreign port. In the presence of that calamity what we want is the truth. How are we to get it? I would rather trust this investigation to the officers of the American navy than to any other men in the country. Does any one suppose that the captain of that ship, who, wounded, stunned by the explosion, remained the last upon the sinking vessel and who, in the midst of all that awful terror and excitement with every duty nobly done, sent a dispatch to this country showing a coolness and a nerve which are an honor to the American name—does any one suppose that Captain Sigsbee, capable of such splendid conduct, is going to lie about his ship? The Secretary of the Navy is a man of distinguished ability, of honor and patriotism. If any one imagines that Secretary Long will not tell the truth and insist upon the whole of it, he little knows the character of the man who has the honor to fill that great post of the head of the navy. I for one trust that Congress will await the action of the proper department charged with this inquiry and will not attempt to do anything which could in the least degree derogate from the attitude which the American people and Congress should hold in the presence of a calamity so dire and so tragic as that which befell the battleship Maine."

Mr. Lodge also paid a tribute to Assistant Secretary Wainwright.

Mr. Allen (Nebraska) said he desired to secure a vote upon the resolution, but he desired to reiterate the suspicions expressed by Mr. Mason that the investigation by the Navy Department would not be satisfactory to the country.

"Can the Senator give the grounds for his suspicions?" inquired Mr. Gray (Delaware). "His statement is important."

"My statement is important," Mr. Allen replied. "I want to say that I have not in my five years experience in the Senate known one of these investigations to result in anything."

Pending a motion by Mr. Hale that the Senate go into executive session Mr. Bacon (Georgia), introduced the following joint resolution:

"That there shall be prepared under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy and placed upon the wall of statutory hall in the Capitol building, a bronze tablet, commemorative of the officers and men of the United States navy who perished in the loss of the battleship Maine in the harbor of Havana, February 15th, 1898."

"The said tablet shall contain the names of said officers and men, and shall be an enduring memorial to their valor and a perpetual token of the sorrow of the nation."

Referred to Committee on Naval Affairs.

At 3:40 p. m. the Senate adjourned until Monday.

HOUSE.

The House to-day promptly and unanimously voted the \$200,000 asked for by the Secretary of the Navy to recover the bodies lost in the Maine disaster and to raise the wreck if that is deemed advisable.

FIGURES ON COTTON.

Report of Statistician McNeill on Probable Supply and Consumption.

New Orleans, La., Feb. 18.—Mr. H. M. Neill, the well-known cotton statistician, to-day issued a circular as to the probable supply and consumption of American cotton for the current season. After reviewing the results of previous seasons, Mr. Neill says:

"In America the Southern mills are doing well and will probably consume 100,000 more bales than last year. But the reverse is the case with the Northern mills. With these premises we may now form a fair idea of the actual consumption of American cotton during the year ending the 1st of September, 1898:

Now as to supply, European and American mill stocks, September 1, 1897, 400,000 bales.

Visible supply, American, 1st of September, 1897, 500,000 bales. Crop of 1897-'98, 11,000,000 bales.

Total supply of American for the year, 12,500,000 bales, from which deducting total consumption of all countries, 9,500,000 bales, and you are left with visible and stocks, 3,100,000 bales, against visible, 800,000 and spinners, 400,000 last year—1,200,000 bales.

Visible and invisible excess at September 1 over last year, 1,500,000 bales. While I have used the figures of 11,000,000 bales in the speculations, it is quite manifest from the average that the crop will be considerably more.

HESTER'S COTTON CROP.

Secretary Hester's weekly cotton statement shows an increase in the movement into sight compared with the same period last year in round figures of 100,000 bales, an increase over the same days year before last of 86,000 bales.

For the 171 days of the season that have elapsed the aggregate is ahead of the same period last year 1,700,000 bales. The movement since September 1 shows receipts at all U. S. ports 7,207,308, against 5,878,513 last year; overland to Northern mills and Canada, 933,975, against 622,358 last year; interior stocks in excess of those held at the close of the commercial year, 460,919, against 269,400 last year; Southern mill takings exclusive of consumption at Southern outports, 636,615, against 608,615 last year.

Foreign exports for the week have been 156,988, against 84,976 last year, making the total thus far for the season 5,182,721, against 4,493,177 last year.

The total takings of American mills North and South and Canada thus far for the season have been 2,279,180, against 1,916,551 last year.

GUARDED WITH SECRECY

Appropriation Bill Withheld from Examination by Newspaper Men.

SOMETHING NEW IN VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

Hot Debate on Senatorial Primary Bill—Legislature Will Have to Work Over-Time—Kizer Labor Bill Has Nearly Enough Votes to Pass.

(Special Dispatch to the Virginian.)

Richmond, Feb. 18, 1898.

There was a hot debate over the Senatorial primary bill to-day. Mr. Boykin opened in opposition to the measure and was followed by Mr. Hale in favor of it. Mr. Morris, in opposing the measure, said there was no general demand for such a law as that proposed. These behind it were a few disappointed office seekers. Later on he gave it as his opinion that the Congressman from the first district was in the scheme. Mr. Blakey defended Mr. Jones by saying that while that gentleman was favorable to the primary plan, he had in no way attempted to influence Virginia legislation. He had not been to Richmond since the General Assembly met. While the junior senator from Virginia and some of the Congressmen were here lobbying for candidates for office Mr. Jones remained in Washington, and attended to the duties of his office. Senator Mason, who represents Mr. Jones' district, stated that he had not received a letter or a suggestion from his Congressman concerning any candidates for office or legislation. Mr. Flanagan spoke for the bill and, in doing so, remarked upon the fact that the two Senators who abused the Republicans most were Senators Barksdale and Wickham, both former Republicans. Mr. Flanagan's objection to the measure was that under the existing election laws and with the present election officers the primary was not likely to be conducted fairly. Senators Barksdale and Floyd will close the debate on the measure to-morrow.

The finance committee reported the appropriation bill to the Senate to-day. Then something that has never before occurred in the Virginia Legislature happened. The newspaper men were not permitted to copy the bill or inspect the measure. The finance committee did not want the bill to be made public to-day and instructed the clerk to withhold it from the press. The bill was made the special order for to-morrow morning at 11 o'clock, when the provisions will be considered.

Considerable of the time of the House was taken up in discussing the bill to prohibit the cities and towns from imposing any fee or tax upon persons for selling their farm products within any city or town outside of and not within the regular market hours and sheds of such corporations. The measure was defended.

Debate was begun in the House on the Watkins' bill to authorize any State bank in Virginia to issue notes payable in merchandise silver bullion at retail and to create a lien in favor of the holder of such obligations. Judge Watkins made an able presentation of his side of the case. A vote was not reached at the morning session.

The session of the Legislature will expire one week from Monday, but it is probable the members will have to remain here a few days in order to finish up the work. Much remains to be done. The Senate has not acted upon the retrenchment measures passed by the House and probably will not do so. The great fight will be made on the appropriation bill which will take up the most, if not all, of next week.

Governor Tyler is still considering the bill to allow women to qualify as notaries. A distinguished lawyer has written to him claiming that the measure is unconstitutional. Applications from ladies who wish to become notaries are still coming in.

On motion of Mr. Mann, of Petersburg, Senate bill 433 was taken up out of its regular order in the House. It amends section 1089 of the Code in regard to the change of location of railroad lines. Mr. Mann stated that some time ago the bill had been passed by both Houses, but it was vetoed by the Governor because it was too broad. Since then an amendment had been prepared and submitted it to the Governor who approved of it. The object of the bill was to straighten out lines so as to save time and money.

Mr. Saunders opposed the measure, saying that each railroad company that desired to straighten out their tracks should make a special application to the Legislature. The bill in its entirety was vicious and should certainly be so amended that railroad companies should be prevented from deflecting their lines from places where permanent improvements had been made. On motion of Mr. Mann, the bill was passed by.

Although the postmaster for Richmond to succeed Mr. Cullingsworth has not been appointed it is pretty well understood that Col. Otis H. Russell will be the man. The appointment would have been made yesterday, but in deference to the wishes of Judge Waddill, it was withheld for a few days. In order that he might confer with Judge L. L. Lewis, who was the Republican aspirant for Congressional honors in this district at the last election, and in other leading Republicans.

Mr. Morgan Trent, the newly appointed United States Marshal for this

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