

is on Tuesday, June 12, while the second half of the same date, (June 13th), according to Astronomical reckoning, is on Thursday, June 14th, Civil Time.

In this we have the elements of confusion, and it is not surprising that The Washington International Conference of 1884 recommended that the Civil Day should take the place of the Astronomical and Nautical Days for all purposes. The recommendations of the Washington Conference must be held to carry weight, as this assembly comprised representatives of science from twenty-five nations specially called together to consider questions of Time-reckoning. Among them were Astronomers of world-wide fame, as well as men who held high rank as navigators. They were unanimous in the opinion that as soon as practicable the Astronomical and Nautical Days should be arranged everywhere to coincide with the Civil Day.

The Civil Day is the reckoning used by the generality of mankind. It is the exact mean between the Astronomical and Nautical Days, and differs precisely twelve hours from both. To effect a complete coincidence, it is only necessary to shift Astronomical and Nautical Days each twelve hours, and this shifting will bring both to the Civil Day. Many ships have already abandoned Nautical Time and date their logs according to Civil reckoning; all ships would use the one reckoning only, if the Nautical Almanac and Ephemerides generally were arranged for Civil Time. There can be no doubt whatever that the marine of all nations would benefit by the change.

If we consider the subject simply in its relation to the Nautical Almanac and Navigation, the unification of Time-reckoning would simplify the calculations of mariners and reduce the chances of error. One correspondent (Dr. Johnston of McGill University) points out very truly "that the omission of even a single step in an oft-repeated process of calculation has an obvious advantage; when the simplification removes at the same time that most dangerous source of error, an ambiguous expression, it becomes a great gain." He says that the subject resolves itself unto a question of practical utility, viz., what is the greatest good of the greatest number? The Nautical Almanac, as its name implies is for the use primarily of navigators, who are very numerous and yearly, increasing. Compared with the men who guide the floating tonnage of the world, astronomers are extremely few in number, and Astronomers as a class are skilled calculators; moreover, Astronomers can make their calculations under the most favourable circumstances, consequently with the least liability to error, as they are removed from the disturbing influences to which seamen are frequently exposed.