

BRAZILIAN CRUISERS PURCHASED

Uncle Sam Secures Two Vessels That Spain Tried to Get.

The Warships Built in England and Well Equipped for Use as Commerce Destroyers in the Event of War.

CHILE WILL NOT SELL WARSHIPS.

Copyrighted, 1888, by James Gordon Bennett. VALPARAISO, March 14.—Since I received the Herald's first dispatch inquiring about the possible sale of the Chilean cruiser O'Higgins and other warships to Spain I have kept a special lookout for any news regarding the report. Information from official and private sources continues to confirm my dispatch of March 2, in which I stated as coming from President Errazuriz personally that Chile had no intention of selling the O'Higgins or any of her warships. President Errazuriz told me this in the presence of the Ministers of War, Interior, Navy and Public Instruction and Senator Eulogio Altamirano, a prominent statesman. President Errazuriz and Ministers have returned to their respective provinces, therefore I can get no information from them to-day. I am informed, however, by several prominent men that there is no truth in the latest report that Spain has purchased the O'Higgins. They say that Chile would not dare to sell the O'Higgins, as the sale might cause an outbreak throughout the country against the Government. As evidence that Chile does not intend to sell any of her ships it is mentioned that Costa Rica tried to buy the old wooden corvette Pilcomayo, offering \$30,000 for her. The offer was flatly refused.

Call Office, Riggs House, Washington, March 14.

A week's negotiations closed to-day by the triumphant purchase by the Navy Department in London of the two fine cruisers built and building at Elswick for the Brazilian Government. Possibly the officials of the pleasure in closing up the business in this manner. The knowledge that Spanish agents had been striving to secure these vessels, and that to Spain, it is said, they would be of much greater value in case of trouble than to the United States. The next question is how to get the ships home, and that has not yet been settled, according to the Secretary of the Navy.

The United States flag will be hoisted over the new ships within a week probably, and just as soon as the crew can be put aboard from the American States. The other matter will follow at the earliest possible moment. The terms of the sale are secret.

The availability of the two Brazilian ships was first brought to the attention of the Navy Department by Mr. Laine, agent of the Maxim Nordenfeldt Company, who was authorized to dispose of these ships building at Elswick and two others in course of construction. Mr. Laine said to-day that the most desirable acquisition to the American navy, as they were the latest and best products of the famous Armstrong yards. One of the ships comprises a complete hull, with her coal supply and ammunition on board, and steam can be raised at any time. There will be no trouble in bringing this ship across, as an adequate crew from the local yards can be secured for the service. It is said the coal and ammunition on board passed with the sale to the United States. The ammunition is not of the kind in use by the American navy, so that the supply of ammunition is a necessary adjunct to the new ships. The other ship has been launched, but it will take some time to make her ready for sea. Mr. Laine believes, however, that there will be no difficulty in bringing her over immediately if it is desired to make the move without delay, as the hull of the ship is so well along that she could be towed and her own sail power utilized for the trip across.

The two Brazilian ships will be extremely valuable additions to the United States navy in either war or peace, in the opinion of Secretary Long, who acknowledges they have been bought by the United States. They are steel sheathed and coppered, with twin screws. The Amazonas is rated at 2300 horsepower, under natural draft, of 7000, which is calculated to develop twenty knots speed. Thus, while the ship is about the size of the Chesapeake it is much faster. Her armament is also much more formidable—so much in caliber, for the main battery is made up of six 6-inch guns, but these guns, as well as the 4.7-inch guns, are of the latest type, and are giving them an unusual range and power. In addition to this they have ten 6-pounder quick-firing guns, four 1-pounders, four Maxim machine guns and two boats of field guns. The torpedo tubes are three in number. The coal capacity is 850 tons, giving her an effective steaming radius of 5000 knots, a most valuable feature, inasmuch as it would enable the ship to cross and recross the Atlantic without coaling. Such a vessel used as a commerce destroyer would be vastly more effective than what appears to be more powerful craft, because of her ability to get along on long cruises without touching in at neutral ports to coal and thus exposing her to capture.

The cruisers carry no armor in the ordinary sense, but their machinery is protected from the fire of guns by an arched steel deck just below the water line, varying in thickness from 1.2 to 3.5 inches. The battery has an unusual train, being arranged to fire three ahead and three astern of the principal guns.

A dangerous deficiency in the engineer branch of the navy has been brought to light strikingly in the fact that it is scarcely possible to secure a staff of engineer officers to bring back to the United States any of the ships purchased abroad. A short time ago, when orders were given to push the work, but he had not been employed for active service, the engineer in chief proposed that he would have the ship ready in three months instead of six, as estimated. To do this he would work day and night and employ more than a week before it was found necessary to detach him in order to find an engineer officer to act as a member of the board appointed to examine auxiliary cruisers.

HUNDREDS TRYING TO JOIN THE NAVY.

But Great Care is Taken in Selecting Recruits, and Few Applicants Are Accepted.

WASHINGTON, March 14.—The newly established recruiting station at the navy yard here shows great activity. The emergency method of accepting any man who makes application has not yet become necessary, and, therefore, the work is slow. During the past few days there has been a large number of applicants. Everything which is available as fighting material is being used. Captain Robinson stated that orders had been received to prepare for the start of the recruiting office for several days have been put in portable shape, and within half an hour after the start of the office the entire body of the marine corps could respond to the call.

HANNA'S ENEMIES HARD AT WORK.

Seek to Control the Coming Republican Convention in Ohio.

CLEVELAND, Ohio, March 14.—James W. Holcomb, one of the members of the Republican committee of fifteen in this city and an active lieutenant for Senator Hanna in the recent Senatorial contest for the Ohio Legislature, is continuing to state that the Bushnell and Kurtz forces the marshaled for another battle.

MOVEMENTS OF THE WAR VESSELS.

The Marblehead Was Ordered to Key West Simply to Take Stores on for the Atlantic Squadron.

WASHINGTON, March 14.—It is now stated at the Navy Department that the Marblehead, which arrived at Tampa Saturday night, was ordered to that place simply to take on some stores for the North Atlantic squadron. The torpedo boat Foote arrived at Charleston yesterday on her way to Key West to join the flotilla. The Fern sailed yesterday from Sagua for Key West, having, it is presumed, delivered all the stores for the starting reconcentration which have so far been received from the central relief committee in New York. The battleship Iowa came over from San Francisco. The gun is a large rapid-fire breech-loading rifle which has been on the receiving ship Vermont. The work of transferring the gun commenced at once.

HURRY ORDER FOR A SIX-INCH GUN.

Weapon to Be Shipped From Brooklyn to San Francisco for Use on the Philadelphia.

NEW YORK, March 14.—A hurry order was received at the Brooklyn Navy-yard to-day from Washington for a 6-inch gun to be sent immediately to San Francisco. The gun is a large rapid-fire breech-loading rifle which has been on the receiving ship Vermont. The work of transferring the gun commenced at once.

INSPECTING BIG STEAMERS No Time Lost by the Auxiliary Board in Beginning Work.

Liners St. Louis and New York Examined and Found Fit for Naval Service.

Many Officers Received From the Owners of All Kinds of Steam Craft at New York.

Special Dispatch to The Call.

NEW YORK, March 14.—The Auxiliary Cruisers Board of the United States Navy, which was appointed to acquire ships of the merchant marine for use in the event of the breaking out of the war, met for organization to-day in the Havemeyer building, where it has secured temporary quarters. Permanent quarters will be taken later, as the board will have a great amount of work to do here.

The board inspected the St. Louis and the New York line this afternoon. The visit to the St. Louis was a short one. The steamship was constructed under the supervision of naval experts, and all of the officers composing the board were familiar with the plan of the vessel.

The New York was next visited. She was constructed when the company sailed its ships under the British flag. The New York was at one time in the possession of the British Admiralty and was built under the supervision of English officers. The inspection of all vessels on which the Government has options by reason of the subsidy act will be proceeded with as rapidly as possible.

Captain Rodgers has very positive instructions to make thorough inspections and immediately report. He has been directed to examine all steamships available for auxiliary cruisers and to report on the fast tugs, or use as rams and steam yachts that could be quickly transferred into serviceable torpedo-boats. He has been instructed also to telegraph his recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy, so that action may be taken without unnecessary delay.

It was said by a member of the board this morning that the department's orders were "hurry up" orders and that the work of the board would be completed as expeditiously as possible. How soon that would be he could not tell. "Possibly," he added, "we shall be through in three days."

Another member of the board said: "Just as soon as our mission here is completed we will be ready to receive offers from the steamship companies. The owners of all the available American steamships in the harbor, I believe I am safe in saying, have been notified to send their offers to the board. Merchant vessels, tugs and yachts are included in this. We had a particularly large number of yachts offered to us, and we will, I believe, enter into negotiations for a number of these."

Captain A. Griscorn, president of the International Navigation Company, owners of the American line, was in consultation with the board in reference to the St. Louis. What the result of that consultation was could not be learned. It was said by a member of the board that the St. Louis was advertised to sail on Wednesday, but it was admitted by an official of the company this morning that he did not know whether or not the vessel would be ready to start. Kelly declined to say that the steamer would be held in this port.

With Havana distant only eighty miles from Key West and 1250 miles from New York, the United States should be able to keep a naval procession going between this country and Cuba with very little difficulty and at a small expense compared with Spain, which is about 2000 miles away from the center of operations. This close proximity to Cuba gives this country a decided advantage for its naval vessels and transports, as they may always be sure of getting fuel, without which modern ships of war are more helpless than those of forty years ago.

The possessions of Spain in the West Indies, other than Cuba, are Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands, but neither of the latter have any military importance, and the blockade and capture of Havana means the loss of the entire Spanish empire. With a navy only half as large as that of the United States, and this being still further crippled by the fact that some of its best ships are undergoing extensive repairs, which may keep them out of service for many months, the remainder of the fleet of Spain is handicapped for the want of coaling stations. Ships leaving any port of Spain will consume one-half their coal supply, and coaling at sea from coalliers is at the best very uncertain and becomes hazardous when in hostile waters. The armored cruisers, torpedo-boat destroyers and transports would become of no value whatever in a very short time, while our ships would have a plenteous making excursions to Havana.

The mercantile steam tonnage of the United States and Spain, from which auxiliary cruisers and transports could be drawn, was given in The Call recently. With a navy of 1896, the figures from the same source supplemented with Navy Department data increase the number of available, especially for the United States.

The appended tables give the name, tonnage, year of build and speed of 126 vessels in the merchant marine of the United States, and 39 in that of Spain, built of iron or steel, and taking only cognizance of such as have a continuous sea speed of twelve knots and over, and of more than 1000 tons register.

AVAILABLE SCREW STEAMERS OF U. S. Table with columns: NAME, Tonnage, Speed, Year built.

Table listing various steamships with columns: NAME, Tonnage, Speed, Year built.

AVAILABLE SCREW STEAMERS OF SPAIN.

Table listing Spanish steamships with columns: NAME, Tonnage, Speed, Year built.

RESUME OF STEAMERS OF 12 TO 22 KNOTS SPEED.

Table with columns: NAME, Tonnage, Speed, Year built.

RESUME OF TONNAGE OF CLASSIFIED STEAMERS.

Table with columns: Tonnage, Number of Steamers.

AUXILIARY CRUISERS OF THE UNITED STATES.

Table listing auxiliary cruisers with columns: NAME, Tonnage, Speed, Year built.

To seven steamers in batteries had been recalled upon at the time. In October last the Navy Department had added forty-six more steamers to its available list, including those newly built on the Atlantic, and such stanch ships as the Alameda and Mariposa on this coast. This makes eighty-four merchant steamers available for auxiliary cruisers, a fleet more than twice as large as the entire roster of Spanish merchant steamers exceeding a speed of twelve knots. The Pacific Coast reserve of auxiliary cruisers will not in all likelihood be needed, for there are enough available craft of the same type to form a cordon around Havana, and where such tugs as the Laura, and Dauntless and Silver Heels, of less than 50 tons burden, have succeeded in running a blockade the hundreds of merchant and other steamers would not fail to carry over and land a multitude of soldiers and all the war material needed.

GREAT BRITAIN THIS CITY WELL PROTECTED

Some Leading Questions Are Asked in the Commons.

Michael Davitt Desires to Know About Offering Fleets and an Alliance.

Mr. Curzon Diplomatically Dodges Questions, and Says a Reply is Inexpedient.

Special Dispatch to The Call.

LONDON, March 14.—In the House of Commons to-day the Parliamentary Secretary for the Foreign Office, Mr. Curzon, replying to Michael Davitt, anti-Parnellite, who asked the Government whether Great Britain had offered to lend men-of-war to the United States in the event of a conflict between the United States and a European power, said that the Government had not made such an offer.

Answering a series of questions which Mr. Davitt put with a view of eliciting whether there have been any negotiations for an alliance between Great Britain and the United States or whether Great Britain had offered to mediate in the Cuban crisis, Mr. Curzon said these questions were of such a nature that it was inexpedient to reply to them.

Mr. Curzon's reply that Mr. Davitt's questions were inopportune was received with loud cries of "Hear, hear!" from the Unionist benches.

From an interview on the subject said: "The question as to the ships because the subject was not proceeded with last week. I wanted to elicit the truth. I knew, of course, that the statement made to the effect that warships would possibly be loaned was as absurd as the rumored alliance, and I received exactly the answer I expected. Mr. Curzon is too clever a diplomat to give any answer which would dispel the idea that an American alliance is on the tapis, as, of course, it never was. Mr. Curzon knows it, but it serves England's purpose to let the Continental nations think it is possible in the near future."

TWO NATIONS THAT SYMPATHIZE WITH SPAIN.

Austria and Germany Are Friendly With the Castilians and Would Aid Them.

SAW THE MAINE AS SHE WENT DOWN

Arthur Bachman an Eye-Witness of the Fatal Disaster.

Heard the Explosion and Ran to the Wharf Overlooking the Harbor.

Arthur Bachman, the manager of the firm of Bachman & Ehrmann, arrived in the city Sunday afternoon from Cuba, and tells the story of the sinking of the Maine from the standpoint of an eye witness. On the 15th of February, the night of the disaster, Mr. Bachman was standing in front of a hotel in the city of Havana, with a number of friends, when he was startled by a terrific explosion, which shook the city and echoed and re-echoed from the direction of Morro Castle.

"I was standing across the road from the Hotel Inglaterra," he said, "with two American friends and a number of Spaniards. As far as I can recollect, it was about 9:45 when we heard a terrific explosion and a low and horrid rumbling noise which immediately followed.

"At first we thought it was another outbreak of the insurgents, and we started for the street in an opposite direction. We hadn't gone far, however, when a passing Englishman informed us that the battleship Maine was on fire in the harbor, and that the explosion was the result of the flames spreading to the magazines.

"I ordered a cab and drove to the wharf, where hundreds of people had already assembled. "The city of Havana, by this time, was in a state of excitement and uproar. Some thought the city was on fire, and others that the insurgents were forming on the outskirts of the city; and half the people to think and, seized with terror, rushed frantically in all directions.

"As I was about to get into the explosion wharves and people began to flock to the wharves to get a glimpse of the sinking vessel.

"Those who witnessed that awful spectacle will carry recollections of it to their graves. The distant groans of the dying men, the calls of help from the wounded and the drowning, the dispatch boats plinking from the floating ship, the awful awesome freight to the Havana shore, are sights that will forever bring before the recollection of the battle-sunk and the sinking of the battleship had no other expression but that of the sincerest sorrow for the ill-fated sailors, and the doomed vessel, and the disaster was so grievous that it alleviated the sufferings of the wounded."

SOME SAN FRANCISCANS HAVE FEARED SPANISH WARSHIPS.

Assurances Given by Officers That Great Seacoast Guns and Monitors Can Defend the Harbor.

Call Office, Riggs House, Washington, March 14.

It is understood that several petitions from San Francisco have reached the Secretary of the Navy asking that the Oregon be kept there. It seems that some of the San Franciscans are fearful that the Golden Gate city will not be sufficiently protected against the attacks of Spanish men-of-war. But they need have no fear on this score, for officers of the War Department declare that the great seacoast guns and monitors Monterey and Monadnock would be entirely sufficient to defend the harbor. Furthermore it is the present intention of the Navy Department to keep the Charleston and Philadelphia at San Francisco. Orders have been sent to rush work on the Charleston and have her ready for commission by the first week in April. The Philadelphia is expected to be ready for service a few days after that.

California members of Congress with whom the Secretary of the Navy talked to-night have various opinions to offer to the best mode of defense of San Francisco against possible attack. They do not apprehend that there will be any fighting on the Pacific Coast, but are confident that San Francisco would be in no danger in any event.

Senator Stanford says that the geographical situation of the city renders it practically safe from the attack of hostile war vessels. As a member of the Naval Affairs Committee he feels a responsibility of opinion on matters which he may be later called upon to consider in his official capacity, so when he was asked for his views to-night on the subject he said: "San Francisco would be well protected by our coast batteries and the monitors without the assistance of the Charleston and Philadelphia. The present situation of San Francisco renders the city practically safe from the attack of hostile war vessels. As a member of the Naval Affairs Committee he feels a responsibility of opinion on matters which he may be later called upon to consider in his official capacity, so when he was asked for his views to-night on the subject he said: "San Francisco would be well protected by our coast batteries and the monitors without the assistance of the Charleston and Philadelphia. 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