

AMENDMENT TO RULE III.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, January 17, 1902.

SIR: The Department incloses herewith copy of correspondence relative to placing all draftsmen under the Navy Department on the same footing as foremen, master of mechanics, special mechanics, and inspectors of work and material. A difference of opinion has arisen between the Navy Department and the U. S. Civil Service Commission as to the scope of the amendment of November 20, 1900, promulgated by the Commission, by direction of the President, to carry out the request of the Navy Department, as presented in a correspondence above referred to, the Commission taking the ground that the amendment applies only to draftsmen outside of the Navy Department at Washington, and the Department maintaining that it covers all draftsmen in its employ. As will be seen from the inclosed copy of Department's letter of November 16, 1900 (see Report of Secretary of the Navy, 1901, p. 25), it was clearly the intention of the Department that an amendment to provide for the appointment of all draftsmen, after a competitive examination before a board of naval officers, be promulgated. The President approved the Department's request as submitted.

Below you will find comments of the Chief Constructor upon the Commission's interpretation of the amendment of November 20, 1900:

It appears that the interpretation of the Civil Service Commission is that ship draftsmen in the Bureau of Construction and Repair must be obtained by certification from the Commission, while ship draftsmen at navy-yards and at private establishments are to be obtained from examinations held under the Navy Department; and, further, that no transfers are permitted from the yards and stations to the Department.

It was because the rule requiring all draftsmen to be certified by the Civil Service Commission was found to be thoroughly unsatisfactory in its working that the Secretary of the Navy, in his letter to the President dated November 16, 1900 (quoted in the Secretary's annual report for 1901), recommended that draftsmen be included in the special classes for which examinations are held by the Navy Department.

The enforcement of the interpretation that ship draftsmen in the Department are a different kind of draftsmen from the ship draftsmen at a navy-yard or private establishment would disorganize the work of this Bureau.

The ship draftsmen in the Bureau are engaged in the work of designing ships and in the critical examination of plans sent in from navy-yards and private establishments. This work requires the highest grade of ship draftsmen—men who have had extensive experience and training in navy-yards and private establishments. As fully set forth in the Secretary's letter above referred to, it has been found impossible to get such men through the Civil Service Commission.

The expansion of the shipbuilding industry in this country has created a demand for competent ship draftsmen far exceeding the supply, and it is not too much to say that every first-class ship draftsman in this country is in a good position at comparatively high wages. The chances to obtain superintending and managing positions in private

establishments are a further inducement in private yards not existing for positions under the Government.

With the increase of the naval establishment the work under this Bureau has also greatly expanded, but it has been found practically impossible to offer such inducements as will persuade high-grade ship draftsmen to leave private establishments and enter the Government service. Under these conditions, the only resource has been to transfer the best men from the navy-yards and offices of superintending constructors to the Bureau, where only men who have already acquired training and experience are required, and to supply to the yards in their places draftsmen of less experience and minors under instruction in drafting. These latter, employed on actual work in the yards, will acquire in time the necessary experience and training, thus building up a force adequate to the needs of this Bureau.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the only distinction between ship draftsmen in the Department and those elsewhere is that the best and most experienced men are required at the Department, and that under present circumstances such men can only be obtained by transfer from places where they have acquired such experience, coupled with a system of local examinations for bringing in men who have the necessary acquirements to form a suitable force for local needs.

The above applies, in whole or in part, to all other kinds of draftsmen employed under the Navy Department—marine engine and boiler draftsmen, architectural draftsmen, structural steel-work draftsmen, ordnance draftsmen, cartographic draftsmen, electrical draftsmen, etc.

If, to carry into effect the Department's original request, as approved by the President, the Civil Service Commission considers it necessary to amend Rule III, section 8, clause (i) (Civil-Service Rules, edition of December 27, 1901), it is suggested that in line 6 of said clause, after the words "Also all persons employed," the words "under the Navy Department" be inserted, so that it will read as follows:

(i) All persons at navy-yards, naval stations, and at private shipbuilding and manufacturing establishments where work is done by contract for the Navy Department, employed as special mechanics and civilian assistant inspectors of work and materials (including ordnance, armor, armor plate, marine engines, hulls, buildings, dredging, etc.). Also all persons employed under the Navy Department as ship draftsmen, marine and boiler draftsmen, architectural draftsmen, structural steelwork draftsmen, electrical draftsmen, cartographic draftsmen, and ordnance draftsmen, including assistant or lower-class draftsmen of the various grades. Appointments to these positions shall be made hereafter on tests of fitness prescribed in paragraphs 74 to 83, inclusive, of Navy-Yard Order No. 23, revised. Pending the result of such examinations, the Secretary of the Navy may appoint to the above positions qualified persons for a period not to exceed thirty days.

Very respectfully,

JOHN D. LONG, *Secretary*.

THE PRESIDENT.