money shall be wasted by mismanagement, in its application to the objects designated by law.

Comparisons between the annual expenditures at the present time and what it was ten or twenty years ago are altogether fallacious. The rapid increase of our country in extent and population, renders a corresponding increase of expenditure, to some extent, unavoidable. This is constantly creating new objects of expenditure, and augmenting the amount required for old ones. The true questions then, are, have those objects been unnecessarily multiplied? or, has the amount expended upon any or all of them, been larger than comports with due economy? In accordance with these principles, the heads of the different executive departments of the government, have been instructed to reduce their estimates for the next fiscal year, to the lowest standard consistent with the efficiency of the service, and this duty they have performed in a spirit of just economy. The estimates of the Treasury, War, Navy, and Interior Departments, have each been in some degree reduced; and unless a sudden and unforeseen emergency should arise, it is not anticipated that a deficiency will exist in either within the present or the next fiscal year. The Post Office Department is placed in a peculiar position, different from the other departments, and to this I shall hereafter refer.

I invite Congress to institute a rigid scrutiny to ascertain whether the expenses in all the departments cannot be still further reduced; and I promise them all the aid in my power in pursuing the investigation.

I transmit herewith the reports made to me by the Secretaries of War, of the Navy, of the Interior, and the Postmaster General. They each contain valuable information and important recommendation, to which I invite the attention of Congress.

In my last annual message, I took occasion to recommend the immediate construction of ten small steamers, of light draught, for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of the navy. Congress responded to the recommendation, by authorizing the construction of eight of them. The progress which has been made in executing this authority, is stated in the report of the Secretary of the Navy. I concur with him in the opinion, that a greater number of this class of vessels is necessary, for the purpose of protecting in a more efficient manner the persons and property of American citizens on the high seas, and in foreign countries, as well as in guarding more effectually our own coasts. I accordingly recommend the passage of an act for this purpose.

The suggestions contained in the report of the Secretary of the Interior, especially those in regard to the disposition of the public domain, the pension and bounty land system, the policy toward the Indians, and the amendment of our patent laws, are worthy of the serious consideration of Congress.

The Post Office Department occupies a position very different from that of the other departments. For many years it was the policy of the government to render this a self-sustaining department; and this cannot now be accomplished, in the present condition of the country, nor ought to make as near an approach to it as may be practicable.

The Postmaster General is placed in a most embarrassing position by the existing laws. He is obliged to carry those into effect. He has no choice alternative. He finds, however, that this cannot be done without leaving a deficiency, exceeding on the 30th June, 1858, to more than two millions and a half of dollars; whilst it is estimated that for the present fiscal year they will amount to $6,290,000. These sums are exclusive of the annual appropriation of $700,000 for "compensation for the mail service performed for the two houses of Congress and the other departments and officers of the government in the transportation of free matter."

The cause of those large deficits is mainly attributable to the increased expense of transporting the mails. In 1853 the sum paid for this service was but a fraction above four millions and a quarter. Since that year it has annually increased until 1858 it has reached more than eight millions and a quarter; and for the service of 1859, it is estimated that it will amount to more than ten millions of dollars.

The receipts of the Post Office Department can be made to approach or to equal its expenditure, only by means of the legislation of Congress. In supplying any remedy, care should be taken that the people shall not be deprived of the advantages which they are fairly entitled to enjoy from the Post Office Department. The principal remedies recommended to the consideration of Congress by the Postmaster General, are to restore the former rate of postage upon all letters, to five cents: to substitute for the franking privilege the delivery to those now entitled to enjoy it, of post office stamps for their correspondence, and to direct the proper department, in making contracts for the transportation of the mail, to confine itself to the payment of the sum necessary for this single purpose, without regard to the manner in which it may be carried, or the class of any particular description. Under the present system, the expenses to the government is greatly increased, by requiring that the mail should be carried in such vehicles as will accommodate passengers. This will be done without pay from the department, over all roads where the travel will remunerate the contractors.

These recommendations deserve the grave consideration of Congress.

I would again call your attention to the construction of a Pacific Railroad. Time and reflection have but served to confirm me in the truth and justice of the observations which I made, on this subject, in my last annual message, to which I now leave respectfully to refer.

It is freely admitted, that it would be inexpedient for this government to exercise the power of constructing the Pacific Railroad by its own inspectors and employés. Such a policy would increase the patronage of the executive to a dangerous extent, and introduce a system of jobbing and speculation, which no vigilance on the part of federal authority could either prevent or detect. This can only be done by the keen sight and active self-interest of individuals and private interests. The construction of this road by contract, under the immediate supervision of the proper department of government, would be attended with many difficulties. Capitalists would be disinclined to risk their means in the work, by grants of land or of money, or both, under such conditions and restrictions as would secure the transportation of troops and munitions of war free from any charge, and that of the United States mail at a fair and reasonable price.

The progress of events since the commencement of your last session, has shown how soon difficulties disappear before a firm and determined resolution. At that time, such a road was deemed by wise and patriotic men, to be a visionary project. The great distance to be overcome, and the intervening mountains and deserts in the way, were obstacles which, in the opinion of many, could not be surmounted. Now, after the lapse of but a single year, these obstacles, it has been discovered, are far less formidable than they were supposed to be; and mail stages, with passengers, now pass and repass regularly, twice in each week, by a common wagon road between San Francisco and St. Louis and Memphis, in less than twenty-five days. The service has been as regularly performed, as it was, in former years, between New York and this city.

Whilst disclaiming all authority to appropriate money for the construction of this road, except that derived from the war-making power of the constitution, they are important collateral considerations urging us to undertake the work as speedily as possible.

The first and most momentous of these is, that such a road would be a powerful bond of union between the States East and West of the Rocky mountains. This is so self-evident as to require no illustration.

But again, in a commercial point of view, I consider this the great question of the day. With the Eastern front of our Republic stretching along the Atlantic, and its Western front along the Pacific, if all the parts should be united by a safe, easy, and rapid communication, we must necessarily command a very large proportion of the trade both of Europe and Asia. Our recent treaties with China and Japan will open those rich and populous empires to our commerce; and the history of the world proves, that the nation which has gained possession of the trade with Eastern Asia, has always become wealthy, and powerful. The peculiar geographical position of California and our Pacific possessions, invites American capital and enterprise into this fruitful field. To reap the rich harvest, however, it is an indispensable prerequisite, that we shall first have a railroad, to convey and circulate its products throughout every portion of the Union. Besides, such a railroad through our temperate latitude, which would not be impeded by the frosts and snows of Winter, nor by the tropical heats of Summer, would attract to itself much of the travel and the trade of all nations passing between Europe and Asia.

On the 21st of August last, Lieut. J. N. Maffit, of the United States brig "Dolphin," captured the slaver "Echo," (formerly the "Putnam," of New Orleans,) near Kay Verde, on the coast of Cuba, with more than three hundred African negroes on board. The prize, under the command of Lieut. Bradford of the United States navy, arrived at Charleston on the 27th of August; when the negroes, three hundred and six in number, were delivered into the custody of the United States Marshal for the district of South Carolina. They were first placed in Castle Pinkney, and afterwards in Fort Sumter, for safe-keeping, and were detailed there until the 19th September, when the survivors, two hundred and seventy-one in number, were delivered on board the United States steamer "Niagara," to be transported to the coast of Africa, under the charge of the agent of the United States, pursuant to the provisions of the Act of 3d March, 1819, "in addition to the acts prohibiting the slave trade." Under the 2d section of this act, the President is "authorized to make such regulations and arrangements as he may deem expedient, for the safe keeping, support, and removal beyond the limits of the United States, of all such negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color" captured by vessels of the United States, as may be delivered to the Marshal of the district into which they are brought; "and to appoint a proper person or persons residing upon the coast of Africa, as agent or agents for receiving the negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color delivered from on board vessels seized in the prosecution of the slave trade by commanders of the United States armed vessels."

A doubt immediately arose as to the true construction of this act. It is quite clear from its terms that the President was authorized to provide "for the safe keeping, support, and removal" of those negroes up till the time of their delivery to the agent on the coast of Africa; but no express provision was made for their protection and support after they had reached the place of their destination. Still, an agent was appointed to receive them in Africa, and he could not have been supposed that Congress intended to desert them at the moment they were landed, and turn them loose on that inhospitable coast to perish for want of food, or become the victims of the slave trade. Such could not be the intention of Congress, the expenses of an agent to receive them, who is required to reside on the coast, was unnecessary, if they were to be turned loose to starve or perish.

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