BEAVER ARGUS.

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 1863.

D. L. IMBRIE, Editor & Proprietor.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Delivered Before Congress on December 9th.

Fellow citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives:—Another year of health and sufficiently abundant harvests has passed. For these, and especially for the improved condition of our national affairs our renewed and profound gratitude to God is due. We remain in peace and friendship with foreign powers. The efforts of disloyal citizens of the United States to involve us in foreign wars and to aid in inexcusable insurrection have been unavailing. Her Britannic Majesty's Government, as was justly expected, have exercised their authority to prevent the departure of new hostile expeditions from British ports. The Emperor of France has by a like proceeding promptly indicated the neutrality which he proclaimed at the beginning of the contest. Questions of great intricacy and importance have arisen out of the blockade and other belligerent operations, between the Government and several of the mara time powers, but they have been discussed, and, so far as was possible, accommodated in a in a spirit of frankness, justice and mutual good will. It is especially gratifying that our prize courts, by the impartiality of their adjudication, have commanded the respect and confidence of the maritime powers.

ON FOREIGN TREATIES.

The supplemental treaty between the United States and Great Britain, for the suppression of the African slave trade, made on the 17th day of February last, has been duly ratified and has since been executed. It is believed that so far as American ports and American citizens are concerned, that inhuman and barbarous traffic has been brought to an end. I shall submit for the consideration of the Senate a Convention for the adjustment of possessory claims in Washington territory, arising out of the treaty of the 15th of June, 1846, between the United States and Great Britain, and which have been the cause of some disquiet among the settlers in that now rapidly improving portion of the country. A novel and important question, involving the extent of the maritime jurisdiction of Spain in the waters which surround the island of Cuba, has been debated without reaching an agreement; and it is proposed, in an amicable spirit, to refer it to the arbitrament of a friendly Power. A convention for that purpose will be submitted to the Senate.

I have thought it a proper subject for the approval of the Senate to consider with the interested commercial powers an arrangement for the liquidation of Sehedt dues, in the principles of which have been heretofore adopted in relation to the imposts upon navigation at the mouths of Denmark.

OUR DIFFICULTIES WITH CHILI.

The long pending controversy between this Government and that of Chili, growing out of the seizure of Selkirk by Chilian officers, of a large amount of treasure belonging to citizens of the United States, has been brought to a close by the award of his Majesty, the King of the Belgians, to whose arbitration the question was referred by the parties. The case was thoroughly and patiently examined by that justly respected tribunal, although the sum awarded is less than the claimants may not have deemed as large as they expected, there is reason to distrust the wisdom of His Majesty's decision. That decision was promptly complied with by Chili when intelligence in regard to it reached that country. The joint commission under the act of the last session for carrying into effect the convention with Peru on the subject of claims, has been organized at Lima, and is engaged in the business entrusted to it. The difficulties concerning inter-oceanic transit through Nicaragua are in course of amicable adjustment. In conformity with principles set forth in my last annual message, I have received a representative from the United States of Columbia, and have credited a Minister to that republic.

THE RIGHTS OF FOREIGNERS AND CITIZENS ABROAD.

Incidents occurring in the progress of our civil war have forced upon my attention the uncertain state of the international question touching the rights of foreigners in this country and of United States citizens abroad. In regard to some Governments, these rights are at least partially defined by treaties. In no instance, however, is it expressly stipulated that, in the instance of civil war, a foreigner residing in this country, within the lines of insurgents, is to be exempted from the rule which classes him as a belligerent, in whose behalf the Government of his country cannot express any privileges or immunities distinct from that character. I regret to say, however, that such claims have been put forward, and in some instances in behalf of foreigners who have lived in the United States the greater part of their lives. There is reason to believe that many persons, born in foreign countries, who have declared their intention to become citizens, or who have been fully naturalized, have evaded the military duty required of them by denying the fact, and thereby throwing upon the Government the burden of proof.

It has been found difficult or impracticable to obtain this proof from the want of guides to the proper sources of information. These might be supplied by requiring the clerks of courts, where declarations of intentions may be made or naturalization effected, to send, periodically, lists of the names of persons naturalized or of those declaring their intention to become citizens, to the Secretary of the Interior, in whose department these names must be arranged and printed for general information.—There is also reason to believe that foreigners frequently become citizens of the United States for the sole purpose of evading the duties imposed by the laws of their native country, to which, in becoming naturalized here, they at once repair, and, though never returning to the United States, they still claim the interposition of the Government as citizens. Many altercations and great prejudices have heretofore arisen out of this abuse.—It is therefore submitted to your serious consideration. It might be advisable to fix a limit beyond which no citizen of the United States residing abroad may claim the interposition of His Government. The right of suffrage has often been assumed and exercised by aliens under pretences of naturalization, which they have disavowed when drafted into the military service. I submit the expediency of such an amendment of the laws as will make the fact of voting an estoppel against any plea of exemption from military service, or other civil obligation, on grounds of alienage.

In common of other Western Powers our relation with Japan have been brought into serious jeopardy through the perverse opposition of the hereditary aristocracy of the Empire to the enlightened and liberal policy of the Tycoon, designed to bring the country into the society of nations. It is to be hoped, although not with confidence, that these difficulties may be peacefully overcome. I ask your attention to the minister residing there for the damages he sustained in the destruction by fires of the residence of the legislation at Yeddo.

Satisfactory arrangements have been made with the Emperor of Russia, which it is believed will result in effecting a continuous line of telegraph through that Empire. I recommend to your favorable consideration the subject of an international telegraph across the Atlantic Ocean, and also of a telegraph between this capital and the national forts along the Atlantic seaboard and the Gulf of Mexico. Such connections established, with any reasonable outlay, would be economical as well as effective aids to diplomatic, military and naval service.

The consular systems of the United States under the enactments of the last Congress, begins to be self-sustaining, and there is reason to hope that it may become entirely so with the increase of trade, which will ensue whenever peace is restored. Our ministers abroad have been faithful in defending American rights. In protecting our commercial interests our consuls have necessarily had to encounter increased labors and responsibilities growing out of the war. These they have for the most part met and discharged with zeal and efficiency. This acknowledgment just by includes those consuls who, residing in Morocco, Egypt, China and other central countries, are charged with complications and extraordinary powers.

The condition of the several organized territories is generally satisfactory, although the Indian disturbances in New Mexico have not been entirely suppressed. The mineral resources of Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, New Mexico and Arizona, are proving far richer than heretofore understood I lay before you a communication on this subject from the Governor of New Mexico.

I again submit to your consideration the expediency of establishing a system for the encouragement of emigration, although this source of national wealth is flowing with greater freedom than for several years before the insurrection occurred. There is still a great deficiency of laborers in every field of industry, especially in agriculture, and in our mines, as well of iron and coal as of precious metals, while demand for labor is thus increased here, tens of thousands of persons, destitute of remunerative occupations, are thronging our foreign consulates, and offering to emigrate to the United States, if essential but very cheap assistance can be afforded them.

It is easy to see that under the sharp discipline of civil war the nation is beginning a new life, and this noble effort demands the aid, and ought to receive the attention and support of the Government. Injuries unforeseen by the Government and unintended may in some cases have been inflicted upon the subjects or citizens of foreign countries both at sea and on land by persons in the service of the United States, and as this Government expects redress from other powers when similar injuries are inflicted by persons in their service upon artisans of the United States we must be prepared to do justice to foreigners. If existing judicial tribunals are inadequate to this purpose a special court may be authorized with power to hear and decide such claims of the character referred to, as may have arisen under treaties and public law. Conventions for adjusting claims by your commission, have been preferred to some Governments, but no definite answer to the proposition has yet been received from any.

OPERATIONS OF THE TREASURY.

The operations of the Treasury during the last year have been successfully conducted. The enactment by Congress of a National Banking Law has proved a valuable support of the public credit, and the general legislation in relation to loans has fully answered the expectation of its favorers, some amendments may be required to perfect existing laws, but no change in their principles or general scope is believed to be needed. Since these measures have been in operation all demands on the Treasury, including pay of the army and navy, have been promptly met, and fully satisfied. No considerable body of troops, it is believed, were ever more amply provided, more liberally and punctually paid, and, it it may be added, that by no people were the burdens incident to a great war more cheerfully borne.

The receipts during the year from all sources, including loans and the balance in the Treasury at its commencement, were $890,125,674,86; the the aggregate disbursements, $895.796,630 05; leaving a balance on the 7th of July, 1863, of $532,904,421—Of the receipts there were derived from custom-, 69,59,644,40; from internal revenue, $37,748,767,05; from direct taxes, $148,510,361; from lands, $167,617 17; from miscellaneous sources, $304,661,535; and from loans, $776,682,361 47, making the aggregate of $90,112,567,486. Of the disbursements, there were 282,539 22; for pensions, &c., $4,216,529 59; for interest on public debt, $24,729. 846-51; for War Department, $599,298, 100 83; for the Navy Department, $6,324,105 27; for the payment of funded and temporary debt, $181,086,-635 07; making an aggregate of 886, 576,663,055, and leaving a balance of $532,904,421.

But the payment of the funded and temporary debt having been made from monies borrowed during the year must be regarded as merely nominal payments, and the monies borrowed to make them as merely [illegible] should therefore be deduced both from the receipts and disbursements. This being done, there remains, as actual receipts, 714,709, 995 58, leaving the balance as already stated. The actual receipts and disbursements for the first quarter and the estimated receipts and disbursements for the remaining three quarters of the current fiscal year of 1864, will be shown in detail by the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, to which I invite your attention. It is sufficient to say here that it is not believed that the actual results will exhibit a state of the finances, less formidable to the country, than the estimates of that officer, heretofore submitted, while it is confidently expected that at the close of the year, both disbursements and debts will be found very considerably less than has been anticipated.

REPORT OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

The report of the Secretary of War is a document of great interest. It consists of, First: The military operations of the year, detailed in the report of the General-in-Chief. Second: The organization of colored persons into the war service. Third: The exchange of prisoners is fully set forth in the letter of General Hitchcock.—Fourth: Operations under the act for enrolling and calling out the National forces, detailed in the report of Provost Marshal General. Fifth: The organization of the ivalid corps Sixth: The operation of the several departments of the Quartermaster Generals; Commissary General; Paymaster General; Chief of Engineers; Chief of Ordnance and Surgeon General.—It has appeared impossible to make a valuable summary of this report, except such as would be extended for this place, and hence I content myself in referring your attention to the report itself.

THE CONDITION OF OUR NAVY.

The duties devolving on the naval branch of the service during the year, and throughout the whole of this unhappy contest, have been discharged with fidelity and eminent success.—The extensive blockade has been constantly increasing in efficiency as the navy has expanded, yet on so long a line it has so far been impossible to entirely suppress illicit trade. From the returns received at the Navy Department it appears that more than one thousand vessels have been captured since the blockade was instituted, and that the value of the prizes already sent in for adjudication amount to thirteen million dollars.

The Naval force of the United States, consists, at this time, of 588 vessels, completed and in the course of completion, and of these, 75 are Iron-clad armored steamers. The events of the war give an increased interest and importance to the Navy, which will probably extend beyond the war itself. The armored vessels in our Navy, completed and in service of which are under contract and approaching completion, are believed to exceed in number, those of any other Power; but while these may be relied upon, for harbor defence and sea-coast survey, others of greater strength and capacity will be necessary for cruising purposes, so as to maintain our rightful position on the ocean.

The change that has taken place in naval vessels and naval warfare, since the introduction of steam as a motive power for ships of war, demands either corresponding change in some of our existing navy yards, or the establishment of new ones for the construction and necessary repair of modern war vessels. No inconsiderable embarrassment, delay and public injury have been experienced from the want of such Government establishment. The necessity of such a navy yard so furnished at some suitable place upon the [illegible] seaboard has on repeated occasions been brought to the attention of Congress by the Navy Department, and is again presented in the report of the Secretary which accompanies this communication. I think it my duty to invite your special attention to this subject, and also to that of establishing a yard and depot for naval purposes upon one of the western rivers. A naval force has been created on these interior waters, and under many disadvantages within little more than two years, exceeding in numbers the whole naval force of the country at the commencement of the present Administration. Satisfactory and important as has been the performances of the heroic men of the navy at this period they are scarcely more wonderful than the services of our mechanics and artisans in the production of war vessels, which has created a new form of naval power. Our country has advantages superior to any other nation in our resources of iron and timber, with inexhaustable quantities of fuel in the immediate vicinity of both, and all available and in close proximity to navigable waters without the disadvantage of public risks.—The resources of the nation have been developed and its power displayed in the construction of a navy of such magnitude, which has at the very period of its creation, rendered signal service to the Union.

The increase of the number of seamen in the public service from 7,000 men in the spring of 1861, to about 24,000 at the present time, has been accomplished without especial legislation or extraordinary bounties to promote that end, with high bounties paid for army recruits is beginning to affect injuriously the naval service and will, if not corrected, be likely to impair its efficiency by detaching seamen from their proper vocation and inducing them to enter the army. I therefore respectfully suggest that Congress might aid both the army and naval service by adequate provision on this subject which would at the same time be equitable to the communities more especially intended.

I commend to your consideration the suggestions of the Secretary of the Navy, in regard to the policy of fostering and training seamen for naval service. The naval academy is rendering signal service in preparing midshipmen for highly responsible duties which in after life they will be required to perform, in order that the country should not be deprived of the proper quota of educated officers, for which legal provision has been made. At the Naval School the vacancies caused by the neglect or omission to make nominations from the States in insurrection, have been filled by the Secretary of the Navy. The school is now more full and complete than at any previous period, and in every respect entitled to the favorable consideration of Congress.

CONDITION OF THE P. O. DEPARTMENT.

During the past fiscal year the financial condition of the Post Office Department has been one of increasing prosperity, and I am gratified in being able to state that the accounts of postal revenue has nearly equalled the entire expenditure, the latter amounting to eleven imillion three hundred and fourteen thousand dollars and eighty four cents, and the former to eleven millions one hundred and sixty-three thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine dollars and fifty-nine cents, leaving a deficiency of but $150,417 25. In 1860 the year immediately preceding the rebellion, the deficiency amounted to $566,670.549 the postal receipts of that year being $264,572,219 less than those of 1063. The decrease since 160 in the annual amount of transportation has been only about 25 per cet. but the annual expenditures on account of the same has been reduced 35 per cent. It is manifest, therefor, that the Postoffice Department may become self-sustaining in a few years even with the restoration of the wole service.

The international conference of postal delegates from the principal countries of Europe and America, which was called at the suggestion of the Postmaster General, met at Paris on the 11th of May last, and concluded its deliberations on the 8th of June. The principle established by the conference, at best adapted to facilitate postal intercourse between nations, and as the basis of future conventions to inaugurate a general system of uniform international charges at reduced fee of postage, cannot fail to produce beneficial results.

CONDITION OF THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT.

I refer you to the report of the Secretary of the Interior, which is herewith laid before you, for the useful and varied information in relation to public lands, Indian affairs patents, pensions, and other matters of public concern pertaining to his Department. The quantity of lands disposed of during the last and the first quarter of the present fiscal year, was three million eight hundred and forty-one thousand and five hundred and forty-nine (acres, of which one hundred and sixty-one thousand nine hundred and eleven acres were sold for cash; one million four hundred and fifty-six thousand five hundred and fourteen acres were taken up under the homestead law, and the residue disposed of under laws granting lands for military bounties, for railroads, and other purposes. It also appears that the sale of the public lands is largely on the increase.—It has long been a cherished opinion of some of our wisest statesmen, that the people of the United States had a higher and more enduring interest in the early settlement and substantial cultivation of the public lands, than in the amount of direct revenue to be derived from the sale of them. This opinion has had a controlling influence, shaping legislation upon the subject of our national domain. I may cite as an instance of this the liberal measures adopted in reference to active settlers the grant to the States of the overflowed lands within their limits in order to their being reclaimed and rendered fit for cultivation. The grant to railroad companies of alternate sections of land upon the contemplated lines of their road, when completed, will largely multiply the facilities of reaching our distant possessions. This policy has received its most signal and beneficient illustration in recent enactment, granting homesteads to acting soldiers since the first day of January last, the before mentioned quantity of one million, four hundred and fifty six thousand, five hundred and fourteen acres of land has been taken up under its provisions. This fact and the amount of sales, furnish gratifying evidence of the increasing settlement upon the public lands. Notwithstanding the great struggle in which the energies of the nations have been engaged, and which has required so large a withdrawal of our citizens from their accustomed pursuits, I suggesting a modification of the act in favor of those engaged in the military and naval service of the United States, I doubt not that Congress will cheerfully adopt such measures as will without essentially changing the general features of the system give to the greatest practicable extent its benefits to those who have left their homes in defence of the country in this arduous crisis.

OUR INDIAN AFFAIRS.

I invite your attention to the views of the Secretary of War as to the propriety of raising, by appropriation of legislation, a revenue from the mineral lands of the United States.—The measures provided at your last session for the removal of certain Indian tribes have been carried into effect. Sundry treaties have been negotiated, which will, in due time, be submitted for the constitutional action of the Senate. They contain stipulations for extinguishing the possessors' rights of the Indians to large and valuable tracts of lands. It is probable that the effects of these treaties will result in the establishment of permanent friendly relations with such of those tribes as have been brought into frequent and bloody collisions with our outlying settlements, and emigrants. The sound policy and our imperative duty to these works of government demand our anxious and constant attention to their material well being, to their progress in the arts of civilization, and above all to that moral training which under blessings of Divine Providence will confer upon them the elevated and sanctifying influence of the hopes and consolations of the christian faith.

I suggested in my last annual message the propriety of remodeling our Indian system. Subsequent events have satisfied me of its necessity.—The details set forth in the report of the Secretary, will evince the urgent need for immmediate legislative action. I commend the benevolence of the institutions established or patronized by the Government in this district, to your generous and fostering care.

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

The attention of Congress during the last session was engaged to some extent with a proposition for enlarging the water communication between the Mississippi river and Northwestern seaboard, which proposition, however, failed for the time.—Since then, upon a call of the greatest respectability, a convention has been called at Chicago upon the same subject, a summary of whose views is contained in a memorial addressed to the President and Congress, and which I now have the honor to lay before you. That this interest is one which ere long will force its own way, I do not entertain a doubt, while it is submitted entirely to your wisdom as to what can be done now. Augmented interest is given to this subject by the actual commencement of work upon the Pacific Railroad, under auspices so favorable to its rapid progress and completion. Enlarged navigation becomes a palpable need to this great road.

THE AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

I transmit the second annual report of the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, asking your attention to the developments in that vital interest of the nation.

THE REBELLION.

When Congress assembled a year ago, the war had already lasted nearly twenty months, and there had been many conflicts on both land and sea, with varying results. The rebellion had been pressed back into reduced limits, yet the tone of public feeling and opinion at home and abroad was not satisfactory. With other signs, the popular elections then just past indicated uneasiness among ourselves, while amid much that was cold and menacing, the kindest words coming from England were uttered in accents of pity that we were too blind to surrender. Our commerce was suffering greatly by a few armed vessels, built upon and furnished from foreign shores, and we were threatened with such additions from the same quarter as would sweep our trade from the sea and raise our blockade. We had failed to elicit from European governments anything hopeful upon this subject.

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

The Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued in September, was running its assigned period to the beginning of the new year. A month later the final proclamation came, including the announcement that colored men of suitable condition would be received in to the war service. The policy of emancipation and of the employment of black soldiers, gave to the future a new aspect, about which hope and fear and doubt contened in uncertain conflict. According to our political system, as a matter of civil administration, the General Government had no lawful power to effect emancipation in any State, and for a long time it had been hoped that the rebellion could be suppressed without resorting to it as a military measure. It was all the while deemed possible that necessity for it might come, and that if it should, the crisis of the contest would then be presented. It came, and as was intended, it passed, we are permitted to take another review. The rebel borders are pressed still further back, and by the complete opening of the Mississippi river, the country dominated over by the rebellion is divided into distant parts.

Practical communication between them and Tennessee and Arkansas, has been so substantially cleared of insurgents' control and influence, that the citizens in each, and owners of slaves and advocates of slavery at the beginning of the rebellion, now declared openly for emancipation, in their respective States. Of those States not included in the emancipation proclamation, Maryland, and Missouri, neither of which, years ago, would tolerate any restraint upon the extension of slavery into our territories, any dispute now as to the best mode of removing it from within their own limits.

Of those who were slaves at the beginning of the rebellion, fully one hundred thousand are now in the military service of the United States, about one-half of which number actually bear arms in the ranks, thus giving the double advantage of taking so much labor from the insurgent cause and supplying the places which otherwise must be filled with so many white men. So far as tested, it is difficult to say that they are not as good soldiers as any. No servile insurrection or tendency to violence or cruelty has marked the measures of emancipation and arming the blacks. These measures have been much discussed in foreign countries, and contemporary with such discussion the tone of public sentiment there is much improved.—At home, the same measures have been fully discussed, supported, criticized and denounced, and the annual elections following are highly encouraging to those whose special duty it is to bear the country through this great trial. Thus we have the reckoning: the crisis which threatened to divide the friends of the Union is past.

A RECONSTUCTION PROCLAMATION.

Looking now to the present and future, and with reference to the resumption of national authority within those States wherein that authority has been suspended, I have thought fit to issue a proclamation, a copy of which is herewith transmitted. On examination of this proclamation, it will appear, as is believed, that nothing is attempted beyond what is amply justified by the Constitution. True, a form of oath is given; but no man is coerced to take it; the man is only promised pardon in case he voluntarily takes the oath. The Constitution authorizes the Executive to grant or withhold the pardon at his own absolute discretion, and this includes the power to grant on terms, as is fully established by judicial and other authorities. It is also proffered that, if in any of the States named, want a seat of Government it shall be in the mode prescribed set up. Such Government shall be recognized and guaranteed by the United States, and that under it the State shall, on Constitutional conditions, be protected against invasion and domestic violence.

The constitutional obligation of the United States to guarantee to every State in the Union a republican form of government, and protect the State in cases as stated, is explicit and full; but why tender the benefits of this provision only to State governments set up in this particular way? This section of the Constitution contemplates a case wherein the element within a State favorable to a republican government in the Union may be too feeble for an opposite and hostile element, external to and [illegible] the Union; and such are precisely the cases with which we are dealing. An attempt to guarantee and protect a revised State governments constructed in whole or in preponderating part from the very element against whose hostility and violence it is to be protected, is simply absurd. There must be a test by which to separate the opposing elements, so as to build only from the sound, and that test is a sufficient and liberal one, which accepts as sound whoever will make a sworn recantation of his former unsoundness.

But if proper to require a test of admission to the political body, an oath of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and to the Union under it, why not also to the laws and proclamation in regard to slavery?—Those laws and proclamations were enacted and put forth for the purpose of aiding in the suppression of the rebellion. To give them the fullest effect there had to be pledges given for their maintenance. In my judgment they have aided and will further aid the cause for which they were enlisted. To give up this principle would be not only to relinquish a lever of, power, but would also be cruel and astounding breach of faith.

I may add, at this point, that while I remain in my present position, I shall not attempt to retreat or modify the Emancipation Proclamation, nor shall I return to slavery any person who is made free by the terms of the Proclamation, or by any act of Congress. For these and other reasons, it is thought best that the support of these proclamations shall be included in the oath, and it is believed the Executive may lawfully claim it as a means to some end. Beyond this existing temporary State arrangements, I do not feel justified to say, is the best to which we may ultimately come. The movements by State action for emancipation in several of the States not included in the Emancipation Proclamation, are matters of profound gratification; and while I do not repeat in detail what I have heretofore so earnestly urged upon this subject, my general views and feelings remain unchanged, and I trust that Congress will omit no fair opportunity of aiding these important steps toward the great consummation.

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