

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

THE WAR WITH SPAIN.

Letter on the Subject from the First Presidency to Governor Wells—Latter-day Saints Should Respond with Alacrity to the Government's Call.

Executive Office.

Salt Lake City, Utah, April 23, 1898.

To the Editor:

I am in receipt of the accompanying letter from the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which I should be pleased to have you publish.

Very respectfully,

HEBER M. WELLS, Governor.

Office of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

Salt Lake City, Utah,

April 28, 1898.

Hon. Heber M. Wells, Governor of the State of Utah:

Dear Governor—We have read with much interest your proclamation to the people of our State, in which you call, in response to the proclamation of the President of the United States, for the enlistment of 500 men to furnish Utah's quota of the 125,000 volunteers called for by the President to serve in the army of the United States for two years.

The people whom we represent are lovers of peace, and would do anything in their power, consistent with honor and the patriotic duty which every citizen owes to his country, to avert war and its dreadful train of consequences. Because of this feeling we have been led to admire the course which has been taken by President McKinley throughout this Spanish imbroglio, and we have hoped that his efforts to preserve peace between the two countries would result in success.

But war has been declared, and we have it to meet. Our citizens are called upon to enlist, and Utah is asked to furnish cavalry and batteries of artillery approximating 500 men.

We trust that the citizens of Utah who are Latter-day Saints will be found ready to respond with alacrity to this call which is made upon our State. There was a time in the past when we were called upon, as a religious organization, to make a far greater sacrifice than this, under circumstances that were exceedingly painful. Then there was no hesitation; but upwards of one-third of the men of suitable age formed a battalion of 500, left the camp and volunteered to take part in the Mexican war. In like manner there should be no hesitation now; and we sincerely trust that your recruiting officers will find our co-religionists as ready now to enlist and march to the defense of

their country as their fathers were in the days to which we refer.

Trusting that you will be eminently successful in raising Utah's proper quota of volunteers, and praying that the Almighty will protect our nation in the hour of trial and assist us in our battles for humanity and right, we remain. Very respectfully,

WILFORD WOODRUFF,

GEO. Q. CANNON,

JOS. F. SMITH,

First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

FIRST FIGHT WON.

A stirring item appears in the telegraphic columns of the "News" today, rendered more so because of its departure from the class of information we have previously received. Since the troubles leading up to the war and the war itself began, the events reported have hardly kept pace with public anticipation, while the fact that hostilities had really commenced made the majority of people anxious to hear of a decisive engagement somewhere. Captures have become commonplace by reason of frequency, the shifting of fleets, squadrons and ships were only notes of preparation tending to sharpen the appetite instead of appeasing it, and all other things in that connection became insufferably tame. The average reader had got to exclaiming, as Hamlet did to Laertes, "I pray you pass with your best violence." Well, it is to be hoped he has found gratification to some extent at last.

According to the accounts furnished, the Spaniards have succeeded in drawing our fire and in getting a foretaste of the fighting quality which is arrayed against them. At Matanzas yesterday a shot was fired from the fortified position of the Spanish; it was aimed at the big battleship New York, but did no execution whatever. Drawing nearer so as to get a good range and thereby giving the enemy a better chance, the New York and the two others composing the blockading force returned the compliment with interest in the shape of a fusillade of bombshells. Quite an active fire was kept up for about eighteen minutes, at the end of which time the fortifications were in ruins, every shot from our side having taken effect. No fatalities are so far reported, but it is hardly probable that, with so much destruction accomplished, no one was hurt; indeed, it is believed that many Spaniards were killed.

Another dispatch gives the Spanish side of the affair as received at Madrid. It was that the fight lasted an hour and the Americans were compelled to retreat! That they did withdraw is equivalent to saying that a man goes home when he is through with the business of the day. The Spaniards began the fight and the Americans closed it, having silenced everything on shore and placed the forts on either side of the bay completely hors du combat; then, waiting in vain a reasonable time for the Spanish to resume offensive operations, the ships went back to where they were originally sent and from whence they had not emerged but for being called forth by the necessities of the case.

It was a complete American victory, all the more gratifying because foreshadowing the kind of work our forces will do when once they are "turned loose." It should be remembered that no general orders to fight except in re-

ply or retaliation have yet been issued; when such are given out, there will be some hard fighting or some fast running, and perhaps both, between the American coast and that of Spain.

THE CAPTURE OF SHIPS.

So far the damage done to shipping as a result of the war is chiefly on the Spanish side. But possibly the news of the exploits of the enemy does not reach us with the same precision as that of a more agreeable nature. The United States has quite a large mercantile fleet. It is estimated that about seventy-five sails are due to pass the Cape Verde Islands or the Canaries at this time, and it would be strange should not some of these fall into the hands of the enemy.

The bulk of our merchant marine is engaged in the coast trade. Official reports give the number as 22,633 vessels with a tonnage of 4,769,020. The tonnage of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts is 2,647,769. There are 6,599 steamboats, of which 1,775 float in the lakes. New York state owns a fleet of 4,857 vessels and Maine 1,871. Steel and iron vessels number 1,023, of 1,207,222 tons burden. Employed in this carrying navy are 72,000 seamen, 22,500 of whom are Americans.

In view of the possible damage Spanish privateers or auxiliary cruisers may do to this shipping, it would seem to be of utmost importance to capture all the coaling stations and bases of supply and to take enough of the vessels of the enemy and their cargoes to pay for the eventual losses of the American merchant marine.

OUR RESOURCES MUST BE FOSTERED.

The public mind is so nearly monopolized by wars and rumors thereof that other matters are doubtless in many cases receiving less attention than they ought. It is quite excusable to take the fullest interest in our troubles with Spain and every development that occurs, as well as to watch and be posted regarding the more or less sinister actions of some of the other nations; but it by no means follows that local and material interests are to be permitted to take care of themselves, for this means that they would inevitably fail to the ground, some of them to rise no more.

Utah is one of the wealthiest states in its natural resources, developed and undeveloped, in the Union. What it can do and is doing as a producer of the things most needful to man is by no means a problem or even an undetermined quantity; and reasoning from this and guided by new developments which are of daily occurrence, it is quite justifiable to say that but a very small fraction of our State's possibilities in the direction spoken of are known or even estimated. These gifts of nature are for the sustenance, the improvement and the upbuilding of our race, but unless the hard hand of labor, directed by skill and backed by enterprise, be applied, such intended benefits might as well have no existence at all. It is not what we have but the use to which it is put that counts to our profit, and while all or a considerable portion cannot be utilized or even brought forth all at once, it remains a fact that much more than is done could be, and this too without drawing very largely on what we already have in possession.

One pressing need that has been such for many years, and is even now as decidedly in a statu-quo condition as when the project was in its infancy, is the building and equipment for immediate service of a railway to Deep Creek. Occasionally a spasmodic start is made, some new ground is broken, some expense (which