

Supplement to The Kinsley Graphic.

KINSLEY, KANSAS, FRIDAY, SEPT. 9, 1898.

Those Tin Ships.

What Congressman Simpson Said About The Navy—His Speech in Full Taken Verbatim From The Congressional Record of Feb. 15, 1895

THE Republican press of the state has been amusing itself, for the past ninety days, over a little card gotten out, and which claimed to contain an extract from a speech made by Congressman Simpson.

Every postoffice sheet in the district took the matter up, and there has been a continual howl going up that Jerry is against the navy, etc. The Congressional Record of February 15, 1895 contains a speech made before the House committee of the whole which had under discussion the Naval appropriation, in which Mr. Simpson gives his views on the Navy, and is here reproduced word for word:

Mr. Simpson. Mr. Chairman, I wish to occupy the attention of the committee for a short time in relation to this bill. I shall direct my remarks more particularly to the provision making appropriation for the "Increase of the Navy."

That for the purpose of further increasing the naval establishment of the United States the President is hereby authorized to have constructed by contract three seagoing coast-line battle ships designed to carry the heaviest armor and most powerful ordnance upon a displacement of about 10,000 tons to have the highest practicable speed for vessels of their class, and to cost, exclusive of armament, not exceeding \$4,000,000 each; and nine torpedo boats of from 100 to 300 tons each, at the discretion of the Secretary of the Navy, at a cost not to exceed an average of \$170,000.

Now, I wish to direct the attention of the committee to the increased cost that this bill necessarily involves. These three battle ships will cost the country when completed, with their armor, \$21,126,000.

Mr. Talbert of South Carolina. Is this an entirely new contract disconnected with any other contract?

Mr. Simpson. Yes; it is a provision for the construction of three new battle ships.

Mr. Loud. I should like to know the basis of the gentleman's estimates of \$7,000,000 and more for each of these war vessels.

Mr. Simpson. I will come to that later.

The nine torpedo boats will cost \$1,530,000; and the three additional torpedo boats, mentioned further on in this same paragraph, will cost \$510,000. So that we have carried in this bill a total increased expenditure, in addition to the regular appropriation bill, of \$23,126,000.

Mr. Talbott of Maryland. Will the gentleman let us have the items of that computation if he can.

Mr. Simpson. The items are, first the three battle ships, costing four millions apiece—

Mr. Loud. Not exceeding \$4,000,000.

Mr. Simpson. Well, the expenditure on matters of this kind always run up to the limit.

Mr. Loud. The gentleman, if he knows anything about the Navy, knows that none of these vessels have cost over \$3,000,000.

Mr. Simpson. I say that these three war vessels, including the armor, will involve an increased expenditure of \$21,000,000.

Mr. Talbott of Maryland. The armor is included in the cost of construction.

Mr. Simpson. No; it is not.

Mr. Sayers. If the gentleman from Kansas will yield a moment I will have read at the desk a letter of the Secretary of the Navy, which, I think, sustains the statement the gentleman has just made.

Mr. Simpson. I gladly yield for that purpose.

The Clerk read as follows:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, Washington Feb. 8, '95.

Sir: In reply to your telephone messages of January 29 and 30, requesting information in regard to the appropriation "Increase of the Navy," I have the honor to reply as follows:

1. Estimated cost of the armament of the three new battle ships referred to in the naval appropriation bill now pending in the House of Representatives is \$7,215,000.

2. Of the \$5,287,670 appropriated under the head of "Armor and armament" in said bill, there will be used upon the new vessels authorized in said bill, the sum of \$50,000.

3. The amount of the appropriation "Increase of the Navy, armor and armament," that will be absolutely necessary to meet the expenditures which will be incurred up to July 1, 1896, upon vessels already authorized is \$5,237,670.

4. Of the \$3,342,422 appropriated in the naval appropriation bill now pending in the House of Representatives under the head of "Construction and machinery," the sum of \$463,200 will be used for the new vessels authorized in said bill; also, that the sum of \$7,879,222 is the estimated amount that will be necessary to meet expenditures that

will be incurred under the head of "Increase of the Navy" to July 1st, 1896, for construction and machinery upon vessels already authorized.

5. On February 2, 1895, the records show 8890 enlisted men in the Navy. Men are being enlisted each day; more than the 110 short of the quota are needed to supply a full crew to the Olympia, commissioned on the 5th instant.

In your message you only ask for the estimated cost of the armament of the three new battle ships, and in consequence I have not included in the above estimate anything for the hull armor of the vessels in question. The estimate for armament (7,215,000) does include, however, the sum of \$3,015,000 for armor known as "gun protection," which, according to a decision of the Attorney General, comes under the term "armament," and as the estimate for the hull armor for the three battle ships is \$1,911,000, the total estimated cost for armor and armament for the three vessels is \$9,126,000.

Very Respectfully,
HILARY A. HERBERT, Secretary.
HON. JOSEPH SAYERS,
Chairman Committee on Appropriations,
House of Representatives.

Mr. Simpson. Now, Mr. Chairman, this bill provides that these battle ships shall not cost, "exclusive of armament," more than \$4,000,000 each. The letter just read discloses the fact that the cost of the armor will be \$9,000,000 and more, making, as I have stated, an increased cost eventually for the construction of these ships and the torpedo boats of more than \$23,000,000.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it is worth while, perhaps, to consider whether it is absolutely necessary to have these battle ships constructed. Does the history of naval warfare warrant us in going on and constructing these enormous ironclad battle ships? It is a very grave question among those who are best informed on naval affairs whether the battle ships have come up to the expectations of the people as a means of defense.

The history of recent years, and especially the last year, has developed the fact that they have not proved equal to the fast cruisers. In the late contest between China and Japan the fact has been developed, at the battle of Yulu River, that the unarmored cruiser of Japan was more than equal to the two great battle ships that China had in line during that contest. The vessels of China had the superior armament both in regard to the thickness of armor plate and weight of artillery, yet the swift unarmored cruiser of Japan, with rapid-firing guns, proved to be more than a match for the great battle ships. Mr. Herbert, the honorable Secretary of the Navy, in an article in the North American Review of last November, says:

Judging from what we see in the newspapers, the fight off the Yulu River seems to have created a somewhat widespread impression that they are, and that the naval battles of the future are to be, won by swift, unarmored cruisers, armed with powerful guns and fighting at long range.

Recent events have developed the fact that this was a correct prophecy. I quote from the Scientific American of this morning an account of the sinking of those two remaining battle ships belonging to China by torpedo boats, proving that such war vessels are not a match either for the cruisers or for the torpedo boats.

It reads as follows:

The major part of the Chinese navy, including the two principal ironclads, the Ting-Yuen and Chen-Yuen, has almost been destroyed. They were both engaged in the great battle at the mouth of the Yulu River, from which they escaped only to be sunk at Wei-Hai-Wei, after about ten days' almost continuous fighting, by the torpedo boats sent against them by the Japanese. They were sister ships, and the most powerful vessels in either the Japanese or Chinese service, each having a displacement of over 7,000 tons and belted 14-inch steel compound armor. It is reported that the Chinese torpedo fleet subsequently attempted to escape from the harbor on February 7, but that they were pursued by a flying squadron of Japanese vessels and twelve of them either sunk or driven ashore.

That, Mr. Chairman, proves beyond dispute, I think, that they have not come up to the expectations which were indulged in as a means of defense. The little torpedo boats and swift armored cruisers are more than a match for these enormous battle ships, with their unwieldy bulk and enormous draft.

Mr. Cannon of Illinois. If the gentleman will permit me—does he consider the instance given there as a fair test, when he recalls at the same time the extent of the Chinese Empire and the great population they have as compared with little Japan? Is there not something in the human animal after all in the Japanese army, and something in the same animal as displayed in the Chinese army, that perhaps has

much more to do with victory or defeat than the torpedo boat or the armored battle ship?

Mr. Simpson. I think perhaps the gentleman is right; and it shows the superiority and the wisdom of the Japanese in selecting the swift armored cruisers and torpedo boats instead of spending enormous sums of money in the construction of unwieldy battle ships. Japan has no battle ships with armor to exceed nine inches. That we would call a light armored vessel. But you propose here in this bill to construct big line-of-battle ships with these enormously thick steel armor plates.

Besides that, Mr. Chairman, such vessels are not seagoing vessels. They are not intended for such purposes, and are fit only for coast defense. Few nations avail themselves of the battle ships to send to foreign ports. Great Britain is the only exception of any of the maritime nations that sends any number of her 51 heavy battle ships to foreign ports. They are used mainly for coast defense.

Mr. Money. If the gentleman will pardon an interruption, I did not catch his statement accurately. Did I understand the gentleman to say that the armored battle ships were not seagoing vessels?

Mr. Simpson. Not considered as such—

Mr. Money. Not considered by whom?

Mr. Simpson (continuing). Because the heavy armor plates make them top heavy in addition to the immense armament they carry; and what I have just stated with reference to the use of these battle ships is true of every nation except Great Britain, who sends a few of them to foreign ports.

Mr. Sayers. The gentleman is speaking now of the heaviest class of battle ships.

Mr. Simpson. Yes, sir; the heaviest armored ships?

Now, the only reason why we want these ships is to be enabled to use them for coast defense. Let us see how practical that is. This class of ships, of the displacement mentioned in the bill, is in the neighborhood of 10,000 tons; and they will draw probably not less than 20 feet. How many ports in the United States can vessels enter with such a heavy draft, and be utilized as a means of coast defense? I venture to say that there is not a half dozen ports in the United States in which they can safely enter; and so, as a means of coast defense, they will be useless. For the protection of our long line of coast and the numerous small bays and harbors that indent it we want light-draft vessels, quick, active, speedy, and which can defend the coast by being able to enter the smaller ports, or those having less depth of water, with facility. So, I repeat, as a means of coast defense, vessels of this class, light-draft vessels and swift cruisers are invaluable.

But, sir, there is another phase of this question to be considered; that is whether the battle ship when built will not be useless on account of the rapid development and discovery in the shape of inventions increasing the already powerful ordnance we have already in this country. We go to work now and construct a battle ship at an immense cost, sheathe it with enormous steel plates, and then at once produce a gun that will shoot a ball right through her. We have today ordnance that will shoot through the most powerful ironclad that has been built.

I cut from the daily press the other day a paragraph which throws light on the subject. It says:

The Golden Gate is to be protected by three of the biggest guns in use in the United States. They will be pointed seaward from vantage positions on either side of the gate, and they are calculated to furnish a complete defense against any craft that might escape the shells which the new mortar batteries will send out to sea for the distance of six miles. These guns are as long as seven average-sized guns, and two men might easily crawl into the bore of one of the wonders.

Mr. Loud. When is that to be?

Mr. Simpson. Right away.

Mr. Loud. Well, we have heard the same thing for many years, and it has not come yet.

Mr. Simpson. Every man who has witnessed the tests of ordnance at the Indian Head proving grounds within the last year realizes the utter helplessness that the ironclads would exhibit against the modern guns now being produced at our gun factories. You

have seen there a 10-inch gun knock into flinders the strongest and heaviest plate that is at present produced.

All of the recent naval engagements prove that the very best armor and the heaviest armor upon the battle ships of this day cannot resist the tremendous power of the guns we now have in our possession.

So after this very large expenditure we shall probably find, with the inventions with regard to dynamite and torpedos and different explosives, that the Government will have expended a large amount of money for a useless pile of iron and steel, that will not meet modern requirements. I think it is a very dangerous course to pursue, in the light of what is transpiring, to tax the people of the United States for what I consider so very large and useless an expenditure of the public funds.

Mr. Ray. If the gentleman will permit me, following the line of his argument, it would be just as well not to have any ironclad at all, would it not, according to the gentleman's view?

Mr. Simpson. I said, that in the beginning, recent events have developed the fact that the light-armored cruiser has proven more than a match for the battle ship, and that under our peculiar conditions, with such a long coast line to defend, I think if we need anything at all we need more of the light, swift cruisers that can enter ports where ships of light draft can obtain entrance.

Mr. Ray. Following out your argument that you make, what is the use of any armor at all?

Mr. Simpson. I do not see that there is very much use in it.

Mr. Ray. The way that it struck me was that your argument tended to show that armor of any kind on the vessels was useless.

Mr. Simpson. I read an account of the battle between the Chinese and Japanese at the Yalu River, and there was one Japanese gunboat which was unarmored which stayed in the fight throughout. There were more than forty holes shot clear through her, and yet she remained in action. The men on board plugged up the holes as fast as they were shot through her, and she continued in action all through the fight.

Mr. Talbott of Maryland. Does the gentleman know that one of the Chinese battle ships received over four hundred shots, and none penetrated?

Mr. Simpson. Yes; and a torpedo boat came along and struck her and sunk her, and the account said that she turned over and went down with her propeller wheel sticking up in the air. And that is about all they are good for.

Mr. Ray. As the penetrating power of our guns is increased, should we not also proportionately, as far as we can, increase the power of resistance from the ships themselves?

Mr. Simpson. There seems to be no limit to the increase in the force of propelling projectiles from rifled cannon. We have gone on increasing the thickness of armor, until today it seems that we have about reached the limit. There is a limit to the carrying capacity of ships. All the armor is placed above the water line, or very nearly so. It projects but very little below the water line, and therefore the enormous weight must necessarily rest upon the top of the ship. Any man who is familiar with vessels and the things pertaining thereto knows that a ship must have a part of the weight she carries down below the water line. Any thing else makes her top-heavy and unseaworthy.

We have, as I say, apparently reached the limit. We have gone on increasing the thickness of this armor so that it makes such an enormous weight that these ships seem now to be unable to bear it. The history of the sinking of the British ship of war Victoria shows that she was top-heavy, and when a hole was cut in her and some water got in which ran over to one side it gave her a list which capsized her.

Mr. Geissenbaler. How much water?

Mr. Simpson. It did not take much to tip her over, on account of the enormous weight on the top of the ship. Even though the bulkheads were closed, the water coming in at one side gave her a list which threw the additional weight on that side, and she tipped over very quickly. It proves that we have apparently reached the limit

of the capacity of the ship to carry any thicker armor plate, while we are going on increasing the piercing capacity of our ordnance. Therefore I think, as I have said before, that, in view of these facts, it is extraordinary that we at this day should go on appropriating to complete these ships of more than \$23,000,000.

Mr. Loud. You approve of torpedo boats, do you not?

Mr. Simpson. If they are necessary.

Mr. Loud. Then you don't know whether they are necessary or not?

Mr. Simpson. I do not know. I will direct my attention now to these battle ships.

Mr. Loud. Now, I would like to ask the gentleman one question, and have a fair answer. I would like to ask the gentleman if his objection is not to the amount of the appropriation, rather than an objection to the construction of a navy, or rather than to the class of vessels carried in this bill?

Mr. Simpson. Mr. Chairman, I will give this gentleman a fair answer, as he wants a fair answer. I always try to give a fair and honest answer to any question that is asked me, as I see it. I am opposed both to the appropriation and to the ships, because, of course, the ships carry the appropriation.

Mr. Loud. Which do you oppose the strongest?

Mr. Simpson. I oppose them both equally, because I do not see how any sensible man can separate the two; and I do not see any necessity for an increase of the Navy.

Mr. Loud. That is a fair answer.

Mr. Simpson. I think we have a sufficient navy to protect our interests, both at home and abroad. Now, what do we want an increased Navy for? Do you apprehend a foreign war; and if so, who with? There is no nation on all the face of the globe that would have any pretext or could have any interest in attacking the greatest nation in the world, and if we deal fairly with other nations we need not fear any war. There is but one country with whom a war might be had, and that is Great Britain, which is the greatest naval power on the earth. Her naval power exceeds that of any navy ever built. She must necessarily have a navy, because her commerce goes to every port in the world. She, by the system of trade she has adopted, has intercourse with all the world, and so her ships enter into every port. Therefore she has been compelled by circumstances to build up a very large navy to protect her great ocean carrying trade. We are in different circumstances. We have no ocean marine worth speaking of. Why, the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. Hepburn] the other day, in a speech here, showed beyond question that we have to pay many hundreds of millions every year to foreign ships; and I think he made the statement that we paid the Germans also an enormous sum, and that it was a rare thing to see the American flag in any foreign port. Then why do you need an increase of the navy?

Mr. Loud. When your party comes into power, in 1896, when you will have this free trade which you have been speaking of, will it not be well to anticipate it, as it will take longer to build ships than to pass your free trade bill?

Mr. Simpson. Mr. Chairman, we are discussing an appropriation bill which carries an increase of expenditures of \$23,000,000, and does the gentleman want to divert the discussion from that to party politics?

Mr. Loud. You were referring to England and her free trade.

Mr. Simpson. It is so, because of the different conditions of that country from those of this country, which I think is a perfectly legitimate argument in this question. England is confined to a small territory. Her people have been compelled to take to the ocean and to trade with all the nations of the earth; and therefore she, of course, has built up a large navy to protect her commerce from the navies of the other nations of the world who are engaged in the same kind of trade.

England is also engaged in a system of gobbling up territory in foreign countries, and therefore she has been compelled, to protect her interests, to build this enormous navy.

I have been drawing a comparison between nations that are entirely dif-