

NAVY YARD

Government Urged by Technical Publication to Have Work Done Under Naval Supervision—Better Results Are Obtained.

From the Scientific American.
Popular fallacies die hard, especially when they are kept alive by persistent and interested misrepresentation. A notable instance of this is the statement so often made and too widely believed, that it costs a great deal more and takes considerably longer to build a battleship at a government navy yard than it does at a private shipyard. There was a time, it is true, when navy yard-built ships were very costly, and took an unconscionable time to complete, but that was over 20 years ago, when political control of navy yards was rampant and before a certain courageous young navy constructor, who later became chief constructor of the navy, undertook the task of rescuing our navy yards from political control, reforming their many abuses and putting them in first class working shape.

It was the regeneration of these yards which rendered it possible for them to take hold of the highest class of naval work and complete it in the same time, and for only slightly more cost, than the best of other yards. This was clearly proved, some years later, in the construction of the large modern battleship, the Connecticut, which was carried through so expeditiously that the private yard which had taken the contract for the sister ship, and which extended itself to the utmost to keep pace with the government-built ship.

Creates Competition.
One of the main objects of giving work of new construction to private yards was to spur private builders to greater activity; for up to that time it was a notorious fact that the government contract work was treated as a kind of standby in the private yards, the first attention being given to orders for private firms. The record made by the Connecticut for rapid construction has acted as a most effective spur to the private yards and our latest warships, in spite of their greater size, are being built in less time than the earlier ships.

The agitation in favor of navy-built ships originates within the navy itself, and its most effective advocate was the naval constructor above referred to, Francis T. Bowles, who subsequently left the navy and was subsequently appointed one of the great shipyards upon which the government depends mainly for the construction of its warships. The most complete and convincing presentation of the arguments in favor of navy-built ships is that made by Mr. Bowles in the year 1896 before a congressional committee on naval affairs appointed to consider this question. Just now when the question is again being agitated, it would be well to find a better brief for the case than this testimony of the former constructor.

In his evidence before the committee, Mr. Bowles stated that the first advantage of building ships in navy yards is that it maintains the efficiency of the mechanical force and of the plant and shops. "The reason we have navy yards is to provide ourselves with the means of equipping and keeping our ships in good order for purposes of war, and with that end in view, and in the light of our recent experiences, it is essential that the equipment of a mechanical force and the equipment should be kept in an efficient condition."

Build All the Time.
"Now if, in these yards which are essential to the object of the navy, we should keep a vessel or two vessels building all the time, we would have a nucleus of a complete force, and it would be necessary in order to have a reasonable degree of economy that our yards should be kept in good order."

"The fact that a vessel is building in a navy yard makes it possible to conduct the repair work of the fleet economically and rapidly, because, if a vessel comes in for repair as soon as it is determined what is necessary to do the force is available and every shop is in working order, and the chances are that there is a stock of material on hand of every kind that would be needed to make those repairs. The matter of having the material on hand is one of the most essential items in carrying on work rapidly."

"The third advantage is that the amount expended for repairs will be reduced by the fact of having ships building in the yard. That may seem a curious thing, but it is perfectly true. If you have got enough to do to keep an efficient force at work there will be no tendency whatever to magnify repair work or even to devote attention to considering what improvements can be made in existing ships."

"The fourth advantage in carrying on repair work in the navy yard is that it enables the government to maintain a high standard of workmanship and design by which the contractors can be made to conform to what is necessary under their contracts and I consider this a great advantage."

Provides Training.
"I will combine that with the fifth item on my list; that building ships in navy yards provides a training for those who must inspect the contract work. I maintain that a man is unfit to be a government inspector, to tell the contractor how his work shall be done and what is acceptable and what is not acceptable unless he has had that kind of work himself."

"The next advantage to the government in doing the work is that no profit has to be made. The cost of inspection can also be saved. When a ship is built by contract, the government maintains a force of inspectors and draftsmen who inspect the work in progress and make projected plans. The cost of a trial trip is another item saved, for it is the custom to remunerate the contractor, either by including it in his contract or fairly as an extra bill, for all the expenses of the trial trip."

"Now since the above telling arguments were presented and they are just as valid as when they were made, the question as we have noted above, has been put to the test by the construction at Brooklyn of one of a pair of the largest battleships so far built for our navy; and the question naturally arises, How far have the predictions of the former chief constructor been verified? In answer it can be said that the Connecticut in spite of its strenuous efforts of the private firm which was building the sister ship Louisiana was completed within the same time as that ship, and within two or three months less time than called for by the contract. Because of the fact that hours are shorter and the pay somewhat higher in the government yards, no claim was ever made that the Connecticut could be built as cheaply as the Louisiana. It was estimated that she would cost about ten per cent more than the other ship, on a matter of fact, in the final summing up the costs, it was found that she cost only five per cent more. The latest official report of the navy department gives the total cost of the two ships to September 26, 1907, the figures including the expense of alterations chargeable to original construction and also of armor and permanent ordnance fittings as follows: For the Connecticut, \$167,908.23; for the Louisiana, \$1,237,544.47.

The question may be raised as to whether as good a ship can be built at our navy yards as at the private yards. Perhaps the most conclusive test of this point is to compare the actual cost of repairs on these two ships since their completion. Fortunately the figures are available; for the same report gives the cost of such repairs for the Connecticut as \$4,314.56 and for the Louisiana as \$110,500.19, a difference of about 17 per cent in favor of the Connecticut. As a matter of fact, the comparison is more favorable than appears on the face, and this for the reason that the totals for the Connecticut include repairs made necessary by her having been run aground during the past summer, an accident which, of course, is in no sense chargeable to the quality of the work of the ship itself.



Madam Lillian Blauvelt, Charming American Lyric Soprano, at the Hellig Tonight.

This item probably refers to the beds on which the engines were built; yet these beds are now a part of the permanent plant of the erecting shops and indeed are now being used for building the engines for the collier Vestal. It would be possible to follow this comparison further if we had time, and show that if the cost of these preliminary preparations and of special tools and appliances were charged to the plant of the yard, to which they properly belong, the difference of five per cent between the Connecticut and the Louisiana would not be a little reduced.

Building Other Ships.
The official record of the building of the other twenty-one best known ships in the navy shows that not one of them was built in contract time. The Nebraska built by Moran Brothers of Seattle, and the Georgia built by the Bath Iron works of Bath, Maine, were over three years longer building than the contract.

The New Jersey built by the Fore River Shipbuilding company at Fore River, Massachusetts, and the Virginia built by the Newport News company at Newport News, Pennsylvania, were over two years longer building than the Connecticut, although the Connecticut is larger than any of these ships by fifteen feet in length, by seven and one half inches in beam, by nine inches in draft, the displacement being 1,000 tons greater, the coal carrying capacity being larger by 800 tons.

BUY BOOTHS ALL THE SAME PAY RENT

The city and county will be able to purchase 100 voting booths and equipment for \$2,975 and, inasmuch as it

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Your druggist sells Dr. Miles' Anti-Pain Pills, and we authorize him to return the price of first package (only) if it fails to benefit you.
Miles Medical Co., Elkhart, Ind

costs the two corporations about that much money each year for renting buildings, it is probable that the booths will be purchased.
The city executive board's committee on city hall, and County Clerk Fields met yesterday and received bids for the booths. The Willamette Tent and Awning company was the lowest bidder on the 100 tents, booths and tables with a bid of \$2,912. Jennings & Sons and Meler & Frank bid on chairs, stoves, lamps and other articles needed for the booths.

NEW SCHOOL BUILDING RISES AT THE DALLES

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.)
The Dalles, Or., March 12.—Work has commenced on the new school building on West Tenth street, in this city. This will be a wooden building, costing \$5,000, exclusive of furnace, lighting, sewerage, or furniture. There are 1,440 school children in this district, and the other school buildings were overcrowded. There are now three brick school buildings here and one frame building. There is not a finer High School building in the state outside of Portland than the one here, which cost \$20,000. It is well equipped with all modern appliances.
The school building in course of construction will be completed by August 1.

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