## OUR NEW NAVY YARD

## THE GREAT AMERICAN

Speeches of Hon. M. Russe'A Thayer and Hon. Charles & Neill.

Yesterday we publisher, the speeches of Hon.
W. D. Kelley and Hon. Leonard Myers in favor
of League Island. To-day we present the
speeches of Messis. Thayer and O'Neill.
speech of Me. THAYER.

The delegation from Philadelphia has already secupied a very large, an unusually large, share of the time of the House on this bill; but it should be remembered that this question excites very considerable interest in the city of Philadelphia—an interest which has its foundation not in any sordid or unworthy mofive, but simply in a desire to promote the general welfare. The people of Philadelphia believe, as regards the particular enterprise which is now the subject of consideration, the interests of Philadelphia are coincident with those of the nation. Philadelphia does not come here for the purpose of asking a special rayor at the hands of the national Government. She is not here, sir, to beg for a measure which will conduce to her own aggrandizement. She has offered this valuable property to the Government under the conviction that its acceptance by the government would promote the welfare of the general Government. It is true that some incidental benefits would result to the city of Philadelphia from the adoption of this measure. By the removal of the existing pavy yard it would very largely add to the commercial dockage of the city.

It would incidentally conduce to the benefit of the city of Philadelphia by eventually bringing into existence a large amount of property, which would contribute to the payment of her local burdens by the taxation of property which is now exempt from it. It would be a benefit to Philadelphia by adding new sources of industry and thrift to those which already engage the labors and attention of the seven hundred thousand souls that dwell within her happy

But those motives are not selfish. No man can characterize those motives as unworthy. They are motives founded in the public welfare and benefit; and if the measure which is the subject of agitation is found to be, as it is alleged by those who are most conversant with the fact, one which will benefit the nation at large, I suppose that no man will deduce any argument against the expediency of the adoption of that measure from the fact that the city of Philadelphia may derive an incidental benefit from the establishment of this great work within her borders.

Sir, I disclaim, on the part of the city of Philadelphia, any motives less worthy than those to which I have referred. She has never, either by her Representatives or in any other manner, advocated any national measure upon the footing of her own private special benefit. Her devotion to the national interest is traditional. It commenced with the first inspiration of national life, and it has continued with unabated vigor and with unsullied purity through all the chances and changes which have characterized the period that has intervened between that day and the present. No. sir. I spurn the imputation of any selish purpose on the part of the city of Philadelphia or her citizens in advo-

what originally, I suppose, suggested the feasibility and the desirableness of this measure
was the fact of the insufficient capacity of the
existing navy yard at Philadelphia. The present
navy yard occupies an area of some filteen acres
of ground, a space which for many years past
has been found to be entirely inadequate for the
purposes of the yard. The city has grown compactly down to the navy yard, whereas when it
was originally established the yard was at a
considerable distance from the city proper.
The navy yard now, to a certain extent, ob-

structs the growth of our city on its southern line, for it cuts off the water front. Upon the southern line of the city of Philadelphia this property upon which the old navy yard is situated has in process of time, by the approach of the city, which now completely envelopes it, become of great value, and it was supposed that it could be made of interest to the national Government to remove the existing yard from its

present site to League Island.

The obvious advantage of such a removal would be this:—In the first place, the Government of the United States could self the old Navy Yard property for a very large sum of money, profably for a sum ranging from a million and a half to two millions of dollars, of such great value has that property become. It was proposed to apply the proceeds of that sale to the improvement of the new yard at League Island; and the city of Philadelphia, which would, of course, be proud to have a great first-class navy yard fixed at that point, and which saw in the natural advantages of League Island those features which are most requisite for such a purpose, purchased League Island at an expense of some three hundred thou and dollars, and effered it to the national Government as the site of a new navy yard.

Now, sir, I do not know whether the fact of the liberality of Philadelphia in this respect may not have led to some degree of suspiction in regard to the measure which is before us. Perhaps if League Island had been offered to the Government at a price instead of having been purchased by Philadelphia at an expense of \$300,000, and freely and voluntarily offered to the Government, this opposition might not have existed to this bill. Suspicion, perhaps, may have arisen out of the very fact of the liberality of Philadelphia.

But, sir, the city of Philadelphia purchased Leugue Island at a great expense, and they offered it, and still offer it, to the General Government as the site of the new mavy yard. The proceeds of the old yard, a million and a half or two million dollars, which will be derived from the sale of that property, will be sufficient to commence, at any rate, upon a sufficiently great scale the improvement of the new site. And when these advantages were combined with the natural advantages presented by the island, itself, it was sipposed by the city of Philadelphia that the literests of the nation in this respect were identical with those of Philadelphia; it was supposed that the offer would be accepted with alacrity on the part of the general Government; that they would not turn their backs upon a proposition obviously so advantageous to the general Government upon any suggestion of an incidental benefit to the city of Philadelphia.

Now, sir, the question, as was said yesterday by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Le Blond), who is a member of the Committee on Naval Affairs, is principally whether you will transfer the existing navy yard at Philadelphia from its present site to the site at League Island. If you build a new navy yard elsewhere you must go on with amual appropriations for the existing yard at Philadelphia. We have this year appropriated \$150,000 to that yard, and we shall have to continue to keep it up. Nobody suggeste that we shall abandon Philadelphia as one of the naval stations of the United States.

Well now, sir, if you establish a navy yard elsewhere there will be an additional burden upon the country, for you will, have to appro-

Well now, sir, if you establish a navy yard elsewhere there will be an additional burden upon the country, for you will have to appropriate for two navy yards instead of one; whereas, if you simply transfer the existing navy yard at Philadelphia from its present location to League Island, you simply keep up a naval station at Philadelphia; and we, who hold the purse-strings of the nation, may deal out our appropriations for the new station as generously or as stintedly as we please in the future.

I will not detain the House by a detailed enumeration of all the advantages which may be presented in favor of this measure. But it would perhaps not be amiss for me to sum them up in a short way by a brief allusion to them, n order, at any rate, that the attention of the measure may be called to them, even though it be an a very currery manner.

In 'the first place, these advantages have been set 'forth at great length, and dwelt upon with great emphasis, by the Secretary of the Navy. The length of the subject. He is not a citizen of Philadelphia, or of Pennsylvania; he is not in any way so situated as to be likely to be influenced by Pennsylvania interests. He has acted in this manner not only disinterestedly, but, as we all know, to some extent to his own disadvantage, infismuch as the course which he has pursued has brought upon him the wrath of some of his own people. But he has had, I have no doubt, a perfectly clear and disinterested judgment throughout this whole inquiry. And the advantages of League Island, which so loudly call upon the Government for the adoption of this measure, are very tersely and satisfactorily summed up by him as follows:—

by him se follows:—

"1. It contains the requisite amount of land. There are on the is and four hundred and nine acres of what is called 'fast land,' being high, dry, and tillable, susceptiole of use without embankment or other preparation; one hundred and twenty-four acres of marsh land east of Broad street, and seventy-seven acres west of Broad street, embracing in the aggregate an area of six hundred acres, or mere than five times the area of the largest of our present navy yards, and twice the size of the largest yard in Europa.

Europe:

"2. The island possesses the necessary amount of frontage upon the water, which is a most important consideration, and the want of which is one of the preat defects of all our piesent yards. The water front of the island will extend six miles, turnshing room for mooring in safety all the vessels in our piesent navy and all we shall be likely to have for nary years to come. The sam of money to be saved in warping vesses sin and out of slips when a change in their position may be necessary, and in wharfage and rent of docks where private property is used, will be very great in the course of a single year, and, of course, greater in the lapse of time and the necessary addition to our navy. By possessing an expansive frontage, workmen, materials, and stores can be placed on board at the wharf instead of being put on hears of tenders and transported into the stream as is required to be come at all of our yards where there is an insufficiency of frontage, as there is in a peculiar degree at the Philadelphia yard at the present time.

"8 There is an abundant depth of water for all of the purposes of Gevernment. Along the outer shore of the island, near to its edge, and for more than three miles in length, there is a sufficient depth of water to first the largest class of war vessels.

water to float the largest class of war vessels.

"4 The greatest advantage of this location, and that which, taken in connection with the frontage and depth of water, places it far beyond any rival, is the fact that the yard would be in water wholly fresh. It is a well-known fact that iron corrodes and decomposes in salt much more rapidly than in Iresh water, and hence that the endurance of an iron vessel, when either in service or laid up in ordinary, is much greater in fresh than in salt water. Nor is this all. Iron vessels, when exposed to the action of salt water for a considerable period of time, and estecially in warm climates, become four by the accumulation of marine crustacea, thus not only lessening their speed and injuring the vessels but requiring them to be taken into dry-dock to be scraped. As an illustration of this fact, the iron blockading vessel South Carolina, after a service of nine months in the Gulf of Mexico, had her speed reduced by the accumulation of barnacies, ser weed, and other marine nuisances, from tweive to six knois as hour, requiring her to be sent North to be cleaned. Had the Philadelphia navy vard been in a condition to receive her, and complete her other necessary repars, her passage through the fresh water of the Delaware river from New Castle, which is practically the imit of the salt water, would of itself have cleaned her bottom of those imperiments, as perfectly as it could have been done by machanical mears.

"It is hardly doubed by any one that iron vessels are hereafter to constitute our principal reliance for harbor detense. It will unquestionably be the policy of the Government to keep these vessels, when not required for active service, in some secure place, where they will be as little hable to decay as may be, and where the largest possible number can be put in repair, and dispatched to the threatened points at the shortest notice. Experience may show the necessity or economy of keeping such vessels in dry slips, in which case the capacity of this island will by no means exceed the necessities of the Government. Should it be otherwise, and should it be deemed advisable to dismantle and moor them in wet docks in time of peace, the value of League Island for a naval station may be mere correctly estimated, when I say that it is the opinion of naval officers, and of scien ific experts, that an iron vessel will last more than ten times longer in fresh than in salt water. The United States iron steamer Michigan was built in 1844 has been in continuous service in the fresh water lakes of the North cighteen years, and has had no repairs to her huil, which is at parently as perfect as it ever was. In salt water her bottom would pro-

baby have been destroyed ten years ago.

'5. (The proximity of the island to a large maritime and manufacturing city is one of its greatest advantages for a naval station.) Whenever an extra force of mechanics or seamen are required, or an extra supply of naval stores needed, they can be procured at short notice and at no extra expense. It is well known that whenever such extra force is required at the Southers yards, neither of which was near a large industrial population secusiomed to such labor, the cost of procuring the necessary craftsmen was much greater than at Charlestown, Brooklyn, or Philadelphia. The men had to be transported at Government expense extra wages were demanded, and the laborers in almost every instance were clamorous to be retained permanently, because of alleged loss of situations at home. Nor could sailors be procured at those yards in an emergency, except by expensive process, and generally consuming weeks of time, the value of which could not be computed in money. The great advantages of a Government establishment of this kind in proximity to a large mechanical population, whose leading jursuit is the abrication of from in its various forms and for its numerous purposes, cannot be over esti-

"6. Another consideration of the highest importance is the susceptibility of League Island for periect delense against foreign invasion or domestic insurrection. The channel of the Delaware, all hough affording a sufficient depth of water at all times, is so narrow and fortuous for a distance of one hundred illes above its mouth, that a ship in the hands of any otter than an experienced pilot, especially with the buoys removed, would have the greatest difficulty in reaching Philadelohin at all. If the present detenses should be considered insufficient, a single martello tower on the edge of the channel, mounted with an iron turret like that of the monitor, would command the approach to the island from the sea more completely than Fortfess Monroe commands Hampton Roads, or Fort Sumter the harbor of Charleston. A succession of such towers would cost less than any one of our large coast fortifications. So far as stationary defenses may be relied on, there can hardly be any system more efficient than this. The island is even more susceptible of detence as a list a domestic insurrection, being our off from the Peni sylvania shore by a deep natural moat fifty feet in width. No assault could be made upon it except by vessels, in which, of course, the Government would have such a superiority that no attempt to capture the yard would ever be hazarded, even if we suppose that the materials for an insurrection of that kind would ever be found in the vicinity of Philadelphia.

vicinity of Philadelphia.

"7. The accessibility of coal and iron commends League Island very strongly to our favor. Situated at the junction of the Delaware and Schuyikili rivers, it is the natural entrepot of the whole anthracite ecal trade of the United States. The steam power necessary to the maintenance of a modern navy is here obtainable at the smallest cost. Pennsylvania, if not possessing the largest from resources to be found in the country, certainly has those resources in by far the highest state of development, and in close proximity to the seaboard. Philadelphia is the great iron-mongering metropolis of the country. Her furnaces and shops are numbered by husboreds, her artificers by thousands, and her capital invested in the production of iron by millions.

"8. The island is below the bend on the Delaware,

"8. The island it below the bend on the Delaware, and her ce marnly out of danger from free gorees, from which the present yard suffers to a considerable extent; and jet it should be remarked that the river Delaware is seldom closed by ice, the only point on the Atlantic where fresh water can be obtained that is not closed two or three months in the year.

year.

"9 It is to be observed, also, that the insu'ar position of the proposed yard will effectually estop corrupt speculations in real estate, so far as the Government property is concerned. It will be impossible for josbers to besiege Congress, with any degree of plausibility or hope of success, to buy the adjoining iots at fabulous prices; and I can hardly conceive of any other than an insular position which will debar the tribe of speculaions and lobb is from all chances of successful assault upon the Treasury.

"10. The selection of this site for a may yard will save to the Government just the sum at which the present yard in Philadelphia can be sold, the estimated value of which is \$1 800 000"

Now, sir, these are the substantial arguments in favor of the measure. These are the points on which the authorities upon whom this

Now, sir, these are the substantial arguments in favor of the measure. These are the points on which the authorities upon whom this House is accustomed to rely have long since come to a definite and satisfactory conclusion; and hence this measure has been repeatedly recommended to this House by the Secretary of the Navy. It is now recommended by the Naval Committee of this House. Now, sir, allow me to suggest whether it would not be better that those gentlemen who have given no particular examination to the facts upon which this question turns, should abide by the deliberate judg-

ment of the official persons upon whose responsibility these recommendations rest, than analthey should act upon a mere suggestion of objection on the part of gentlemen who have in view the benefit of some other locality. It strikes me, sir, that the House would not act with its usual judgment and discretion if it should adort the latter course.

should adopt the latter course.

But, sir, a substitute is proposed by the gentleman from Connecticut; and here let me say that upon its face this substitute would appear to be a very fair and equitable proposition; and if this were an entirely new question, and a question of an additional navy yard, instead of the change of the site of an existing yard, there would appear to be a great deal of fairness in that substitute. But if gentlemen will but reflect a moment, they will see that the proposition of the gentleman from Connecticut is delusive in its character. It would result merely in an indefinite postponement of this question; that is all. It proposes a roving commission to examine all the waters of the United States for an additional navy yard. That is not what the Secretary of the Navy desired or recommended to this House. That is not what the Naval Committee of this House have recommended. They have recommended the acceptance of League Island, which is offered by the city of Philadelphia as a munificent gift to the Government, that the present navy yard at Philadelphia may be removed thither. They do not propose the creation of an additional navy yard, but the substitution of anew one for an existing one.

that the present navy yard at Philadelphia may be removed thither. They do not propose the creation of an additional navy yard, but the substitution of anew one for an existing one.

Suppose, sir, that you appoint your commission. You do not, by this substitute, give the commissioners any authority or power to act. You leave the matter all at loose ends as it has been heretofore. A year or perhaps two years hence that commission will make a report. More probably they will make two reports or three reports, perhaps as many reports as there are members of the commission. Then how much progress will you have made in reaching a decision upon this question? None whatever.

Besides, sir, as time goes on, new sites not now thought of will be clamorously pressed for consideration. At first, sir, the proposition to select League Island was met by an application on behalf of New London, urged by the gentleman from Connecticut, who so well represents the interests of his constituents. How is it now? Why, sir, rival interests have sprung up in all quarters. We have suggestions for new navy yards all along the coast. Every member thinks that his State must have "a finger in the pie." Our action upon this question is made the occasion for a general scramble for a new navy yard. Sir, I hope this House will not give its approval to any such measure. Very sure am I that the city of Philadelphia, it it had been supposed that her munificence would be met by such a general scramble, would have been too proud to make this offer to the general Government.

Talk to me about New London harbor! Why the gentleman's substitute for the bill reported from the committee and his whole argument means New London, and nothing else. Sir, in the very entrance of the harbor there is a rock, which one of my fellow-travellers, and I presume from his knowledge of the locality one of my friend's constituents, pointed out to me and told me was so bad that it would take all the powder in the country to blow it to pieces, and that it had always been considered an obstacle to the commerce of the place. This, of course, must be removed, and many others, perhaps, if you would locate a navy yard there. These projecting rocks and the hidden ones are indeed dangerous to navigation, and I find in a newspaper published only three or four weeks ago an account of an accident which happened to a vessel, either in coming in or going out, by running on to this rock, and a steam vessel at that. It was one of the New London line of sound steamers, the State of Maine. If one of your large and powerful steamers cannot avoid such an accident in a harbor to which it makes frequent trips, how can you expect naval vessels, occasionally coming into New London, to escape

such dangers?

The members of this House who were members of the Thirty-eighth Congress will perhaps recollect the discussion that then took place upon this subject. The gentleman from Connecticut now but repeats the same tenor of argument which he adduced then. He made the same attacks upon the commission which was appointed by the Secretary of the Navy; he made the same attacks even upon some members of the committee of this House, which was appointed with a view to consider this as well as all other matters relating to naval affairs. He attempted to hold up to scorn and suspicion the motives of the commission of naval officers who examined the subject and reported upon it, and questioned, as he does now, the reliability of their acts, because they happen to have been born in certain portions of the country. Now, are these the arguments by which to convince this House?

I will read you the names of this commission, and show you how near to Philadelphia or League Island they were born, and how much their local inclinations and feelings could be likely to affect their judgment. I find by the Navy Register that Commodore Stringham, now rear admiral, was born in the State of New York: Commodore Gardner was born in Mary land; I think Commodore Van Brunt was born in the State of New York, but I have not had time to find his name in the Register; my friend from New York (Mr Pergen) informs me that he was torn in New Jersey. I am pleased to be corrected. It is not important to this argument where they were born, but it is one of the pety means used here to create a prejudice agains the minority of the commission. These are the gentlemen who signed the majority report, much to the delight of my friend from Connec ticut. Not one of them, however, was a Penn sylvanian. Engineer Sanger was also with the majority. Massachusetts claims him as one o her sons. I will not stop to discuss him, my

colleague (Mr. Kelley) having already done that.

And I assert boldly that it I had time to look over that report, I could prove from it, to the satisfaction of members of the House that in every requisite for a naval station for the building of iron-clad vessels, for their repair, for their armature, and in all other necessary respects, the majority of that commission have given a report in favor of League Islaud. I do not mean to deny that the bottom of the Delaware river is muddy, as they have said, but I mean to say that in all the requisites for a naval station, and especially for a navy of iron-clads propelled by steam, League Island on the Delaware river is the best and safest point upon our coast.

Sir, I find appended to the report of the mi-

Sir, I find appended to the report of the minority of the commission—and I am sorry to go over this ground again, because I believe these reports were rully discussed in the last Congress—the name of Commodore John Marston, a most worthy officer of the navy; an officer to whom the gravest responsibilities have been intrusted at various times; who has commanded ships and commanded fleets; who, it has been charged by the gentleman from Connecticuts, is from Philadelphia, but who was born in Massachusetts. Only one of those six gentlemen, members of that commission—Professor Bache—was a native of the city of Philadelphia.

But, sir, suppose they had all been born in the city of Philadelphia; suppose that they had

But, sir, suppose they had all been born in the city of Philadelphia; suppose that they had all been born within two miles of League Island; is it to be imagined that they, sworn officers of the Navy, would not perform their duty aright to the Government? Sir, if there are any men connected with the service to whom I would intrust a question as to what is right or wrong, what is suitable or unsuitable with reference to the general good of the country, I would not hesitate to place confidence in the officers of our navy and our army. It seems to be the study of their lives to be governed by the best and noblest motives, and prejudice seldom enters into their decision when any matter is officially submitted to them.

The gentleman speaks of this question having been before the House some four years. Why, sir, of course it has been here four years. The natural consequence of the breaking out of the Rebellion was to bring it up as a demonstration of the wants of the Government in reference to a suitable naval station. And he is surprised that the members cannot see that the harbor of New London is the place for erecting a navy yard in which to build iron-clad vessels. Why, sir, the question of New London has been here

as long as League Island. I well recollect reading the discussion in the Thirty-seventh Congress. If I remember rightly it came before the House towards the close of the session by the report of the Committee on Naval Affairs, and then the relative merits of League Island and New London were considered. The superiority of New London as a location for a naval station was then insisted upon, as it has always been insisted upon, by the gentleman from Connecticut and others representing the interests of that State. During the last Congress he and others, members and citizens, urged its claims in every

Sir, I am not surprised at this. I never believed that the citizens of this country had no right to impress their views upon their Representatives, or that those Representatives, if convinced, had no right to urge those views upon Congress. I think the gentleman and his coadjutors performed no more than their duty by presenting the views of their constituents on a question in which they were interested. But, sir, the claims of League Island are not to be prejudged by any such argument as that they have been heard and presented tor years.

Mr. Speaker, there is another attempt in my estimation to make difficulty in this House or to create prejudice. The gentleman speaks of the formation of the Committee on Naval Affairs. He speaks of it in this Congress, and he refers to it in the last Congress. No member from Pennsylvania has complained of the formation of the Committee on Naval Affairs in this Congress, the last Congress, or the Thirty-seventh Congress, Now, the Committee of the last Congress reported against League Island. They considered it and must have acted on their best judgment. They considered it with the light which was then thrown on the question. We have now other information, and I refer to one strong point, the letter of Captain Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, in regard to the back channel. The Navai Committee of this session had this point investigated, and it may have induced the report of this bill and the recom-

mendation of its passage.

The gentleman from New London has certainly urged with great earnestness its, claims as the best place for this naval station. But he has told you nothing in reference to the indefensibility of New London. He endeavors to stigmatize League Island as a mud-hole, but says nothing of its periect defensibility. He endeavors to show that the distance of League Island from the sea is one hundred miles. For the sake of his argument, he makes it twenty miles more than it really is. He perhaps has never travelled along the Delaware river. He knows nothing about its distance from the ocean. I really believe he prefers to remain in ignorance of everything connected with it. I can in no other way account for his well-worded abuse and depreciation of its countless merits and advantages.

But, sir, let all that go. The gentleman does not tell you of the great defect of New London. I speak on this question as if the gentleman's substitute provided only for the establishment of a navy yard at New London. I look at it in that way and in no other. One great delect of his favorite place is the want of facilities in procuring labor. The site suggested is three or four miles from a city with a population which I will not say is insufficient to fill up a black-smith shop with skilled workmen, but where you certainly cannot get a supply of the mechanical labor required. It is a city which, from natural causes, cannot hold a population exceeding twelve thousand. You cannot possibly extend limits so as to provide for an increased population, it being so sur ounded by high hills of hard rock that its growth must forever be impeded. It is not, therefore, a fitting place for the great naval station for such a navy as the United States will require.

But sir one great advantage of League

But, sir, one great advantage of League Island is that an enemy's fleet could not reach it.

Now sir, as I have said before the proposi-

Now, sir, as I have said before, the proposition of the gentleman from Connecticut is in effect a proposition to establish a navy yard at New London, and nothing else. The gentleman cares nothing about the proper requisites for such a great yard. He knows that his locality is not the place for a naval station of the character desired. His object is to place it in the harbor of New London, among the rocks. Sir, that is no place to build iron-clads; you cannot get the material there out of which to build them without going to an enormous expense, and the salt water would corrode them when built.

Now, a word as to the question of filling up League Island so as to secure a proper foundation for the necessary buildings. It will not cost much. The gentleman says you must go to New Jersey for material. Yes, I say you can go to Red Bank, in New Jersey, which is immediately opposite, only a mile or two off, and get as much gravel as you want, and bring it across the Delaware at a trifling cost. There is plenty of material coming from the iron works of Philadelphia for filling up that part of it which the committee terms, I think, "marsh land." I know something about that island. It happens to be in my district, and I have been upon it many times. There are five or six truck farms upon it; and there are buildings upon it which have stood for years.

The gentleman speaks of it as being an unhealthy location. Talk to me about League Island not being a healthy location! The gentleman might as well tell me that one half of my district is unhealthy. Sir, I am well acquainted with the immediate neighborhood of the island, and I can truly say that I am not mistaken in denying this charge of want of health. It is healthy, and inhabited by people who live to good old age, and who will be surprised to hear of it being sickly.

I want a fair and proper consideration of the

bill. I am anxious that a proper naval station should be selected, and desire the House to vote should be selected, and desire the House to on this bill understandingly. Let us pass it, and start a great yard, one equal to all the require-ments of the country. What is the use of having ments of the country appointed? We have had another commission appointed? We have had commissions heretofore, and in spite of their reports Congress has never decided against League Island and never will upon such arguments as have been presented by its enemies. Why should we distrust the Secretary of the Navy? Has he any interest in League Island If he felt as the gentleman from Connecticut does, being from Connecticut, he would establish this navy yard at New London; and it is because he will not do that that my triend does not like the Secretary. Captain Fox, the Assistant Secretary, is, I believe, a citizenjor Massachu-setis, and I think the heads of nearly all the bureaus in the Departments are from New England; yet I am not unwilling to take their views on this subject. I am not even unwilling to take the views of Rear Admiral Smith, to some extent. I know, sir, that those officers of an older generation do not see the fitness of the Delaware river for a naval station; for when they held commands in the Navy sailing ships only were used, and it did take some time to come up to Philadelphia. That is the secret of their oppo-sition. Well, sir, they have done honor to their country in their time; but they are passing away, and it is too late in the day, after this question has been so thoroughly discussed, not only in this House and in its Naval Committee, but in the Navy Department, for us to hesitate to establish a navy yard for iron vessels in a river of resh water, with ample depth of channel, near skilled labor, and near the coal and iron neces sary to be used in their construction, and where ice, even in the coldest winters known, is no insurmountable obstacle. We have an ice boat which has always kept the channel open.

The gentleman has referred to the relative distances of New London and Philadelphia from New York. I do not know where he gets his geography or his scale of distances. I believe New London is one hundred and fifty miles from New York. I know it takes all night to get there from that city in the steamboat; and by railroad the distance is about the same, for it takes nearly the whole day to reach it. Does the gentleman know how far it is from Philadelphia to New York? To be sure, going by steamboat down the Delaware the distance may be a little greater than from New London to New York, but by railroad communication we

New York, but by ratiread countries.

are only ninety mites from the latter city.

Why, sir, the gentleman does not know his map. Let him look at it, let him measure the distances as I have done for the purpose of the facts to this House, so as not to dea imagination and guessing for the sake of succ

I should be ashamed of myself if I thought I was actuated in this matter by mere local interests. I believe that League Island is the place for a navy vard, because it is in every way accessible to everything which is needed to be used for building a navy such as we should have. We have a channel in front of League Island of twenty-three feet and more in depth. It is two and a quarter miles in extent upon the Delaware river. There is a channel of some eighteen or twenty feet in depth, and some five-eighths of a mile in extent on the Schuylkill, and also the back channel, which is also two and a quarter miles long, of some tourteen or sixteen teet deep, which furnishes a great natural basin. I am speaking of the depth of the channels at high water, of course. I believe that this is a place intended by nature for some such purpose as

Now, the gentleman from Connecticut desires that we shall go to New London for this navy yard, where we would have to blast out thousands and thousands of tons of rock in order to obtain a basin. That, sir, could never be done, and yet the gentleman talks about it as the place most suitable for building ships, but never mentioning its salt water.

Besides, we all know that we want iron and

Besides, we all know that we want iron and coal for building a navy; those are the great materials to be used in the construction and for the motive power of iron vessels propelled by steam. And would you go to New London to be near supplies of coal and iron? The gentleman cannot show me any line of railroad or cansl, or any means of access to it, by which you could reach those articles within one hundred miles as near as they are to League Island. He cannot have the hardhood to attempt seriously to convince any one that the location he would select is in such close proximity to everything which enters into the completion of an iron navy as the point designated in this

League Island lies at the mouth of the Schuylkill, at its confluence with the Delaware, both of which rivers are navigable by nature and by art. There is a canal all the way down the Schuylkill, from the Schuylkill coal regions to within five miles of League Island, and the Reading Railroad ranning along the side of the canal. There is the Lehigh Valley Railroad, connecting at Bethlehem with the North Pennsylvania, leading into the Lehigh coal and iron regions. There are also means of access from League Island into the same regions by canal and tidewater navigation along the Delaware and Lehigh rivers.

And is timber any nearer to New London than it is to League Island? No, sir; the means of getting timber to the former place are not so great. For the live oak of the State of Delaware and the yellow pine of the Carolinas, what are the means of communication with League Island? Besides the Delaware bay and river, there is the Delaware Railroad, which now extends almost the entire length of that State, and before long will be extended into Virginia along its eastern shore. And will it be argued of League Island, possessing all these advantages, that New London is still nearer to all these materials than it? Why, sir, anywhere, in any direction, by any means of communication, canal, railroad, river, or bay, for any of the materials which are so necessary in the construction and repair of naval vessels, iron or wood, League Island is many miles nearer than New London.

Sir, I hope, I believe that this House will decide the question upon principles of justice and right. We are acting for the best interests of the whole country. And we are urging the passage of this bill because we believe that League Island is the best place for this naval station.

It seems that a great many naval officers who have looked into the matter within the last two or three years have changed their minds materially. I am under the impression that my constituent, Commodore Turner, was not a warm advocate of League Island two years ago. Yet we have his letter setting forth the reasons why it should be preferred, stating among other things its healthfulness and its easy approach. So, too, with Commodore Stribling, who, although stationed at Philadelphia, was not at one time favorable to League Island, yet he has since written a letter in its favor: That letter has been read by my colleague (Mr. Kelley). This is another illustration of the change which has taken place in the views of prominent naval officers, one great reason being, no doubt, the importance of the basin afforded by the back chaunel, a basin that can be made three hundred and fifty yards wide, and deep enough to float the navies of the world.

The gentleman from Connecticut refers often to the mud of the river Delaware. Well, sir, we do not pretend to say that the bottom of the river Delaware is of rocks, and we thank Providence that it is not; for if it were so, we could not urge the adoption of League Island as the location for the naval station. Sir, we have the advantage of the mud, if you choose. At high tide we have twenty-three feet or more of water in the channel of the river Delaware; and we have besides that six or eight inches of yielding mud, which does not hinder the progress of a vessel. The largest vessels of the navy and of the merchant service have come not only to League Island, but to the wharves of the city of Philadelphia. I know that in one instance, a few years ago, the ship Cathedral was unable to get into the port of New York because she could

not get across the bar; but that ship was brought

in safety to our wharves.

And I will state also that at one time a project was on foot to bring the Great Eastern to Philadelphia, a party agreeing to undertake to accomplish it; but the project was abandoned, I believe, in consequence of some hesitation on account of the insurance. There is an ample depth of water for any vessel. The records of the Navy Department show that those drawing the most water, and having the largest armaments, have not only been at the present Philadelphia Navy Yard, but many of them were built there, and have with ease gone out to sea through the Delaware river and bay. Vessels propelled by steam are not delayed. Six or seven hours will take them to the Capes, and even under the most adverse circumstances of wind and weather a salling vessel can make the distance in about double that time.

Thirty-five or forty years ago the foreign commerce of this country was done at the wharves of the city of Philadelphia. At that time they were crowded with shipping from all parts of the world. That was the emporium for the China trade and the London trade. It was not until the sagacity of Governor De Witt Clinton suggested the construction of the Erris Canal that that trade began to leave that city and go to New York. The Delaware river now, as then, is of sufficient depth of channel for either merchantmen or national vessels. None of either kind are constructed, or are likely to be constructed, whether of iron or wood, which cannot navigate her waters.

But, Mr. Speaker, to return to the question of detensibility, which is, in fact, the important question. You must locate your naval stations in positions where they can be defended at a low cost. Where is the location that can be as easily defended as the city of Philadelphia and League Island adjacent to it? An enemy's ship could not successfully make its way up that river. Its very length is its defense. There are the two detensive works. Fort Delaware and Fort Miffim. Besides, there are numerous places along the shore of the river (not high bluffs or to vering mountains) upon which batteries could be placed. It would be impossible for a foreign enemy to approach Philadelphia by sea. And, sir, you could not blockade the city of Philadelphia or League Island.

phia or League Island.

It would take the combined navies of the world for such a blockade as would prevent effectual access to or from them. The bottom of Delaware bay is composed of yielding muo, so that you cannot anchor a blockading fleet there, and you all know its great width. A blockade of Philadelphia and League Island to be complete renders a blockade not only on the Delaware bay necessary, but also a blockade of the Jersey coast and of the Chesapeake bay. You must also blockade New York. I repeat, it would take the combined navier of the world to do this. Suppose it was attempted, you can get from League Island to New York through the Delaware and Raritan canal, which has a winth and depth sufficient to enable us to take a monitor of twe hundred tons into New York harbor. You can also get them through the Delaware and Chesapeake canal to Baltimers. And Fap

peal to my friend from New Jersey (Mr. Newell) that to make a blockade of that coast effectual you must blockade it entirely. Still we would have access to it by the Camden and Atlantic Railroad. Thus we would have means of outlet for our monitors by these canals, and we would have the whole West to furnish us with its products, thus rendering a threatened blockade to till and without result.

Leave Island can be shown most incention.

intile and without result.

League Island can be shown most incontrovertibly, not only to be a place of safety for our iron-clad vessels, but also the very best in which to build up a navy. Now, I judge from what I have seen in this House that facts, and facts only, will be listened to, and they seem to me, as far as presented, to be all in favor of that location.

location.

I say that on the question of detensibility, on the question of iresh water, on the question of the depth of water, freedom from ice, and on the question of cheapness of living, and the facility of procuring materials, you can find no place to compare with it. It looks to me as if nature planted it there for some great national use. New London is out of the question on account of salt water.

All who have examined it state this as the

All who have examined it state this as the great and insurmountable objection as far as iron vessels are concerned. Sait water destroys

The gentleman from Connecticut seems to suppose that a rocky point is the best place for a navy yard. Such is not our experience in the past. Look at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, most of which is made ground. We do not want to carry vessels up a steep hill or to cut deep basins through solid rock. It is not necessary, when we have other places which do not require this enormous expenditure of money. Go to the Charlestown Navy Yard, in the district of the Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, and you will find that a great portion of it is nade ground. It is necessarily so, for you want a navy for water and not tor land.

At the outset of my remarks I alluded to the fact that the gentleman from Connecticut made no argument of the defensibility of New London against a foreign navy. He could not make any such argument. The history of the country points out some facts in reference to the defensibility of that location. It could not resist a foreign navy during the war of 1812, which blockaded it, any more than during the revolutionary war, when it was burnt to ashes by the British, whose fleet and transports reached it in one night's sail. It is just as easy of capture now as it was then.

One word about the expense. Why, sir,

One word about the expense. Why, sir, \$5000,000 was expended in repairing and fitting out one ship of our Navy. I refer to the Van derbill. Yet you talk about the cost of constructing a navy yard at League Island such as no other nation in the world will or can have. It is so clear that I do not think it needs argument. I do not think this House would heritate for one moment in reference to the expense when the city of Philadelphia offers to give to the Government six hundred acres of land. It certainly would not if the land were adjoining

the present navy yard.

We do not ask for a new navy yard, We expect the present one to be transferred to League Island when completed. The present yard is now surrounded by the city. It is almost in the centre of the city. The Government can sell it for probably \$2,000,000, although it contains but fifteen or sixteen acres, and in its stead you will have a navy yard of some six bundred acres in a much better location. We are not asking for a new navy yard, but only desire that you will locate one, in fact, but as an extension of the old yard. These six hundred acres new offered as a gift will be worth in a few years millions of dollars to the Government. Commerce is pressing down the river towards League Island. Wharves for the accommodation of private business are being built along the banks of the Delaware.

Sir, would you select for a naval station New London harbor, which is famous for nothing but its nearness to the ocean? We do not want a new navy yard, much less do we want one located among rocks and salt marshes. It may have the proximity to the sea to recommend it as regards health, but a consumptive could not live there, and men working hard from morning until night in the shops would suffer from the climate, whereas in the neighborhood of Philadelphia they would be living where health abounds.

One word as to the defensibility of League Island in comparison with New London. I tell you there is but one way of deciding this question, and that is upon the facts. With the natural and artificial detenses in the Delaware river in the Revolutionary struggle, it took the British fleet eight long weeks to get up to Philadelphia. And I will appeal to my friend from Delaware if it is not true that in the war of 1812 time and again the British cruisers were driven off the Capes by our batteries, and yet Commodore Decatur was shut up by blockade of the enemy in the harbor of New London for weeks upon weeks with his ship after he had captured the Macedonian.

Sir, we need such a navy, as the lesson of the late Rebeilion has taught us, a navy built of iron, and we need a naval station at a point where we cannot only build, but equip our iron-clad vessels. Does this House know that during the late rebellion not one ship was fully equipped in the navy yards of the country? Now, sir, let us have a yard where we can have a foundry, where we can makefour ordinance, and everything great or small which enters into the completion of a man-of-war. Look at the losses we have suftered; millions of dollars claimed by contractors for extra work on vessels and their machinery. In the midst of the speech of my friend from Connecticut a bill for the relief of a contractor for less upon the Idaho is messaged from the Senate to the House. We will find claims amounting to twenty or thirty million dollars of this character, all occasioned by want of proper legislation on this subject.

proper legislation on this subject.

In 1862 the Secretary of the Navy suggested in a report, and has made the same suggestion in every succeeding report, the necessity of locating a navy yard for iron-clads, and yet here after nearly five years, with built a-dozen or more navy yards, we have none fitted for this purpose. We ought to have a navy worthy of such heroes as Farragut, Dupont, Winslow, Cushing, and others; but we can never have it until we select the place at which to build the

Mr. Speaker, one word and I am done. As I said before, I started out to state ircts, and have endeavored to confine myself to such. I wish to say, sir, for my colleagues of the Pennsylvania delegation and for my own more immediate colleagues of Philadelphia, that we are not urged to the support of this measure by any local interests or consideration. We endeavor to do our duty without the prejudice of locality. If a better site can be found for this purp se anywhere in the country, select it and establish your naval station there. But let us, for the sake of those who have honored our flag in the naval service, take such measures as will place the navy upon a proper footing for all time to come. For this we ask you to pass the bill lust as it was reported from the Committee on Naval Affairs.

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