

CLAIM FRENCH SHIPS WERE CONSTRUCTED OF GREEN LUMBER

French Official Raps American Builders; Portlander Defends Wooden Craft Built Here.

Paris, Feb. 20.—Of 82 ships built for France by the United States during the war, not one has been able to put to sea, because they were built of unseasoned, defective lumber, M. Bignon, under-secretary of state, told the chamber of deputies commission on merchant marine yesterday.

The ships, Bignon said, included 40 schooners and cost France \$80,000,000. The commission ordered an investigation.

"The statement of M. Bignon is grossly exaggerated and in fact, decidedly untrue so far as the Portland plant of the Foundation company is concerned."

This statement made today by Charles F. Swigert, who, during the period of shipbuilding activity, was general manager of the Portland plant, building light wooden craft exclusively for the French government, greeted the reported declaration of the French under-secretary of state.

"It is a matter of common knowledge," Swigert said, "that every ship we built for the French at Portland not only put to sea, but arrived at port and, without an exception that I can call to mind, every one of them got to France."

"No defect of material or workmanship was ever discovered in a ship built at our plant so far as I know, with the exception of the boiler trouble that developed. The French government insisted upon putting into the vessels built here a cheap pipe boiler that did not stand the usage to which it was put, and which cost about half the price of a good Scotch marine boiler."

"It is a fact, I have been told, that the French left contracts to private builders in America against the advice of the United States shipping board, but that does not prove the statement that our Portland-built ships were unseaworthy. Aside from the boilers, every piece of material in our vessels was first class. The seaworthiness of Portland-built French crafts has been proved."

Charles W. Beaver Will Have Time to Repent Behind Bars

Charles W. Beaver, deposed policeman who was indicted by the grand jury on a serious statutory charge involving a 14 year old girl, will be obliged to serve time in the penitentiary.

This fact developed Thursday, when District Attorney Evans made public a letter addressed to him by the grand jury explaining the indictment. It had returned, Beaver was accordingly, allowed to plead guilty to a smaller charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, which carries with it a maximum of one year in jail and a maximum fine of \$100.

The jury recommended that the indictment be returned because of the assertion by Beaver's mother that he is but 18 years old, is an overseas veteran and that this is his first trouble.

It was not explained why a minor should be allowed to work on the police force and be entrusted with such authority.

It was arranged, therefore, that Beaver plead before Judge Kanzler in the court of domestic relations, the case being transferred from the circuit court.

Beaver was sentenced to serve one year in the county jail.

Court Could Do Nothing When He Wed Chief Witness

Joe Sagala is free today. He blocked prosecution of alleged violator of the national prohibition act by marrying the government's chief witness.

Joe was free on bail last Monday. The revenue officers who arrested him at 618 East Sixth street on February 12, thought he didn't have enough evidence with him to remove, to get a conviction.

So while the United States attorney's office was counting on Mamie Wells for a conviction he married her, taking advantage of the law principle which frees a wife from testifying against her husband. When Sagala's hearing came up before United States Commissioner Drake Friday he was dismissed. The "evidence" was no longer in the government's keeping.

Twin Falls to Have Cooperative Store

Twin Falls, Idaho, Feb. 20.—A co-operative store will be established in Twin Falls soon. Not only stockholders but also the customers will share in the



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