

vision for the publication of the annual report should be promptly remedied. The public interest in the report and its value to the farming community I am sure will not be diminished under the new organization of the Department.

THE WEATHER BUREAU.

I recommend that the Weather Service be separated from the War Department and established as a Bureau in the Department of Agriculture. This will involve an entire reorganization both of the Weather Bureau and of the Signal Corps, making of the first a purely military staff corps. The report of the Chief Signal Officer shows that the work of the corps on its military side has been deteriorating.

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

The interests of the people of the District of Columbia should not be lost sight of in the pressure for consideration of measures affecting the whole country. Having no legislature of its own, either municipal or general, its people must look to Congress for the regulation of all these concerns that, in the States, are the subject of local control. Our whole people have an interest that the National Capital should be made attractive and beautiful, and above all that its reputation for order and good government be well maintained. The laws relating to the sale of intoxicating drinks in the District should be revised with a view to bringing the traffic under stringent limitations and control. In execution of the power conferred upon me by the act making appropriations for the expenses of the District of Columbia for the year ending June 30, 1889, I did on the 17th day of August last, appoint Rudolph Hering, of New York, Samuel M. Gray, of Rhode Island, and Frederick P. Stearns, of Massachusetts, three eminent sanitary engineers, to examine and report upon the system of sewerage existing in the District of Columbia. Their report, which is not yet completed, will be in due course submitted to Congress.

The report of the Commissioners of the District is herewith transmitted, and the attention of Congress is called to the suggestions contained therein.

THE EXPOSITION.

The proposition to observe the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by the opening of a world's fair or exposition in some one of our great cities will be presented for the consideration of Congress. The value and interest of such an exposition may well claim the promotion of the General Government.

THE CIVIL SERVICE LAW.

On the 4th of March last the Civil Service Commission had but a single member. The vacancies were filled on the 7th day of May, and since then the commissioners have been industriously engaged in executing the law. They were assured by me that a cordial support would be given them in the faithful and impartial enforcement of the statute and of the rules and regulations adopted in aid of it.

Heretofore the book of eligibles has been closed to every one, except as certifications were made upon their qualifications by the appointing officers. This secrecy was the source of much suspicion, and of many charges of favoritism in the administration of the law. What is secret is always suspected; what is open can be judged. The Commission, with the full approval of all its members, has now opened the list of eligibles to the public. The eligible lists for the classified post-offices and custom-houses are now publicly posted in the respective offices, as are also the certifications for appointments. The purpose of the civil-service law was absolutely to exclude any other consideration in connection with appointments under it than that of merit as tested by the examining boards. The business proceeds upon the theory that both the examining boards and the appointing-officers are absolutely ignorant as to the political views and associations of all persons on the civil-service list. It is not too much to say, however, that some Congressional investigations have somewhat shaken public confidence in the impartiality of the selections for appointment.

The reform of the civil service will make no safe or satisfactory advance until the present law and its equal administration are well established in the confidence of the people. It will be my pleasure, as it is my duty, to see that the law is executed with firmness and impartiality. If some of its provisions have been fraudulently evaded by appointing-officers, our resentment should not suggest the repeal of the law, but reform in its administration. We should have one view of the matter, and hold it with sincerity that is not affected by the consideration that the party to which we belong is for the time in power.

My predecessor, on the 4th day of January, 1889, by an executive order to take effect March 15, brought the Railway Mail Service under the operation of the civil-service law. Provision was made that the order should take effect sooner in any State where an eligible list was sooner obtained. On the 11th day of March Mr. Lyman, then the only member of the Commission, reported to me in writing that it would not be possible to have the list of eligibles ready before May 1, and requested that the taking effect of the order be postponed until that time, which was done, subject to the same provision contained in the original order as to States in which an eligible list was sooner obtained.

As a result of the revision of the rules, of the new classification, and of the inclusion of the Railway Mail Service, the work of the Commission has been greatly increased, and the present clerical force is found to be inadequate. I recommend that the additional clerks asked by the Commission be appropriated for.

The duty of appointment is devolved by the Constitution or by the law, and the appointing officers are properly held to a high responsibility in its exercise. The growth of the country and the constant increase of the civil list have magnified this function of the Executive disproportionately. It can not be denied, however, that the labor connected with this necessary work is increased, often to the point of actual distress, by the sudden and excessive demands that are made upon an incoming administration for removals and appointments. But, on the other hand, it is not true that incumbency is a conclusive argument for a continuance in office. Impartiality, moderation, fidelity to public duty, and a good attainment in the discharge of it must be added before the argument is complete. When those holding administrative offices so conduct themselves as to convert just political opponents that no party consideration or bias affects in any way the discharge of their public duties, we can more easily stay the demand for removals.

I am satisfied that both in and out of the classified service great benefit would accrue from the adoption of some system by which the officer would receive the distinction and benefit that, in all private employments, comes from exceptional faithfulness and efficiency in the performance of duty.

I have suggested to the heads of the Executive Departments that they consider whether a record might not be kept in each Bureau of all those elements that are covered by the terms "faithfulness" and "efficiency," and a rating made showing the relative merits of the clerks of each class, this rating to be regarded as a test of merit in making promotions.

I have also suggested to the Postmaster-General that he adopt some plan by which he can, upon the basis of the reports to the Department and of frequent inspection, indicate the relative merit of postmasters of each class. They will be appropriately indicated in the official register and in the report of the Department. That a great stimulus would thus be given to the whole service I do not doubt, and such a record would be the best defense against inconsiderate removals from office.

NATIONAL AID TO EDUCATION.

The interest of the General Government in the education of the people found an early expression, not only in the thoughtful and sometimes warning utterances of our ablest statesmen, but in liberal appropriations from the common resources for the support of education in the new States. No one will deny that it is of the gravest national concern that those who hold the ultimate control of all public affairs should have the necessary intelligence wisely to direct and determine them. National aid to education has heretofore taken the form of land grants, and in that form the constitutional power of Congress to promote the education of the people is not seriously questioned. I do not think it can be successfully questioned when the form is changed to that of a direct grant of money from the public treasury.

Such aid should be, as it has been, suggested by some exceptional conditions. The sudden emancipation of the slaves of the South, the bestowal of the suffrage, which soon followed, and the impairment of the ability of the States where these new citizens were chiefly found to adequately provide educational facilities, presented not only exceptional but unexampled conditions. That the situation has been much ameliorated there is no doubt. The ability and interest of the States have happily increased.

But a great work remains to be done, and I think the General Government should lend its aid. As the suggestion of a national grant in aid of education grows chiefly out of the condition and needs of the emancipated slave and

his descendants, the relief should, as far as possible, while necessarily proceeding upon some general lines, be applied to the need that suggested it. It is essential, if much good is to be accomplished, that the sympathy and active interest of the people of the States should be enlisted, and that the methods adopted should be such as to stimulate and not to supplant local taxation for school purposes.

As one Congress can not find a succeeding one in such a case, and as the effort must, in some degree, be experimental, I recommend that any appropriation made for this purpose be so limited in annual amount and as to the time over which it is to extend as will, on the one hand, give the local school authorities opportunity to make the best use of the first year's allowance, and on the other deliver them from the temptation to unduly postpone the assumption of the whole burden themselves.

WHITE AND COLORED.

The colored people did not intrude themselves upon us; they were brought here in chains and held in the communities where they are now chiefly found, by a cruel slave code. Happily for both races they are now free. They have, from a stand-point of ignorance and poverty, which was our shame, not theirs, made remarkable advances in education and in the acquisition of property. They have, as a people, shown themselves to be friendly and faithful towards the white race, under temptations of tremendous strength. They have their representatives in the national cemeteries where a grateful Government has gathered the ashes of those who died in its defense. They have furnished to our regular Army regiments that have won high praise from their commanding officers for courage and soldierly qualities, and for fidelity to the enlistment oath. In civil life they are now the toilers of their communities, making their full contribution to the widening streams of prosperity which these communities are receiving. Their sudden withdrawal would stop production and bring disorder into the household as well as the shop. Generally they do not desire to quit their homes, and their employers resent the interference of the emigration agents who seek to stimulate such a desire.

But, notwithstanding all this, in many parts of our country where the colored population is large the people of that race are by various devices, deprived of any effective exercise of their political rights and of many of their civil rights. The wrong does not extend itself upon those whose votes are suppressed. Every constituency in the Union is wronged.

It has been the hope of every patriot that a sense of justice and of respect for the law would work a gradual cure of these flagrant evils. Surely, no one supposes that the present can be accepted as a permanent condition. If it is said that these communities must work out this problem for themselves, we have a right to ask whether they are at work upon it. Do they suggest any solution? When and under what conditions is the black man to have a free ballot? When is he in fact to have those full civil rights which have so long been his in law? What is that equality of influence which our form of government was intended to secure to the electors to be restored? This generation should courageously face these grave questions and not leave them as a heritage of woe to the next. The consultation should proceed with candor, calmness and great patience, upon the lines of justice and humanity, not of prejudice and cruelty. No question in our country can be at rest except upon the firm base of justice and of the law.

I earnestly invoke the attention of Congress to the consideration of such measures within its well-defined constitutional powers as will secure to all our people a free exercise of the right of suffrage and every other civil right under the Constitution and laws of the United States. No evil, however deplorable, can justify the assumption, either on the part of the Executive or of Congress, of powers not granted; but both will be highly blameable if the powers granted are not wisely but firmly used to correct these evils. The power to take the whole direction and control of the election of members of the House of Representatives is clearly given to the General Government. A partial and qualified supervision of these elections is provided for by law, and in my opinion this law may be so strengthened and extended as to secure, on the whole, better results than can be attained by a key looking at the processes of such election into general control. The colored man should be protected in all of his relations to the Federal Government, whether as litigant, juror or witness in our courts, as an elector for members of Congress, or as a peaceful traveler upon our interstate railways.

OUR MERCHANT MARINE.

There is nothing more justly humiliating to the national pride, and nothing more hurtful to the national prosperity than the inferiority of our merchant marine compared with that of other nations whose general resources, wealth, and sea-coast lines do not suggest any reason for their supremacy on the sea. It was not always so, and our people are agreed, I think, that it shall not continue to be so. It is not possible in this communication to discuss the causes of the decay of our shipping interests or the different methods by which it is proposed to restore them. The statement of a few well-authenticated facts and some general suggestions as to legislation is all that is practicable. That the great steam-ship lines sailing under the flags of England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy, and engaged in foreign commerce, were promoted, and have since been and now are liberally aided, by grants of public money, in one form or another, is generally known. That the American lines of steam-ship have been abandoned by us to an unequal contest with the aided lines of other nations until they have been withdrawn, or, in the few cases where they are still maintained, are subject to serious disadvantages, is matter of common knowledge.

The present situation is such that travelers and merchandise find Liverpool often a necessary intermediate port between New York and some of the South American capitals. The fact that some of the delegates from South American states to the Conference of American Nations, now in session at Washington, reached our shores by reversing that line of travel, is very conclusive of the need of such a conference, and very suggestive as to the first and most necessary step in the direction of fuller and more beneficial intercourse with nations that are now our neighbors upon the lines of latitude, but not upon the lines of established commercial intercourse.

MAIL SERVICES RECOMMENDED.

I recommend that such appropriations be made for ocean-mail service, in American steam ships, between our ports and those of Central and South America, China, Japan, and the important islands in both of the great oceans, as will be liberally remunerative for the service rendered, and will encourage the establishment and in some fair degree equalize the chances of American steam-ship lines in the competitions which they must meet. That the American states lying south of us will cordially co-operate in establishing and maintaining such lines of steam-ships to their principal ports, I do not doubt.

A NAVAL RESERVE.

We should also make provision for a naval reserve to consist of such merchant ships, of American construction and of a specified tonnage and speed, as the owners will consent to place at the use of the Government in case of need, as armed cruisers. England has adopted this policy, and as a result can now, upon necessity, at once place upon her naval list some of the fastest steamships in the world. A proper supervision of the construction of such vessels would make their conversion into effective ships of war very easy.

A LIBERAL AND PROGRESSIVE POLICY.

I am an advocate of economy in our national expenditures, but it is a misuse of terms to make an expenditure for the purpose of extending our foreign commerce. The enlargement and improvement of our merchant marine, the development of a sufficient body of trained American seamen, the promotion of rapid and regular mail communication between the ports of other countries and our own, and the substitution of large and swift American merchant steam-ships to naval use, in time of war, are public purposes of the highest concern. The enlarged participation of our people in the carrying of trade, the new and increased markets that will be opened for the products of our farms and factories, and the fuller and better employment of our mechanics, which will result from a liberal promotion of our foreign commerce, insure the widest possible diffusion of benefit to all the States and to all our people. Everything is most propitious for the present inauguration of a liberal and progressive policy upon this subject, and we should enter upon it with promptness and decision.

The legislation which I have suggested, it is sincerely believed, will promote the peace and honor of our country and the prosperity and security of the people. I invoke the diligent and serious attention of Congress to the consideration of these and such other measures as may be presented, having the same great end in view.

BENZ, HARRISON.

Executive Mansion.

Washington, December 3, 1889.