

I am very respectfully
Believe me
Sicily of the Navy

Am:

E. M. Stanton,
Secretary of War.

Navy Dept.
Sept 17 - 1863

Welles Gideon
Secretary of Navy.

Relative to the building
of iron-clad, and floating
battery on the Roanoke
River. — te.

Recd W. Army Sept 27 - 1863

Navy Department
Sept 17. 1863

Sir: I have the honor to present for your
consideration a subject of great importance,
connected with the maintaining possession of
the Sounds of North Carolina.

Information received from time to time
places it beyond doubt that the rebels are
constructing, and have nearly completed,
at Edwards Ferry, near Weldon, on the
Roanoke river, a ram and an iron clad
floating battery. It is represented that
these vessels will be formidable and
will be completed in the course of four
or six weeks. It is further represented
that an attack by land and water on
Plymouth

Plymouth is contemplated.

Our force of wooden vessels in the Sounds, necessarily of light draught and lightly armed, will by no means be adequate to contend against the rebel ram and battery should they succeed in getting down the Roanoke, and in that event our possession of the Sounds would be jeopardized.

It is impracticable for our vessels to ascend the Roanoke to any great distance, in consequence of the shallowness of the water, their exposed situation from the fire of sharpshooters, and the earthworks represented to be located at different points—particularly at Rainbow bluff.

Now our iron clads now completed

available

available for service in the Sounds, they could not be sent there as they draw too much water to cross the bulk head at Statteras. Our lighter draft ones will not be completed for some time to come.

In view of all these facts I deem it proper to suggest the importance of an effort on the part of the army to surprise and destroy the rebel ram and battery referred to, or of obstructing the river by torpedoes and piles or otherwise, so as to prevent their descent. Permit me to urge some measure of this sort. This Department will be happy to co-operate so far as it may be able in adopting such steps as may seem practicable and adequate to secure us against threatening disaster.

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