

GREATEST ARMY POST

SUCH IT IS PROPOSED TO MAKE GOVERNORS ISLAND.

Plans Submitted to Congress to Enlarge the Island and Improve the Plant—Scheme to Deepen Buttermilk Channel, New York.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21.—Matters affecting the army and the navy have called for the special attention and consideration of the closing session of the Fifty-sixth congress. The army reorganization bill, with its canteen controversy and its perplexing details, has had precedence and has been the theme of long and spirited debate in



Photo by Bell, Washington. REPRESENTATIVE HULL. (Chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs.)

both branches of congress, but there are other things of vital interest connected with our military and naval establishments to receive consideration. Among these is the proposition to improve and enlarge the military station at Governors Island, in New York bay, which also contemplates the deepening of the Buttermilk channel between the island and the Brooklyn water front. Though it is essentially an army measure, the proposed improvement would greatly facilitate the operations of the navy in New York harbor and the Brooklyn navy yard.

Some months ago Secretary Root appointed a special board to consider the subject of the expansion of Governors Island and the concentration there of much of the work carried on at various points in the vicinity. In general the board, which was composed of General John R. Brooke, Colonel George L. Gillespie of the engineer corps and Colonel Amos S. Kimball of the quartermaster's department, was instructed to lay out its work on the following lines: To provide barracks and quarters for at least one battalion of troops, to provide storage and shipping accommodations for every branch of the army service in New York harbor, to concentrate the ordnance buildings, to rearrange the buildings on the island and to enlarge the island.

The board gave special attention to the question of providing additional area to Governors Island by building a sea wall exterior to the present wall and filling in the water area. It was considered that for the present purposes of the post the existing accommodations are sufficient, but in view of the great national importance of New York harbor it was deemed advisable that there should be at that point a spacious government reservation, convenient to the city and adapted to every military requirement. The contemplated improvements and enlargement would make Governors Island the most important military post on the Atlantic coast and would transfer to the island practically all of the transport shipping now done at Erie basin, which would effect a great saving of time and expense.

The board found that Governors Island is well suited to the project of adding to its area by filling in the adjoining shoal areas. "The low shoal," the report says, "forming that part of Governors Island and projecting from its southern border and lying between the two navigable channels of the upper harbor, can be easily raised to any desired height and utilized for government purposes. The desired enlargement may be effected by inclosing a portion of the shoal by means of solid timber dikes and filling it in with excavations taken from the adjacent channels undergoing improvements by the United States. Should more permanent improvements be desired at a later period, the subaqueous part of the dikes may constitute a foundation for stone sea walls. It is estimated that the filling in will cost the government only a nominal sum, as it is believed that the contractors will be glad to avail themselves of a dumping ground which would obviate the necessity for a long towage to sea of dredged material. A dike running east and west across the shoal at a distance of 300 feet from the sea wall, together with marginal dikes, will provide an enlargement of 15 acres, and a dike 1,500 feet out will give an enlargement of 70 acres. The improvement which the board recommends as the most desirable is an enlargement by a dike located 2,000 feet from the shore, which will provide an increased area of nearly 90 acres. The dikes which will form the east front and south boundaries of the made land will measure about 5,800 lineal feet and may be put in position, it is estimated, for the sum of \$725,000. The

cost of the sand filling in should not exceed \$100,000. The estimated aggregate of this improvement is therefore \$825,000, and it is stated that the proposed conversion of the shoal will not affect the navigable capacities of the channel.

The report outlines a scheme for providing wharfage for transports. It is proposed to lower the bed of the river on the north shoal by dredging to the depth of 25 feet at mean low water from a line 50 feet outside of the sea wall and extending to the 26 foot curve of the harbor, with deep east and west approaches. To accomplish this it is estimated that 250,000 cubic yards of bowlders, hardpan and sand would have to be excavated at a cost of \$100,000. The construction of 1,000 feet of covered pile wharf 50 feet wide it is estimated would cost \$100,000.

In this connection it is noted that the quartermaster's department pays an annual rental of \$83,000 to the city of New York for storage and for dock room for army transport service, all of which would be saved by the adoption of the proposed plan of improvement.

The members of the board also present a plan for the enlargement of the present accommodations, so that a battalion or a regiment may be quartered on the island.

In speaking of the general arrangement of the buildings on Governors Island the report says that with few exceptions they are old frame structures only slightly raised from the soil, inconvenient, insanitary and inflammable. All of them are so old and in such bad repair that renewals will be required in a few years.

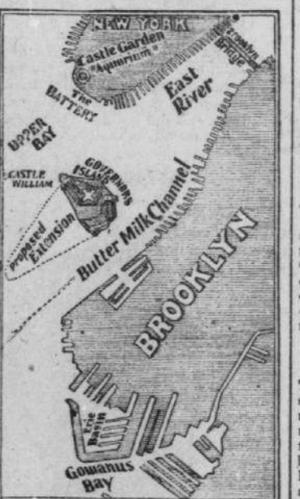
The cost of the proposed improvements, divided into different items, is estimated as follows: Two brick storehouses for the quartermaster's department, \$80,000; one brick storehouse, commissary department, \$40,000; one brick storehouse, medical department, \$40,000; one brick storehouse, ordnance department, \$40,000; one pierhouse, \$40,000; six double sets of quarters for officers, \$50,000; moving and repairing hospital, \$20,000; buildings for quartermaster's department, east side, \$35,000; constructing, repairing and moving other minor buildings, \$35,000; raising barracks one story, \$50,000; repairs to engineer docks at Castle William, \$15,000; wharf along sea wall, \$100,000; dredging in front of sea wall, \$100,000; enlargement of the island, \$885,000; total, \$1,595,000.

The report of the board, with the approval and recommendation of the secretary of war, is now before congress and will doubtless be incorporated in the army appropriation bill, though whether the expenditure will be authorized at this session remains to be seen. It is certainly a proposition worthy of consideration.

Allied to the proposed improvement of Governors Island is the proposition to deepen and make navigable for large craft the Buttermilk channel, which has for some time been earnestly urged by the leading commercial bodies of New York. This would naturally come under the head of river and harbor improvements, but the work could be most economically carried on in connection with the enlargement of Governors Island, as the earth and rock excavated in dredging the channel would be utilized in building the extension of the island.

The importance of this improvement would seem to be apparent. The channel between Manhattan Island and Governors Island is becoming more and more congested. Men-of-war going to and from the Brooklyn navy yard have run aground in trying to avoid other craft or have sustained collisions. By making Buttermilk channel a real maritime thoroughfare to the sea traffic would be divided between the two channels and much greater facility of ingress and egress assured.

In this connection it may be interesting to note the extent of the shipping of New York harbor, a considerable portion of which would be affected by



the proposed improvement. According to statistics for the year 1899, prepared by Major W. L. Marshall of the United States engineer corps, 33,143 steamers, sailing vessels, barges, etc., arrived and departed from the port of New York, representing 12,501,292 tons burden, with an estimated valuation of \$873,754,512. It would seem to be wise to spend as much for keeping open the front gate of the nation's greatest harbor as was spent upon the rear entrance, Hell Gate. Whether the entire expense should be borne by the general government is another matter. At all events it port with an annual commerce of nearly \$400,000,000 is entitled to considerable consideration. SAMUEL HUBBARD.

NAVAL PROMOTIONS.

They Will Be Aided by Enforced Retirements During the Year.

It is fortunate that the naval personnel does not depend on retirements during the year to "cause that even flow of promotion" which has been so much discussed in congress. The retirements in all grades and corps are so small that there would be few, if any, promotions in the higher ranks, and but for the provisions of the personnel act a stagnation would prevail equaling the most discouraging period of naval advancement.

The personnel act, however, remedies what would be unusual stagnation, and there will be next June a large number of enforced retirements, especially in the grade of lieutenant commander and perhaps several in that of captain. The highest ranking officer relinquishing active service during the year is Rear Admiral Winfield Scott Schley, now commanding the Atlantic naval forces on the south Atlantic station. Admiral Schley closes his years of naval service on Oct. 9, and a few months later Admiral Sampson gives way also for the ease of the retired list.

In the line there is but one other regular retirement, that of Captain N. M. Dyer, who commanded the cruiser Baltimore during the Manila bay fight and who on his return to this country was presented with a sword by the people of Baltimore. Captain Dyer goes on the list Feb. 19, after many years of excellent service.

In the medical corps Medical Director W. R. Schofield retires April 28, this being the only age retirement among the doctors during the year. Pay Director H. G. Coby retires March 5 and Pay Inspector J. Porter Loomis, on duty at Annapolis, retires March 5 also. Pay Inspector George Cochran retires April 8, Pay Director G. H. Griffing April 24 and Pay Directors D. A. Smith and C. H. Eldredge in September. There is but one retirement in the rank of chaplain, that of the Rev. W. O. Holway, who goes out on June 9. In the construction corps the only officer retiring is Admiral Philip Hichborn, who goes out with the close of the president's term on March 4. Civil Engineer P. C. Asserson retires June 5. There are a number of warrant officers who also retire, but none in the marine corps.

From the present outlook there will be more enforced retirements in the navy at the close of the fiscal year to cause the flow of promotion than at any period since the adoption of the personnel act. Few naval officers die, and none seems to resign, so that to create the flow desired it will be necessary to retire perhaps a dozen lieutenant commanders. There is no great injustice worked to this class, however, as all secure the rank and pay of the next higher grade on giving up active service.

Much difference of expert opinion exists regarding the merits of this provision of the act which segregates to the retired list often officers who are capable of performing active duty for many years and creates a pension list that some think the government should not bear. There seemed no other way, however, of making promotion in the higher grades quicker and surer, although in many instances officers so mustered out are thoroughly competent to continue active service until they reach the age limit of 62 years. A few officers prefer being retired to active service, but this number is comparatively small.—Baltimore Sun.

Why He Refuses.

James Eads How of St. Louis has again refused to take the fortune left to him by his father. "I want no money," he says, "beyond what I earn by the sweat of my brow. I am out of the wild struggle for existence for wealth, for power. None of these things interest me. I am living as nearly as my frail nature will permit an unselfish life. There is nothing of mine that I would not give to help a needy person. My time, my talents if I have any and my small earning capacity are held by me in trust for the benefit of mankind. I do not regret the course I have pursued in refusing to take what I have inherited from my father. I regard that as merited increment. That represented what my father did not need and what his laborers earned for him. They should have it. If I have a factory and employ 100 men, and they earn \$200 a day, it is not a fair distribution to the men. I get \$100 to \$1 for the men. My legitimate share is what an equal division would bring me. The other is unearned increment, the rainy day fund of the laboring man, which I unjustly take. That was the way I regarded my inheritance. Hence I refuse it."

Clemenceau's Fall.

Georges Benjamin Clemenceau, now a "struggler for life" in Paris, earning a scant living with his pen, was ten years ago one of the foremost figures in French politics. Clemenceau was thrown up to the surface of affairs by the revolution of 1870, and from that time until 1891 he was as conspicuous as any character in the revolution. Arising with the storm of the revolution, he sank in the excitement of the Panama affair. Although he was violently attacked by his enemies and accused of having sold out the country, these charges were certainly untrue. Yet Clemenceau never recovered his old power. Boulangerism, which he invented, was dead, and when he went before the electors in 1893 he was defeated. He has not sat in the chamber since that time.

Religious Ignorance.

A rural Wesleyan minister sends to The Methodist Times of London some startling evidence of the religious ignorance of little children. In a class of more than 30 children varying in age from 7 to 15 not one boy or girl had ever heard of the parable of the Prodigal Son. In another spot in that neighborhood he asked about the same parable, and he found that there were three boys who knew something about it, but the rest, including even girls of 17, were absolutely ignorant of it.

His Card.

"Steeple Charley," who was recently employed on St. John's church; was, it is said, approached by a man one day at the church who asked the steeple climber in jest to show him his union card. "Come up and I'll show it to you," said the climber, pointing to the cross on the north tower. "I always keep it where I am working."

Death's Penalty.

Brownwood, Tex., Jan. 25.—The jury in the Pearl murder case brought in a verdict of murder in the first degree, and assessed the penalty of death.



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