CONGRESS TO ACT.

Will Assume a Vigorous Attitude Toward Spain.

THE PRESIDENT IS WAITING

For a Reply to His Demands on Spain's Government.

WARFARE IN CUBA MUST CEASE.

Unless It Does the President Will Lay the Whole Matter Before Congres and Be Guided by Its Instructions. The Government Secures a Torpedo Boat Built For the German Government and a Number of Yachts and Tugs Which Will Be Transformed Into Marine Fighters—Admiral Sicard Retired, and Captain Sampson Succeeds Him in Command of the Fleet at Key West — Commodore Schley Commands the Flying Squadron at Hampton Roads—The Report of the Court of Inquiry Into the Disaster to the Battleship Maine, in the Harbor of Havana, and the President's Message to Congress on the Subject.

Washington, March 28.—Following is the full text of the report of the court of inquiry appointed to investigate the disaster to the Maine at Havana:

United States Steamer Iowa, First Rate, Key West, Fla., Monday, March 21, 1898.

After full and mature consideration of all the testimony before it, the court finds as follows:

1. That the United States battleship Maine arrived in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, on the 25th day of January, 1898, and was taken to buoy No. 4, in from five to six fathoms of water, by the regular government pilot.

The United States consul general at Havana had notified the authorities at that place, the previous evening, of the intended arrival of the Maine.

2. The state of discipline on board the Maine was excellent, and all orders and regulations in regard to the care and safety of the ship were strictly carried out.

All ammunition was stowed in accordance with prescribed instructions, and proper care was taken whenever ammunition was handled.

Nothing was stowed in any one of the magazines or shell rooms which was not permitted to be stowed there.

The magazines and shell rooms were always locked after having been opened, and after the destruction of the Maine the keys were found in their proper place in the captain's cabin, everything having been reported secure that evening at 8 p. m. The temperatures of the magazine and shell room were taken daily and reported. The only magazine which had an undue amount of heat was the after ten inch magazine, and that did not explode at the time the Maine was destroyed.

The torpedo warheads were all stowed in the after part of the ship under the ward room, and neither caused nor participated in the destruction of the Maine.

The dry gun cotton primers and detonators were stowed in the cabin aft, and remote from the scene of the explosion.

Waste was carefully looked after on board the Maine to obviate danger. Special orders in regard to this had been given by the commanding officer.

Varnishes, dryers, alcohol and other combustibles of this nature were stowed on or above the main deck and could not have had anything to do with the destruction of the Maine.

The medical stores were stowed aft under the ward room and remote from the scene of the explosion.

No dangerous stores of any kind were stowed below in any of the other store rooms.

The coal bunkers were inspected daily. Of those bunkers adjacent to the forward magazines and shell rooms four were empty, namely, B 3, B 4, B 5, B 6. A 5 had been in use that day, and A 16 was full of new river coal. This coal had been carefully inspected before receiving it on board. The bunker in which it was stowed was accessible on three sides at all times, and the fourth side at this time on account of bunkers B 4 and B 6 being empty. This bunker, A 16, had been inspected Monday by the engineer officer on duty.

The fire alarms in the bunkers were in working order, and there had never been a case of spontaneous combustion of coal on board the Maine.

The two after boilers of the ship were in use at the time of the disaster, but for auxiliary purposes only, with a comparatively low pressure of steam and being tended by a reliable watch. These boilers could not have caused the explosion of the ship. The four forward boilers have since been found by the divers and are in a fair condition.

On the night of the destruction of the Maine everything had been reported secure for the night at 8 p. m. by reliable persons, through the proper authorities, to the commanding officer. At the time the Maine was destroyed the ship was quiet, and therefore least liable to accident caused by movements from those on board.

3. The destruction of the Maine occurred at 9:40 p. m. on the 15th day of February, 1898, in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, she being at the time moored to the same buoy to which she had been taken upon her arrival.

There were two explosions of a distinctly different character, with a very short but distinct interval between them, and the forward part of the ship was lifted to a marked degree at the time of the first explosion.

The first explosion was more in the nature of a report, like that of a gun, while the second explosion was more open, prolonged, and of greater volume. This second explosion was, in the opinion of the court, caused by the partial explosion of two or more of the forward magazines of the Maine.

4. The evidence bearing upon this, being principally obtained from divers, did not enable the court to form a definite conclusion as to the condition of the wreck, although it was established that the after part of the ship was practically intact and sank in that condition a very few minutes after the destruction of the forward part.

The following facts in regard to the forward part of the ship are, however, established by the testimony.

That portion of the port side of the protective deck which extends from about frame 30 to about frame 41 was blown up aft, and over to port. The main deck from about frame 30 to about frame 41 was blown up aft, and slightly over to starboard, folding the forward part of the middle superstructure over and on top of the after part.

This was, in the opinion of the court, caused by the partial explosion of two or more of the forward magazines of the Maine.

5. At frame 17 the outer shell of the ship from a point eleven and one-half feet from the middle line of the ship and six feet above the keel when in its normal position has been forced up so as to be now about four feet above the surface of the water; therefore, about 34 feet above where it would be had the ship sank uninjured. The outside bottom plating is bent into a reversed V shape, the after wing of which, about 15 feet broad and 32 feet in length (from frame 17 to frame 25), is doubled back upon itself against the continuation of the same plating extending forward.

At frame 18 the vertical keel is broken in two, and the flat keel bent into an angle similar to the angle formed by the outside bottom plating. This break is now about six feet below the surface of the water, and about 30 feet above its normal position.

In the opinion of the court this effect could have been produced only by the explosion of a mine situated under the bottom of the ship at about frame 18, and somewhat on the port side of the ship.

6. The court finds that the loss of the Maine, on the occasion named, was not in any respect due to fault or negligence on the part of any of the officers or members of the crew of said vessel.

7. In the opinion of the court the Maine was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, which caused the partial explosion of two of her forward magazines.

8. The court has been unable to obtain evidence fixing the responsibility for the destruction of the Maine upon any person or persons.

The report is signed by Captain W. T. Sampson, president of the court of inquiry, and Lieutenant Commander Marix, judge advocate, and approved by Rear Admiral Sicard.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Thinks Spain's Sense of Justice Will Dictate a Course of Action.

Washington, March 28.—The president today sent a message to congress detailing the incidents connected with the loss of the Maine, and repeating the findings of the court of inquiry. The message says in part:

"The appalling calamity fell upon the people of our country with crushing force, and for a brief time an intense excitement prevailed, which in a community less just and self controlled than ours might have led to hasty acts of blind resentment. This spirit, however, soon gave way to the calmer processes of reason and to the resolve to investigate the facts and await material proof before forming a judgment as to the cause, the responsibility, and, as the facts warranted, the remedy. This course necessarily recommended itself from the outset to the executive, for only in the light of a dispassionately ascertained certainty could it determine the nature and measure of its full duty in the matter.

"The usual procedure was followed, as in all cases of casualty or disaster to national vessels of any maritime state. A naval court of inquiry was at once organized, composed of officers well qualified by rank and practical experience to discharge the duty imposed upon them. Aided by a strong force of wreckers and divers, the court proceeded to make a thorough investigation on the spot, employing every available means for the impartial and exact determination of the cause of the explosion. Its operations have been conducted with the utmost deliberation and judgment, and while independently pursued no source of information was neglected, and the fullest opportunity was allowed for a simultaneous investigation by the Spanish authorities.

"The finding of the court of inquiry was reached after 23 days of continuous labor, on the 21st of March, and having been approved on the 22d by the commander-in-chief of the United States naval force on the North Atlantic station, was transmitted to the executive. It is herewith laid before congress, together with the voluminous testimony taken before the court.

"I have directed that the finding of the court of inquiry and the views of this government thereon be communicated to the government of her majesty, the queen regent, and I do not permit myself to doubt that the sense of justice of the Spanish nation will dictate a course of action suggested by honor and the friendly relations of the two governments.

"It will be the duty of the executive to advise congress of the result and in the meantime deliberate consideration is invoked."

CONGRESSMEN IMPATIENT.

They Will Demand Speedy Action of the Administration.

Washington, March 30.—Congress and the cabinet divided attention yesterday in the Spanish situation. In congress the feeling which began to take form after the president's conservative and pacific message on the Maine report was submitted on Monday found expression yesteray in resolutions proposing a declaration of war, recognition of the independence of Cuba, armed intervention and other decisive and warlike steps against Spain.

Within five minutes after the senate convened Mr. Allen, of Nebraska, introduced a resolution recognizing the independence of the Cuban republic. This was followed by a resolution from Mr. Rawlings, of Utah, declaring war against the kingdom of Spain. Mr. Foraker, of Ohio, then introduced a resolution declaring for such intervention in the Cuban war as would bring about the independence of the Cubans. Following this came a resolution by Mr. Frye, of Maine, demanding that Cuba be made free. The resolutions followed one another so rapidly as to stun the auditors, both senators and spectators. The galleries were in a commotion and the people were prepared for anything.

This was the condition when Vice President Hobart recognized Mr. Mason, of Illinois, for his announced speech on the president's message transmitting the report of the Maine court of inquiry. Mr. Mason read his speech from manuscript, but it was delivered with all the vigor and fire of which he is capable. The intensity of the feeling of those in the galleries was evidenced by the storm of applause which was elicited by his declaration that he was for war.

On the house side it was apparent that the Republican majority could be no longer controlled by what is known as the conservative element led by the speaker. Groups of members in a state of excitement were to be seen on every hand. In each cloak room there were members listening eagerly while portions of the Maine testimony were read. Members of the foreign affairs committee grouped together and discussed plans and possible future proceedings It was generally acknowledged that a serious condition had arisen; that a crisis was near at hand. It was the opinion of some of the conservative members that in a day or two the feeling would subside and members would not be so agitated. Much depends upon the next few days. That congress will not long remain inactive if some decided action is not taken by the administration is certain. It is also true that the talk of an armistice caused a great deal of ill feeling. The house yesterday proceeded to business without outbreak or without dramatic incident, but no such quiet can be promised during the consideration of the naval appropriaconsideration of the naval bill.

The revolt in the house against further delay of action on the Cuban issue culminated yesterday in a conference of Republican members whose ideas are in accordance with a positive early course. About 50 representatives attended, representing all sections. Representative Hopkins, of Illinois, a member of the ways and means committee, presided. Representative Joy, of Missouri, was secretary. The meeting was called to take steps to secure immediate intervention in some form and the recognition of Cuban independence. It was the first definite step following discussions in the cloak rooms and lobbies since the president's message was submitted by many members who favor immediate and aggressive action. Up to yesterday afternoon the sentiment was a half concealed but strong feeling against voting money for Cuban relief unless accompanied by action to stop the war.

The meeting was called with a view of accomplishing the unqualified removal of Spanish troops from Cuba and the prompt armed intervention in the affairs of that island. It was decided to call a meting immediately after adjournment. The word was quickly passed around, but many who are enthusiastically in favor of intervention failed of notification, though the number present would be sufficiently large, by consolidation with the Democratic forces, to carry out a program. After vigorous speeches denunciatory of Spain it was decided to defer action until 5 o'clock this afternoon.

The day closed with a prospect that the committees to which were referred the Maine correspondence will act soon, possibly before the end of the week.

The cabinet meeting yesterday developed nothing new. The president remains steadfast in his convictions as to what is his duty, and adverse criticism, which it is asserted is mainly due to misinformation as to the situation or ignorance of the president's purposes, will not be permitted to swerve him in the least degree from the course he has planned. As he has already stated, the president some days ago made a peremptory demand upon Spain to put an end immediately to hostilities in Cuba, to release the concentrados and to permit them to return to their homes and resume their several occupations unmolested. This statement is made by unquestionable authority, and since that demand was communicated to Spain the president has not taken a step backward or allowed himself to be persuaded into modifying it in the least particular.

Spain's final reply to this demand, it is known, is now receiving the earnest consideration of the Spanish authorities at Madrid, and their final reply may be reasonably expected within the next few days. Should these demands be rejected there is the highest authority for stating that the president would not hesitate a moment as to his future course, but would immediately lay the whole record before congress and be guided by its instructions. As a preliminary step toward peace it has been proposed to Spain, though this last proposition has not yet taken the shape of a demand, that the Spanish government withdraw its troops from the island, and that the Cubans be given their independence on a basis of indemnity that would be regarded as just in amount by the United States and other nations of the world and fair to both contending parties.

The question of an armistice has not been agreed to by either this country or Spain, though there is no doubt that Spain suggested an armistice. What terms of peace will be acceptable to the president cannot be stated, but it is asserted that no proposition will be considered that does not involve the practical, if not the actual independence of the Cubans. Under these circumstances members of the administration think it only fair to the president that the people should wait with patience the result of the pending negotiations.

There is little doubt that the French government is ready to tender its good offices as mediator between the United States and Spain, if any intimation is conveyed by this country that such offices would be acceptable.

At the close of the cabinet meeting Secretary Alger gave out a statement that all the members of the cabinet were in thorough accord with President McKinley, despite rumors to the contrary.

The army and navy departments continue to show many evidences of activity, but there was not that extreme energy of preparations apparent last week. Captain Sigsbee had several talks with Secretary Long during the day, and at the close of office hours the secretary accompanied Captain Sigsbee to the White House and presented him to the president. Mr. Long says that no determination has been reached thus far as to Captain Sigsbee's next assignment, but as one of the high officials of the navy department the commander of the wrecked battleship can have about anything he wants.

A significant conference was held during the day between representatives of the war and navy departments to determine whether New Orleans, Mobile or Tampa was best adapted as a base of operations, both military and naval, in the event of war. The representative of the navy was Captain Baker, naval aide to Secretary Long, and for the army Colonel Wagner, chief of the bureau of information of the army. No determination has yet been reached on the subject.

The ordnance officials of the army report that the firms which have been given contracts for supplying ammunition, guns, projectiles and gun carriages are keeping well to their promises in the matter of supplying these munitions of war on time, and they are being hurried to the fortifications needing them. Work in all departments is going on rapidly at all points.

The events of last week were a succession of exciting incidents. On Thursday last Admiral Sicard was retired on sick leave and Captain Sampson appointed to succeed him in command of the fleet at Key West. Captain Robley Evans ("Fighting Bob") was appointed to the command of the Iowa, succeeding Captain Sampson. On Friday Commander W. S. Schley was appointed to command the flying squadron at Hampton Roads. Orders were also issued to have the vessels of the white squadron painted a dark lead color, and that work is now proceeding. On Friday it was announced that agents of this government had purchased a "Schischau" torpedo boat just built for the German government. At New York agents of the government purchased four swift yachts, nine fast sea going tugs and one coasting vessel, which are being transformed into war vessels.

The great event of last week was, of course, the arrival in Washington on Thursday night of the report of the Maine court of inquiry, which was brought to the capital from Key West by Lieutenant Commander Marix. Lieutenants Hood and Jungen, Engineer Bowers and Ship Carpenter Helmes, of the Maine's crew. Another important event of the week was the launching, on Thursday last at Newport News, Va., of the two new battleships Kentucky and Kearsarge. Last Thursday the body of Lieutenant Jenkins was recovered from the wreck of the Maine, and has been forwarded to his mother at Allegheny, Pa.

This week opened with every evidence of approaching war at the nation's capital. Sunday was an unusually busy day. At the state, war and navy departments there was little semblance of the Sabbath. Chiefs of bureaus, clerks, messengers and telegraph operators were all at work. Probably never since the days of the late war have so many officials gathered at the war and navy departments on a Sunday. The president had conferences with the members of his cabinet, and Assistant Secretary Day had a conference with the Spanish minister at the state department. At the same time it was stated in official circles that the president was determined to terminate the war in Cuba on terms that will make the Cubans practically free.

A matter of considerable importance in connection with the Spanish controversy is the fact that in Sunday's elections in Spain the Sagasta government made sweeping victories.

The presentation of the report of the Maine board of inquiry and the president's message to congress on Monday attracted large and excited crowds to both houses, but there were no warlike demonstrations among the lawmakers. After the cabinet meeting of that day the talk of the officials was extremely peaceful, though it was admitted that the danger point was not yet passed. The report of the Spanish commission on the Maine disaster also reached the capital. It is directly opposite to that presented by this government's investigators, asserting positively that the explosion was internal.

The Auxiliary Navy Examiners.

New York, March 30.—The board for the selection of naval vessels is doing the work of examination of yachts, colliers and seagoing craft at Wilmington, Baltimore and New York harbor. The board examined not less than 75 vessels of the "outside class"—that is to say, exclusive of coastwise steamers and all seagoing, and of vessels serviceable for harbor work, such as those now being gathered for Commander Elmer's "mosquito fleet." Nothing could be learned about the intention of the department with reference to the American line steamship St. Paul.

Food Rots While Cubans Starve.

Key West, Fla., March 30.—Provisions for the Cubans which arrived here two weeks ago still lie useless in the naval station for want of authority to ship them to Cuba. The authorities yesterday asked permission to use the survey boat Bache for this purpose, but no answer has yet been received. The provisions do not improve with the delay, and according to reports the Cubans continue to starve. The original program was to send this shipment by the Fern, but the arrangements were broken by the sudden call of that vessel to Havana.

The Naval Enlistments.

New York, March 30.—The activity in the workshop and on the vessels in the Brooklyn navy yard has not abated, and today the forges were in full blast. Word was received at the yard yesterday from Washington authorizing the enlistment of all desirable men for one year unless the service desires to discharge them before that time. Those who are in most demand, and very few have made application, are machinists of the first class, carpenters and able seamen.

Spaniards Held an American Schooner

Kingston, Jamaica, March 30.—The American schooner Hester, of Pensacola, Fla., loaded with lumber, arrived here Monday evening, and her captain reports that while on the voyage he was boarded by a Spanish gunboat, which towed the schooner into Casilidea and detained her there for three days. The captain of the Hester has reported the matter to the United States consul here.

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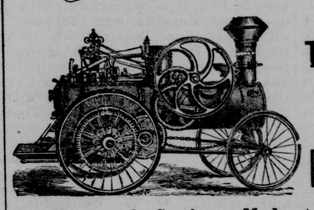
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