

# FINDING OF THE BOARD

## Ship Was Blown Up By a Floating Mine.

### RESPONSIBILITY IS NOT FIXED

Spain Notified of the Findings of the Naval Court—Madrid Refuses to Recall the Torpedo Flotilla and Is Actively Fortifying Porto Rico.

Washington, March 28.—The court of inquiry appointed to investigate the cause of the Maine disaster has reported that the loss of the battle-ship was due to an outside explosion. The state department, by direction of the president, has cabled Minister Woodford, at Madrid, to notify the Spanish government of the conclusion.

The president and his cabinet advisers held two extended sessions today, one at 10:30 A. M. and another at 3:30 P. M., at which the report was considered in detail. Members of the cabinet stated after the meetings that the discussion was of a grave character, and that never since the wrecking of the Maine has the situation seemed so critical.

The Spanish government has cabled officially to Washington that the Spanish naval commission holds the disaster to the Maine to be of internal origin.

The government of Spain, it can be stated positively, is not disposed to turn back the torpedo fleet now proceeding from the Canaries, and would be disinclined to consider a suggestion from this government tending to interfere with the disposition by Spain of her own naval forces.

War preparations on an unprecedented scale are being hurried to completion by the war and navy departments, and the country practically is on a war footing.

The foregoing gives the record of one of the most eventful days the national capital has seen since the close of the civil war. It was a day of profoundly important action and of the deepest anxiety, coupled with naval and military activity, one step following another in rapid succession.

Representative men of the administration, public men in all branches of official and congressional life, no less than the public in general, shared in the tension to which the situation has been wrought. There was no effort among the highest officials, nor, indeed, was it possible from what was clearly apparent in the development of the day, to minimize the situation.

#### Verdict of the Court of Inquiry.

Viewed in detail, the finding of the court of inquiry was the most vital factor. Commander Marix, judge advocate of the court of inquiry, delivered the report to Secretary Long early this morning, and shortly afterward it was carried to the White House and placed in the hands of the president.

At 10:30 the cabinet assembled, half an hour earlier than usual, and began the consideration of the momentous document. Even the rigid rules of secrecy which prevail at cabinet meetings were made doubly strict in this case, and no intimation of the results reached by the court was known until 2 o'clock, when a press bulletin gave the information to the country, as well as to the eagerly waiting officials throughout Washington. These results, briefly stated, are that the loss of the Maine was due to an explosion from the outside, the court being unable to fix the responsibility for the explosion.

The court does not express an opinion as to the character of the explosion, but the testimony goes to show that it was a powerful submarine mine, the exact character of which was not determined, though the belief was expressed that it was a floating submarine mine.

There were two explosions, the court finds. The first was from the outside, and that set off one of the smaller magazines.

It was this, expressed in detail, and with the precision of a court deeply conscious of its responsibility, together with the evidence upon which it was based, that occupied the attention of the cabinet throughout its extended sessions of the morning and afternoon. All other subjects have given way to this foremost question. There was no change in the plan of making the report public and transmitting it to congress, accompanied by a brief message from the president.

The afternoon cabinet session lasted until nearly 5:30. The entire situation was discussed at length, but no definite point was reached. The situation is regarded as decidedly critical, and it is feared there will be great difficulty in avoiding trouble.

While interest was thus centered at the White House, the navy and war departments were hurrying forward their work of preparation.

### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

No Recommendation Is Made Regarding Action to Be Taken.

Washington, March 29.—The president today sent the following message to congress:

"To the congress of the United States—For some time prior to the visit of the Maine to Havana harbor our consular representatives pointed out the advantages to follow the visits of naval ships to Cuban waters in accustoming people to the presence of our flag as a symbol of good will and of our ships in fulfillment of the mission of protection to American interests, even though no immediate need therefor might exist. Accordingly, on the 25th of January last, after a conference with the Spanish minister, in which a renewal of the visits of our vessels to Spanish water was discussed and accepted, the peninsular authorities at Madrid and Havana were advised of the purpose of this government to resume friendly naval visits to Cuban ports, and that with that end in view the Maine would forthwith call at the port of Havana.

"This announcement was received by the Spanish government with appreciation of the friendly character of the visit of the Maine and with notification of an intention to return the courtesy by sending Spanish ships to the principal ports of the United States.

Meanwhile the Maine entered the port of Havana on the 25th of January, her arrival being marked with no special incident besides the exchange of customary salutes and ceremonial visits.

"The Maine continued in the harbor of Havana during the three weeks following her arrival. No appreciable excitement attended her stay. On the contrary, a feeling of relief and confidence followed the resumption of long-interrupted friendly intercourse. So noticeable was this immediate effect of her visit that the consul-general strongly urged that the presence of our ships in Cuban waters should be kept up by retaining the Maine at Havana, or in the event of her recall, by sending another vessel there to take her place.

"At 40 minutes past 9 o'clock in the evening of the 15th of February, the Maine was destroyed by an explosion, by which the entire forward part of the ship was utterly wrecked. In this catastrophe, two officers and 260 members of her crew perished, those who were not killed outright by her explosion being penned between decks by the tangle of wreckage and drowned by the immediate sinking of the hull. Prompt assistance was rendered by neighboring vessels anchored in the harbor, aid being especially given by the boats of the Spanish cruiser Alphonso XII and the Ward line steamer City of Washington, which lay not far distant. The wounded were generously cared for by the authorities of Havana, the hospitals being freely opened to them, while the earliest recovered of the bodies were interred by the municipality in the public cemetery in the city. Tributes of grief and sympathy were offered from all official quarters of the island.

"The appalling calamity fell upon the people of our country with crushing force, and for a brief time intense excitement prevailed, which, in a community less just and selfishly controlled, must have led to hasty acts of blind resentment. This spirit, however, soon gave way to the calmer process of reason and to a resolve to investigate the facts and await material proof before forming judgment as to the responsibility, and if the facts warranted the remedy due. 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 its full duty in the matter.

"The usual procedure was followed as in 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 onerous duties imposed upon them, and accompanied by a strong force of wreckers and divers, the court proceeded to make a thorough investigation on the spot, employing every available means for an impartial and exact determination as to 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 simultaneous investigation by the Spanish authorities.

"The findings of the court of inquiry were reached after 23 days' continuous labor, on the 21st of March, and having been approved on the 23d, by the commander-in-chief of the naval force of the North Atlantic station, were transmitted to the executive. It is herewith laid before congress, together with the voluminous testimony taken before the court, which is in brief as follows:

"When the Maine arrived at Havana she was conducted by a regular government pilot to buoy No. 4, to which she was moored in from 5½ to 6 fathoms of water. The state of discipline on board and the condition of her magazines, boilers, coal bunkers and storage compartments are passed in review, with the conclusion that excellent order prevailed and that no indication of any

cause for internal explosion existed in any quarter.

"At 8 o'clock in the evening, on February 15, everything had been reported secure and all was quiet. At 40 minutes past 9 o'clock the vessel was suddenly destroyed. There were two distinct explosions with brief intervals between them. The first lifted the forward part of the ship very perceptibly, the second, which was more prolonged, is attributed by the court to the partial explosion of two or more of the forward magazines.

"The evidence of the divers establishes that the after part of the ship was practically intact, and sank in that condition a very few minutes after the explosion. The forward part was completely demolished.

"Upon the evidence of concurrent external cause, the finding of the court is as follows:

"At frame 17, the outer shell of the ship, from a point 11½ feet from the middle line of the ship and six feet above the keel when in normal position, had been forced to about four feet above the surface of the water, therefore, about 34 feet above where it would have been had she sunk uninjured. The outside bottom plating is bent into a reversed 'V' shape, the after wing of which, about 15 feet broad and 32 feet long (from frame 17 to frame 25), is doubled back upon itself against a continuation of the same plating extending forward.

"At frame 18, the vertical keel is broken in two and bent into a singular angle, formed by the outside plates. This break is 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."

"The conclusions of the court are:

"The loss of the Maine was not in any respect due to the fault of or negligence on the part of any officer or member of her crew.

"That the ship was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, which caused a partial explosion of two or more of her forward magazines, and that no evidence has been obtainable fixing the responsibility for the destruction of the Maine upon any person or persons."

"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 of Spain, 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 friendly relations of the two governments.

"It is the duty of the executive to advise congress of the result and in the meantime deliberate consideration is invoked. WILLIAM M'KINLEY.

"Executive Mansion, March 28, 1898."

### PERISHED ON AN ICE FLOE.

Terrible Fate of Forty-Seven Sailors on a Newfoundland Sealing Steamer.

St. John's, N. E., March 30.—The steamer Greenland has reached this harbor with a grewsome cargo. Twenty-four corpses were on deck and 55 men were moaning in terrible suffering in the hold in the pain of frostbitten limbs and bodies. The dead bodies were on the decks disfigured and almost unrecognizable. The effects of the terrible suffering which they had endured presented one of the most horrible sight human eyes ever beheld.

The frostbitten men number 55. All will recover.

The Greenland set sail from St. John's about the first of March on her fateful voyage. She was commanded by Captain George Barbour, and carried a crew of nearly 300 sealhunters. The steamer proceeded northward with the rest of the sealing fleet, but after a couple of hours she diverged on a separate tack, and reached the hunting grounds not long after. All went well until Tuesday last. Seals were quickly encountered, and several good packs were secured.

On Tuesday morning the hunters left the ship about 7 o'clock, as usual, when the lookout reported ice plentiful around them. The men were clad in light clothing, for the slaughtering of seals in exhausting work. Scattered over the ice field, they wandered far from the protection of the ship, and a gale and snowstorm shut them out from view. The ice floe parted and they drifted away from the steamer. Long ere the storm subsided many of the unfortunate fellows had succumbed to the terrible cold and exposure. Those who did not die were terribly frostbitten and suffered excruciating pain.

The long night passed, but morning brought no help, for the storm still raged and the atmosphere was thick with snow driven by the gale. Snow continued nearly all day, and the evening brought no cessation to the high wind. Another night was passed in untold agony. Some of the victims had already given up hope, and in despair laid down and died. Every hour witnessed at least two deaths.

Toward morning the storm subsided and clear weather enabled the survivors to see that the Greenland was not far away, searching for the missing. The steamer bore down on the drifting field of ice, and began the work of picking up the stark bodies of the dead and the lifeless bodies of the living.

### A WARNING TO SPAIN.

Two Notes Cabled by the President to Minister Woodford.

Madrid, March 29.—President McKinley has cabled two notes to Spain through Minister Woodford. One deals with the Maine, the other with President McKinley's plan of humanitarian intervention in the Cuban war. Both notes are expressed in strong, firm language, without a suggestion of a threat. They are, perhaps, merely preliminary.

For the destruction of the Maine, the president demands no indemnity. He merely acquaints the Madrid government with the fact that the court of inquiry finds that the ship was blown up in Havana harbor by an external agency and that nothing but a mine or torpedo of the largest size could have wrought the destruction. The president submits the facts to the Spanish government, and waits a reply. Mr. Woodford did not even demand an early response.

As to the war in Cuba, President McKinley advised the Spanish government in the politest terms that the time is fast drawing near when the United States would be compelled to act upon the warning so often given to Spain since the struggle in Cuba began. The president clearly intimated that the war in Cuba must cease, but he fixes no date. The note makes the question of Cuban intervention paramount to the Maine case, which the president's memorandum refers to merely as a lamentable incident. The issues and problems of the Cuban war, the United States government now calls urgently to the attention of Spain, declaring that the conditions prevailing in Cuba, so near to the shores of the United States, have long been intolerable to the American people.

### Negotiations to End the War.

Washington, March 29.—The developments of the day in the Cuban situation indicate progress in the negotiations of this country and Spain looking to the maintenance of peace, for the present at least. There is good authority for saying that Spain's wish is to secure a cessation of hostilities in Cuba, rather than to engage in a war with the United States, and that it is more than probable that the negotiations with the Sagasta ministry will take such a turn in the immediate future. The present Spanish ministry has expressed a pacific disposition from the beginning, and the indications are strong now that it will avail itself of the good offices of the United States to the fullest extent that public opinion in Spain will allow in bringing to an end the hostilities in Cuba.

To what extent the United States may go in assisting Spain in her present design of securing an armistice is not determined, but the conservative element in the administration consider the manifestation of this desire on the part of Spain for even a temporary peace a direct result of President McKinley's diplomacy, and they naturally are disposed to contend that the president should be left free, for the present at least, to pursue a policy which promises much in the way of preventing war between this country and Spain; also of bringing to a close the hostilities in Cuba. Hence there will be an effort on the part of the peacefully inclined in congress to hold that body in check and to prevent inflammatory utterances there until this promising diplomatic lead may be exploited.

On the part of the administration it is stated that the development of the situation will not require a great length of time, and hence there will be no extended delay.

A policy has been fully determined upon by the president. It is to bring the Cuban war to a close. This will be accomplished by pointed intervention, if necessary, but it is considered far preferable that the end should come as the result of peaceful negotiations than that it should be accompanied by hostile demonstrations on the part of the United States. Hence the disposition of the president is to give Spain an opportunity to secure an armistice with the Cubans and allow her a reasonable time to come to an understanding with the hostiles.

It is stated that there is no abatement of the president's intention to see that the war is terminated, and that it is closed on terms that will render the Cubans practically a free people.

Friends of the administration feel that the situation is very delicate, and much will depend upon the course the Cubans may pursue.

### The Spanish Elections.

Madrid, March 29.—The elections for the popular branch of the cortes have passed quietly. The indications are that the government of Senor Sagasta will have an enormous majority, estimated at 300 of the 432 seats in the chamber. Disorders are apprehended at Bilbao, where the polling caused great excitement. The military judge at Bilbao issued a warrant for the arrest of three socialist municipal councilors. One of them was taken into custody, but the other two escaped.

### Spain's Refusal.

Berlin, March 29.—The Madrid correspondent of the Berliner Tageblatt says: "Spain will not only refuse to allow American interference in assisting the suffering Cubans, but will decline to pay indemnity, unless it is shown unmistakably that the Spanish authorities were responsible for the Maine explosion."

### READY TO BUY LIBERTY.

Cubans Would Welcome Such a Solution of the Problem.

New York, March 28.—A special to the New York Tribune says: General Gomez, commander-in-chief of the Cuban army of liberation, reaffirms the willingness of the insurgents to purchase independence by payment of a reasonable indemnity to Spain. General Gomez expresses the hope that the price of Cuba's liberty may not necessarily be war between the United States and Spain, and declares there can be no doubt as to the ultimate triumph of the Cuban cause, even though the insurgents receive no outside aid.

### The Spanish Version.

Madrid, March 28.—The report of the Spanish board of inquiry into the loss of the Maine says emphatically that the explosion was of internal origin, that it is "scientifically and practically demonstrated that the explosion was internal."

The United States minister, General Woodford, had a long conference this evening with the minister of foreign affairs, Senor Gullon. Absolute reticence is observed as to what transpired.

### JOHN LEONARD HANGED.

Murderer of Jacob Malquist Pays the Death Penalty.

Colfax, Wash., March 28.—The legal execution of John Leonard for the murder of Jacob Malquist, at Texas City, occurred this afternoon, in the presence of fully 1,000 people.

Leonard was brought from the jail and ascended the scaffold steps unassisted, at 1:16 o'clock. Father Kearns, at the request of Leonard, read a short final statement protesting his innocence of willful murder.

At 1:31 o'clock Leonard stepped on the trap and shook hands with the officers and reporters.

At 1:24 a voice called out, "Good-bye, Jack," and Leonard responded in full tones, "Good-bye, Charley." As the last word left his lips the trap was sprung, and Leonard dropped six feet, the body rebounded slightly and then hung stark, not a movement of the muscles being noticeable. The body hung 16 minutes, when he was pronounced dead by the attending physicians.

Leonard on the scaffold, although showing nervousness, looked about at the surrounding crowd. The body was at once taken in charge by Father Kearns, and conveyed to the cemetery and funeral exercises held.

### CLERKS UNDER SUSPICION.

Frauds on a Number of St. Paul Banks Recently Unearthed.

Washington, March 28.—Information reached the government through a number of banks at St. Paul that during the past year and more these and other nearby banks have been made the victims of a colossal fraud through the suspected collusion of government clerks connected with the commission having in charge the improvements on the upper Mississippi river. Full details have not yet reached the government, but the statements submitted by the banks indicate that \$300,000 or more has been procured from them through fraudulent time checks for services never performed.

How the banks came to be imposed upon to the extent stated and why the checks have been withheld until this time, cannot even be conjectured. It is understood the banks will make a claim for reimbursement, but the law is said to be clearly against this contention. The government will begin a searching investigation into the whole matter.

### STORM IN UNITED KINGDOM.

Hurricane Sweeps the Coasts Causing Great Loss of Life and Property.

London, March 28.—The storm continues throughout the United Kingdom. Trains are imbedded in heavy snowdrifts telegraph wires are down in many parts of the country, people have been frozen to death, while a hurricane has swept all the coast, and terrific seas have been running. The channel service is suspended, there have been a number of wrecks of small craft, many people have been saved from drowning and shipping everywhere is seeking shelter. Much damage has been done at the harbors, piers have been swept away, and high tides are flooding the streets. A Swedish brig went ashore near Grimsby this morning. The crew perished. The greatest excitement is felt for the safety of the fishing fleets.

### The Site Selected.

La Grande, Or., March 28.—The selection of a site for the sugar factory has been made and the stakes have been set for the buildings. The factory grounds will be on the north 80 acres of the Williamson farm. The selection was made by Messrs. Eccles and Granger and Engineer West last evening, and was approved by Engineer Bellinger, for the O. R. & N. Co.

The site, which is located northeast of the city limits, lies between the county road and the Williamson residence, is a half-mile south of the river and within a half-mile of the city limits.

### Deficiency in the Interior Department.

Washington, March 28.—The secretary of the interior sent to the house an estimate calling for appropriations of over \$8,000,000 to meet a deficiency in the funds.