

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives...

FOREIGN RELATIONS. The condition of our foreign affairs is reasonably satisfactory.

While our political relations with that country have undergone no change, we have at the same time strictly maintained a neutrality between the belligerents.

In the request of the States of Costa Rica and Nicaragua, a competent Engineer has been authorized to make a survey of the river San Juan, and the port of San Juan.

It is a source of much satisfaction that the difficulties which for a moment excited some political apprehensions, and caused a closing of the interoceanic transit route, have been amicably adjusted, and that there is a good prospect that the route will soon be reopened with an increase of capacity and adaptation to the exigencies either of the commercial or the political importance of that great improvement.

It would be doing an injustice to an important South American State not to acknowledge the directness, frankness, and cordiality with which the United States of Columbia have entered into intimate relations with this Government.

A Claims Convention has been instituted to complete the unfinished work of the one which closed its session in 1864.

The new liberal constitution of Venezuela having gone into effect, with the universal acquiescence of the people, the Government under it has been recognized, and diplomatic intercourse has been opened with it in a cordial and friendly spirit.

The long-extended Aresis land claim has been satisfactorily paid and discharged. Mutual payments have been made of the claims awarded by the late joint commission for the settlement of claims between the United States and Peru.

An earnest and cordial friendship continues to exist between the two countries, and such efforts as were in my power have been used to remove misunderstandings and avert a threatened war between Peru and Spain.

Our relations are of the most friendly nature with Chili, the Argentine Republic, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Paraguay, San Salvador, and Hayti.

During the past year no differences of any kind have arisen with any of these Republics, and on the other hand their sympathies with the United States are constantly expressed with cordiality and earnestness.

The claims arising from the seizure of the cargo of the brig Macdonald, in 1851, have been paid in full by the Government of Chili.

Civil war continues in the Spanish part of San Domingo, apparently without prospect of an early close. Official correspondence has been freely opened with Liberia, and it gives us a pleasing view of social and political progress in that Republic.

It may be expected to derive new vigor from American influence, improved by the rapid disappearance of slavery in the United States. I solicit your authority to furnish to the Secretary of the Treasury, including loans and the balance in the Treasury on the 1st day of July, 1864, were \$1,394,706,007.63, and the aggregate disbursements upon the same basis were \$1,298,056,191.89, leaving a balance in favor of the Treasury of \$96,649,815.74.

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Of the receipts there were derived from customs, \$102,316,152.39 from lands \$688,833.29; from direct taxation \$475,044.90; from the revenue, \$109,741,134.19; from miscellaneous sources, \$17,511,448.19; and from loans applied to actual expenditures, including former balance, \$623,443,929.13.

There were disbursed for the civil service \$27,508,590.46; for pensions and Indians, \$7,517,930.97; for the war department, \$690,794,829.77; for the navy department, \$73,733,292.77; for interest on the public debt, \$38,065,421.02, making an aggregate of \$1,298,056,191.89, and leaving a balance in the Treasury of \$18,842,958.71, as before stated.

For the actual receipts and disbursements for the first quarter, and the estimated receipts and disbursements for the three remaining quarters of the current fiscal year, and the general operations of the Treasury in detail, I refer you to the report of the Secretary of the Treasury.

I concur with him in the opinion that the preparation of money reports to the Congress, and the consequent expenditure of the Treasury, should be still further increased, and earnestly invite your attention to this subject, to the end that there may be such additional legislation as shall be required to meet the just expectations of the Secretary.

THE NATIONAL DEBT. The public debt on the 1st of July last, as appears by the books of the Treasury, amounted to one billion seven hundred and forty millions five hundred and ninety thousand four hundred and eighty-nine dollars and forty-nine cents. Probably, should the war continue for another year, that amount will be increased by not far from five hundred millions.

Hold as it is, for the most part, by our own people, it has become a substantial branch of national wealth, though private property. For obvious reasons the more nearly this property can be concentrated among all the people the better. To favor such general distribution, greater inducements to become owners might, perhaps with good effect and without injury, be presented to persons of limited means.

With this view I suggest whether it might not be both competent and expedient for Congress to provide that a limited amount of some future issue of public securities might be held by any bona fide purchaser, exempt from taxation and from seizure for debt. Under such restrictions and limitations as might be necessary to guard against abuse of so important a privilege. This would enable every prudent person to set aside a small annuity against a possible day of want.

Privileges like these would render the possession of such securities, to the amount limited, most desirable to every person of small means who might be able to save enough for the purpose. The great advantage of citizens being creditors, as well as debtors, with relation to the public debt, is obvious. They readily perceive that they cannot be much oppressed by a debt which they owe to themselves.

The public debt on the 1st day of July last, although somewhat exceeding the estimate of the Secretary of the Treasury made to Congress at the commencement of the last session, falls short of the estimate of that officer made in the preceding December as to its probable amount at the beginning of this year by the sum of \$2,935,009.21.

This fact exhibits a satisfactory condition and conduct of the operations of Treasury. The National Banking system is proving to be acceptable to capitalists and to the people.

On the 26th day of November five hundred and eighty-four National Banks had been organized, a considerable number of which were concessions from State Banks. Changes from the State systems to the National systems are rapidly taking place, and it is hoped that very soon there will be in the United States no banks of issue not authorized by Congress, and no bank note circulation not secured by the Government. That the Government and the people will derive great benefit from this change in the banking systems of the country can hardly be questioned. The national system will create a reliable and permanent influence in support of the national credit, and protect the people against losses in the issue of paper money. Whether or not any further legislation, in relation to the suppression of State bank issues, it will be for Congress to determine.

It seems quite clear that the Treasury cannot be satisfactorily conducted unless the Government can exercise a restraining power over the bank note circulation of the country.

THE ARMY AND NAVY. The report of the Secretary of War, and the accompanying documents, will detail the campaigns of the armies in the field since the date of the last annual message, and also the operations of the several administrative bureaus of the War Department during the past year. It will also specify the general extent of the national defense, and to keep up and supply the requisite military force.

The report of the Secretary of the Navy presents a comprehensive and satisfactory exhibit of the affairs of that Department and of the naval service. It is a subject of congratulation and laudable pride to our countrymen that a navy of such vast proportions has been organized in so brief a period, and conducted with so much efficiency and success.

The general exhibit of the navy, including vessels under construction, on the 1st of December, 1864, shows a total of 671 vessels, carrying 4610 guns, and of 610,336 tons, being an actual increase during the year over and above all losses by shipwreck or battle, 387 vessels, 297 guns, and 42,427 tons. The total number of men at this time in the naval service, including officers, is about 51,400.

There have been captured by the navy during the year 324 prizes, whose number, but not naval captures since hostilities commenced in 1873, of which 267 are steamers. The gross proceeds arising from the sale of condemned prize property thus reported amount to \$14,396,250.51. A large amount of property is still under adjudication, and yet to be reported.

The total expenditure of the Navy Department of every description, including the cost of the immense squadrons that have been called into existence, from the 1st of September, 1861, to the 1st of November, 1864, is \$238,647,262.35. Your favorable consideration is invited to the various recommendations of the Secretary of the Navy, especially in regard to a Navy Yard and suitable establishments for the repair of ships, and the machinery and armature for our ships, to which reference has been made in my last Annual Message.

Your attention is also invited to the view expressed in the report in relation to the legislation of Congress at the last session in respect to prizes in our inland waters. I cordially concur in the recommendation of the Secretary as to the propriety of creating the new rank of rear-admiral in our naval service.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT. Your attention is invited to the report of the Postmaster-General for a detailed account of the operations and financial condition of the Post Office Department. The postal revenue for the year, ending June 30th, 1864, amounted to \$12,438,258.78; and the expenditures to \$12,644,786.01; the excess of expenditures over receipts being \$206,527.23.

The views presented by the Postmaster-General on the subject of special grants by the Government in aid of the establishment of new lines of ocean mail steamship service, and the expediency of the development of increased commercial intercourse with adjacent and neighboring countries, should receive the careful consideration of Congress.

It is of noteworthy interest that the steady expansion of population, improvement, and governmental institutions over the new and unoccupied portions of our country has scarcely been checked, much less impeded or destroyed, by our great civil war, which has been so long and so severely absorbed almost the entire energies of the nation.

A NEW STATE. The organization and admission of the State of Nevada has been completed in conformity with law, and thus our excellent system is firmly established in the mountains which once seemed a barren and uninhabitable waste between the Atlantic States and those which have grown up on the Pacific Ocean.

THE TERRITORIES. The territories of the Union are generally in a condition of prosperity and rapid growth. Idaho and Montana, by reason of their great distance from India, and the expense of mail or freight, or organized; but it is understood that these difficulties are about to disappear, which will permit their Governments, like those of the others, to go into speedy and full operation.

As intimately connected with and promotive of this material growth of the nation, I ask the attention of Congress to the valuable information and important recommendations relating to the public lands, Indian affairs, the Pacific Railroad, and mineral discoveries, which are herewith transmitted, and which report also embraces the subjects of patents, pensions, and other topics of public interest pertaining to this Department.

THE PUBLIC LANDS. The quantity of public land disposed of during the five quarters ending the 30th of September, 1864, was 4,221,342 acres, of which 1,335,014 acres were entered under the homestead law. The remainder was located with military land warrants, agricultural scrip certified to States for railroads, and sold for cash. The cash received from sales and location fees was \$1,019,166.

The income from sales during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1864, was \$678,007.21, against \$136,077.65 received during the preceding year. The aggregate number of acres surveyed during the year was 1,019,166, and there is open to settlement about 132,000,000 acres of surveyed land.

THE PACIFIC RAILROAD. The great enterprise connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific States by railroads and telegraph lines has been entered upon with a vigor that gives assurance of success, notwithstanding the embarrassments arising from the high prices of materials and labor. The route of the main line of the road has been definitely located for one hundred miles westward from the initial point at Omaha City, Nebraska, and the route of the branch to the Pacific Railroad of California, has been made from Sacramento eastward to the Great Bend of the Snake river in Nevada. Numerous discoveries of gold, silver, and other minerals have been added to the already rich resources of the country occupied by the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains, and the subordinate ranges now teem with enterprising labor, which is richly remunerative.

It is believed that the product of the mines of precious metals in that region has, during the year, reached, if not exceeded, \$100,000,000.

RELATIONS WITH THE INDIANS. It was recommended in my last annual message that our Indian system be remodelled. Congress, at its last session, acting upon the recommendation, did provide for reorganizing the system in California, and it is believed that under the present organization the management of the Indians there will be attended with reasonable success.

Much yet remains to be done to provide for the proper management of the Indians in California, and of the country to render it secure for the advancing settler, and to provide for the Indians. The Secretary reiterates his recommendations, and to them the attention of Congress is invited.

PENSIONS, ETC. The liberal provisions made by Congress for paying pensions to invalid soldiers and sailors of the Republic, and to the widows, orphans, and dependent mothers of those who have fallen in battle or died of disease contracted or wounds received in the service of the country, have been diligently administered.

There have been added to the pension rolls during the year ending the 30th day of June last the names of 16,779 invalid soldiers, and of 271 disabled seamen, making the present number of army invalid pensioners 22,767 and of navy invalid pensioners 712.

Of widows, orphans, and mothers, 22,198 have been placed on the army pension rolls, and 248 on the navy rolls. The present number of army pensioners of this class is 25,433, and of navy pensioners 733.

At the beginning of the year the number of revolutionary pensioners was 1430; only twelve of them were soldiers, of whom seven have since died.

The remainder are those who, under the laws, receive pensions, because of relationship to Revolutionary pensioners. The number of such may now be 4,616, being the number of June, 1864. \$4,504,616.92 had been paid to pensioners of all classes.

I cheerfully commend to your continued patronage the benevolent institutions of the District of Columbia, which have hitherto been established or fostered by Congress, and respectfully refer, for information concerning them, and in relation to the Washington aqueduct, the Capitol, and other matters of local interest, to the report of the Secretary. The Agricultural Department, under the supervision of its present energetic and faithful head, is rapidly commencing itself to the great and vital interest it was created to advance. It is peculiarly the People's Department, in which they feel most directly concerned than in any other. I commend it to the continued attention and fostering care of Congress.

PROGRESS OF THE WAR. The war continues. Since the last Annual Message the important lines and positions then occupied by our forces have been maintained, and our arms have been steadily advanced, thus liberating the regions left in the rear; so that Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and parts of other States are again in possession of our troops. The most remarkable feature in the military operations of the year is General Sherman's attempted march of three hundred miles, directly through the insurgent region.

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The manner of continuing the conflict remains to be chosen. On careful consideration of all the evidence accessible, it seems to me that no attempt at negotiation with the insurgent leader could result in any good.

He would accept nothing short of severance of the Union—precisely what we will not and cannot give. His declarations to this effect are explicit and oft-repeated.

He does not attempt to deceive ourselves. He cannot voluntarily re-accept the Union. He cannot voluntarily yield it. Between him and us the issue is distinct, single, and inflexible.

It is an issue which can only be tried by war and decided by victor. If we yield we are beaten. If the Southern people fail him he is beaten. Either way it would be the victory and defeat following war. What is true, however, of him who heads the insurgent cause, is not necessarily true of those who follow.

Although he cannot re-accept the Union, they can. Some of them, he knows, already desire peace and reunion. The number of such may increase. They can at any moment have peace simply by laying down their arms and submitting to the national authority under the Constitution.

After some time the Government could not, if it would, maintain war against them. The loyal citizens would not sustain or allow it.

If questions should remain, we would adjust them by the peaceful means of legislation, conferences, courts, and votes, operating only in constitutional and lawful channels.

Some certain, and other possible questions are and would be beyond the Executive power to adjust as, for instance, the admission of members into Congress, and whatever might require the appropriation of money.

The Executive power itself would be greatly diminished by the cessation of actual war. Pardons and remissions of forfeitures, however, would still be within Executive control.

In what spirit and temper this control would be exercised can be fairly judged of by the past. A year ago a general pardon and amnesty, upon specified terms, were offered to all, except certain designated classes, and it was at the same time made known that the excepted classes were still within contemplation of special clemency.

During the year many availed themselves of the general provisions, and many more would only that the signs of bad faith in some led to such precautionary measures as rendered the practical process less easy and certain.

During the same time, also, special pardons have been granted to individuals of the excepted classes, and no voluntary application has been denied. Thus, practically, the door has been for a full year, open to all except such as were not in condition to make free choice; that is, such as were in custody or under constraint. It is still so open to all, but the time may come when the public duty shall demand that it be closed, and that in lieu more vigorous measures than heretofore shall be adopted.

In presenting the abandonment of armed resistance to the national authority on the part of the insurgents, as the only indispensable condition to ending the war on the part of the Government, I repeat nothing heretofore said as to slavery.

I repeat the declaration made a year ago, that while I remain in my present position I shall not attempt to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation; nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that proclamation, or by any of the acts of Congress.

If the people should, by whatever word or means, make it an Executive duty to re-enslave such persons, another, and not I, must be their instrument to perform it. In stating a single condition of peace, I mean simply to say that the war will cease on the part of the Government whenever it shall have ceased on the part of those who began it.

[Signed] ABRAHAM LINCOLN. DECEMBER 6, 1864.

ALTOONA, PA. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1864.

The War. Sherman's march through Georgia, and the situation of Thomas and Hood's forces, at Nashville, are now the centre of attraction. The latest we have from Sherman is that he is gradually moving forward at the pace at which he started—fifteen miles per day. The rebels have been thus far unable to throw a sufficient force in front of him to even check his progress.

The rebel press is full of conjecture as to the point at which he will land on the seaboard. Savannah is generally supposed to be his destination, but he may strike out to the left and land at Beaufort, or he may bring up at Charleston. At all events they have concluded he will go where he pleases, and they can't stop him. They affect not to care where he may come out, but their outward indifference cannot conceal their feverish anxiety. They feel that the Confederacy is about "played out," and all they seem to be striving for is to see how long it will take it to die.

The dashing Hood has run his army up to the suburbs of Nashville and now confronts Gen. Thomas who is there entrenched. While he is trying to keep Thomas penned up at Nashville his men will not be able to serve in other localities where they might do more damage. No fears are entertained in reference to the situation at the place named. Gen. Thomas is ready at any time to go into the fray, and his reputation as an officer precludes a doubt as to his success in the engagement.

From the Army of the Potomac the news is "All quiet." How long the expression is to remain in stereotype we cannot tell. Gen. Grant appears to have a purpose unknown outside the proper circle, and his plans will be unfolded at the proper time.

Gen. Couch has been relieved from the command of the Department of the Susquehanna and ordered to report to Gen. Thomas. Gen. Cudwallard has been appointed to the Department of Pennsylvania, embracing the Department of the

CONVENTION OF PEACE. The manner of continuing the conflict remains to be chosen. On careful consideration of all the evidence accessible, it seems to me that no attempt at negotiation with the insurgent leader could result in any good.

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During the same time, also, special pardons have been granted to individuals of the excepted classes, and no voluntary application has been denied. Thus, practically, the door has been for a full year, open to all except such as were not in condition to make free choice; that is, such as were in custody or under constraint. It is still so open to all, but the time may come when the public duty shall demand that it be closed, and that in lieu more vigorous measures than heretofore shall be adopted.

In presenting the abandonment of armed resistance to the national authority on the part of the insurgents, as the only indispensable condition to ending the war on the part of the Government, I repeat nothing heretofore said as to slavery.

I repeat the declaration made a year ago, that while I remain in my present position I shall not attempt to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation; nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that proclamation, or by any of the acts of Congress.

If the people should, by whatever word or means, make it an Executive duty to re-enslave such persons, another