propriations for the support of the naval service proper from those of permanent improvements at navy yards and stations, and from ocean steam mail service, and other special objects assigned to the supervision of this Department.

The report of the Postmaster General, herewith communicated, presents an interesting view of the progress, operations, and condition of his Department.

At the close of the first fiscal year, the length of mail routes within the United States was 196,290 miles; and the annual transportation thereon 58,272,253 miles; and the annual cost of such transportation $4,481,754.

The length of the foreign mail routes is estimated at 18,319 miles; and the annual transportation thereon at 655,205 miles. The annual cost of this service is $1,472,187, of which $448,937 is paid to the Post Office Department, and $1,023,250 is paid through the Navy Department.

The annual transportation within the United States (excluding the service in California and Oregon, which is now, for the first time, reported and embraced in the tabular statements of the Department) exceeds that of the preceding year 6,162,850 miles, at an increased cost of $517,110.

The whole number of post offices in the United States, on the 30th day of June last, was 19,796. There were 1,698 post offices established, and 25 discontinued, during the year.

The gross revenues of the Department, for the fiscal year, including the appropriations for the franked matter of Congress, of the Departments and officer of Government, and excluding the foreign postages, collected for and payable to, the British Post office, amounted to $6,727,566 78.

The expenditures for the same period (excluding $20,599 49, paid under an award of the Auditor, in pursuance of a resolution of the last Congress, for mail service on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers in 1832 and 1833, and the amount paid to the British post office for postages collected for and payable to that office) amounted to $6,924,566 79; leaving a balance of revenue over the proper expenditures of the year of $703,299 99 1.

The receipts for postages during the year (excluding foreign postages collected for and payable to the British post office) amounted to $6,315,717 21, being an increase of $397,619 79, or 13 65-100 per cent, over the like receipts for the preceding year.

The reduction of postage, under the act of March last, did not take effect until the commencement of the present fiscal year. The accounts for the first quarter, under the operation of the reduced rates, will not be stated before January next, and no reliable estimate of the receipts for the present year can yet be made. It is believed, however, that they will fall far short of those of the last year. The surplus of the revenues now on hand is, however, so large that no further appropriation from the treasury, in aid of the revenues of the Department, is required for the current fiscal year; but an additional appropriation for the year ending June 30, 1853, will probably be found necessary when the receipts of the first two quarters of the fiscal year are fully ascertained.

In his last annual report the Postmaster General recommended a reduction of postage to rates which he deemed as low as could be prudently adopted unless Congress was prepared to appropriate from the treasury, for the support of the Department a sum more than equivalent to the mail services performed by it for the Government. The recommendations of the Postmaster General, in respect to letter postage, except on letters from and to California and Oregon, were substantially adopted by the last Congress. He now recommends adherence to the present letter rates, and adv ses against a further reduction until justified by the receipts of the Department. He also recommends that the rates of postage on printed matter be so revised as to render them more simple, and more uniform in their application upon all classes of printed matter. I submit the recommendations of the report to your favorable consideration.

The public statutes of the United States have now been accumulating for more than sixty years, and, interspersed with private acts, are scattered through numerous volumes, and, from the cost of the whole, have become almost inaccessible to the great mass of the community. They also exhibit much of the incongruity and imperfection of hasty legislation. As it seems to be generally conceded that there is no common law for the U. S. to supply the defects of their legislation, it is most important the legislation should be as perfect as possible, defining every power intended to be conferred, every crime intended to be made punishable, and describing the punishment to be inflicted. In addition to some particular evils spoken of more at length, the whole criminal code is now lamentably defective. Some offences are imperfectly described, and others are entirely omitted: so that flagrant crimes may be committed with impunity. The scale of punishment is not in all cases graduated according to the degree and nature of the offence, and is often rendered more unequal by the different modes of imprisonment or penitentiary confinement, in the different States.

Many laws of a permanent character have been introduced into appropriate bills, and is often difficult to determine whether the particular clause acquires with the temporary act of which it is a part, or continues in force. It has also frequently happened that enactments and provisions of laws have been introduced into bills, with the title or general subject of which they have little or no connection or relation. In this mode of legislation so many enactments have been heaped upon each other, and often with but little consideration, that, in many instances, it is difficult to search out and determine what is the law.

The Government of the United States is emphatically a government of written laws. The statutes should, therefore, as far as print cables not only bear access sible to all, but be expressed in language so plain and simple as to be understood by all; and arranged in such method as to give certainty to every subject. Many of the States have revised their public acts with great and important benefit; and I recommend that provision be made by law for the appointment of a commission to revise the public statutes of the United States, arranging them in order, supplying deficiences, correcting inconsistencies, simplifying their language, and reporting them to Congress for its action.

An act of Congress approved 30th September, 1850, contained a provision for the extension of the Capitol, according to such plan as might be approved by the President, and appropriated one hundred thousand dollars to be expended under his direction, by such person as he should appoint to execute the same. On examining the various plans which had been submitted by eminent architects, no part was found entirely free from objection, and no one was found to be entirely satisfactory, and it was therefore deemed advisable to combine and adopt the advantages of several.

The great object to be accomplished was to make such an addition as would afford ample and convenient halls for the deliberations of the two Houses of Congress, with such other accommodations for spectators, and such appartments for the committees and officers of the two branches of the Legislature. It was also desirable not to mar the harmony and beauty of the present structure which, as a specimen of architecture, is so universally admired. Keeping these objects in view, I concluded to make the addition by wings detached from the present building, but connected with it by corridors. This mode of enlargement will leave the Capitol uninjured, and afford great advantages for ventilation and the admission of light, and will enable the work to progress without interrupting the deliberations of Congress. To carry this plan into effect I have appointed an experienced and competent architect. The corner-stone was laid on the 4th of July last with appropriate ceremonies, since which time the work has advanced with commendable rapidity, and the foundations of both wings are now nearly complete.

I again commend to your favorable regard the interest of the District of Columbia and deem it only necessary to remind you, that although its inhabitants have no voice in the choice of representatives in Congress, they are not the less entitled to a just and liberal consideration in your legislation. My opinions on this subject were more fully expressed in my last annual communication.

Other subjects were brought to the attention of Congress in my last annual message, to which, I would respectfully refer. But there was one of more than ordinary interest to which I again invite your special attention. I allude to the recommendation for the appointment of a commission to settle private claims against the United States. Justice to individuals as well as to the Government imperatively demands that some more convenient and expeditious mode than an appeal to Congress should be adopted.

It is deeply to be regretted that in several instances officers of the government, in attempting to execute the law for the return of the fugitives from labor, have been openly resisted, and their efforts frustrated and defeated by lawless and violent mobs; that in one case such resistance resulted in the death of an estimable citizen, and in others serious injury ensued to those officers and to individuals who were using their endeavors to sustain the laws. Prosecutions have been instituted against the alleged offenders, so far as they could be identified, and are still pending. I have regarded it as my duty, in these cases, to give all aid legally in my power to the enforcement of the laws, and I shall continue to do so wherever and whenever their execution may be resisted.

The act of Congress for the return of fugitives from labor is one required and demanded by the express words of the Constitution.

"The Constitution declares, "That no person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on the claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due." This constitutional provision is equally obligatory upon the Legislative, the Executive, and Judicial Departments of the Government, and upon every citizen of the United States.

Congress, however, must, from necessity, first act upon the subject, by prescribing the proceedings necessary to ascertain that the person is a fugitive, and the means to be used for his restoration to the claimant. This was done by an act passed during the first term of President Washington, which was amended by that enacted by the last Congress, and it now remains for the Executive and Judicial Departments to take care that these laws be faithfully executed. This injunction of the Constitution is as peremptory, and as binding as any other; it stands exactly on the same foundation as that clause which provides for the return of fugitives from justice, or that which declares that no bill of attainder or ex post facto law shall be passed, or that which provides for an equality of taxation, according to the census, or the clause declaring that all duties shall be uniform throughout the United States, or the important provision that the trial of all crimes shall be by jury. These several articles and clauses of the Constitution, all rested on the same authority, must stand or fall together. Some objections have been urged against the details of the act for the return of fugitives from labor; but it is worthy of remark that the main opposition is aimed against the Constitution itself, and proceeds from persons and classes of persons, many of whom declare their wish to see that Constitution overturned. They avow their hostility to any law which shall give full and practical effect to this requirement of the Constitution. Fortunately, the number of the e persons is comparatively small, and is believed to be daily diminishing, but the issue which they present is one which involves the supremacy and even the existence of the Constitution.

Cases have heretofore arisen in which individuals have denied the binding authority of acts of Congress, and even States have proposed to nullify such acts, upon the ground that the Constitution was the supreme law of the land, and that those acts of congress were repugnant to that instrument; but nullification is now aimed, not so much against particular laws as being inconsistent with the Constitution, as against the Constitution itself; and it is not to be disguised that a spirit exists and has been actively at work to rend asunder this Union, which is our cherished inheritence from our revolutionary fathers.

In my last annual message I stated that I considered the series of measures, which had been adopted at the previous session, in reference to the agitation growing out of the Territorial and slavery questions, as a final settlement in principal and substance of the dangerous and exciting subjects which they embraced; and I recommended adherence to the Adjustment established by those measures, until time and experience should demonstrate the necessity of further legislation to guard against evasion or abuse. I was not induced to make this recommendation because I thought those measures perfect, for no human legislation can be perfect. Wide differences and jarring opinions can only be reconciled by yielding something on all sides, and this result had been reached after an angry conflict of many months, in which one part of the country was arrayed against another, and violent convulsion seemed to be imminent. Looking to the interest of the whole country, I felt it to be my duty to seize upon this Compromise as the best that could be obtained amid conflicting interests, and to insist upon it as a final settlement, to be adhered to by all who value the peace and welfare of the country. A year has now elapsed since that recommendation was made. To that recommendation I still adhere, and I congratulate you and the country upon the generation acquiescence in these measures, but the spirit of conciliation which has been manifested in regard to them in all parts of the country, has removed doubts and uncertainties in the minds of thousands of good men concerning the durability of our popular institutions, and given renewed assurance that our liberty and our Union may subsist together for the benefit of this and all succeeding generations.

MILLARD FILLMORE.

WASHINGTON, December 2, 1851.

ORPHANS' COURT SALE.

BY virtue of an order of the Orphans' Court of the county of Erie will be sold at public Vendue on the premises, on Tuesday the 23d day of December next, the following described R. E. property, late of the township of Girard, in said county, deceased, viz: All that certain piece or parcel of land situate in the township of Girard, and bounded as follows, to wit: bounded on the north by lands of Parker and Sayre. Containing about Sixty three acres more or less, having thereon a Dwelling House, barn &c., &c. Also one other piece or parcel of land situate in the township of Girard, and bounded as follows, to wit: bounded on the north by the lands of Parker and Sayre. Containing about Ninety