

MESSAGE

OF
PRESIDENT TYLER,

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

We have continued cause for expressing our gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for the benefits and blessings which our country, under his kind Providence, has enjoyed during the past year. Notwithstanding the exciting scenes through which we have passed, nothing has occurred to disturb the general peace, or to derange the harmony of our political system. The great moral spectacle has been exhibited of a nation, approximating in number to 20,000,000 of people, having performed the high and important function of electing their Chief Magistrate for the term of four years, without the commission of any acts of violence, or the manifestation of a spirit of insubordination to the laws. The great and inestimable right of suffrage has been exercised by all who were invested with it, under the laws of the different States, in a spirit dictated alone by a desire, in the selection of the agent, to advance the interests of the country, and to place beyond jeopardy the institutions under which it is our happiness to live. That the deepest interest has been manifested by all our countrymen in the result of the election is not less true, than highly creditable to them. Vast multitudes have assembled, from time to time at various places, for the purpose of canvassing the merits and pretensions of those who were presented for their suffrages, but no armed soldiery has been necessary to restrain, within proper limits, the popular zeal, or to prevent violent outbreaks.

A principle much more controlling was found in the love of order and obedience to the laws, which, with mere individual exceptions, every where possesses the American mind, and controls with an influence far more powerful than hosts of armed men. We cannot dwell upon this picture without recognizing in it that deep and devoted attachment to the part of the people, to the institutions under which we live, which proclaims their perpetuity. The great objection which has always prevailed against the election, by the people, of their Chief Executive officer, has been the apprehension of tumults and disorders, which might involve in ruin the entire Government. A security against this is found not only in the fact before alluded to, but in the additional fact that we live under a confederacy embracing already twenty-six States; no one of which has power to control the election. The popular vote in each State is taken at the time appointed by the laws, and such vote is announced by the Electoral College, without reference to the decision of the other States.

The right of suffrage, and the mode of conducting the election, is regulated by the laws of each State; and the election is distinctly federal in all its prominent features. Thus it is that unlike what might be the results under a consolidated system, riotous proceedings, should they prevail, could only affect the elections in single States, without disturbing, to any dangerous extent, the tranquility of others. The great experiment of a political confederacy—each member of which is supreme—as to all matters appertaining to its local interests, and its internal peace and happiness—while by a voluntary compact with others, it confides to the united power of all, the protection of its citizens, in matters not domestic—has been so far crowned with complete success.

The world has witnessed its rapid growth in wealth and population; and under the guide and direction of a superintending Providence, the developments of the past may be regarded but as the shadowing forth of the mighty future. In the bright prospects of that future, we shall find, as patriots and philanthropists, the highest inducements to cultivate and cherish a love of union, and to frown down every measure or effort which may be made to alienate the States, or the people of the States, in sentiment and feeling, from each other. A rigid and close adherence to the terms of our political compact, and, above all, a sacred observance of the guarantees of the constitution, will preserve union on a foundation which cannot be shaken; while personal liberty is placed beyond hazard or jeopardy.

The guarantee of religious freedom, of the freedom of the press, of the liberty of speech, of the trial by jury, of the habeas corpus, and of the domestic institutions of each of the States—leaving the private citizen in the full exercise of the high and enabling attributes of his nature, and to each State the privilege which can only be judiciously exercised by itself, of consulting the means best calculated to advance its own happiness; these are the great and important guarantees of the Constitution, which the lovers of liberty most cherish and the advocates of union most ever cultivate. Preserving these, and avoiding all interpolations by forced construction, under the guise of an imagined expediency upon the Constitution, the influence of our political system is destined to be as actively and as beneficially felt on the distant shores of the Pacific as it is now on those of the Atlantic Ocean.

The only formidable impediments in the way of its successful expansion (time and space) are so far in the progress of modification, by the improvements of the age, as to render no longer speculative the ability of Representatives from that remote region to come up to the Capital, so that their constituents shall participate in all the benefits of Federal legislation. Thus it is, that in the progress of time, the inestimable principles of civil liberty will be enjoyed by millions yet unborn, and the great benefits of our system of Government be extended to now distant and uninhabited regions. In view of the vast wilderness yet to be reclaimed, we may well invite the lover of freedom, of every land, to take up his abode among us, and assist us in the great work of advancing the standard of civilization, and giving a wider spread to the arts and refinements of cultivated life. Our prayers should evermore be offered up to the Father of the Universe for his wisdom to direct us in the path of our duty, so as to enable us to consummate these high purposes.

One of the strongest objections which has been urged against confederacies, by writers on Government, is, the liability of the members to be tampered with by foreign Governments, or the people of foreign States, either in their local affairs, or in such as affected the peace of others, or endangered the safety of the whole confederacy. We cannot hope to be entirely exempt from such attempts on our peace and safety. The United States are becoming so important in population and resources not to attract the observation of other nations. It therefore may, in the progress of time, occur that opinions entirely abstract in the States in which they may prevail, and in no degree affecting their domestic institutions, may be artfully, but secretly encouraged, with a view to undermine the Union. Such opinions may become the foundation of political parties, until at last the conflict of opinion, producing an alienation

of friendly feeling among the people of the different States, may involve in one general destruction the happy institutions under which we live.

It should ever be borne in mind, that what is true in regard to individuals, is equally so in regard to States. An interference of one in the affairs of another is the fruitful source of family dissensions and neighborhood disputes; and the same cause affects the peace, happiness and prosperity of States. It may be most devoutly hoped that the good sense of the American people will ever be ready to repel all such attempts, should they ever be made.

The President here refers to our foreign relations, which remain without change.

The negotiations respecting Oregon are still pending. The establishment of military posts along the line of travel, to protect the emigrants to that country, is again recommended.

The settlement and adjustment of claims for seizures of American vessels by British ships are not yet completed.

Our Government continues to receive assurances of the most friendly feelings on the part of the various European powers.

The failure of the Senate to act upon the Zollverein Treaty has had the effect of virtually rejecting. The Executive have given instructions to our Minister at Berlin to re-open the negotiations so far as to obtain an extension of time for the exchange of ratifications; but the Minister has, so far, been unsuccessful in his efforts.

Belgium has by an "arrete royal," issued in July last, assimilated the flag of the United States to her own, as far as the direct trade between the two countries is concerned. This measure will prove of great service to our shipping interest, the trade having heretofore been carried on chiefly in foreign bottoms.

No definitive intelligence has yet been received from our Minister, of the conclusion of a treaty with the Chinese Empire; but enough is known to induce the strongest hope that the mission will be crowned with success.

Our relations with Brazil are of the most friendly character.

Claims for indemnity against New Grenada and Chili are still unsettled.

The Convention with the Republic of Peru, providing for the adjustment of the claims of citizens of the United States against that Republic, is again submitted to the attention of Congress.

In my last Annual Message, I felt it to be my duty to make known to Congress, in terms both plain and emphatic, my opinion in regard to the war which has so long existed between Mexico and Texas; which, since the battle of San Jacinto, has consisted altogether of predatory incursions, attended by circumstances revolting to humanity. I repeat now, what I then said, that, after eight years of feeble and ineffectual efforts to recover Texas, it was time that the war should have ceased. The U. States had a direct interest in the question. The contiguity of the two nations to our territory was but too well calculated to involve our peace. Unjust suspicions were engendered in the mind of one or the other of the belligerents against us; and as a necessary consequence, American interests were made to suffer, and our peace became daily endangered.

In addition to which, it must have been obvious to all, that the exhaustion produced by the war, subjected both Mexico and Texas to the interference of other powers; which, without the interposition of this Government, might eventuate in the most serious injury to the United States. This Government, from time to time, exerted its friendly offices to bring about a termination of hostilities, upon terms honorable alike to both the belligerents. Its efforts in this behalf proved unavailing. Mexico seemed, almost without an object, to persevere in the war, and no other alternative was left the Executive but to take advantage of the well known disposition of Texas, and to invite her to enter into a treaty for annexing her territory to that of the United States.

Since your last session, Mexico has threatened to renew the war, and has either made, or proposes to make, formidable preparations for invading Texas. She has issued decrees and proclamations, preparatory to the commencement of hostilities, full of threats, revolting to humanity, and which, if carried into effect, would arouse the attention of all Christendom. This new demonstration of feeling, there is too much reason to believe, has been produced in consequence of the negotiation of the late treaty of annexation with Texas. The Executive, therefore, could not be indifferent to such proceedings; and it felt it to be due, as well to itself as to the honor of the country, that a strong representation should be made to the Mexican Government upon this subject. This was accordingly done; as will be seen by the copy of the accompanying despatch from the Secretary of State to the United States Envoy at Mexico. Mexico has no right to jeopard the peace of the world by urging any longer an useless and fruitless contest. Such a condition of things would not be tolerated on the European continent. Why should it be on this?

A war of desolation, such as is now threatened by Mexico, cannot be waged without involving our peace and tranquility. It is idle to believe that such a war could be locked upon with indifference by our own citizens, inhabiting adjoining States; and our neutrality would be violated, in despite of all efforts on the part of the Government to prevent it. The country is settled by emigrants from the United States, under invitations held out to them by Spain and Mexico. Those emigrants have left behind them friends and relatives who would not fail to sympathize with them in their difficulties, and who would be led by those sympathies to participate in their struggles, however energetic the action of the Government to prevent it. Nor would the numerous and formidable bands of Indians, the most warlike to be found in any land, which occupy the extensive regions contiguous to the States of Arkansas and Missouri, and who are in possession of large tracts of country within the limits of Texas, be likely to remain passive. The inclination of those numerous tribes lend them invariably to war whenever pretexts exist.

Mexico had no just ground of displeasure against this Government or people for negotiating the treaty. What interest of hers was affected by the treaty? She was despoiled of nothing, since Texas was forever lost to her. The independence of Texas was recognized by several of the leading powers of the earth. She was free to treat—free to adopt her own line of policy—free to take the course which she believed was best calculated to secure her happiness. Her Government and people decided on annexation to the U. States; and the Executive saw, in the acquisition of such a territory, the means

of advancing their permanent happiness and glory. What principle of good faith then was violated? What rule of political morals trampled under foot? So far as Mexico herself was concerned, the measure should have been regarded by her as highly beneficial. Her inability to reconquer Texas had been exhibited, I repeat, by eight—now nine—years of fruitless and ruinous contest.

In the mean time, Texas has been growing in population and resources. Emigration has flowed into her territory, from all parts of the world, in a current which continues to increase in strength. Mexico requires a permanent boundary between that young republic and herself. Texas at no distant day, if she continues separate and detached from the United States, will inevitably seek to consolidate her strength by adding to her domain the contiguous provinces of Mexico. The spirit of revolt from the control of the Central Government has, heretofore, manifested itself in some of those provinces; and it is fair to infer that they would be inclined to take the first favorable opportunity to proclaim their independence, and to form close alliances with Texas. The war would thus be endless; or, if cessations of hostilities should occur, they would only endure for a season.

The interests of Mexico, therefore, could in nothing be better consulted than in a peace with her neighbors, which would result in the establishment of a permanent boundary. Upon the ratification of the treaty, the Executive was prepared to treat with her on the most liberal basis. Hence the boundaries of Texas were left undefined by the treaty. The Executive proposed to settle these upon terms that all the world should have pronounced just and reasonable. No negotiation upon that point could have been undertaken between the United States and Mexico, in advance of the ratification of the treaty. We should have had no right—no power—no authority, to have conducted such a negotiation; and to have undertaken it, would have been an assumption equally revolting to the pride of Mexico and Texas, and subjecting us to the charge of arrogance; while to have proposed in advance of annexation, to satisfy Mexico for any contingent interest she might have in Texas, would have been to treat Texas, not as an independent power, but as a mere dependency of Mexico.

This assumption could not have been acted on by the Executive, without setting at defiance your own solemn declaration that that Republic was an independent State. Mexico had, it is true, threatened war against the United States, in the event the Treaty of Annexation was ratified. The Executive could not permit itself to be influenced by this threat. It represented in this the spirit of our people, who are ready to sacrifice much for peace, but nothing to intimidation. A war under any circumstances, is greatly to be deplored, and the United States is the last nation to desire it; but, as the condition of peace, it is required of us to forego the unquestionable right of treating with an independent power, of our own Continent, upon matters highly interesting to both, and that upon a naked and unsupported pretension of claim by a third Power to control the free will of the Power with whom we treat—by voted as we may be to peace, and anxious to cultivate friendly relations with the whole world, the Executive does not hesitate to say that the People of the United States would be ready to brave all consequences, sooner than submit to such condition.

But no apprehensions of war was entertained by the Executive; and I must express frankly the opinion that, had the Treaty been ratified by the Senate, it would have been followed by a prompt settlement to the entire satisfaction of the two countries. Seeing, then, that new preparations for hostile invasion of Texas were about to be adopted by Mexico, and that these were brought about because Texas had adopted the suggestions of the Executive upon the subject of Annexation, it could not passively have looked on, and permitted a war, threatened to be accompanied by every act marking a barbarian age, to be waged against her because she had done so.

Other considerations of a controlling character influenced the cause of the Executive. The treaty which had been negotiated, had failed to receive the ratification of the Senate. One of the chief objections which were urged against it, was found to consist in the fact that the question of annexation had not been submitted to the ordeal of public opinion in the United States. However untenable such an objection was esteemed to be, in view of the unquestionable power of the Executive to negotiate the treaty, and the great and lasting interests involved in the question, I felt it to be my duty to submit the whole subject to Congress as the best expatriate of popular sentiment. No denunciation having been taken on the subject by Congress, the question referred itself directly to the decision of the States and the people. The great popular election which has just terminated afforded the best opportunity of ascertaining the will of the States and people upon it.

Pending that issue, it became the imperative duty of the Executive to inform Mexico that the question of annexation was still before the American people, and that, until their decision was pronounced, any serious invasion of Texas would be regarded as an attempt to forestall their judgment, and could not be looked upon with indifference. I am most happy to inform you that no such invasion has taken place, and I trust that what your action may be upon it, Mexico will see the importance of deciding the matter by a resort to peaceful expedients, in preference to those of arms. The decision of the People and the States, on this great and interesting subject, has been decisively manifested. The question of annexation has been presented unobscured to their consideration. But the treaty, itself, all collateral and incidental issues, which were calculated to divide and distract the public councils were carefully avoided—These were left to the wisdom of the future to determine. I presented, I repeat, the isolated question of annexation; and in that form it has been submitted to the ordeal of public sentiment. A controlling majority of the People, and a large majority of the States, have decided in favor of immediate annexation.

Instructions have thus come up to both branches of Congress, from their respective constituents, in terms the most emphatic. It is the will of both the people and the States, that Texas shall be annexed to the Union promptly and immediately. It may be hoped that, in carrying into execution the public will, thus declared, all collateral issues may be avoided. Future Legislatures can best decide as to the number of States which should be formed out of the territory, when the time has arrived for deciding that question. So with all others. By the treaty, the United States assumed the payment of the debts of Texas, to an amount not exceeding \$10,000,000, to be paid, with the exception of a sum falling short of \$400,000, exclusively out of the proceeds of the sales of her public lands. We could not, with honor, take the lands, without assuming the full payment of all incumbrances upon them.

Nothing has occurred since your last session, to induce a doubt that the disposition of Texas remains unaltered. No intimation of an altered determination, on the part of her Government and People, has been furnished to the Executive. She still desires to throw herself under the protection of our laws, and to partake of the blessings of the federative system; while every American interest would seem to require it. The extension of our commerce and foreign trade, to an amount almost incalculable—the enlargement of the market for our manufactures—a constantly growing market for agricultural productions—salutary to our frontiers, and additional strength and stability to the Union—these are the results which would rapidly develop themselves, upon the consummation of the measure of annexation. In such event, I will not doubt that Mexico would find her true interest to consist in meeting the advances of this Government in a spirit of amity.

Nor do I apprehend any serious complaint from any other quarter; so sufficient ground exists for such complaint. We should interfere in no respect with the rights of any other nation. There cannot be gathered from the act, any design on our part to do so with the possessions on this Continent. We have interposed no impediments in the way of such acquisitions of territory, large and extensive as many of them are, as the leading powers of Europe have made from time to time, in every part of the world. We seek no conquest made by war. No intrigue will have been resorted to, or acts of diplomacy essayed, to accomplish the annexation of Texas, free and independent herself, she asks to be received into the Union. It is a question for our own decision, whether she shall be received or not.

The two Governments having already agreed, through their respective organs, on the terms of annexation, I would recommend their adoption by Congress in the form of a joint resolution, or act, to be perfected and made binding on the two countries, when adopted in like manner by the Government of Texas.

In order that the subject may be fully presented in all its bearings, the correspondence which has taken place, in reference to it, since the adjournment of Congress, between the U. States, Texas and Mexico, is herewith transmitted.

The amendments proposed by the Senate to the Convention concluded between the United States and Mexico on the 20th of November, 1843, have been transmitted through our Minister to the concurrence of the Mexican Government; but, although urged thereto, no action has yet been had on the subject; nor has any answer been given which would authorize a favorable conclusion in the future.

The Decree of September, 1843, in relation to the retail trade, the order for the expulsion of foreigners, and that of a more recent date in regard to passports—all of which are considered as in violation of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the two countries—have led to a correspondence of considerable length between the Minister for Foreign Relations and our Representative at Mexico, but without any satisfactory result. They remain still unadjusted; and many and serious inconveniences have already resulted to our citizens in consequence of them.

Questions growing out of the act of disarming a body of Texan troops under the command of Mr. Shively, by an officer in the service of the U. States, acting under the orders of our Government; and the forcible entry into the Custom House at Breyar's Landing, on Red River, by certain citizens of the U. States, and taking away therefrom the goods seized by the Collector of the Customs, as forfeited under the laws of Texas, have been adjusted, so far as the powers of the Executive extend. The correspondence between the two Governments in reference to both subjects, will be found amongst the accompanying documents. It contains a full statement of all the facts and circumstances, with the views taken on both sides, and the principles on which the questions have been adjusted. It trusts for Congress to make the necessary appropriation to carry the arrangement into effect, which I respectfully recommend.

The greatly improved condition of the Treasury affords a subject for general congratulation. The paralysis which had fallen on trade and commerce, and which subjected the Government to the necessity of resorting to loans, and the issue of Treasury notes, to a large amount, has passed away; and after the payment of upwards of \$7,000,000, on account of the interest, and in redemption of more than \$5,000,000 of the public debt, which falls due on the 1st of January next, and setting apart upwards of \$2,000,000 for the payment of outstanding Treasury notes, and the meeting an installment of the debt of the corporate cities of the District of Columbia, an estimated surplus of upwards of \$7,000,000, over and above the existing appropriations, will remain in the Treasury at the close of the fiscal year.

Should the Treasury notes continue outstanding, as heretofore, that surplus will be considerably augmented. Although all interest has ceased upon them, and the Government has invited their return to the Treasury, yet they remain outstanding; affording great facilities to commerce, and establishing the fact that, under a well regulated system of finance, the Government has resources within itself, which render it independent in time of need, not only of private loans, but also of bank facilities.

The only remaining subject of regret is, that the remaining stocks of the Government do not fall due at an earlier day than its control. As it is, it may be well worthy the consideration of Congress, whether the law establishing the sinking fund—under the operation of which the debts of the Revolution and the last war with Great Britain were, to a great extent, extinguished—should not, with proper modifications, (so as to prevent an accumulation of surpluses, and limited in amount to a specific sum,) be re-enacted.

Such provisions, which would authorize the Government to go into the market for a purchase of its own stock, on fair terms, would serve to maintain its credit at the highest point, and prevent, to a great extent, those fluctuations in the price of its securities, which might, under other circumstances, affect its credit. No apprehension of this sort is, at this moment, entertained; since the stocks of the Government which but two years ago were offered for sale to capitalists, at home and abroad, at a depreciation and could find no purchasers, are now greatly above par in the hands of the holders; but a wise and prudent forecast admonishes us to place beyond the reach of contingency the public credit.

It must also be a matter of unmingled gratification, that under the existing financial system, resting upon the act of 1789, and the resolution of 1816—the currency of the country has attained a state of perfect soundness; and the rates of exchange between different parts of the Union, which, in 1841, denoted, by their enor-

mous amount, the great depreciation, and, in fact, worthlessness of the currency in most of the States, are now reduced to little more than the mere expense of transporting specie from place to place, and the risk incidental to the operation.

In a new country like that of the United States—where so many inducements are held out for population—the depositories of the surplus revenue, consisting of Banks of any description, when it reaches any considerable amount, require the closest vigilance on the part of the Government.

All banking institutions, under whatever denomination they may pass, are governed by an almost exclusive regard to the interest of the stockholders. That interest consists in the augmentation of profits, the return of dividends, and a large surplus revenue entrusted to their custody is but too apt to lead to excessive loans and to extravagantly large issues of paper. As a necessary consequence, prices are continually increased, and the speculative mania every where seizes upon the public mind. A fictitious state of prosperity for a season exists, and, in the language of the day, money becomes plenty. Contracts are entered into by individuals, resting on this unsubstantial state of things, but the delusion speedily passes away, and the country is overcome by an indebtedness so weighty as to overwhelm many, and to visit every department of industry with great and ruinous embarrassment.

The greatest vigilance becomes necessary on the part of Government to guard against this state of things. The depositories must be given distinctly to understand that the favors of the Government will be altogether withdrawn, or substantially diminished, if its revenues shall be regarded as additions to their banking capital, or as the foundation of an enlarged circulation. The Government, through its revenue has, at all times, an important part to perform in connection with the currency; and it greatly depends upon its vigilance and care, whether the country be involved in embarrassments similar to those which it has had recently to encounter; or, aided by the action of the Treasury, shall be preserved in a sound and healthy condition.

The dangers to be guarded against are greatly augmented by too large a surplus of revenue. When that surplus greatly exceeds in amount what shall be required by a wise and prudent forecast to meet unforeseen contingencies, the legislature itself may come to be seized with a disposition to indulge in extravagant appropriations to objects many of which may, and most probably would be found to conflict with the Constitution. A fanciful expediency is elevated above constitutional authority, and a reckless and wasteful extravagance but too certainly follows. The important power of taxation, which, when exercised in its most restricted form, is a burden on labor and production, is resorted to, under various pretexts, for purposes having no affinity to the motives which dictated its grant, and the extravagance of Government stimulates individual extravagance, until the spirit of a wild and ill-regulated speculation invades one and all in its unfortunate results. In view of such faint consequences, it may be held down as an axiom, founded on moral and political truth, that no greater taxes should be imposed than are necessary for an economical administration of the Government, and that whatever exists beyond should be reduced or modified.

This doctrine does in no way conflict with the exercise of a sound discrimination in the selection of the article to be taxed, which a due regard to the public weal would at all times suggest to the Legislature. It leaves the range of selection undefined; and such selections should always be made with an eye to the great interests of the country. Composed as is the Union, of separate and independent States, a patriotic Legislature will not fail in consulting the interests of the whole, to adopt such courses as will be best calculated to advance the harmony of the whole; and thus insure that permanency in the policy of the Government without which all efforts to advance the public prosperity are vain and fruitless. This great and vitally important task rests with Congress; and the Executive can do no more than recommend the general principles which should govern in its execution.

I refer you to the report of the Secretary of War for an exhibition of the condition of the army; and recommend to you, as well worthy your best consideration, many of the suggestions therein. The Secretary in no degree exaggerates the great importance of pressing forward without delay, in the work of erecting and finishing the fortifications, to which he particularly alludes. Much has been done towards placing our cities and road-heads in a state of security against the incursions of hostile attack, within the last four years, but considering the new dangers which have been, of late years, employed in the profligating of ships, and the formidable implements of destruction which have been brought into service, we cannot be too active or vigilant in preparing and perfecting the means of defence. I refer you, also, to his report for a full statement of the condition of the Indian tribes within our jurisdiction.

The Executive has labored no effort in carrying into effect the well-established policy of the Government, which contemplates a removal of all the tribes residing within the limits of the several States, beyond those limits; and it is now enabled to contemplate the removal of the great and nearly consummation of this object. Many of the tribes have already made great progress in the arts of civilized life; and through the operation of the schools established among them, aided by the efforts of the pious men of various religious denominations—who devote themselves to the task of their improvement—we may fondly hope that the remnants of the formidable tribes which were the masters of this country, will, in their transition from the savage state, to a condition of refinement and cultivation, add another bright trophy to adorn the labors of a well-directed philanthropy.

The accompanying report of the Secretary of the Navy, will explain to you the situation of that branch of the service. The present organization of the Department imparts to its operations great efficiency; but there are faults in the propriety of a division of the Bureau of Construction, Equipment, and Repair, into two Bureaux. The subjects are now arranged, are incongruous, and require to a certain extent, information and qualifications altogether dissimilar.

The operations of the squadron on the coast of Africa have been conducted with all due attention to the object which led to its organization; and I am happy to say that the officers and crews have enjoyed the best possible health, under the system adopted by the officer in command. It is believed the U. States is the only nation which has, by its laws, subjected to the punishment of death, as pirates, those who may be engaged in the slave-trade. A similar enactment on the part of other nations would not fail to be attended by beneficial results.

In consequence of the difficulties which have existed in the way of securing titles for the necessary grounds, operations have not yet been commenced towards the establishment of the Navy Yard at Memphis. So soon as the title is perfected, no further delay will be permitted to intervene. It is well worthy of your consideration

whether Congress should not direct the establishment of a rope-walk, in connection with the contemplated Navy Yard, as a measure not only of economy, but as highly useful and necessary. The only establishment of the sort now connected with the service is located at Boston; and the advantages of a similar establishment, convenient to the hemp-growing region, must be apparent to all.

The report of the Secretary presents other matters to your consideration, of an important character in connection with the service.

In referring you to the accompanying report of the Postmaster General, it affords me continued cause of gratification to be able to advert to the fact, that the affairs of the Department, for the last four years, have been so conducted as, from its unimpaired resources, to meet its large expenditures. On my coming into office a debt of nearly \$200,000 existed against the Department, which Congress discharged by an appropriation from the Treasury. The Department on the 1st of March next, will be found, under the management of the present efficient head, free of debt or embarrassment, which could only have been done by the observance and practice of the greatest vigilance and economy. The laws have contemplated, throughout, that the Department should be self-sustained; but it may become necessary, with the wisest regard to public interests, to introduce amendments and alterations in the system.

There is a strong desire manifested in many quarters, so to alter the tariff of letter postage as to reduce the amount of tax at present imposed. Should such a measure be carried into effect, to the full extent desired, it can well be doubted but that, for the first year of its operation, a diminished revenue would be collected, the supply of which would necessarily constitute a charge upon the Treasury. Whether such a result would be desirable, it will be for Congress, in its wisdom, to determine. It may be some consolation, that radical alterations in any system should rather be brought about gradually, than by sudden changes; and by pursuing this prudent policy in the reduction of letter postage, the Department might still sustain itself through the revenue which would accrue by the increase of letters. The state and condition of the public Treasury has, heretofore, been such as to have precluded the recommendation of any material change. The difficulties upon this head have, however, ceased, and a large discretion is now left to the Government.

I cannot too strongly urge the policy of authorizing the establishment of a line of steamships regularly to ply between this country and foreign parts, and upon our own coast, and the transportation of the mail. The example of the British Government is well worthy of imitation in this respect. The belief is strongly entertained that the emoluments arising from the transportation of mail matter to foreign countries, would operate of itself as an inducement to cause individual enterprise to undertake that branch of the task; and the remuneration of the Government would consist in the addition readily made to our steam navy in case of emergency by the ships so employed.

Should this suggestion meet your approval, the propriety of placing such ships under the command of experienced officers of the Navy will not escape your observation. The application of steam to the purpose of naval warfare, is cogently recommended by an extensive steam marine as important in estimating the defenses of the country. Fortunately this may be attained by us to a great extent without incurring any large amount of expenditure. Steam vessels to be engaged in the transportation of the mails on our principal water-courses, lakes, and parts of our coast, could also be constructed as to be efficient as war vessels when needed, and in order to repel attacks from abroad. We are indebted to the fact, that other nations have already added large numbers of steamships to their naval armaments, and that this new and powerful agent is destined to revolutionize the condition of the world. It becomes the United States, therefore, looking to their security, to adopt a similar policy; and the plan suggested will enable them to do so at a small comparative cost.

I take the greatest pleasure in hearing testimony to the zeal and untiring industry which has characterized the conduct of the members of the Executive Cabinet. Each, in his appropriate sphere, has rendered the most efficient aid in carrying on the Government, and it will not, I trust, appear out of place for me to bear this public testimony. The cardinal objects which should ever be held in view by those entrusted with the administration of the public affairs, are, rigidity, and without favour or affection, so to interpret the national will, expressed in the laws, as that justice should be done to none—justice to all. This has been the rule upon which they have acted; and thus it is believed that few cases, if any, exist, wherein our fellow citizens, who from time to time have been drawn to the Seat of Government for the settlement of their transactions with the Government, have gone away dissatisfied.

Where the testimony has been perfected, and was esteemed satisfactory, their claims have been promptly audited; and this in the absence of all favoritism or partiality. The Government which is not just to its own people, can neither claim their affection nor the respect of the world. At the same time the closest attention has been paid to those matters which relate more immediately to the great concerns of the country. Order and efficiency in each branch of the public service, have prevailed, accompanied by a system of the most rigid responsibility on the part of the executing and disbursing agents. The fact in illustration of the truth of this remark, deserves to be noticed, that the revenues of the Government, amounting in the last four years to upwards of \$120,000,000, have been collected and disbursed, through the numerous Governmental agents, without the loss, by default, of an amount of serious commentary.

The appropriations made by Congress for the improvement of the rivers of the West, and the harbors, on the lakes, are in a course of judicious expenditure under suitable agents, and are destined, it is to be hoped, to realize all the benefits designed to be accomplished by Congress. I cannot, however, sufficiently impress upon Congress the great importance of withholding appropriations from improvements which are not ascertained, by previous examination and survey, to be necessary for the shelter and protection of trade from the dangers of storms and tempests. Without this precaution, the expenditures are but too apt to enure to the benefit of individuals—without reference to the only consideration which can render them constitutional—the public interest and the general good.

I cannot too earnestly urge upon you the interests of this District, over which, by the Constitution, Congress has exclusive jurisdiction. It would be deeply to be regretted should there be, at any time, ground to complain of neglect on the part of a community which, detached as it is from the parental care of the State of Virginia and Maryland, can only expect aid from Congress as its local legislature. Amongst the subjects which claim your attention, is the prompt organization of an asylum for the insane, who may be found, from time to time, insouaring within the District. Such course is also demanded by considerations which apply to branches of the public service. For the necessities in this behalf, I invite your particular attention to the report of the Secretary of the Navy.

I have, thus, gentlemen of the two Houses of Congress, presented you a true and faithful picture of the condition of public affairs, both for