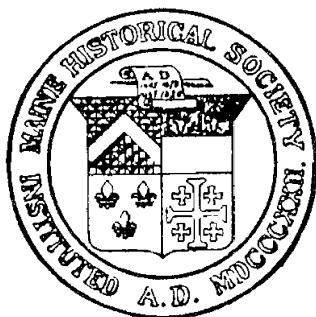




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*The State of Maine
and the New Navy, 1889-1893*
by
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When Benjamin Harrison became President in March of 1889, an effective American naval arm was virtually nonexistent. The bulk of the ships of the United States Navy were antiquated, wooden-hulled cruisers. In light of the rapid advances in naval technology of the 1870s and 1880s, they were woefully obsolete. The Chester A. Arthur and Grover Cleveland administrations of the 1880s had taken hesitant steps toward the creation of a modern steel navy. But the New Navy did not actually get under way until the Harrison administration of 1889-1893.

The years of the Harrison administration witnessed a genuine naval renaissance. Alfred Thayer Mahan's philosophy of sea power was popularized in his *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, published in 1890. Newspapers, popular magazines, and specialized naval journals printed a great volume of literature, most

of which focused on the need for a modernized navy. Many seaport newspaper editors, legislators from coastal states, and naval experts claimed that expanding American commercial activity as well as the nation's coastal cities demanded naval protection and that the existing naval forces definitely were unable to supply adequate defense. Responding to the validity and popularity of these arguments, Congress passed appropriation legislation which funded the construction of four battleships, three cruisers, five gunboats, and one ram vessel.

The State of Maine played a major role in the so-called naval renaissance of the early 1890s. Maine's Congressional delegation not only voted consistently for the cause of the New Navy, but two of its members, Senator Eugene Hale and Congressman Charles Boutelle, also successfully steered the administration's naval appropriations bills through Congress. Maine's only steel shipbuilding plant, the newly-founded Bath Iron Works, built three of the New Navy's vessels during this administration. In addition, the state's major newspapers added their support to the creation of a strong naval force in repeated editorials. Indeed, Maine's role in advocacy and even in actual construction was an important factor in the creation of the modern United States Navy.

Congressional Activity

There was a general interest in naval policy attendant upon the Republican return to power in 1889. Republicans by tradition and association were pro-Navy, and Benjamin Harrison was no exception. He was an outspoken advocate of a regenerated navy.¹ President Harrison selected an able Secretary of the Navy, Benjamin Tracy, who was to be most influential in furthering the New Navy cause. Harrison and Tracy had the benefit of clear Republican majorities in both branches of the Fifty-first Congress. Although the party's House majority was small, it was under the firm hand of the Speaker,

Thomas B. Reed of Portland, Maine, who throughout the 1880s had been a consistent advocate of naval expansion.² In addition to Republican Congressional majorities, the return of Augusta, Maine's James G. Blaine as Secretary of State was an indirect boon to the New Navy. Blaine's aggressive foreign policy pronouncements, especially his denunciation of European control of the proposed inter-isthmian canal, focused public attention on the divergence of American and European interests. Blaine's pronouncements also encouraged imperious demands for a navy to put teeth into national policies, notably the Monroe Doctrine.³

Maine's all-Republican Congressional delegation was a bulwark of support for the administration's naval policy. Both Senators William Frye of Lewiston and Eugene Hale of Turner, the second ranking member of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, voted consistently to strengthen and modernize the Navy. Of Maine's four Representatives, three likewise were steady friends of the New Navy policy. Joining Speaker Reed in voting regularly for a big navy was Nelson Dingley of Durham, a member of the newly-created Committee of Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Charles Boutelle of Bangor, Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee in the Fifty-first Congress and ranking minority committeeman in the Fifty-second, was probably the most vocal advocate of naval expansion in the House. The fourth Representative, Seth Milliken of Montville, was invariably absent from crucial naval votes, though on one occasion he challenged the anti-New Navy remarks of an Indiana Congressman.⁴ In short, the Maine Congressional delegation was a solid supporter of the New Navy cause.

Senator Hale and Congressman Boutelle in particular were key figures in the rise of the New Navy. Both men were well qualified for their important committee posts. Hale had declined the Navy portfolio in the Hayes administration but had remained actively involved in naval

affairs. Boutelle, a shipmaster in his earlier years, was a captain in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War, participating in the capture of Mobile and commanding naval forces in the Mississippi Sound.⁵ With their skillful committee work, forceful arguments, and passionate debate, Hale and Boutelle successfully steered the Naval Appropriations Bill of 1890, the first 'battleship bill' in the nation's history, through Congress. In authorizing "three sea-going coast-line battleships of about 8,500 tons displacement" the Bill set the United States upon the alluring path of sea power and provided a naval basis for the aggressive foreign policy of the 1890s.⁶ In view of the importance of this piece of legislation and of the vital role that Hale and Boutelle played in its passage, the events leading to and the actual Congressional debates on this bill require detailed analysis.

Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Tracy's first annual report given in December of 1889 was the first real step toward the creation of a modern battleship navy. In the report Tracy outlined a "defensive" naval policy. Traditionally that meant fast cruiser squadrons for purposes of commerce raiding. But the Secretary proposed a quite different navy, one with, in contemporary jargon, a deterrent first-strike capability. Tracy called for the creation of two battlefleet fleets, an Atlantic fleet consisting of twelve battleships and Pacific fleet of eight. In addition he requested sixty fast cruisers to be used in a *guerre de course* (or commerce warfare) strategy and twenty monitor-type vessels for coast defense.⁷ The Secretary of the Navy worked closely with Senator Hale in preparing this report, hoping that the Maine legislator's influence would lead to rapid Congressional action. To implement such a far-reaching and inherently long-range policy, Tracy asked Congress for an immediate start on eight battleships (which represented his estimate of available shipyard capacity) as well as five torpedo boats and a continuation of the cruiser-building program.⁸

Tracy's annual report was soon followed by an even more remarkable document, the report of the Naval Policy Board. An ad hoc committee of six naval officers had been appointed by Tracy to study the nation's naval requirements. Taking a broad view of its commission, the Board outlined a program that suited a Mahanian concept of sea power but was by no means practical in terms of current requirements.⁹ Like many other investigators, the Board considered the existing naval establishment totally inadequate. "Our navy is insignificant," it asserted, "and totally disproportionate to the greatness of the country and to the task which would certainly fall to it in case of war."¹⁰ Yet unlike others, the Board considered a massive naval construction program as the only remedy. It recommended an incredible 200 ships: 40 battleships, 40 cruisers, 117 torpedo craft, and 11 rams.

Completely ignoring potential international repercussions as well as domestic political realities, the Navy Policy Board's report was soundly denounced by both friends and foes of the New Navy. Senator Hale, for example, responded to a critic's remarks that associated New Navy legislation with the Board's report.

The officers of that board were able and competent and skillful men in their profession, but they were seized and possessed with the idea that the one thing for the American government to do was to build up an enormous navy equal to that of the nations of the Old World. Nobody else that I know of is in favor of that.¹¹

As a result of the Board's startling report, a fear of unrestrained navalism gripped Congress, obviously the reverse effect from that intended by Tracy. The Naval Affairs committees promptly cut the Navy Secretary's original proposal down to three coastal battleships, one cruiser, and a torpedo boat. Because of the cost factor involved, even this comparatively modest bill faced considerable opposition. The three battleships proposed in the

Naval Appropriations Bill of 1890 were estimated to cost about four million dollars each, nearly treble the amount earmarked for new naval construction during the preceding year and roughly equal to the amount allocated for new construction for the years 1883 through 1888.¹² There was, therefore, considerable debate in Congress on this piece of legislation. And during the extended debate Senator Hale and Congressman Boutelle successfully championed the New Navy's cause and, thereby, helped to secure passage of the first battleship legislation in the nation's history.¹³

Although much of the discussion on the Naval Appropriations Bill focused on matters of naval technology (e.g., cruising ranges, gunnery, and naval architecture), Senator Hale became involved in debating the basic questions of the necessity for a modern navy. Referring to America's potential power as a sufficient deterrent to war, Senator Francis Marion Cockrell, a Missouri Democrat, viewed a naval renaissance as totally unnecessary. Maine's Hale countered this argument by noting that only an actual naval force (similar to the Mahanian concept of a "fleet in being") would act as a deterrent and preventive to war. Mere undeveloped potential, Hale contended, was only a temptation:

Give the small man the pistol, the rifle, the bowie knife and he will attack the large man, if he knows that the large man has not weapons and he wants to do him mischief; but arm the large man, the peaceful man, the quiet man, with the same weapons the other man has, and there will never be a step toward a conflict. The two men will live together in antagonism, it may be quarrel all their lives, but there will be no breach of peace.¹⁴

The Senator often repeated this theme of naval preparedness as a deterrent to war. America in a state of unpreparedness only invited belligerence from the stronger powers.¹⁵

Most of the Congressional debate on the naval bill, however, did not focus on the need for the New Navy. Only a few legislators opposed the general notion of

strengthening and modernizing the country's naval arm. But no real consensus existed as to the pace, method, or procedure of the proposed naval regeneration. Many Democrats favored the small-navy tradition of Jefferson and Jackson.¹⁶ Even more Congressmen were oriented in the traditional continentalist naval policy of coast defense and commerce warfare. They questioned spending millions on limited range battleships when, in their estimation, money could be spent more wisely on swift cruisers and shore defenses. As a result of this divergence of opinion, Hale and Boutelle spent most of their time attempting to demonstrate the necessity for battleship construction.

Senator Hale and Congressman Boutelle effectively defended battleship construction. The Maine Senator pictured America in 1890 as being at the proverbial crossroads. The nation had the choice of continuing to build only cruisers and gunboats or of constructing genuine "fighting ships". Should the United States, queried Hale, be without a single ship capable of maintaining and defending its rights at home and abroad?¹⁷ He argued that the nation did not need cruisers or gunboats but battleships. Only a battleship could break a blockade of the coastlines. A blockade, the Senator contended, "would press with its tremendous congesting force upon every State in this Union". In the event of such a state of affairs any legislator who opposed battleship bills might as well "call on the rocks and mountains to hide them from the indignation of the American people."¹⁸ Boutelle stated that battleships were an imperative for enabling a modern navy to resist "aggression when it comes in its most formidable shape." Only a battleship could encounter successfully anything that rival powers could send against the country.¹⁹ The Bangor Congressman admitted that the Navy's cruisers had the capability of wreaking considerable havoc with the commerce of European powers, especially that of Great Britain. But, he added,

What a spectacle, I say, we should present in chasing English merchantmen on the Pacific and South Atlantic and having half a dozen British ironclads anchored in New York harbor and in the other great ports in our coast, placing an embargo on the centers of business of our country and perhaps repeating the destruction of the national Capital itself.²⁰

America's first step toward sea power, the Naval Appropriations Bill of 1890, passed both the House and Senate with votes of 131 to 105 and 33 to 18, respectively.²¹ Senator Hale and Congressman Boutelle must receive a large portion of the credit for the successful passage of the Bill.²² Even a cursory glance at the Congressional debates reveals that the two Maine legislators were the chief sponsors and spokesmen for this naval legislation.²³ Yet despite his enthusiastic advocacy of the Bill, Hale felt that it was far too modest. The Senator did not intend for the Bill to be the last word in naval construction legislation. During the heat of the debate he stated quite frankly that the Naval Appropriations Bill of 1890 was only a beginning. "All that is sought in this bill is to begin," Hale contended, "and it is only a beginning. I say frankly it is only a beginning. It is not intended to stop here."²⁴

The Naval Appropriations Act of 1890 was undoubtedly the most important naval legislation of the Harrison administration. Naval appropriations in 1891 and 1892 provided for only one additional battleship, the *Iowa*, and two cruisers, the *Minneapolis* and the *Brooklyn*. Such appropriations were decidedly anti-climactic in comparison with the 1890 measure. Despite this apparent waning of New Navy enthusiasm, Hale and Boutelle continued to promote the cause of naval regeneration with vigor.

During the remainder of the Harrison administration Senator Hale directed most of his remarks toward quieting the fears of those who felt that the administration had embarked on a policy designed to achieve naval par-

ity with the big powers. In February 1891 Hale stated that he did not believe that the nation needed, what he termed, an "extravagant Navy." He claimed that he would be content with a relatively small but respectable force composed of the very best ships in the world. In fact, throughout these years the Senator was more concerned with the quality of the Navy than its quantity.²⁵ In 1892, for example, he stated that the United States did not need a reduplication of ships in such numbers as the European powers. All that was essential was a naval force capable of providing the country with safety and protection from any fleet that potential adversaries would be likely to send to our shores.²⁶

Likewise, Congressman Boutelle continued his advocacy of the modern Navy in the latter years of the Harrison administration. Due to Democratic victories in the 1890 election Boutelle was forced to relinquish his chairmanship of the Naval Affairs Committee. But as the committee's ranking minority member, he continued to exert much influence on naval matters. Gone, however, was the power that he once wielded. For instance, in 1892 Boutelle introduced an amendment to the naval bill of that year which called for two new battleships, as opposed to the one that the Naval Affairs Committee had officially recommended. The Boutelle amendment was defeated, and Congress authorized only one capital ship.²⁷ Increasingly, Boutelle became involved in debates of a partisan political nature.

. . . the records of our legislation shows [claimed Boutelle] that the rebuilding of the Navy up to the present time is due to the votes of the Republican party in this House, and has been accomplished at every contested point in spite of the opposition of a majority of the votes of the Democratic Representative.²⁸

The Maine Congressman seemed as intent upon bestowing credit for what progress had been made in rebuilding the Navy upon the Republican party as he was in the naval regeneration itself.

Journalistic Support

Like the Maine Congressional delegation, Maine's major newspapers favored the naval renaissance of the Harrison administration. Numerous editorials supported the New Navy cause consistently. The papers carried literally hundreds of articles and news clips on nearly every aspect of naval affairs: naval technology, foreign naval developments, and the launching of the various vessels of the new United States Navy. For example, the *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier* carried ten editorials and articles on naval matters in the month of October 1889. And in April 1890, while Congress debated the Naval Appropriations Bill, the paper printed nine 'naval items'. Portland's *Daily Eastern Argus* not only reported faithfully major naval developments and printed several editorials in support of the New Navy, but also carried detailed sketches of each major Navy vessel upon completion.²⁹

Such extensive journalistic coverage of naval affairs and support for the New Navy was to be expected, since most of the state's major newspapers were staunchly pro-Republican (some having intimate connections with prominent Republican politicians). Secretary of State James G. Blaine had at one time owned a major interest in the Augusta newspaper, the *Kennebec Journal*. None other than Congressman Charles Boutelle owned controlling interest in the intensely partisan *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*.³⁰ The *Lewiston Evening Journal* was also a pro-Republican paper, most friendly to its favorite son, Senator William Frye. Even the Democratic *Daily Eastern Argus* was just as pro-Navy as the Republican papers, differing only on points of method and procedure.³¹

All the papers agreed that the existing naval establishment was grossly inadequate. For example, the *Lewiston Evening Journal* in an 1890 editorial, entitled "Our Navy To-Day", noted the smallness and inefficiency of the Navy and bemoaned the fact that the wooden ves-

sels were becoming unserviceable faster than new vessels could be authorized and built.³² The Portland *Argus* a year earlier took a similar stance: "The new warships were being built none too soon, for the old ones are rapidly losing the little value they ever had in comparison with the modern armaments of other nations."³³ The *Argus* also reprinted a *Baltimore Sun* editorial which argued that several of the weaker naval powers had the potential to "swoop down upon us at any moment and devastate the coast from Maine to Florida." The same editorial also depicted another hypothetical situation that might be the result of naval unpreparedness: "a single powerful iron-clad could levy upon our cities, within a very few days . . . [great sums of money], leaving us equally liable to another attack at any time. . . ."³⁴

Once having noted the fact of the nation's naval inadequacy and having indicated some of the potentially dire consequences of remaining in such a condition, the Maine newspapers called for the rebuilding of the nation's naval force to remedy the situation. The *Argus* stated that although the nation was at peace, the United States with its commercial and economic prosperity was not without its potential rivals. The nation, therefore, should go on with the work of rebuilding the Navy in addition to strengthening the fortifications of prominent coastal cities, Portland included.³⁵ The *Kennebec Journal* observed that the general sentiment of the American people favored a reasonable increase in the Navy. However, the *Journal* reminded its readers that rebuilding the Navy would take time due to the "magnitude and nature of the work required in putting to sea such a fleet of war vessels as the nation demands."³⁶ The 27 May 1890 issue of the *Kennebec Journal* printed probably the most representative Maine editorial favoring the naval renaissance. Echoing Senator Hale, the editorial stated that a strong naval defense was essential to the preservation of peace. The *Journal* remarked that in the event of a war with Britain, the chief naval power of the nineteenth cen-

ture, the “utterly defenceless” American commerce would be swept from the seas. The editorial concluded by noting that “the people of Maine, with its more than 2,000 miles of coast should for obvious reasons be interested in the building up of a strong navy by the general government. . . .”³⁷

Maine’s major newspapers were in unison in their advocacy of a stronger naval arm. But there were differences which were roughly manifested along partisan political lines. Yet the newspapers generally did not equate the cause of naval expansion with any particular party. Boutelle’s *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier* was the most significant exception to this general rule. Repeatedly, the Bangor paper accused the Democratic party with obstructing naval progress. It attributed most, if not all, the success in rebuilding the Navy to the Republican party. In April 1890 the *Bangor Whig* reprinted a Cincinnati editorial which stated that the Democrats’ failure to sustain the nation’s maritime prowess “should incite Republican zeal in behalf of that branch of our military service that has shed so much glory upon our country and its flag.”³⁸ A reprinted Philadelphia editorial, “How the Navy was Built”, attributed current naval construction to the willingness of Republican Congressmen to allot funds to the naval program and stated that if the Republican Senate had taken the course of the Democratic House in Cleveland’s first administration, there would be no New Navy at all.³⁹ Just after Congress defeated Boutelle’s amendment to the Naval Appropriations Bill of 1892, the *Bangor Whig* alleged that the Democrats, with their “unpatriotic and sectional instincts”, had checked the progress of naval construction, leaving the “rich seaboard cities of the United States without adequate defence from hostile attack.”⁴⁰

The *Bangor Whig* generously publicized the contributions made by its owner, Representative Boutelle, on behalf of the New Navy. When Boutelle was appointed

Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, the *Whig* printed four items from other newspapers which heaped lavish praise on the Maine Congressman.⁴¹ Boutelle's newspaper reprinted a *New York Tribune* editorial that said Congressman Boutelle "deserves great credit for the industry and success with which he has conducted . . . [the Naval Affairs Committee's] investigations. . . ." The *Whig* also printed a letter written by Congressman J.P. Dolliver, an Iowa Republican, which contended that "the country is first of all indebted to the well trained foresight and practical wisdom of Chairman Boutelle" for the passage of the Naval Appropriations Bill of 1890. Many more instances of this type of 'pat-on-the-back' journalism were evidenced in the pages of the *Bangor Whig*. Undoubtedly, the Maine citizen who read solely this paper would conclude that Charles Boutelle single-handedly brought about the naval regeneration and, thereby, saved the nation.

Maine citizens were exposed to the New Navy cause in ways other than newspaper editorials and reprinted speeches of their Congressmen. Portlanders, for instance, packed a local theater in December 1892 to see "A.Y. Pearson's Big Patriotic and Spectacular Drama, 'The White Squadron.'" The *Eastern Argus* carried elaborate advertisements, complete with a large picture of a modern cruiser of the famous White Squadron. The *Argus* review of the play described immense crowds and thunderous ovations at the "emphatically patriotic drama."⁴² Residents of the Bangor-Bar Harbor area, however, had the opportunity to view the real thing in late August 1891. The United States Navy staged its spectacular grand naval review off Bar Harbor. The highlight of the review was a mock naval battle between the White Squadron and the North Atlantic Squadron. All told, ten of the Navy's best cruisers participated. Secretary Tracy headed the list of dignitaries present to witness the gala affair. Congressman Boutelle dramatically arrived at Bar Harbor in the new cruiser *Vesuvius* to join the festivities,

while many other Bangor inhabitants took special excursion trains to the coast.⁴³

Naval Construction

The state of Maine was able to achieve tangible economic benefits from the New Navy agitation of the Harrison administration, namely contracts to build three naval vessels at Bath Iron Works. In early August 1889 a representative of Secretary Tracy inspected the newly-founded Bath Iron Works in order to ascertain whether the institution could serve as a nucleus for a government naval station (a base where steel vessels could be both constructed and repaired). Although the representative announced that he was favorably impressed with the new firm and the town of Bath, for some reason the naval station was established elsewhere.⁴⁴ Less than a month later Bath was host to President Harrison and Secretary Tracy along with most of the Maine Congressional delegation. Harrison and Tracy spent the better part of a day inspecting the town's shipbuilding plants, especially Bath Iron Works.⁴⁵ In November of that same year the Bath firm made an unsuccessful bid on a cruiser contract. But this did not dampen the spirits of the Bath people, as a *Bath Times* editorial indicated:

Bath will keep a-bidding till she gets iron ships to build. There is no doubt about that. The future is destined to see a good many iron ships constructed in America, and Bath is to have her share.⁴⁶

Finally in late February 1890 the optimistic predictions were realized when Bath Iron Works was awarded its first contracts for two steel gunboats at a price of \$318,500 apiece.⁴⁷ The gunboats were hybrid vessels with both steam and sail propulsion. They were lightly armored craft of about one thousand tons displacement, sporting six four-inch breech-loading rifles for their main armament.⁴⁸ Amid much fanfare the first gunboat was

launched on 8 December 1891, christened by Ethel Hyde, daughter of General Hyde, the President of Bath Iron Works. She was named the *Machias* in honor of the first naval engagement of the War for American Independence. The *Machias*' sistership, the *Castine*, was launched on 10 May 1892. The two gunboats were the first steel warships ever to be built in the state of Maine.⁴⁹

The *Lewiston Journal* saw in the two gunboat contracts the seeds of a permanent steel shipbuilding industry in Maine, an industry that had the potential of becoming one of the state's leading employers: "Steadily, surely, Maine is moving ahead. A great industrial future is before her."⁵⁰ Although these words are somewhat prophetic, the prophecy was not fulfilled during the Harrison administration. The Bath Works continued to bid for Navy contracts. In July 1891 the firm made the lowest bid on a proposed fast cruiser but lost the contract to the well-established Philadelphia firm of Cramp and Sons, which was already building an exact duplicate of the cruiser. Bath admitted that it could not complete the ship within the two year contract limit, whereas Cramp and Sons claimed they could build it in six months less time. In addition, the difficulty of constructing the proposed vessel made Navy Department officials wary of awarding the contract to the new and relatively inexperienced firm.⁵¹ Yet the Iron Works' low bid not only forced Cramp and Sons to lower their first bid but also gained for the firm a national reputation as a builder of large warships of exceptional speed competitive with the famous Philadelphia concern.⁵² Bath Iron Works received only one additional contract during the Harrison administration. It was for the experimental U.S.S. *Katahdin*, a low-lying, cigar-shaped vessel armed only with a massive pointed ram. The unique vessel was never imitated.⁵³

The Chilean Affair: A New Navy Vindication

During the Harrison administration an actual diploma-

tic crisis developed from which the naval expansionists, heretofore using theoretical and hypothetical arguments, claimed that their efforts for naval regeneration had been vindicated. On 16 October 1891 two American blue-jackets were killed and sixteen injured during a street brawl in Valparaiso, Chile. Secretary of State Blaine, unwilling to jeopardize his Pan-American and reciprocity policies, was inclined to treat the incident as of minor significance.⁵⁴ President Harrison, however, regarded the incident as an attack of grave importance. In late December and early January after much diplomatic maneuvering, the situation became quite serious. Chilean naval forces held naval exercises in Valparaiso harbor, using the anchored American cruiser *Yorktown* as a target for mock torpedo boat attacks. War preparations were made in both countries, and by mid-January a conflict seemed inevitable. Matters came to a head on 21 January 1892 when Blaine sent an ultimatum, worded by Harrison, to the Chileans demanding an apology and reparations. Five days later the Chilean government sent an apology; reparations followed subsequently.⁵⁵ The United States had come ever so close to a naval conflict with Chile, a small, but by no means, insignificant naval power.

Maine's two foremost naval advocates, Senator Hale and Congressman Boutelle, did not fail to cite the Chilean affair as a vindication of their naval expansion arguments. In an interview with a New York newspaper correspondent during the height of the crisis, Senator Hale was asked what would have been the result of the current dispute with Chile had the United States no navy "to back up our demands for a proper course of conduct." Hale replied that were the Navy in the state it was a few years before, "Chile could have blustered at us as much as she pleased and we would have been powerless to say a word." The Maine Senator again raised the specter of hostile ships bombarding helpless American cities. Hale concluded by stating that the Chilean affair to date had confirmed his belief in the necessity of a

strong navy. "I think our people appreciate this fact", he claimed, "and I believe they all rejoice that we are now in a position to assert our national self respect."⁵⁶

In Congress Senator Hale reiterated his belief that the recent steps toward rebuilding the Navy had saved the country from profound embarrassment during the Chilean crisis. The New Navy had spared the nation the humiliation of being "bully-ragged by a little South American power . . . [, for Chile] would have had its hand at our throats and we would have been at its mercy." He ended his speech by warning that the nation could expect similar incidents and must, therefore, be prepared:

We are coming nearer to other people, forming commercial alliances, and entanglements . . . may come about at any time We can not count upon that exemption from trouble, danger, and war [that] we have been counting upon for the last twenty-five years.⁵⁷

Likewise, Congressman Boutelle did not miss the opportunity to draw conclusions from the Chilean affair. He viewed the crisis as "a demonstration of the incalculable benefit conferred upon this country by the development of our Navy. . . ." Boutelle maintained that had the nation been in the state of naval unpreparedness of several years before, San Francisco might have been bombarded or New York "might have been put under tribute or partially destroyed by so comparatively insignificant a power as Chile." But the United States, Boutelle proclaimed, *did* have the nucleus of a modern navy. Secretary Tracy was able "by the click of the telegraph . . . [to] set in motion . . . a naval force under the flag of our country adequate to the maintenance of the dignity of and honor of the United States . . ."⁵⁸ Boutelle, like Hale, did not favor a retreat from American commercial expansion in foreign nations in order to minimize the possibility of similar incidents occurring in the future. Rather, he advocated an adequate naval establishment to protect and uphold American citizens and interest abroad.⁵⁹

Maine's Republican newspapers wholeheartedly

agreed with Harrison's handling of the Chilean affair. But only the *Kennebec Journal* actually linked the events of the incident with the New Navy cause. In an editorial, entitled "The Lesson of the Chilean Affair", the *Journal* noted, in words nearly identical to those of Hale and Boutelle, that without the New Navy Chile easily could have "laid low" the nation's coastal cities. Sounding very much like Boutelle's *Bangor Whig*, the Augusta paper took this opportunity to strike out against the Democrats: "If the peanut statesmen of the Democratic party had continued in uninterrupted power to the present day the United States would not have been in position to have demanded apology and reparation. . . ." The editorial concluded by citing the Chilean affair as ample justification for "energetically pushing forward the work of building up our new navy."⁶⁰

Unlike the Republican newspapers, the Portland *Eastern Argus* violently opposed the Harrison administration's handling of the Chilean crisis. While other Maine newspapers demanded that America resort to war should the Chileans refuse to apologize and make reparations, the *Argus* argued that war was both not in the nation's best interest and morally unjustifiable. A war with Chile, the *Argus* maintained, would involve the United States in complications with Britain and hence expose American shipping and coastal cities to the over-powering might of the Royal Navy. A war with Chile would also discredit the nation in the eyes of many of the South American republics, to the benefit of the country's European rivals. The *Argus* also attacked the view that war was in the people's interest. On the contrary, protested the *Argus*, the people are invariably "the chief sufferers" in war. The nation simply was not justified in going to war over "a drunken sailors' brawl."⁶¹

When the Chilean crisis passed, the Republican newspapers of Maine praised the administration's tough stand. One even noted the relationship of the naval renaissance

with aggressive, even belligerent, foreign policy. Breathing a sigh of relief at the news of a peaceful settlement, the *Eastern Argus*, on the other hand, printed a poem by Fitz Nigel, "No War with Chile", one stanza of which read as follows:

Yes, by jingo!
I know you're all
Cocked and primed
For a row
And that's what's the matter.
The big guns, big ships,
Devlish torpedoes,
Patent armor plates, etc.,
Have turned your head
Also the little heads
Of the little naval roosters
Who want to be Admirals
But we shan't have no war

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Maine and the New Navy, 1889-1893

During the Harrison administration the state of Maine almost unanimously supported the New Navy. Only one example of opposition to the cause of rebuilding the Navy has been found. The North Berwick Society of Friends meeting petitioned the Fifty-first Congress against increased expenditures for naval construction and coast defense.⁶³ Such sentiment was most rare, for the state was intimately involved in the naval revival. Maine's Congressional delegation not only supported New Navy legislation, but also provided the cause with its national leadership. The great significance of the Naval Appropriations Act of 1890 for the future development of the Navy underlines the importance of the role played by Senator Hale and Congressman Boutelle. Maine's major newspapers supported naval expansion and, no doubt, created or reinforced considerable pro-naval sentiment in their readers. The state of Maine, in addition to its contributions to the legislative and popular roots of the modern American naval arm, also contri-

buted three new ships to the growing list of commissioned vessels in the United States Navy. And, as the Chilean episode demonstrated, the state of Maine, on the whole, linked the New Navy with the strategic imperatives of an emerging world power.

— NOTES —

¹ Walter Millis, *Arms and Men: A Study in American Military History* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1967), 156, 160-61.

² Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1939), 206. There were 173 Republicans, 156 Democrats, and 1 independent in the Fifty-first Congress.

³ *Ibid.*, 185, 206. See also A.T. Volwiler, "Harrison, Blaine, and American Foreign Policy, 1889-1893," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, LXXXIX (November, 1938), 637-39; and Walter La Feber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963), 104-09.

⁴ *Congressional Record*, 52 Cong. 1st sess., Appendix, 16 April 1892.

⁵ *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1949*, 81st Cong. 2nd sess., House Document No. 607 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), 1249; *A Biographical Congressional Directory, 1774-1911*, 61st Cong. 2nd sess., Senate Document No. 654 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1912), 488-89.

⁶ Millis, *Arms and Men*, 158. The description of the battleships was that of Congressman Boutelle: *Congressional Record*, 51st Cong. 1st sess., 8 April 1890, 3163.

⁷ Sprout and Sprout, *American Naval Power*, 208; Walter La Feber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, New York, 1963), 123-24. For the text of Tracy's report see: *Congressional Record*, 51st Cong. 1st sess., House Executive Document No. 1.

⁸ La Feber, *New Empire*, 124; Millis, *Arms and Men*, 157-58.

⁹ Sprout and Sprout, *American Naval Power*, 209.

¹⁰ "Report of the Naval Policy Board," *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute*, XVI (1890), 203.

¹¹ *Congressional Record*, 51st Cong. 1st sess., 26 May 1890, 5277.

¹² Based on figures given in: *Ibid.*, 8 April 1890, 3161-62.

¹³ To be sure, the *Maine* and the *Texas* were authorized in 1886,

but these two ships were not first-rate battleships. The former was rated as an armoured cruiser, while the latter was a third-rate battleship. Both were obsolete by the time of their completion.

¹⁴ *Congressional Record*, 51st Cong. 1st sess., 24 May 1890, 5238.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 51st Cong. 1st sess., 26 May 1890, 5287.

¹⁶ Sprout and Sprout, *American Naval Power*, 190.

¹⁷ *Congressional Record*, 51st Cong. 1st sess., 26 May 1890, 5290.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5291.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8 April 1890, 3163.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10 April 1890, 3261.

²¹ Sectional and partisan cleavage was somewhat blurred in the Senate, but was quite apparent in the House. Only 26 Democrats voted for the battleship and only 23 Republicans voted against them. Of the 26 Democrats, 24 represented constituencies in seaboard states, and of the 23 Republicans, 22 represented interior districts. — Sprout and Sprout, *American Naval Power*, 212.

²² In presenting their battleship apologia the two Maine legislators were aided, no doubt, by the publication in May of 1890 of the first edition of Alfred Thayer Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power on History, 1660-1783*. Mahan's emphasis on the battleship fleet, his scorn of commerce raiding, and his overall rationale that sea power was beneficial in peace as well as war provided abstract theoretical as well as pseudo-historical justification for the Naval Appropriations Bill of 1890. See, Millis, *Arms and Men*, 161-63; Robert Seager, "Ten Years Before Mahan: The Unofficial Case for the New Navy, 1880-1890," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XL (December 1953), 493.

²³ See especially: *Congressional Record*, 51st Cong. 1st sess., 26 May 1890 and 8-10 April 1890. Robert Seager II has stated that in this period a few members of the Naval Affairs Committees were able to dominate the Congress as a whole on naval matters, especially because they had access to the technical advice of the Navy Department, which made them superior in debate on technical naval matters. This undoubtedly was the case for Hale and Boutelle in the debates on this bill. See: Seager, "Ten Years Before Mahan," 498-99.

²⁴ *Congressional Record*, 51st Cong. 1st sess., 24, 26 May 1890, 5239, 5290.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 51st Cong. 2nd sess., 10 February 1891, 2428.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 52nd Cong. 1st sess., 17 May 1892, 4317.

²⁷ See the editorial in the *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, 16 April 1892.

²⁸ *Congressional Record*, 52nd Cong. 1st sess., 14 April 1892, 3320.

²⁹ For example, see the 31 August 1889 supplement of the *Daily Eastern Argus* for an article and sketch of the cruiser *Philadelphia* or the 16 November 1889 supplement for a similar treatment of the cruiser *San Francisco*.

³⁰ See *Biographical Congressional Directory*, 489.

³¹ This may well indicate that on this issue, nationally, the coastal-interior split was more important than the party split.

³² *Lewiston Evening Journal*, 5 March 1890.

³³ *Daily Eastern Argus*, 31 October 1889.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 26 July 1889.

³⁵ *Daily Eastern Argus*, 1 January 1889.

³⁶ *Daily Kennebec Journal*, 12 August 1889.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 27 May 1890.

³⁸ *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, 29 April 1890.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 6 February 1889.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 23 April 1892.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 24 December 1889.

⁴² *Daily Eastern Argus*, 10-13 December 1892.

⁴³ *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, 27 August 1891.

⁴⁴ Bath Iron Works was founded earlier that same year. No doubt the fact that it was not yet an established firm entered in to this decision. For an account of the beginnings of the Bath Iron Works see: William Avery Baker, *A Maritime History of Bath, Maine and the Kennebec River Region* (2 vols., Bath, Maine, 1973), II, 696-702.

⁴⁵ See: *Daily Eastern Argus*, 15 August 1889 for details of Harrison's visit to Bath and his short speech delivered there.

⁴⁶ The *Bath Times* editorial was reprinted in the *Daily Kennebec Journal*, 23 November 1889. See also: *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, 1 November 1889.

⁴⁷ See: *Daily Eastern Argus*, 9 December 1891.

⁴⁸ Garnett Laidlaw Eskew, *Cradle of Ships* (New York: A.P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), 44. The gunboats were square-rigged on the foremast, with fore-and-aft sails on the main.

⁴⁹ *The Quarterly Register of Current History*, I (February, 1892), 542; and II (August, 1892), 187; *Daily Eastern Argus*, 9 December 1891.

⁵⁰ *Lewiston Evening Journal*, 27 February 1890.

⁵¹ *Current History*, I (November, 1891), 416. The two gunboats were still under construction at this time, and Navy officials had no way of knowing how proficient B.I.W. was in steel ship construction.

⁵² See: *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, 31 July 1891.

⁵³ Millis, *Arms and Men*, 158.

⁵⁴ Volwiler, "American Foreign Policy", 640. For various, though somewhat dated, treatments on Blaine's role in the Chilean affair see: Alice Felt Tyler, *The Foreign Policy of James G. Blaine* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1927), 145-64; Charles Edward Russell, *Blaine of Maine: His Life and Times* (New York: Cosmopolitan Books, 1931), 421; James P. Boyd, *Life and Public Services of Hon. James A. Blaine* (New York: Publisher's Union, 1893), 665.

⁵⁵ Volwiler, "American Foreign Policy," 641-47.

⁵⁶ *Daily Kennebec Journal*, 21 January 1892.

⁵⁷ *Congressional Record*, 52nd Cong. 1st sess., 13 May 1892.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 14 April 1892, 3322.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3325.

⁶⁰ *Daily Kennebec Journal*, 26 January 1892. The *Journal's* partisan remarks are the only other exception that the writer discovered to the generalization, made on page 11, that Maine newspapers tended not to equate the cause of naval expansion with any particular party.

⁶¹ *Daily Eastern Argus*, 1 and 14 January 1892.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 26 January 1892.

⁶³ *Congressional Record*, 51st Cong. 1st sess., 11 April 1890, 3278.

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