

CHANGES IN ARMOR

That Were Ordered by the Heads of the Ordnance Bureau Will Not Cost MORE THAN EVER BEFORE.

They Consist Chiefly of Some Minor Matters of Taste.

PARTY POLITICS IN THE AFFAIR

Figure to the Extent of Charges Against the Administration.

INTERVIEW WITH COMMODORE FOLGER

SPECIAL TELEGRAM TO THE DISPATCH.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29.—When the story was first started, a week ago, charging the authorities of the Navy Department with having made certain changes in the construction of the warship City of New York, which not only involves great additional expense to the Government and a correspondingly increased profit to the manufacturers of the armor plate, THE DISPATCH, in this correspondence, gave the charges in full, stopped at verbiage, and endeavored to make a story sensational, and gave the full statement from Secretary Soley, asserting that there was no foundation whatever for the accusations, with the exception that some changes had been made in the form of the turret plates.

Commodore Folger, Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, who is said to be primarily responsible, and upon whom the burden of the charges rests, was at that time absent from the city, but to-day he was again at his desk, and ready to answer, with no more than his natural reserve, the questions of all comers in regard to the changes and charges.

The Changes of Slight Extent. "Yes," said the Commodore, to THE DISPATCH correspondent, "changes have been made to a slight extent in the construction of the plates for the new war vessels, but they do not involve any increased expense to the Government, for the simple reason that the contracts had not been let for the plates in the form that was at first contemplated, and consequently the contract price for the plates as they are to be made is exactly what it is for similar plates under a contract made years ago, before I came into the department.

"The chief criticism seems to be against the change from the deflecting armor of the roof of the turret to what is technically called the vertical form. Now, to begin with, the design for the deflecting form was never fully decided upon. It was a thought of a former administration, an untried invention appealing to the judgment as an excellent fancy, but not at all perfect in its suitability for the uses to which it was to be put.

What the Changes Really Mean. "The deflecting turret means that the roof over the guns and gunners, the part of the turret that revolves, is somewhat conical in form, to deflect projectiles. This is the only portion of the turret that revolves. The lower, and by far the larger portion, is of cylindrical form and is stationary, and it is proposed simply to extend this form a little higher, so that part of the turret which revolves. In the conical form the breeches of the gun extend across the turret. To the lowest part of the opposite side from that of the barrel, and there would be very small space for the trying and arduous work of the gunners who must operate the ponderous breech mechanism.

"It is a question whether the deflecting armor, even leaving the matter of the space aside, is a stronger defense against projectiles than the vertical armor. In the latter the deflecting sides of the turret will make it almost impossible to seriously injure it with a projectile. It is a fact that the turrets of the old monitors with their crude armor were rarely seriously injured by shot or shell. The form is a matter of judgment, and as the deflecting armor had never been formally selected, it was thought that in view of some very objectionable features it would be best to return to the vertical design.

Mostly a Matter of Taste. "As to the change in the form of a portion of the armor for the hull, that was hardly more than a matter of taste. It was made in the interests of prompt work, upon the decision of a board of officers, and it cost no more than the other armor, and no one who knows anything about it can truthfully say that it will be less effective than the former design.

"Any one who says that any change that has been ordered will detract from the efficiency of the vessel is simply making an assertion that he cannot bear out in the light of experience or by scientific demonstration. Had it been possible to have constructed the New York without delay upon the untried plans, the experiment of the deflective or conical turret might have been made; but taking all things into consideration—and nobody but those who are responsible has any idea of the many things that have to be considered in such an undertaking—it was a wise action to make the changes that have been made, and those who are responsible for them are willing to subject all of their acts to the fullest inquiry.

"I see that a Congressional investigation is predicted. Well, it seems to me very easy in these days to get into a Congressional investigation upon almost any charge by anybody, and yet I do not find that any one has been seriously injured by them. As any one who is personally concerned, I have nothing to conceal and can give a good reason for every action in which I have had any part.

An Apparently Strained Story. "The whole story bears the impress of being strained and amplified for the purpose of making a sensation during a dull period, and as will be recognized from the attempt to make a point against the department for failing to advertise for bids at the time the contract was given to the firm at Pittsburgh. The truth is the firm was the only one in a position to accept the contract, and it would have been a mere hollow form, worse than useless, to have advertised.

"I might say much more as to the source from which the charges—if they can be called charges—emanated, but it would be manifestly out of place. I shall not be drawn into any controversy. If charges be made against me personally I shall be only too glad to meet them.

It will be noticed that Commodore Folger gives practically the same series of denials as was given by Acting Secretary Soley to THE DISPATCH a week ago. There now remains only Secretary Tracy to be interviewed, and this will be done promiscuously as soon as he returns from his jaunt on the Government yacht, The Despatch. Then the very clever gentleman who are prying up all this fuss will have the complete denials of the persons in authority, and can move on their works if they desire to do so.

Some Assertions Considered FOLLY. While there is no doubt of the changes made, it is apparent that the assertions of the rascals and expensive character of the changes are rather foggy. On the one side it is asserted that they will in no wise affect the efficiency of the vessels, and on the other it is intimated that their resisting power will be greatly decreased. On the one side it is claimed that there will be little or no increase of cost, and that the cost will be even lessened, and on the other the estimate of additional expense runs all the way from thousands to hundreds of thousands.

Whatever may be the exact truth—which

no one outside of the Department can possibly know—there is no doubt that the charges emanate from the clique which is opposed to the present administration of the Ordnance Department. Commodore Soley, the former Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, and the officers who acted with him form a clique which has opposed nearly every act of the present administration of the office. Especially have the officers of this clique been excited by the least changes made in designs originating during their tenure, though they themselves were responsible for changes at least as radical as any that have been made by the present officials.

Party Politics in the Matter. Party politics also enters, to some extent, into the controversy, as many of the officials who operated under ex-Secretary Whitney were very friendly to that gentleman, and are jealous of any act that could reflect upon the judgment of his administration. It is these officials who are stirring up the trouble, though they are keeping themselves in the background in the few cases that are being handled, as they are making serious assaults on the integrity of their superior officers which they should never have even whispered unless they were ready to make them good before a court of naval officers.

There is either subject for a formal inquiry, or there is nothing but jealousy at the back of the charges. In the one case the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance should be hauled over the coals, and in the other the officers (and some of them are of high rank) who are responsible for the attacks on the Secretary and the Chief of Ordnance should at least be assigned to active duty, away from the soft places they now fill largely by reason of social influence.

A strong ground for the supposition that the charges are magnified is that the Chief of Ordnance has constantly known that the eyes of the opposing clique were upon his every action, and that he could do absolutely nothing without their knowledge. He would have been something more than foolish even if he wished to indulge in favoritism, or in corrupt schemes, to have done so in the face of certain discovery and ultimate disgrace.

Jealousy on Both Sides of the Fence. "On the other hand, it is possible that some of the changes made were the result of jealousy on the part of the clique of which Commodore Folger is a central figure. It takes but a small provocation to set these sensitive naval officers by the ears, and in their jealous fits they are liable to magnify every movement of the opposition that can be gotten hold of for criticism.

The assertion that Secretary Tracy has been the cat's paw of Commodore Folger is one of the most absurd of the charges made. The Secretary has heard both sides of all these questions, and he accepted Folger's views it was because of his conviction that they were for the best interests of the Government. Either that or he must be as culpable, and deliberately so, as Folger.

At the same time, it is true that it wasn't the unanimous opinion of those who are entirely friendly to both Tracy and Folger that the surrender of the deflecting turret idea was wise. Though it was an untried experiment, even so conservative an official as Chief Naval Constructor Hiebhorn is of the opinion that the conical turret would have proved a great success. On the other hand, it was told by a high officer of the navy, long before this controversy arose, that the designs for the conical turret were very defective, and that the big guns would not be mounted so safely in them. But Mr. Hiebhorn happens to have been the designer of the turret.

Allen on Monday, August 29, at 2:30 o'clock P. M., John C. Allen, General Secretary of the Law Society, died at his residence, 1215 Broadway, at the age of 62 years.

Funeral services at his late residence, 407 1/2 North 10th street, near Davidson, Tuesday morning at 7:30 o'clock. Interment at Hillside on Wednesday.

BAILEY—Mrs. JANE C. BAILEY, August 28, at 8:40, in the 7th ward office, aged 72 years. Funeral from her late residence, Manor township, Armstrong county, Tuesday, at 2 o'clock.

BERRY—On Monday, August 29, 1892, LEONARD B. BERRY, died at his late residence, Baden, Pa., Wednesday morning at 10:30.

BOOSE—On Monday morning, August 29, 1892, at 1:15 o'clock, at the residence of his parents, 210 South 10th street, died EDWARD O. H., only son of E. O. H. and Annie Boose, age 3 years 4 months and 21 days.

BULLOCK—On Sunday, August 28, 1892, at 4:25 A. M., FLORENCE McCLURE, infant daughter of William S. and Mary E. Bullock, aged 8 months and 21 days.

Services at the residence, Homestead, Pa., Tuesday, August 30, 10 o'clock A. M. Interment private at a later hour.

FAHEY—At New Brighton, Pa., Saturday evening, August 27, 1892, FLORENCE KEEN, beloved wife of George M. Fahey.

Funeral services at the residence, New Brighton, Pa., Tuesday morning, August 30, at 10 o'clock. Interment private.

HAGAN—On Sunday, August 28, at 10:10 A. M., P. H. HAGAN (engineer), aged 32 years.

Funeral from his late residence, Dungan, O., on Tuesday, August 30, at 10 A. M.

HOPKINS—Suddenly by accident, on Sunday, August 28, WILLIAM HOPKINS, in his 21st year, a member of A. O. U. of No. 2000, and of the Plutch Lodge K. of P. No. 202.

Funeral from his residence in Mansfield on Wednesday, August 31, at 2 P. M.

KREPS—On Sunday, August 28, 1892, at 2 o'clock P. M., KENNETH D. D. D. and Rebecca Krebs, aged 9 years.

MURPHY—On Sunday, August 28, 1892, at 5 o'clock P. M., WILLIAM MURPHY, in his 32nd year, member of the American Flint Glass Workers' Union.

Funeral from his late residence, 539 Fifth avenue, on Tuesday, the 30th inst., at 2 o'clock P. M. Services at St. Paul's Church at 2:30. Friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend.

MCCLOSKEY—At Elizabeth, Pa., Sunday, August 28, 1892, Mrs. ANNE BLAIR MCCLOSKEY, aged 70 years 10 months and 28 days.

Funeral Tuesday, August 30, at 2:30 o'clock A. M., from St. Michael's Church, Elizabeth.

MCKINLEY—On Monday, August 29, 1892, at 4 A. M., GEORGE DUNHAM MCKINLEY, in his 32nd year.

Funeral services at her late residence, 138 Forty-second street, on Tuesday, August 30, 1892, at 11:30 A. M. Interment at Sharpville, Mercer county, Pa.

McQUILL—On Monday, August 29, 1892, at 11:30 P. M., BEVERLY McQUILL, youngest son of F. J. and Maggie McQuill, aged 8 months 6 days.

Notice of funeral in evening papers.

NOBLE—On Sunday, August 28, 1892, at 2:15 A. M., Mrs. ELLEN ROBERT NOBLE.

Funeral services at her late residence, Olynthia street, Duquesne Heights, on Tuesday afternoon, August 30, at 2:30.

PERMAR—Suddenly, August 28, at Findlay, O., at her 28th year, Mrs. MARGIE J. PERMAR, wife of William H. Permar.

Funeral from the residence of her daughter, Mrs. David I. Barnes, Rebecca street, Wilkesburg, Tuesday, August 30, at 2 o'clock P. M. Friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend.

REGAN—REARDON—At rest, ELIZABETH, wife of the late THOMAS REGAN, died at 2:35 P. M. Monday, August 28, 1892, in her residence, second door from Harrison on Forty-ninth street, city, aged 64 years.

Notice of funeral hereafter.

ROBINSON—On Saturday, August 27, at 9 A. M. MARY ANN ROBINSON.

Funeral at 2 o'clock Tuesday afternoon, August 30, from her late residence, No. 19 Cedar avenue, Allegheny City. Interment private.

SAAM—On Monday, August 29, at 4 A. M., Mrs. ELIZABETH W. SAAM, in her 64th year.

Funeral Wednesday, August 31, at 2 P. M., from the residence of her son, W. H. Saam, Irwin, Pa.

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