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RANK IN THE NAVY.

SPEECH

OF

HON. AARON F. STEVENS,

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

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SPEECH.

The House having under consideration the bill (H. R. No. 1832) to regulate rank in the Navy of the United States, and for other purposes—

Mr. STEVENS said:

Mr. SPEAKER: As the gentleman from Pennsylvania does not indicate the amount of time which he wishes to occupy, I will proceed to state generally the provisions of the bill, and to some extent its history, after which I will cheerfully yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

I am quite sure that the gentlemen of this House, whose attention I shall have the honor to secure, will not confess themselves strangers to the question raised by the provisions of this bill. Nor will they, I think, treat it as a trivial or unimportant question, connected as it is with one of the principal branches of the public service. I do not seek to disguise the fact that within the past two years the regulation of rank in the Navy has become a question of more public importance than has ever been conceded to it in former times outside of those immediately interested in its settlement. It is but truth to say that no question of military organization and detail has ever, except in time of war, excited so much interest as that to which I now desire to call the attention of the House, and which this bill seeks to regulate and fix upon a just and permanent basis. Why is this? Certainly not because there is any considerable class in or out of the Navy that desire to disturb a well-settled and just principle of organization; a principle which ought to be recognized as regular, equitable, and in accordance with well-established military rules.

Experience shows that in military, as in civil organizations, just and correct principles and rules of action furnish the basis of acquiescence and contentment; while, on the other hand, radical defects and unjust rules are constantly a source of irritation and friction, producing discord, hostility, and disturbance. It is not in the nature of man, nor is it in accordance with our experience or the teachings of philosophy, either in civil or military affairs, to find a perfect and correct organization cursed with intestine discord, convulsed with internal quarrels, or, as my friend from Maine once expressed it, with the hands of its honorable members at each others' throats. From the fact of the bitter controversy which has arisen and been continued in the Navy, and which now exists there, weakening its efficiency and annoying the country and Congress with its complaints, I argue confidently that there must be something wrong in an organization which can give rise to and constantly be involved in this marked and disagreeable controversy. There must be a defect somewhere, there must be something wrong. We may differ as to

the cause, we may not agree as to the point where the blame rests, but I think all who have traced the history of the question, or given the subject even a superficial examination, will admit that it is absolutely necessary to the prosperity of the Navy and to the vindication of ourselves as legislators that the cause of dissension should be removed so far as we have it in our power to effect so desirable an object.

Entertaining upon this subject views of my own, not hastily adopted, and entirely unconnected as I am with any personal interest or consideration in connection with the official corps of the Navy, I ask attention while I present them to the House in aid of the provisions of this bill.

A MILITARY QUESTION.

Let me say, in the first place, that this is a military question. I claim, therefore, the right to draw especially to its consideration the attention of gentlemen upon this floor who have heretofore, many of them, acted a prominent part in the military organization of the country, and I ask them frankly to listen to me, to question me, to criticise the provisions of the bill, to search the reasons which I may be able to offer in its support, to object and to amend if they shall find cause for such intervention; but above all I crave their earnest and careful attention to the discussion and the consideration of the question.

A military organization has within itself, necessarily, many elements of exclusiveness and caste, but when to these natural tendencies is added an educational process which, taking possession of the boy in his tender years by a well-prepared and successive course of training, leads him up to rank and command, there is infused into his mind, and he carries with him, perhaps almost unconsciously, into the discharge of his duties a spirit of intense egotism and contempt for those very elements of society out of which he sprung. This is the natural tendency of military culture, as it is the philosophy of military organization.

OUR NAVAL SCHOOL.

The schools of West Point and Annapolis are often cited as prominent instances of the fostering care which has been extended by the nation to these anti-republican tendencies. It is more particularly with the latter that I wish to deal at this time. That the school of Annapolis has become, *par excellence*, the hot-bed and nursery of American military aristocracy and caste I think no student of our progress will deny. In asserting this I do not mean to charge the students of that Academy with all the results of their education at that institution. I do not mean to say that the young men who receive their military training there are at fault in this particular. It is the fruit of the system of the instruction and of the exclusiveness

inculcated there. Let it be remembered that it is only the officers of the line who are admitted and educated there. Everything else has been eliminated from the sacred precincts. The staff officers are educated in and selected from civil life. They represent the citizen element. They are not trained on the bounty or charity of the Government. They are educated at our schools, academies, and colleges, while the line officer is taken at a tender age, placed in the school of Annapolis, and early taught that his is to be a life of authority and command, consecrated to exclusiveness and rank, and that all talent, culture, skill, experience, and age outside of the line are to be subordinated to that part of our naval organization in all time to come. This idea is impressed upon the young cadet in every way that ingenuity can devise, or authority enforce. It grows with his growth and strengthens with his strength. Instead of being told that they are to rely upon their talents and acquirements solely for usefulness and distinction, they are advised that their importance and success depend materially on maintaining the exclusiveness of their rank. Without rank they are nothing; with rank they are superior to all that do not share in its full enjoyment. They are taught to believe that it would be a disgrace to share that rank with those who come into the military service from the professions and skilled occupations of civil life. They are taught that a sailing ship alone can properly educate the sailor, and that steam and steam machinery are innovations costly and unprofessional, and to be tolerated only as a matter of necessity. They listen to the honorable Secretary of the Navy when he tells them—

"That lounging the watches of a steamer or acting as fireman and coal-heaver will not produce in a seaman that combination of boldness, strength, and skill which characterized the American sailor of the elder day; and the habitual exercise by an officer of a command, the execution of which is not under his own eye, is a poor substitute for the school of observation, promptness, and command found only on the deck of a sailing vessel."

So it is when the cadet comes out from the school of Annapolis he is found, even in the early stages of his professional life, the trained antagonist, sometimes socially and always professionally, of his brother officer of the staff. He assumes his place in the official corps of the Navy with a sneer at the surgeon or the engineer, who has been educated in civil life, and whom he has been taught to call a "civilian," or "non-combatant," though he may be in all repsects, except rank, his equal or superior, a first-class man in all particulars save in artificial distinction, a man of the highest skill, capacity, and intelligence; such a man as is recognized and appreciated everywhere, and, in all military organizations except the American Navy, accorded rank commensurate with his age, accomplishments, and responsibilities. Thus the line officer, quite naturally, and perhaps in some instances unconsciously, as he ascends step by step to the higher grades which, during and since the war, have been so liberally bestowed upon his corps, he carries with him the spirit of military domination crystalized into a professional and social aristocracy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you may tell me that this is the spirit and the tendency of all military education. I admit it. Observation shows it, history teaches it, the world has come long since to acknowledge it, governments, in the progress of human affairs, have been called to observe and deal with it. It is the question we are dealing with to-day. It is a question which this Government has heretofore grappled with, and in its Army has modified and restrained, placing the official corps of that branch of the service upon a footing at once just, practical, and American. How has it been done? By the legislation of Congress. Such evils, sir, seldom cure themselves. They need the pruning-knife of legislation. Power and authority seldom of their own accord relinquish their hold upon any organization, especially a military one. Every liberal Government has found that out, and, with a single exception, applied the remedy; and that exception involves the Navy of the United States.

Let me be just, sir, Congress has inaugurated this restraining and remedial policy in regard to our Navy. The department has at times been found in sympathy with this policy, but it has been largely thwarted by the influence and activity of the officers of the line; and now Congress is called upon to complete the work. There is only one way that it can be done, and that is by law.

The Navy is a military organization, with an official body, consisting of line and staff. The latter ask Congress to give them the recognition of fixed, definite, and positive rank, without enhanced command, thus placing them on the same relative footing with the staff of the Army. That is their prayer.

LINE AND STAFF.

In order to understand quite distinctly a military organization, as it respects line and staff, I beg leave to call the attention of the House to the definition which has been given by the distinguished General of the Army in his annual report of 1870. Under the head of "Staff of the Army," he says:

"This term applies to those officers and men who administer to the wants of every military establishment, and are in our service classified as adjutant generals, inspector generals, Bureau of Military Justice, quartermasters, commissaries, surgeons, paymasters and ordnance departments, corps of engineers, and chief signal officers, and post chaplains. The names imply their respective duties, and the organic law of 1866 limits and prescribes their number."

From this high authority we learn with precision what symmetrical military organization is in its official relations of line and staff.

In the Navy the staff departments are represented by surgeons, paymasters, and engineers; and it is proposed by the bill to add chaplains, constructors, and professors of mathematics. In general terms the line consists of the officers who have command, from admiral to midshipman. The intensity of the pending controversy is largely due to the attempt, on the part of the line, to abolish the distinction of line and staff in the Navy; to obliterate the latter as a distinctive part of its organization, and to arrogate to the line by

legal enactment the entire prestige, representation, and power of its official classes. Within the past two years the attempt has been made to give the sanction of law to this ambitious scheme. In a bill which passed the Senate, known as the "Grimes bill," and which was strongly urged upon your committee a year since by Vice-Admiral Porter, there was a provision to the effect that hereafter the designation of staff corps should not be used in the Navy, and the new book of regulations carefully ignores the distinction. While abolishing the staff as a distinctive part of the Navy, in order to capture and hold in the grasp of the line the entire power and control of the service, the "Grimes bill" provided also for a "board of survey," to consist of three line officers, "not below the rank of rear admiral," to whom the Secretary of the Navy should be subordinate and responsible, abolishing the bureau system and throwing a military protectorate over the Department, Secretary, and all. This was an attempt on the part of the line to place the Navy Department in "commission," organizing something like the old exploded board of English admiralty, consisting of three officers of the Navy, and representing solely that portion which may be called the sailing talent of our marine, which was to take possession and control of the Navy, and under whose direction and advice it was to be organized, kept up, and administered, while the Secretary of the Navy was substantially to be but a figure-head, set up for the admiration of the gentlemen who were to walk the quarter-deck, "monarchs of all they survey." We once had such a commission as that for a series of years. Fortunately, sir, it was exploded, and another system substituted before our civil war broke out.

Now, this whole project of a board of survey was attacked, discussed, and exploded in Congress in 1865. Yet the line officers, with their usual disregard of the will of Congress, except when its action tends to their advancement, returned to their favorite schemes of placing the Navy Department in commission, and embodied their purpose in the "Grimes bill." It may be profitable to recur to the congressional history of the attempt in 1865. I have only time to glance at it.

The project, substantially that of the "Grimes bill," was introduced into the House of Representatives by Mr. Winter Davis, and into the Senate by Mr. Wade, 1865. In the discussion of that bill, Senator Grimes denounced the identical scheme that was subsequently embodied in his bill, in the following language:

"The amendment [of Mr. Wade] means neither more nor less than this, if it means anything; to put the Naval Department into commission, to put it into leading strings, to put it in the control of some line officers who have been for a long time in the service; or else it means to furnish to the Naval Department a subterfuge by which it can at all times avoid responsibility. Either it means to give the control of the Navy Department to these commissioners, or else the effect will be to furnish the Secretary of the Navy the means in the future of avoiding all responsibility for his acts by thrusting everything off upon this board of commissioners. Do you wish to divide responsibility thus? Do you wish to give the Secretary of the Navy an opportunity to shuffle off all responsibility for his acts upon this board of irresponsible officers, who hold their commissions by a life tenure? I surely do not.

"Yet, Mr. President, that will be the effect of this amendment if adopted. That is the effect of the British admiralty administration to-day. There is nothing that the members of the naval profession in England are so anxious to get rid of as their admiralty system, after which this amendment is modeled. They saw fit two hundred years ago to put their office of lord high admiral into commission, and it is now wielded by just about such a board as the Senator has proposed to create here. And what is the result of it? Precisely the result that I predict will follow here. A British writer on the admiralty administration says:

"'It is unnecessary to insist at any length on the evil of divided councils, which must often occur among six persons brought together by the chapter of accidents, without previous knowledge of each other's views, and in fact the admiralty often represents nothing so completely as the endless diversity of opinions which prevail among naval officers, a diversity which, on the other hand, is partly accounted for by the absence of any standard course of policy to be discovered in the conduct of successive naval administrations.'

"And he says, further:

"'With respect to naval officers the case is not more encouraging, for the only one subject on which there is general agreement among them is the utter hopelessness of any good result arising from a system which is felt to hang like a blight over the navy.'

"That is a navy board, which the Senator from Ohio would induce the American Senate to adopt and incorporate into our system. Sir Charles Napier, a great naval authority, says:

"'Believing, as I do, that no permanent good can be done for the service until the board of admiralty is abolished, I shall point out what appears to me would be the best mode of ruling the navy, although that step has not been taken.'

"Sir George Cockburn has said:

"Having filed the station of confidential or principal sea lord of the admiralty for more than seventeen years, I feel that my opinion regarding the constitution of the board may sooner or later be deemed worthy of consideration and attention. I am induced, therefore, to place in writing the decisions to which my experience has brought me on this point.

"'I have no hesitation in stating that I consider the present establishment of that board to be the most unsatisfactory and least efficient for its purpose that could have been devised.'

"Mr. President, if you adopt this scheme for a board of admiralty, one or two things will follow, either the appointments that will be made under it will be made by the President of the United States, upon the suggestion of the Secretary of the Navy, and, therefore, you will have no more nor less than the tools, the pets, or the friends of the Secretary of the Navy to compose it, or the appointments will be made independently of him and will be antagonistic to him, and thus you will secure divided councils. Which of the horns of that dilemma will the Senate prefer? Suppose that a new Secretary of the Navy should come into office on the 4th of March, will not the President detail or appoint, for his associates in this board, men whom he will designate, with whom he is familiar, and with whom he is willing to co-operate? Or, if the present Secretary shall be continued, do you suppose the President will select men whom Mr. Welles will not desire to unite in his councils? If they are not thus appointed, if the President does not regard the wishes of the Secretary, as I suppose he will, he will select men who are in opposition and in hostility to him, and in that case how will the Navy Department be conducted? You will have such confusion as no executive office in the Government was ever yet cursed with.

"Mr. President, I trust that it is hardly necessary for me to say anything more this evening in opposition to the adoption of this amendment. I believe that a more disastrous measure for the Navy could not be devised. I know that there are some officers who are in favor of it. I am tolerably familiar with the sentiment of the Navy, and while some of the older officers who have spoken with me, and others who have not spoken with me with whom I am acquainted, are in favor of it. I know that the bone and sinew, the heart and muscle, of the Navy, the men who do the labor and who are destined to do it, the men in mature life, and from that down to the young passed midshipmen, are utterly and wholly hostile to it.

"Sir, what has been our experience on this subject? We had this Navy board once, or something tantamount to it. As a friend said to me yesterday, when the proposition was introduced here, 'When we got rid of the old board in 1842 we felt as Sinbad the sailor felt when the Old Man of the Sea was lifted off his shoulders.' It was an incubus on the Navy, and was so regarded at that time by everybody except some of the old post captains who were assigned as members of the board. It was an inefficient organization and was so considered by every one whose opinion was worth anything. Every nation on the face of the earth that has had it or anything like it is attempting to abolish it."

In the House of Representatives, Mr. Rice, of Massachusetts, chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, met the proposition as follows:

"I think the gentleman [Mr. DAVIS] has been unfortunate in the selection of the proposition which he has submitted to the House. It is, sir, nothing more nor less than that this Congress and the Navy Department of the United States shall throw away all the teachings of experience, both at home and abroad, and shall take a retrograde step, placing the administration of our naval affairs where it was nearly a century ago." * * * * * * *

"The question of the expediency of putting the Navy Department under the surveillance of a board of examiners, or a board of administration, the committee proceeded to consider as soon as they could gain time from the pressure of other and more important matters; and, as I said before, weeks ago they were ready to submit their action and conclusions to this House as soon as its rules would permit, and, if necessary to do so, to submit the reasons for the decision to which they arrived.

"Now, I desire to say here, that the report which the committee are ready to make whenever they have an opportunity is adverse to the proposition submitted by the honorable gentleman from Maryland, [Mr. DAVIS,] and if the House will indulge me I will proceed to state, with as much brevity as the circumstances permit, some of the reasons which have led us to that conclusion. The proposition of the honorable gentleman is substantially that the Navy Department of the United States shall be put under a similar kind of administration to that by which the British navy is at present controlled; and I need not say to any gentleman who has examined that subject, that the British board of admiralty is to-day, of all administrative things in England, the most unpopular among the people and Government of that nation.

"The administration of the navy of Great Britain was vested originally in an officer called the 'lord high admiral of the British Navy,' an office which has not been filled, except for a very short period, for nearly one hundred and eighty years, the exception being its occupation by the Duke of Clarence, in 1827; at all other times it has been placed in commission, as the phrase is, a commission consisting of two lords, four commissioners, and two secretaries, the incumbents being so appointed and retired as to be in harmony and sympathy with the dominant party in the Government for the time being. And what has been the result? Just precisely what one would expect would be the result of the action of an organization having no individual responsibility, and feeling the stimulus of no executive power."

After reviewing the merits of the British system, on board of admiralty, Mr. RICE continues:

"Other leading men and authorities have spoken of this board in even stronger terms of disfavor as a feeble and unsatisfactory mode of administering the Navy, and this in such numbers as to lead one to suppose that nothing but the proverbial unwillingness to make a radical change in any part of their governmental organization would tolerate its continuance. And let me call attention to the fact that it is not against the *personnel* of this board of admiralty that the objection lies, but against the system itself; for the board of admiralty of Great Britain has from time to time embraced some of the wisest, some of the most experienced, and some of the most judicious naval authorities in Great Britain. But during all the time of its existence down to the present it has hardly been able promptly and efficiently to put forth the efforts which were necessary to provide against the exigencies of war which at all times are liable to occur.

"As I have already shown, British authorities, who have investigated for themselves the subject, declare in their periodicals, reports, and speeches that this board of admiralty is an organization which is defective in its very nature, and, therefore, it cannot be made of paramount value by the administration of any men, however efficient, excellent, and experienced they may be. Yet this, let me say, is substantially the system which the honorable gentleman from Maryland, (Mr. DAVIS,) if I understand him, desires we shall establish here; a system which, after a test of more than two hundred years in Great Britain, is more than almost anything else connected with their government in disrepute, both with the Government and with the people, and has singularly failed in presenting any positive advantage, as the present condition of the British navy shows. This is the system which the honorable gentleman from Maryland (Mr. Davis) desires us to institute here. This is the kind of trammel that he desires to put over the chief officer of our Navy Department."

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"Now, sir, the gentleman from Maryland in proposing this measure has not only run contrary to the experience of France and of England upon this subject, but he proposes to leap over the whole period of time during which this Government has had an existence. Why, sir, when the Navy of the United States first came into being, in 1775, we then had a marine committee. In 1776 we had what was called a continental Navy board. In 1779 we had a board of admiralty. In 1798 a Navy Department was established, with a Secretary of the Navy. In 1815 we had a board of Navy commissioners appointed. In 1842 all these irresponsible boards, these debating societies organized to discuss and to settle the principles upon which our Navy should be constructed and administered, were wiped out of the way, under the experience which the Government had had through

this long period, and a Navy Department, substantially like that which we now have, was established. We got along very well from 1842 up to 1862, the second year of this war, under the Navy Department as it was organized in 1842. And, sir, what did the wisdom of Congress determine after two years of experience amid the trials of this war, added to the long experience in a peace establishment? What did the wisdom of Congress decide was expedient to be done in 1862, when the height of the pressure of this war was upon us, when new exigencies were arising every day, when there was a demand for the loftiest and broadest wisdom and experience that the country could furnish in respect to the best method of administering the Navy? Why, sir, it did not establish a board of admiralty; it did not establish a board of commissioners; it did not run across the water and adopt the system of admiralty which the government of Great Britain was just then trying earnestly and laboriously to dispense with. But Congress did amplify the existing Navy Department, changing none of its material features, but enlarging it to meet the added necessities which were brought upon it and upon the country by this gigantic war."

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This policy undoubtedly arose from a desire to arrogate to the line of the Navy all there might be of consideration, respect, and importance which can be derived from rank. Your committee have looked carefully to the construction and organization of other navies, as well as to the Army of the United States, and have failed to find any existing military organization where these well-known and convenient distinctions of line and staff do not obtain. In this view, and with so strange a proposition, I can only regard it as one of the idiosyncrasies of the American Navy, which furnishes so many departures from the well-recognized rules of enlightened and progressive military organization, while it develops an absence of those changes which seem to have been demanded and adopted in all other branches of military service.

Before I go further, Mr. Speaker, I ask attention to a comparative statement to which I shall have occasion to refer.

RANK IN FOREIGN NAVIES.

I have said that the condition of the American Navy in regard to rank is as anomalous as unjust and inequitable. When we point to the organization of the Army of the United States as a body where the principle contended for prevails, and has been thoroughly tested, and, according to General Sherman, works well, we are answered that the Navy is a very different thing; that its official corps are brought into closer proximity and relationship, are cooped up together on board ships where collisions are more likely to occur and disagreements to exist. Well, sir, grant this; does it not suggest the strongest reason why men of equal strength of character and high attainments, though clothed with different power and duties, should have their official status clearly defined? More than this, sir; is it not absolutely required, for the good of the service, that there should be no such inequality in official ranks as will enable youth to domineer over and insult age with impunity? Such has been the declared opinion of the highest authorities in the country for many years, including the most distinguished line officers of the Navy.

It cannot tend to the harmony and discipline of the service for one-half of its officers to be constantly goaded by a knowledge of the obvious fact that not only are they retained in a state of official inferiority, while their contemporaries of the Army are honored and promoted, but to discover, as they look over the organization of other navies, that they are deprived of rights, comforts, and privileges enjoyed by staff corps everywhere else, and that they are the victims of an exclusive and aristocratic principle which does not exist even in the navies of Europe. The self-respect of every staff officer in our Navy may well feel a shock when he knows, both by observation and study, that in the English and French navies the men who occupy relative positions with himself are entitled to fixed and positive rank, and that, although belonging to

the same profession with himself, the honor of the higher grades of rank in the service are open to the talents, ambition, and merit of the staff officer. Why is this aristocratic principle, exploded and abrogated in every navy in the civilized world, retained and nourished in our little Navy? Is it for the protection of the line? Is there such a superiority of brains and accomplishments in the staff that the equality can only be preserved by exclusive rank? I trust not, Mr. Speaker; and yet the argument of "discipline" proceeds upon this ground too often, I fear. But one thing is certain: that in every other navy efficiency and discipline are both secured by the concession of rank, positive and fixed, and of a high grade, to the members the staff corps. The following table will show the position of the staff in foreign navies. Let the reader examine, and then censure, if he can, the sense of justice which asks at our hands a similar recognition in the American Navy:

(*See table on next page.*)

"In the Russian navy medical officers attain the highest military rank known; they receive an increase of pay every five years, and enjoy the same honors and pensions as the line.

"In the British navy medical officers attain the rank of vice admiral; they receive the same decorations, &c., as the line, the director general of the medical department being a K. C. B., and seven of them are honorary physicians and surgeons to the Queen.

"In the Spanish navy medical officers attain the rank of vice admiral, (*teniente general;*) they enjoy equally with the line naval honors, rewards, and pensions, and count seven years on entering for the time occupied in studying their profession.

"In the French navy medical officers attain the rank of rear admiral, (*contre amiral.*) The surgeon-in-chief of a French squadron is allowed table money, and messes with the commander-in-chief.

"In the Austrian navy medical officers attain the rank of rear admiral, (*contre admiral;*) they wear the same uniform, enjoy the same privileges, and receive the same retired pay as the line.

"In the Dutch navy the senior medical officer (*inspecteur*) has the rank of major general, and the *dirigerend officier van gezondheid* that of brigadier.

"In the United States army medical officers enjoy every rank, from first lieutenant to brigadier general. The Surgeon General is a brevet major general, and nine surgeons are brevet brigadier generals. Their rank is positive, well-defined, universally acknowledged, and carries with it the uniform, pay, right to quarters, and every other incident to rank except military command in the line."

HISTORY OF THE CONTROVERSY—CHARACTER OF THE STAFF.

We thus find our Navy in its organization far behind all others in liberalization and improvement, with strong tendencies to go backward. This condition of things has for many years been felt and manfully struggled against by the staff. For many years in the earlier history of our Navy the struggle was confined to the medical staff. For many years they were the champions for the principle and policy of advancement embodied in this bill, struggling alone against their anamolous and degrading position. It is a matter of credit, however, to the Navy that their views received the support of several distinguished officers of the line, as they did two years ago that of the "bravest of the brave," Admiral Farragut. I would be glad, had I time, to bring to the attention of the House all the memorials and tributes of these brave old heroes of

Rank of the naval medical staff, as compared with that of the line of the navies of the principal maritime nations.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.		GREAT BRITAIN.		RUSSIA.		FRANCE.	
Navy, line.	Navy, medical corps.	Navy, line.	Navy, medical corps.	Navy, line.	Navy, medical corps.	Navy, line.	Navy, medical corps.
Midshipman..	.....	Midshipman..	.....	Midshipman .	.....	Aspirant de 2de classe.	
Ensign.....	Assistant surge'n	.....	.....	.....	.....	Aspirant de 1re classe.	Pharmacien de 3me classe. Médecin de 3me classe.
Master	Passed asst. surgeon.	Sub-lieuten't.	Assistant surge'n under 6 years.	.....	.....	Enseigne de vaisseau.	Pharmacien de 2de classe. Médecin de 2de classe.
Lieutenant....	Surgeon under 12 years.	Lieut. under 8 years.	Assistant surge'n over 6 years.	Lieutenant.....	Titouljarni sovetnik	Lieutenant de vaisseau.	Pharmacien de 1re classe. Médecin de 1re classe.
Lieut. commander.	.....	Lieut. over 8 years.	Surgeon.....	Captain lieutenant.	Collegsky assessor....	.....	Pharmacien professeur. Médecin professeur.
Commander...	(Fleet surgeons*).. Surgeons over 12 years.	Commander.. Captain under 3 years.	Staff surgeon. Deputy inspector general under 5 years.	Captain, second rank.	Nadvorny sovetnik..	Capitaine de frégate.	Second pharmacien en chef. Second médecin en chef.
Captain.....	.....	Captain over 3 years.	Deputy inspector general over 5 years.	Captain, first rank.	Collegsky Sovetnik..	Capitaine de vaisseau.	Premier pharmac'n en chef. Premier médecin en chef.
Commodore ...	.....	Commodore...	Inspector general under 3 years.	.....	Statsky sovetnik.....	Chef de division	Inspecteur adjoint. Directeur de santé.
Rear admiral.	.....	Rear admiral.	Inspector general over 3 years.	Contre admiral.	Deisvitelny statsky sovetnik.	Contre amiral,..	Inspecteur général.
Vice admiral..	.....	Vice admiral..	Director general..	Vice admiral..	Tainy sovetnik.....	Vice amiral.	
Admiral	.....	Admiral...	.....	Admiral...	Deisvitelny tainy sovetnik.	Amiral.	
		Admiral of the fleet.	.....	Gen'l admiral	Kantzler.		

*Not a distinct grade.

the sea in behalf of justice to the medical officers of the Navy. I regret to be compelled to add, however, that these attempts were resisted by the younger and less considerate officers of the line. Though something was obtained out of these struggles, it fell far short of what was due to their standing and services.

CHARACTER OF THE STAFF CORPS.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy, I think, for a professional man to see why the medical corps of the Navy should be placed on the same footing of consideration and rank that is enjoyed by their brethren in the Army. The naval surgeon must be a man of sound mental organization and high attainments. He must have passed successfully through the school of letters and of medicine. He must stand well in a profession whose members in civil life are the masters of material science. In the office to which he devotes himself he is intrusted with the highest duties which can connect him with the welfare of his fellow man. The health and the lives of the officers and crew of the ship are in his keeping. His field is a broad one, for it embraces every climate and zone. It is his duty to know and determine the most important matters relating to the physical welfare of all around him. He must be master of health and hygiene. He must compass that intricate and subtile knowledge of the wonderful organization of man through which he becomes the master of that art of surgery which is the crowning glory of his profession. Nature will make man a good fighter, observation and experience may make him a good sailor; but the man who would successfully heal and cure must call to his aid the strong brain, the steady hand, the accomplishments of study, and the courage which knows no faltering. The medical corps of the Navy, as well as of the Army, have adorned and illustrated their profession, while they have devoted themselves with patriotism to the service of the country.

We have also a corps of paymasters, numbering some one hundred and twenty-five, drawn from the mercantile departments of life, educated at their own expense, trusted for their integrity, their business habits, and qualifications, upon whom are cast a variety of duties, requiring exactness, promptness, and good judgment. They come into the Navy as the representatives of the great business world, are clothed with large responsibilities, for the discharge of which they are compelled to give ample security to the Government to an extent which cannot fail to test and establish their good standing as citizens and business men in the communities from which they are selected. They receive and disburse the moneys of the Government; they discharge the dues of the Government to its officers and men; they make the enormous purchases which supply the demands of the Navy. They are at once quartermasters, commissaries, and paymasters. They, also, in common with the surgeons and engineers, come into the Navy at mature years, representing a republican citizen element of the best character.

Within thirty years the extensive introduction of steam into the Navy has demanded the employment and organization of a corps of engineers, an intelligent, educated, skilfull, and vigorous membership, essential to the successful working of the Navy. They come from our schools, academies, colleges, and workshops, trained in art and in letters, bringing with them that self-respect and force and independence of character which marks the educated American citizen.

In social standing, in mental capacity, and in culture, they are at least the equals of their contemporaries of the line, and in all that relates to their specific branch of the service unquestionably their superiors. Their early lives and education fit them by physical and mental training, in muscle and mind, for the delicate and arduous duties of their naval life. Those duties are most important and vital. Upon the character and efficiency of the engineers the operations and the safety of the ship largely depend. They control its movements in calm and in storm, by night and by day, and meet with calmness and courage the vicissitudes of battle and of breeze, in common with the brave men who tread the decks or cling to the spars above them. With scientific and practical knowledge they deal constantly with one of the most subtle and terrible forces known to man. They guard and protect by their watchfulness and skill the most delicate and powerful machinery; and while the men of their profession on land are unfolding the cunning devices of artizanship their brethren of the sea are utilizing them for their country and mankind. Who shall say that he who kills is greater than he who cures, or that he who commands is greater than he who invents and directs?

In our larger ships the engineer has under his immediate direction and command hundreds of men, whose movements he must direct and for whose conduct he is responsible. They are with him in that important part of the vessel, the engine-room, whose vast and complicated machinery must be left entirely under his immediate control, for no officer of the line is supposed to remain long in that department. The engineer officer must have, as a matter of necessity, a subsidiary power of command. Along with this comes a responsibility which the law and regulations of the Navy attempt to fix with exactness, and in the progress of our naval life the rank was conceded to the engineers, as a dignity belonging to their position and necessary to the discharge of their duties.

THE RIGHT TO RANK.

Imperfectly as I have sketched the character and duties of the staff corps of the Navy, it seems to me that every disinterested man will admit that such a body of officials, clothed with eminent attainments and charged with high responsibilities, have the right to ask, and it is their duty to demand, a position of respectability and con-

sideration, of equality and respect, in a military organization in which they are such important constituents, and such as is enjoyed by the corresponding members of all other military organizations. *Such position has never been secured, and cannot be attained by the members of a military organization without* RANK. No matter what may be the qualifications of the man, if he enters the Army or the Navy without rank he is but the enlisted man of the body, subject to the caprice, whim, and orders of the mere stripling who enjoys rank and wears shoulder straps.

Such a proposition may seem almost absurd to the unobservant civilian. It is nevertheless strictly and exactly true; and I may confidently appeal to the experience of every one who has been a member of the volunteer army or navy for the truth of what I am saying. So uniform is the rule that I fail to call to mind any exception in its practical operations, and its truth may be illustrated by a multitude of examples. With this fact known and established, what can be more natural and just than that the surgeon, the engineer, or the paymaster, who come into the naval service educated and matured, should demand in his new relation that degree of equality, consideration, and comfort to which his character, his responsibilities, and his length of service entitle him? Yet the line of the Navy, holding him strictly to his responsibility and to the faithful discharge of all his duties, making him amenable as an officer, declare he shall have no corresponding rank. Who among us would sneer at these aspirations or seek by words of irony to dishonor these efforts for rank, advancement, and promotion? Who can be surprised or disturbed at the fact that for many years the members of the naval staff have struggled to obtain it against the arbitrary and arrogant demands of the line?

OBJECTIONS OF THE LINE.

I ask attention now to the history of this struggle, for its development bears materially upon the merits of the present controversy. As I have before said, until within the last twenty-five or thirty years the surgeon alone represented the staff corps of the Navy and bore the burden and brunt of the battle against military caste and oppression. It is but justice to say that the student will find in the history of this controversy that the medical staff have exhibited a dignity of character and an ability for their task which will ever reflect honor upon them both as officers and men. Their opponents were in many instances learned and able in controversy; but it is a striking fact that while their metaphysical essays upon the question of rank were many and ingenious, their assumptions, arrogant and overbearing, forcibly illustrate the confidence of power and position, while the progress of events and the reform in military organizations have annihilated their fine-spun theories and false logic. Their assumption, taught in the text-books of the line, asserted in their me-

morials to Congress, and found in the utterances of the champions of line exclusiveness, that command and rank are inseparable, is too false and glaring to merit more than a passing notice. It is disproved by a thousand circumstances and facts patent to the most superficial observer. Rank and command are constantly separated, and exist independent of each other. Officers in retirement, on leave, in arrest, on courts military, in the performance of clerical duties, on the sick list, on waiting orders, and in many other instances, are without command, yet still retain their rank. Admiral Porter is to-day without command. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon this assumed position of the line.

A second position assumed in this controversy by the line as a basis of their opposition to conferring rank upon the staff, namely, its tendency to insubordination, has been practically and completely exploded; yet the line cling to it as a drowning man catches at a straw; and we find the assertion repeated by them in recent memorials to Congress, and in appeals through the public press, although they adduce no facts to prove this proposition. Though they sustain it by no argument, their repetition of this hackneyed and fanciful assertion always appears in their remonstrances against the claims of the staff corps. But our surprise at the announcement of this untenable postulate is somewhat mitigated when we recall the fact that these same gentlemen of the line declared that the abolition of the grog ration in the Navy would work the utmost disaster to discipline, and that no subordination could be maintained on shipboard without flogging. These things have been swept away by the reformatory power of legislation, led by a distinguished citizen of my own State, (Hon. John P. Hale,) and we hear no clamor for their restoration. The Navy still lives, our ships still plow the seas, without rum for the stomach or the lash for the backs of our gallant tars. For six years the staff held the nominal rank asked for them in this bill, and the records of your courts-martial will show no increase of the evil of insubordination and want of discipline.

A final objection urged by the line to staff rank has been the assertion that a staff corps was not a part of the *military* organization of the Navy, but merely *auxiliary* or *adjunct*. To say nothing of the fanciful or metaphysical nature of this objection, it is apparent, from what I have already said, as well as from many other considerations that might be urged, that if the staff corps of the Navy are auxiliary only, their duties are indispensable to the existence and operations of the Navy, and hence equal in importance to those of the line; and as they require for their competent discharge and accompanying responsibilities men of the largest capacity, of the highest integrity, and the most marked professional skill, it is evident that their members should be clothed with the same marks of distinction and respect which are conferred upon corresponding members of the other parts of the military or-

ganization. The line itself cannot exist in such an organization without the staff. The construction and equipment of every ship that floats are the result of their labor and skill. They are the custodians of funds disbursed for the support and comfort of the line. They preserve health, cure disease, and heal wounds.

They are the governors and guardians of that motive power without which our proudest ships are as helpless and harmless as a floating wreck. You can no more liminate the surgeon, the paymaster, and the engineer from the service, and have a Navy remaining to you, than you can command physical efficiency and courage without health, supplies without production and purchase, or motion without force. They cannot be struck out of its organization; they are requisite, not auxiliary; their agencies are direct and indispensable, not inferential and incidental. In the division of duties and vocations into which the modern military organization is separated there is no distinction in the importance, vitality, and fundamental character of those imposed upon the line and staff. All are original and essential. The distinction is reduced to one of sentiment and education.

In every sense, therefore, except that of general command, the staff are as much military men as their brethren of the line. Their commissions are the same, they derive their appointment from the same source, and are confirmed in the same manner. Theirs are the same vicissitudes in war and in peace; they are subject to the same military law; they are clothed with the responsibilities and incidents of military life, and their right to be considered military men admits of no question.

HISTORY—THE EARLY STRUGGLE.

Against these assumptions of the line, enforced as they have been by the exercise of arbitrary power, the medical corps of the Navy commenced the struggle at an early period in the history of the Navy, and soon began to develop sympathy and aid. Their claims to rank were advocated by the ablest of our Secretaries, who demanded for them a recognition which their brethren of the Army enjoyed, and at an early day they found supporters among the more considerate and worthy officers of the line. The corps preferred its claim for rank soon after the close of the war of 1812. The country had just passed through a period of hostilities in which their services had been felt and appreciated, and with this recognition of their merits came also the recognition of the justice of their claim. Nearly one-half of the highest grade in the line of the Navy then supported their demand. The opinion of the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Crowninshield, was decisively in their favor. In May, 1816, nine captains in the line of the Navy, then the highest grade in the service, addressed a communication to the Secretary of the Navy, in which they said;

"We consider the medical department of such great importance to the Navy of our country that no reasonable measures ought to be omitted which could have a tendency to retain in the service the professional ability of those gentlemen who, by their experience, knowledge, zeal, and humanity, have procured the esteem and confidence of those with whom they have been associated; and we also beg leave to express our belief that no reasonable inducements would be objected to by Congress to procure for those who are engaged in a perilous service, and who are constantly exposed to the diseases of all climates, the best medical aid which the country affords. To effect this it must be obvious that the rank and pecuniary emolument ought to bear some proportion to what gentlemen of professional eminence would be entitled in private life."

In December, 1816, four captains addressed the Secretary of the Navy on the same subject. They say:

"We have heard with pleasure that it is the intention of the medical officers of the Navy to address a respectful memorial to you, requesting that measures might be taken by the Department to procure for them a definite rank in the service, an increase of pay, and the establishment by law of the rank of hospital surgeon."

Secretary Upshur, in his report of December, 1841, calling attention to this question, declared that—

"The evils resulting from the want of a proper naval code are of the most serious character, and will, if not remedied, ultimately ruin the naval service of our country. What can be expected of a community of men living together under circumstances tending to a constant excitement and collision, with no fixed laws to govern them, and where even rank and station are imperfectly defined? The necessary consequence of such a state of things must be disputes, contests, disorders and confusion; sometimes unauthorized power will be assumed, and at other times lawful authority will be disobeyed. It is impossible that a wholesome discipline can prevail in this uncertain condition of official rank and authority."

Mr. Secretary Henshaw, in his annual report of November, 1843, bore testimony to the justice and necessity of the principle in this language:

"The medical department of the naval service requires talent, education, and moral worth, properly to fill it, of as high order as in other branches of that service, but the surgeons and assistant surgeons have no military rank. A modification of the law, by which medical officers in the naval service shall be entitled to rank in a manner simiiar to that prescribed in the Army, might be beneficially made."

In the following year Mr. Secretary Mason, in his report, spoke of the anxiety felt by the staff of the Navy upon this question of rank, declaring, as General Sherman has since, that corresponding officers in the Army enjoyed it without detriment to the service, and urged a consideration of the subject. Do you ask me why these repeated recommendations and urgent demands for justice were so long producing the desired result? We may find the answers in the fact that all peaceful reforms are marked by gradual progress, and that justice, when it overcomes oppression without violence, advances with slow though sure and unfaltering step. At last, however, these repeated attempts succeeded, and Mr. Secretary Brancroft, on the 31st of August, 1846, during the war with Mexico, recognized the claims of the medical corps in the following order:

[General Order.]

Surgeons of the fleet, and surgeons of more than twelve years will rank with commanders;

Surgeons of less than twelve years with lieutenants;

Passed assistant surgeons, not passed, next after masters.

Commanding and executive officers, of whatever grade, when on duty, will take precedence over all medical officers.

This order confers no authority to exercise military command and no additional right to quarters.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *August* 31, 1846. GEORGE BANCROFT.

On the 27th of May, 1847, the following order was issued, conferring rank upon the pursers (corresponding to the present corps of paymasters:)

[General Order.]

Pursers of more than twelve years will rank with commanders;
Pursers of less than twelve years with lieutenants;
Pursers will rank with surgeons according to date of commission;
Commanding and executive officers, of whatever grade, when on duty, will take precedence of all pursers.
This order confers no authority to exercise military command, and no additional right to quarters.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *May* 27, 1847. J. Y. MASON.

Both these orders were legalized by act of Congress, approved August 5, 1854, and thus commenced the first reforms in relation to this important subject in the naval service.

Congress, by the act of March 3, 1859, conferred rank upon the engineers as follows:

"Chief engineers of more than twelve years will rank with commanders;
"Chief engineers of less than twelve years with lieutenants;
"First assistant engineers next after lieutenants;
"Second assistant engineers next after masters;
"Third assistant engineers with midshipmen,"

And also enacted that—

"Commanding and executive officers, of whatever grade, will take precedence over all engineer officers."

INCREASE OF LINEAL RANK.

It is important to notice here the standing of the line of the Navy at the time these orders were legalized, and the subsequent advancement in lineal rank during the war. In 1854 there were but three grades in the line of the Navy, namely: captain, commander, and lieutenant, the title of commodore being one of courtesy only, the rank being unrecognized by law. But, by the act of July 16, 1862, Congress created for the line of the Navy the additional grades of rear admiral, commodore, lieutenant commander, and ensign, thus increasing the higher and lower grade of the line by two. Nothing, however, was done for the staff of the Navy, but they were quieted with the assurance that their turn would come in good time.

At this time, (1862,) as has been seen, the staff enjoyed but three ranks, namely, commander, lieutenant, and master, while at the same time the line contended, as they do now, that the language of the orders of 1846 and 1847, before cited, conferred no real and substantial rank, but only an ambiguous, uncertain status, treated the claim of the staff to rank with derision, and, to use the language of the line itself, "looked upon their assumption of *de facto* rank as an insult to the naval profession, and no one attaches the slightest value to it," thus nullifying, as was too often their custom, the laws of Congress.

The injustice of this condition of things was so apparent and the

demand of the staff for advancement *pari passu* with the line so reasonable, that Mr. Lincoln, through the Secretary of the Navy, following the example of Secretaries Bancroft and Mason, issued an order, under date of March 13, 1863, grading the staff of the Navy somewhat in accordance with the action of Congress the preceding year in regard to the line. This was not done unadvisedly, but under the sanction and assistance of some of the highest and most distinguished line officers of the Navy, was approved by the Cabinet, and in pursuance of the legal opinion of Attorney General Bates, who sustained the authority and power of the Secretary to issue the order.

The order was issued; the staff officers served under it during the remainder of the war; and it continued in force until April 1, 1869, when it was revoked, Admiral Porter then having practically the direction and control of naval affairs, and being the unrelenting opponent of staff rank. That revocation reduced and disgraced professionally more than six hundred men; as able, faithful, and devoted officers as ever honored the naval service of this or any other country. One of the provisions of the bill now under consideration is intended to restore and legalize that order, and to replace the officers of the staff in the respective positions from which they were so rudely reduced and degraded by its revocation. The rank given by the order of March 13, 1863, was as follows:

Surgeons, paymasters, naval constructors, chief engineers, chaplains, professors of mathematics, passed assistant surgeons, secretaries, assistant surgeons, assistant naval constructors, assistant paymasters, first assistant engineers, second assistant engineers, third assistant engineers, clerks, carpenters, and sailmakers are to be regarded as staff officers, and all other officers of the service as line officers. The relative rank between the officers of these two classes is to be as follows:

Medical department:

Assistant surgeons to rank with masters.

Passed assistant surgeons to rank with lieutenants.

Surgeons to rank with lieutenant commanders for the first five years after promotion; after the first five years, with commanders; and after fifteen years' date of commission, to rank with captains.

Surgeon of the fleet to rank with captains.

Pay department:

Assistant paymasters to rank with masters.

Paymasters to rank with lieutenant commanders for the first five years after promotion; after the first five years, with commanders; and after fifteen years' date of commission, to rank with captains.

Fleet paymaster to rank with captain.

Engineer department:

Third assistant engineers to rank with midshipmen.

Second assistant engineers to rank with ensigns.

First assistant engineers to rank with masters.

Chief engineers to rank with lieutenant commanders for the first five years after promotion; after the first five years, with commanders; and after fifteen years' date of commission, to rank with captains.

Fleet engineer to rank with captain.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT.

It may be well at this stage of my remarks to submit a comparative table of the several grades in the staff corps under the Welles order as they stood in January, 1869, before its revocation, and their status under the provisions of this bill, and also the rank proposed by the board of 1869, of which I shall speak hereafter:

UNDER ORDER OF MARCH 31, 1863.		UNDER PRESENT BILL.	
Surgeons.			
Ranking with captain	15	Ranking with captain	15
Ranking with commander	39	Ranking with commander	15
Ranking with lieut. commander	26	Ranking with lieutenant commander	50
Ranking with lieutenant	35	Ranking with lieutenant / Ranking with master	100
Ranking with master	33		
Vacancies	52		
Total	200	Total	180
Paymasters.			
Ranking with captain	13	Ranking with captain	13
Ranking with commander	30	Ranking with commander	13
Ranking with lieutenant commander	36	Ranking with lieutenant commander	50
Assistants, ranking with lieutenant	38	Assistants, ranking with lieutenant	30
Assistants, ranking with master	18	Assistants, ranking with master	20
Vacancies	15		
Total	150	Total	126
Engineers.			
Chief engineers ranking with captain	5	Chief engineers ranking with captain	10
Chief engineers ranking with commander	43	Chief engineers ranking with commander	15
Chief engineers ranking with lieutenant commander	1	Chief engineers ranking with lieutenant commander	25
First assistant engineers ranking with lieutenant	91	First assistant engineers ranking with lieutenant	100
Second assistant engineers ranking with master	112	Second assistant engineers ranking with master	100
Third assistant engineers ranking with midshipmen	33		
Total	285	Total	250
Naval constructors.			
Ranking with captain	2	Ranking with captain	2
Ranking with commander	2	Ranking with commander	3
Ranking with lieutenant commander	2	Ranking with lieutenant commander	3
Assistant, ranking with master	4	Ranking with lieutenant	4
Total	10	Total	12
Chaplains.			
Ranking with captain	0	Ranking with captain	4
Ranking with commander	5	Ranking with commander	7
Ranking with lieutenant commander	11	Ranking with lieutenant commander, not more than	7
Total	16	Total	18
Professors of Mathematics.			
Ranking with captain	0	Ranking with captain	3
Ranking with commander	4	Ranking with commander	4
Ranking with lieutenant commander	7	Ranking with lieutenant commander	4
Total	11	Total	11
Civil Engineers.			
Without rank	5	Rank of captain	2
		Rank of commander	2
		Rank of lieutenant commander	4
		Total	8

UNDER THE BOARD OF 1868.		UNDER THE "GRIMES BILL."	
Surgeons.			
Ranking with captain	15	Rank of commodore, assimilated	1
Ranking with commander	18	Rank of captain, assimilated	5
Ranking with lieut. commander	20	Rank of commander, assimilated	10
Ranking with lieutenant, all others		Rank of lieut. commander, assimilated	10
Total	53	Rank of lieutenant, assimilated	40
		Passed assistant, next after lieutenant, assimilated	40
		Assistant, next after master, assimilated	45
			151
Paymasters.			
Ranking with captain	15	Rank of commodore, assimilated	1
Ranking with commander	18	Rank of captain, assimilated	5
Ranking with lieut. commander	20	Rank of commander, assimilated	10
Ranking with lieutenant, all others		Rank of lieut. commander, assimilated	10
Total	53	Rank of lieutenant, assimilated	25
		Passed assistant, next after lieutenant, assimilated	25
		Assistant, next after master, assimilated	25
			101
Engineers.			
Chief engineers ranking with captain	10	Chief, rank of captain, assimilated	3
Chief engineers ranking with commander	18	Rank of commander, assimilated	5
Chief engineers ranking with lieutenant commander	20	Rank of lieut. commander, assimilated	8
First assistant engineers ranking with lieutenant	20	Rank of lieutenant, assimilated	30
Second assistant engineers ranking with all others.		First assistant, rank of master, assimilated	60
Total	68	Second assistant, rank of ensign, assimilated	74
			180
Naval Constructors.			
Ranking with captain	2		
Ranking with commander	4		
Assistants, ranking with lieutenant commander	4		
Assistants, ranking with lieutenant	4		
Total	14		
Chaplains.			
Ranking with captain	4		
Ranking with commander	7		
Ranking with lieut. commander, all others.			
Total	11		
Civil Engineers.			
Ranking with captain	3		
Ranking with commander	4		
Ranking with lieut. commander, all others.			
Total	7		

It was a great misfortune to the staff and to the service that the order of March 13, 1863, was not legalized by Congress, as had been done in the case of the Bancroft and Mason orders. The staff, alarmed by the assertion of the line that no legal rank was conferred by this order, and goaded by the unjust construction given to the language in which the law was written, sought to fix their status and to maintain the new position to which they had been assigned by appeals to the Department and to Congress. And this brings us to another point of importance in the history of the controversy.

In 1864 a board consisting of line officers, Messrs. Taylor, Case, Rogers, and others, captains and commanders, undertook to settle the vexed question by regulation. By examining their report we shall see that they approximated the principles governing in this bill. They proposed to regulate the relative rank by equal lengths of service in the several grades, but allowing to the staffs the advantage of an average of six years, in which it was assumed they were pursuing, at their own expense without cost to the Government, the preparatory studies before entering the Navy, during which six years the officers of the line were engaged in their preparatory course at the expense of the Government; thus making a common starting point for both line and staff. Under this proposed plan an assistant surgeon, paymaster, or engineer, was to be placed beside a master or ensign, and to be promoted with him to the higher grades of lieutenant commander and captain. They took the Navy Register of 1864, and estimating six years as the usual time passed at the Naval Academy by midshipmen and passed midshipmen in obtaining their naval education, they graded the line and staff officers as follows:

Captain 40 years in service would rank a staff officer of..... 34 years.
Commander 30 years in service would rank a staff officer of..... 24 "
Lieutenant commander 20 years in service would rank a staff officer of 14 "
Lieutenant 12 years in service would rank a staff officer of..... 6 "

This was acceptable to the medical officers, many of whom were over thirty years in service, but was objected to by the paymasters and engineers as not equally favorable to them. Since the very great promotions in the line by the act of 1866, however, it is more favorably received by them.

As applied to the Navy Register of 1869, the plan may be briefly summed up thus:

Staff officers 35 years commissioned rank with commodores.
Staff officers 25 years commissioned rank with captains.
Staff officers 15 years commissioned rank with commanders.
Staff officers 8 years commissioned rank with lieutenant commanders.

This line board of 1864, in their report and communications, stated and enforced their conclusions, exhibiting the justice of the principle embraced in the pending bill. I quote the language:

"In the arrangement of assimilated rank, it was supposed that a master, first assistant engineer, assistant surgeon, assistant paymaster, &c., had finished their

preliminary studies and become prepared for work; and those of the same date were advanced together in that order to the rank of commodore:" * * * * "that is, when the master was promoted to a lieutenant, the others had the same assimilated rank, and so on.

"For the commencement of the assimilation of rank, the board adopted the period when each class, line and staff, should become qualified for usefulness to the service. The midshipman having finished his probationary course, goes on board ship as an ensign, there to learn the practice of what he has been taught theoretically. After a period he undergoes an examination for promotion to the grade of master. In this new sphere he becomes, for the first time, practically useful and reliable as a watch officer.

"The young engineer having advanced through two grades, and having passed as a first assistant, becomes competent to take charge of an engine, and eligible to appointment as senior engineer of vessels of the smaller classes.

"So with the assistant surgeon and assistant paymaster. Each has studied and qualified himself for the position; and each is ready, or should be, to assume independent duties should they be assigned to him.

"Thus we have four young men starting upon their career at the same time, with equal rank assigned to each. It is not apparent that any particular favor should be shown to either in his advancement. On the contrary, if they run side by side until they reach the highest grade provided for regular promotions, it is conceived that a greater degree of harmony will be obtained than has existed since the first order for the assimilation of rank was issued."

The reasoning is stated in less general and more specific terms in a letter of a member of the same board:

"I think the average age of midshipmen entering the service as stated by you (fifteen and a half) is too low. Some few enter between the ages of fourteen and sixteen; but a greater majority do so between sixteen and eighteen, a few older. Adding six years brings them up to from twenty-one to twenty-five, which corresponds very closely with the ages, as shown by the records in the Department, of assistant surgeons when they enter the service."

In January, 1869, the medical staff, apprehensive that the assertion of the line that the Department order of March 13, 1863, would be revoked, and their rank and promotion taken from them, applied to Congress for relief. Their bill, which was reported favorably by the House committee, involved the principle of fixed and positive rank, though it differed in its details from the pending bill and was partial, inasmuch as it did not embrace the other staff corps in its provisions. But its introduction and discussion were timely and fortunate in calling public attention to the subject, and eminently so in obtaining the indorsement of the highest authority in the Navy to the principle of defined and positive rank as embodied in the bill now under consideration. The great chief of the Navy was then living. He had survived the perils of ocean and battle, and lingered among us, the peerless sailor, brave, generous, and just. A long life of association had taught him the value of those services which had clothed the medical staff of the Navy with distinction and honor, and his generous heart promptly responded to their appeal for recognition. He rose above all narrow-minded professional rivalry and feeling, and when they submitted their bill to his inspection and opinion he responded without hesitation or reserve. I hold here his original letter upon the subject, written to his brother officer, Dr. Palmer, his fleet surgeon at Mobile, and I gladly lay it before the House as an authority of the very highest character in support of the principle for which we are contending. I also present a letter from Admiral Farragut to Dr. Palmer, a professional and personal tribute to his brother officer:

113 EAST THIRTY-SIXTH STREET,
NEW YORK, *January* 2, 1869.

MY DEAR DOCTOR: I have read with great care the bill entitled "An act to reorganize and increase the efficiency of the medical department of the Navy," and, as far as I have been able to discover, it appears to be drawn up in a spirit of fairness and justice to all, and affords to the highest officers of the medical corps employment on shore after having obtained a certain grade. I do not hesitate to say that I approve of the principal features of the bill, but would insert, in the third section, which refers to the employment of the different grades, "except in time of war," when all officers should be available for sea or other service at the discretion of the Department.

I am, very truly, yours,

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Admiral.*

Surgeon JAMES C. PALMER, *United States Navy.*

NEW YORK, *December* 31, 1868.

MY DEAR DOCTOR: I have carefully read over the bill "for the reorganization of the medical corps of the Navy," making higher grades, &c., and I find no objections, except that in time of war all persons should be available for duty, only retaining their relative rank in their own corps. Without this clause the services of some of the most efficient medical officers might be lost to the Government when most essential. I am aware that such might not be the case, as they would no doubt volunteer; but while legislating it is best to provide for it on the face of the bill, although I am happy to say that for my own experience war is the time when I have always found the medical officers ready and willing to do their duty without regard to personal risk, and it gives me special pleasure to refer to your case in Mobile bay, where you, in the little Loyal, carried my orders around the fleet for the ships to run the ram Tennessee down, which you did with cheerfulness and alacrity. I sent the other note to accompany the bill, and this only to explain the objection to leaving the war clause out.

Very truly yours,

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Admiral.*

THE BOARD OF 1869.

As was anticipated from the declared intention of the line to procure the revocation of the Department order of March 13, 1863, the purpose was carried into effect in the early days of Mr. Borie's incumbency. It is now matter of current history that his administration of the Department was the administration of Admiral Porter. Congress was then in session. The Grimes bill had passed the Senate. It was the pet scheme of the Admiral, board of survey and all. He came before the House committee with Mr. Borie and urged its passage. The influence of the staff of the Navy was invoked in its aid, under the terrorism of the threat that if they did not take that bill with all its degrading incidents they should have nothing, and that the order of 1863 should be revoked. They declined. The blow came, the order was revoked, and, as I have said, one half of the official corps of the Navy was reduced and degraded. The intervention of Congress was invoked, and the Committee on Naval Affairs in the House unanimously resolved to report a resolution legalizing that order and restoring the staff to their former position. It was too late in the session to enable the committee to report in their order; but the chairman attempted on various occasions to bring the resolution to the vote of the House. The effort failed, and Congress adjourned without action.

The summer of 1869 witnessed an awakened public interest in the question. When Mr. Secretary Robeson came into office, in July of that year, he found the exciting and disturbing subject upon his hands, intensified as it was by the triumphant boasts of the domin-

ant line and the chagrin of the staff, coupled with the determination of the latter to seek redress at the hands of Congress. He probably apprehended, as had Mr. Upshur, that it would be impossible that a wholesome discipline could prevail in this uncertain condition of rank and authority, and that while the agitation would call the attention of Congress to the dissensions in his Department, it would operate to the prejudice of the Navy itself. At any rate, he undertook to settle the question by the action of a "board." The board assembled under the orders of the Secretary. It consisted of the heads of bureaus in the Navy Department, and of one officer of the line and one of the staff. Their report was made under date of December 4, 1869, and in compliance with a call of the House on the 14th December, 1869, transmitted to that body under date of January 24, 1870. On the last-named day a bill emanating from the Navy Department was also transmitted to the House. I regret to say, sir, that the provisions of that bill, instead of following the recommendations of the board, exhibited a wide departure from their conclusions, and embraced the most offensive features of the Grimes bill. But, by way of explanation, it should be borne in mind that Vice Admiral Porter was still in the Navy Department. In fact, he had written a letter to the Secretary, prior to the order convening the board, in which he substantially recommended the adoption of the Grimes bill. I am inclined, Mr. Speaker, to furnish a copy of that letter in this connection.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON, *November* 10, 1869.

SIR: I hope you will excuse the liberty I take in addressing you on a matter that perhaps you have well considered, namely, the subject of assimilated rank in the Navy. My position in the Department has prevented my approaching you on this subject, as I do not wish in any way to influence you in a matter where, as a line officer, I might be considered personally interested.

My desire is to bring about a spirit of harmony in the Navy, and to have regulated by law assimilated rank between the line officers and the civil officers of the service, and to establish a law of "precedence with and after" which will suit the wants of the Navy.

The subject of rank and precedence is one that will admit of exhaustive arguments without satisfying the parties interested. Therefore, I deem it out of place to enter into any argument in relation to the subject. I think the wants of the service should be considered before anything else, and the sooner the matter is settled one way or the other the better it will be for the Navy.

I should recommend a mixed board to settle this matter were it not that I had been addressed by a party professing to represent the wishes of the civil officers of the Navy, who have presented to me the following as the outline of a bill with which they would be pleased.

I am quite sure that the line officers of the Navy are willing to accede to anything that would not conflict with the discipline of the service, which, in their estimation, is paramount to every other consideration.

I have read many arguments on the subject of rank, published in the public prints, none of which have convinced me of the necessity of establishing such high rank among the civil officers as has been hitherto claimed for them.

There is, and always has been in the Navy, an honorary distribution of rank, assimilating in a measure to that higher distinction of line rank which has always been considered an indispensable attribute of high discipline.

This honorary rank, very properly, lacks the power of command, and has been conceded for the purpose of establishing the status of civil officers on board ship.

"The parties who receive it are *quasi* civil officers with *quasi* civil duties; but, in order to identify them with their surroundings and give propriety to their presence, they are favored with the compliment of rank."

Notwithstanding that this is the only position that civil officers on board ship should hold, the line officers of the Navy would generally be pleased if the bill now before Congress would become a law, with the following amendments,

which I have been led to believe would be perfectly acceptable to the civi officers of the Navy. I take great pleasure in giving it my support.

DAVID R. PORTER,
Vice Admiral.

Hon. GEORGE M. ROBESON,
Secretary of the Navy.

Vice Admiral Porter had his way. The "board" did not.

At the commencement of the next Congress the bill which we are now considering was introduced into this House and referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs; and it is no exaggeration to say that its consideration engaged their attention, study, and discussion at regular and special meetings during the entire session of 1869–70. I think no provision or feature, either of the general subject or of the bill, has escaped the most searching analysis. There has been an earnest desire to probe the matter to the bottom, and the committee have not been without aid from all sides of the question. I think they have succeeded, or that they at least have come to understand what the controversy between line and staff means. This bill is the result of the deliberations of two years on the part of your committee.

DETAILS OF THE BILL.

Let us look now at the details of the bill. As I have said, it has been prepared with much care and after a most extended examination, and with a view to the best interests of the whole service and justice to all its constituent parts. The subject is so largely involved in professional and legal technicalities that nothing less than the most assiduous and careful consideration of your committee could bring them to a satisfactory conclusion. And I find it now almost impossible to explain in these general remarks all its minute details or its intricate relations to the service. And you will permit me to say very frankly that it is one of those measures which in its details must in a very great degree commend itself to the House only through the labor and recommendation of the committee. But having endeavored to state generally the principles of military organization on which it rests, I may allude now more particularly to the scope and provisions of the bill itself. It looks to the organization of the Navy as the basis of its revision of the grades. In its relation to that organization it restores the grades of captain and lieutenant commander, which was the characteristic of the Department order of March 13, 1863; and while it gives to the heads of bureaus the rank of commodore, as in that order, it provides that retired officers of the staff who have served faithfully forty-five years, shall have the rank of commodore; (these are the fleet officers of the war;) and that officers retired at sixty-two years under the existing laws, who have served forty years faithfully, shall also have the same rank.

It apportions to the different grades the number of officers which on full examination the committee have from all the sources of in-

formation at their command believed to be demanded by the interests of the service, reducing the aggregate in each corps. The number of the medical corps is reduced twenty, that of the paymasters twenty-five, while the number of engineers, heretofore uncertain, is now limited to a number which it is believed will be sufficient for the present demands of the service.

The bill provides in clear and distinct language, adopting the phraseology of the regulations, that no staff officer shall exercise command or authority in the line of the Navy or in any staff corps or department except that to which he belongs; that they shall have no additional right to quarters on account of their rank; and that in processions on shore, on courts-martial, courts of inquiry, boards of survey, and all other boards, line and staff officers shall take precedence according to rank, as in the Army. These provisions of the bill answer completely and with force of law that pretended objection to the bill which asserts that it gives authority to staff officers to command vessels, posts, &c., the fact being that no staff officer can exercise such command in the presence of a line officer. The bill is a measure of reform, not only in its military features but also in relation to the pay of the Navy. Compared with existing laws its provisions will reduce the pay of the Navy from seventy-five to one hundred thousand dollars per annum.

CONSTRUCTION.

There has been much discussion in your committee and elsewhere upon the phraseology by which rank is conferred and the terms "positive," "assimilated," and "relative" rank. The difficulty is one of words and construction only, and it has arisen entirely from the novel, forced, and unjust construction placed upon them by officers of the line. Without this there would have been no difference or cavil. It must be remembered that the line officers have the unrestricted opportunity to dictate a construction and an unlimited power to enforce it and punish its violation. In all this they are supreme. They declare on the quarter-deck what the law means. They issue orders based on their construction of it. They detail and organize the courts-martial that are to settle it. They hold a revisory power over their judgments, and they approve or reject, they punish or pardon, according to their own will. It is to the line an unlimited power, and it would be contrary to the experience of mankind to find such power exercised without partiality and prejudice. The history of the Navy illustrates most forcibly the truth of this. The case of Dr. Green, who was court-martialed and found guilty of disobedience of orders in refusing to erase the name of John Simmons, a seaman on board the steamer Nipsic, when his head had been cut open by a cutlass in the hands of an officer, from the sick list, at the order of Commander Selfridge, was a case of construction and discipline. Here the judgment, oath, conscience,

and prescribed duties of the surgeon were subordinated and sacrificed to the will of the commanding officer of the line; and, strange, as it may seem, this high-handed outrage against humanity and good conscience, against the law and regulations of the Navy, was sustained through all the stages of prosecution, and the surgeon punished as for a breach of duty.

Now, let us see how the line have brought this power and disposition to bear upon the construction of the acts of Congress regulating staff rank. The language of the statute is, that staff officers are "*to rank with*" certain grades of the line. The line officers contend that these words do not confer rank. They do not tell us what Congress did intend by this language, but insist that it did not intend to give rank. From this illiberality and unfairness has arisen much of the difficulty which this bill seeks to remedy; and it becomes necessary, in view of the tendency of the line to render the staff the victims of a forced and unfair construction of law, to announce their purpose in clear and decisive phraseology, so as to exclude the forced conclusions, of which too many examples exist.

We have therefore made the language clear and distinct and the intention incapable of misapprehension by the use of the imperative words "*shall have the rank of*," a phraseology which will be found in the statute giving staff rank in the army. Congress has found it necessary in many instances to be imperative with the Navy, and it cannot afford in this case to clothe its legislation in ambiguous language.

VALUE OF RANK.

The advocates of the line tell us that there is no virtue or benefit in rank when separated from "command." Will these ardent admirers of exclusiveness, inequality, and caste tell us why old men, no longer able to command, unfitted by age and disqualified by law for that duty, cling with such tenacity to their rank. Is it not because without it they would be the merest nonentities that society holds? Why does this class of ancient mariners of whom I speak press your committees for an increase of rank after the capacity for command has gone to the "tombs of the Capulets?" At the very last session these men came here and asked to be "retired" with the rank of rear admiral instead of commodore, and the grades below them pressed up with hot haste to take their places in the successive grades of advancement. What means the terrible struggle of the Vice Admiral to push his way into the vacant place of the glorious old dead hero, Farragut. The necessity of command, forsooth! Sir, it is the baldest, sheerest humbug to pretend that such advancement grows out of the necessities of the service or the duties of command.

It is honor; honor, the great reward for a life devoted and consecrated to the service of the country; honor, a reward for long years

of isolation, danger, and duty performed; honor, the goal of ambition, the soul of military organization, which shines attractive above the stern form of its exclusiveness and despotism, which is sought and struggled for through all vicissitudes and obstacles, and which no class, either in military or civil life, in this country have a right to claim as exclusively their own. And yet the advocates of caste claim that rank has no value save in name, and that, in military circles even, it is an empty bauble. Sir, it would seem that that which all desire and seek must indeed be valuable. Those who sneer most maliciously at the efforts of others to attain it, are the most ardent in its pursuit, and, having compassed its possession, cherish it most fondly. They come from the remotest corners of the earth to the shadows of the capital to clamor for it. They obtain it. They accept it; and in its enjoyment arrogate to themselves as the favored class all its consideration and benefit, and sneer at their peers in accomplishments and merit who respectfully ask the same justice at the hands of Congress.

Of what benefit is rank to the staff officer?

1. It gives him a certain and fixed status in the organization. This is imperatively demanded for his mental and physical comfort.

2. It makes him an officer in fact as well as in name and official rank, enables him to perform his duties with greater ease and efficiency, as it gives him respect and consideration with all his associates, both above and below him.

3. It takes away that sentiment of inferiority which so long annoyed the staff of the Army. That was extinguished by the law of 1849, since which time the completest harmony has existed there on this question, and its discipline has been improved without any deterioration of authority or privilege from the line of the Army.

4. It relieves him from the continual taunt of the younger line officers, that he is not entitled to official respect because he has no rank.

5. If he has "actual rank," as General Sherman happily terms it, they share with the line in a common *honor* to which none have an exclusive right.

The advantages secured by the bill are—

1. That it remedies an anomaly in the military organization of the Navy, and brings it into conformity with all other military organizations.

2. It settles a long-existing controversy in our Navy, which to-day antagonizes six hundred and fifty officers of the staff against six hundred and fifty officers of the line.

3. It restores the staff of the Navy to the position given them in consideration of their services in the recent war, of their attainments, and character, and nature of their duties; a position from

which they were degraded by the revocation of the order of March 13, 1863.

4. It gives to the surgeons, paymasters, and engineers of the Navy, without interference with the command of the vessel, that position, consideration, comfort, and social recognition, without which high professional culture and talent cannot be secured in any military organization.

5. It enlarges and liberalizes the spirit of the organization, and removes that exclusiveness and aristocracy in our Navy, which in time of peace render it obnoxious and unpopular with the country.

6. It brings harmony to this branch of the public service, by eliminating from it a radical and vicious defect; one by which brains, culture, and professional experience are subordinated to the artificial distinctions of rank, without regard to age, length of service, or responsibility.

7. It settles for the Navy distinctly that well-defined line between line and staff which exists in all other military organizations, and which the line officers, under the lead of Admiral Porter, have sought to ignore and destroy.

8. It is carrying out the policy of former Congresses in promoting and advancing staff officers *pari passu* with those of the line, within the limits of military usage.

9. By its moral effect it tends to enhance the comfort and secure the good treatment of the enlisted men of the Navy, by increasing the respect and usefulness of a class who, not being in command, naturally discourage the cruel treatment and unlawful punishment too frequent in the Navy.

10. By eradicating a false, proscriptive, and oppressive principle in military organization it relieves the service of a source of discontent and bitterness which is sure to arise where such principle exists.

11. It fixes the status of the officers of the Navy by law, the same as in the Army, thus taking the question out of the reach of the uncertainty and caprice of hostile regulations, made from time to time by irresponsible power. It gives it a firm legal basis.

12. It gives substantially what one year ago was conceded by a mixed board of the line and staff officers appointed for the purpose of settling the question, but which was suppressed by hostile influences.

13. It settles the false and unmilitary division into "combatants" and "non-combatants" set up by the line, and elsewhere exploded. The records of the war show that more of the staff than of the line of the Navy, in proportion to their numbers, were killed and wounded in battle.

14. It will prevent the resignations and vacancies in the staff which are the result of the degradation and persecution visited by the line upon the staff.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that the present settlement of this

question on the ground of justice to the staff corps of the Navy cannot be postponed without detriment to the harmony of the service, to the just principles of American military organization, and economy in legislation. It is in the very nature of things that this controversy can have no end until this anti-American slavish distinction, which has no counterpart in other military bodies, is stricken from the Navy. In the improvements that have taken place in military organizations our Navy seems to have had but very little share. In its body still lurks this remnant of caste and slavery, which seeks to subordinate a portion of its members and to draw between them, without warrant, the line of military and civil distinction, and refuses to share equally the honors of its rank according to military custom.

That distinction is most offensively put by Vice Admiral Porter in his letter to the Secretary of the Navy, and, though denounced by the immortal Farragut, is still cherished with all the ardor of professional caste by the school of Annapolis. This same controversy arose and was settled years since in the British army and navy, at the instance and intervention of the Duke of Wellington and Sir John Parkington, and upon the principle of positive rank for the staff. It is time that it was settled in this country. Its settlement under the provisions of this bill recognizes, by the honor of fixed and positive rank, the value of professional services, and the merit and importance of that skilled labor and mechanical art which, under the fostering care of our free institutions, are contributing so largely to the wealth, the power and prosperity of our country. The intelligent and active men representing these great interests will never be content with an unjust and unnecessary subordination. The staff is proud of the Navy, of its history, and the great achievements, in which they have borne their full share, and while they cheerfully concede to its great commanders the glory of its many victories, they justly claim their heritage of honor attendant upon long, arduous service, and dangers shared with their brethren of the line.

Mr. STEVENS yielded the floor to Mr. SCOFIELD, Mr. HALE, and Mr. MYERS, who severally addressed the House; after which—

Mr. STEVENS resumed the floor.

Mr. MAYNARD. Will the gentleman allow me to offer an amendment?

Mr. STEVENS. I cannot yield for any amendment. In reply to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. MYERS,] I will say that this law, which was passed some six years ago, placed the rights of the warrant officers in the hands of the President of the United States. It is most fortunate that the President is a military man, who understands these subjects; and the application to him by these gentlemen, if they will make it, as they have not yet done, will be received with favor, or certainly with due consideration.

Now I desire to say that so far as the representatives of the mechanical skill of the country are concerned, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. SCOFIELD] has done great injustice to the provisions of the bill and to its authors. This is the first and only bill that has been presented here giving the mechanical interest of the Navy a certain fixed and positive rank. I think there is some little confusion, however, in regard to this matter. The warrant officers of which the gentleman speaks do not represent the mechanics of the country. Properly speaking, they represent the sailors. The constructors and engineers do, however, represent in an eminent degree, the skilled mechanics of the country, and this bill recognizes them, and gives them actual, positive rank.

Now, sir, I do not propose to continue this discussion at further length. I will, however, allude to what the gentleman said upon the question of granting honors and conferring rank in the military organizations in this country. The gentleman says that it is unconstitutional, but I think he will fail to find in the Constitution any clause or provision sustaining his position. His allusion to the clause against orders of nobility will hardly sustain it, and the practice of the Government, from its earliest foundation, is the practical answer to this theory. I think his difficulty may be found in his drawing no distinction between society and civil service, where rank is properly and wisely excluded, and privileged orders unknown, and the military service of the country where rank has thus far been found by all Governments quite as necessary as power and authority, and where martial law is substituted for civil jurisprudence.

The gentleman says also that this bill gives command to the engineer or to the surgeon over the line officer. Sir, by military law, by the regulations of the Navy, and by the provisions of this bill, a staff officer can have no command except over the subordinates of his own corps; and this command, so absolutely requisite to the efficiency and discipline of the service, is given in all military bodies, and is by present law and regulation an incident in our naval service. An engineer, for instance, can have command only over subordinate engineers and assistants in his department. I ask the gentleman to show a single instance where a staff officer can have command when a line officer is present.

Mr. HALE. Will the gentleman allow me to ask a question right in point?

Mr. STEVENS. Yes, sir.

Mr. HALE. Will the gentleman state what would be the result on board of a ship if the head of the surgeon corps and the commander of the ship came to loggerheads about a subject-matter in that corps? And what would be the result if added to that the head of the pay corps in the ship came to loggerheads with the commander of the ship about a subject-matter in that corps? And so in

relation to the engineer department. And would not the matter be all the more complicated if all those officers had the same relative rank?

Mr. STEVENS. If the gentleman will reflect upon what constitutes military rank and military command, I think he will admit that no such circumstance could ever occur as a surgeon, an engineer, and a paymaster having control independent of the captain of a ship.

Mr. HALE. Then why the force of the exception, if ——

Mr. STEVENS. I beg pardon of the gentleman; I am answering his question. The captain of a ship has sole and unlimited power. And if an admiral was on board that ship as a passenger, not under orders, he could not take the control of the ship away from the captain. If the gentleman will turn to the regulations existing in the Navy for many years past he will find that your committee have incorporated in this section which gentlemen are now attacking the very language of those articles regulating command of staff officers. And yet gentlemen, in order to antagonize themselves to this bill, say that that law, which has stood in the Navy in the form of regulations for many years, regulating command, now takes command away from the captain of the ship! Somebody is mistaken; either the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. SCOFIELD] and the gentleman from Maine [Mr. HALE] or the Navy Department of the United States, which has had these regulations, word for word, standing on their books for years.

Mr. Speaker, so strongly, indeed, is this bill fortified by those principles of necessity and equity which lie at the foundation of all the military organizations known to the civilized world, that in order to strike a blow at its integrity the gentleman is compelled to carry his effort to great length; so far, indeed, as to seek to overthrow those incidents of military authority and dignity which have been sanctioned by the experience of centuries, and which are as widespread as civilized governments. It is a most extraordinary position, indeed, to ignore honor and distinction, which is the goal of human aspirations, in many cases stronger than the love of letters, stronger than avarice, and oftentimes than all other sentiments and affections; a principle so all-pervading, so universal in its application, and so well recognized that nothing has ever been found equal to its eradication. Not even the Red Republicanism of France, which sought to merge all distinctions and grades in a common citizenship, went further than the principle contended for.

Mr. Speaker, we must take things as they are. We must look upon society as we find it. In the organization necessary to the existence and protection of the Navy we must have due regard to those sentiments of the human character which constantly incite men to fortune and to fame. We cannot ignore it in civil life, and the experience of the whole world and all ages teaches us the folly of attempting to suppress it in military organizations. This love of

distinction, which brings with it consideration, comfort, and respect, enters largely into the incentives and the reward of military action. We hold out to the young man just entering upon the active duties of his occupation or profession the advancing grades and stages where he may rest, proud in the consciousness of what he has achieved, proud in the power of his intellect and influence, holding up before him the golden prize, which is the reward of effort, intelligence and duty performed. In all military organizations RANK is the designation of that position. So in the Army we find that through the various stages the lieutenant passes to the rank of General, and in the Navy the midshipman works or fights his way up to the proud position of Admiral.

Let me say, with all due respect, to the gentleman whose philosophy has been so severely tested to find arguments against this bill, who has been carried back almost to a state of nature, in which he finds less distinction and less observance of these marks of greatness, in order that he may find arguments against rank and promotion, that he is battling against the experience of centuries and tilting against the acknowledged necessities of military organization. Is it not, sir, a fight against the wind-mills? Is it not an attempt to grasp the millennium while all around him is bristling with the ardor of progress and the air is full of strife and contention? I shall not pursue this subject further, but leave the gentleman to find in those communities of Fourierism and phalanxes of transcendentalism which are scattered here and there throughout our country the fruition of those hopes which seem to animate him in his endeavors to strike out of existence all designations of military rank and military orders.