

The numerous frauds which continue to be practiced upon the revenue by false invoices and undervaluations, constitute an insuperable reason for adopting specific instead of ad valorem duties in all cases where the nature of the commodity does not forbid it. A striking illustration of these frauds will be exhibited in the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, showing the custom house valuation of articles imported under a former law, subject to specific duties, when there was no hindrance to undervaluation, and the custom house valuations of the same articles, under the present system of ad valorem duties, as greatly reduced, so as to leave no doubt of the existence of the most flagrant abuse under the existing law.

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 sufficient accommodations for spectators, and suitable apartments for the committee and officers of the two branches of the Legislature. It was also desirable 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, yet connected with it by corridors. This mode of enlargement will leave the present 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 suitable ceremonies, since which time the work has advanced with commendable rapidity, and the foundations of both wings are now nearly complete.

correcting incongruities, simplifying their language, and reporting 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 architect as he should appoint to execute the same.

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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 1,102,855 miles, at an increased cost of \$647,110.

The gross revenue of the Department for the fiscal year, including the appropriations for the franked matter of Congress, of the Departments, and officers of government, and excluding the foreign postage, collected for and payable to, the British post office, amounted to \$6,727,866 78.

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 settled before January next; and no reliable estimate of the receipts for the present year can yet be made.

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 small services performed by it for the mail service. The recommendation of the Postmaster General, in respect to letter postage, except on letters from and to California and Oregon, was substantially adopted by the last Congress.

The report of the Secretary of the Navy will exhibit the condition of the public service under the supervision of that department. Our naval force afloat during the present year has been actively and usefully employed, in giving protection to our widely extended and increasing commerce and interests in the various quarters of the globe, and our flag has everywhere afforded the security and received the respect inspired by the justice and liberality of our intercourse, and the dignity and power of the nation.

The expedition commanded by Lieutenant De Haven, despatched in search of the British commander, Sir John Franklin, and his companions in the Arctic Seas, returned to New York in the month of October, after having undergone great perils and suffering from an unknown and dangerous navigation, and the rigors of a northern climate, without any satisfactory information of the objects of their search, but with new contributions to science and navigation from the unfrequented polar regions.

The determination of the question of relative rank between the sea and civil officers of the navy, in the various grades of each, will also merit your attention. The failure to provide any substitute, when corporal punishment was abolished for offenses in the navy, has occasioned the convening of numerous courts-martial upon the arrival of vessels in port, and is believed to have an injurious effect upon the discipline and efficiency of the service.

The stone dock in the navy yard at New York, which was ten years in process of construction, has been so far finished as to be surrendered up to the authorities of the yard. The dry dock at Philadelphia is reported as completed, and is expected soon to be tested and delivered over to the agents of the government.

commencing 1st July next, and ending June 30, 1853, are \$7,808,775 82; showing a reduction of \$1,161,402 75.

The Board of Commissioners, to whom the management of the affairs of the Military Asylum, created by the act of the 3d of March last was entrusted, have selected a site for the establishment of an Asylum in the vicinity of this city, which has been approved by me, subject to the production of a satisfactory title.

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and the adoption of a tariff of fees which, as far as practicable, should be uniform, and prescribe a specific compensation for every service which the officer may be required to perform. This subject will be fully presented in the report of the Secretary of the Interior.

My last annual message I gave briefly my reasons for believing that you possessed the constitutional power to improve the harbors of our great lakes and sea coast, and the navigation of our principal rivers, and recommended that appropriations be made for completing such works as had already been commenced, and for commencing such others as might seem to the wisdom of Congress to be of public and general importance.

The protection of our southwestern frontier, and of the adjacent Mexican States, against the Indian tribes within our border has claimed my earnest and constant attention. Congress having failed, at the last session, to adopt my recommendation that an additional regiment of mounted men be specially adapted to that service, should be raised, all that remained to be done was to make the best use of the means at my disposal.

It is hoped that Congress, in the ample opportunity afforded by the present session will thoroughly investigate this important subject, and establish such modes of determination, and such gradations of punishment as are consistent with humanity and the personal rights of individuals, and at the same time shall ensure the most energetic and efficient performance of duty and suppression of crime in our ships of war.

the soil, and of procuring and distributing seeds and plants and other vegetable productions, with instructions in regard to the soil, climate, and treatment, best adapted to their growth, could not fail to be, in the language of Washington, in his last annual message to Congress, a "very cheap instrument of immense national benefit."

Regarding the act of Congress, approved 28th September, 1850, granting bounty lands to persons who had been engaged in the military service of the country, as a great measure of national justice and munificence, an anxious desire has been felt by officers entrusted with its immediate execution, to give prompt effect to its provisions. All the means within their control were, therefore, brought into requisition to expedite the adjudication of claims, and I am gratified to be able to state that nearly one hundred thousand applications have been considered, and about seventy thousand warrants issued within the short space of nine months.

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