

provement in character of seamen, and for the re-organization and gradual increase of the navy, I deem eminently worthy of your favorable consideration. The principles which have controlled our policy in relation to the permanent military force, by sea and land, are sound, consistent with the theory of our system, and should by no means be disregarded. But limiting the force to the objects particularly set forth in the preceding part of this message, we should not overlook the present magnitude and prospective extension of our commercial marine, nor fail to give due weight to the fact, that, besides the two thousand miles of Atlantic seaboard, we have now a Pacific coast, stretching from Mexico to the British possessions in the north, teeming with wealth and enterprise, and demanding the constant presence of ships-of-war. The augmentation of the navy has not kept pace with the duties properly and profitably assigned to it in time of peace, and it is inadequate for a large field of its operations, not merely in the present but still more in the progressively increasing exigencies of the wealth and commerce of the United States. I cordially approve of the proposed apprenticeship system for our national vessels, recommended by the Secretary of the Navy.

The occurrence, during the last few months, of marine disasters of the most tragic nature, involving great loss of human life, has produced intense emotions of sympathy and sorrow throughout the country. It may well be doubted whether all these calamitous events are wholly attributable to the necessary and inevitable dangers of the sea. The merchants, mariners, and ship-builders of the United States, are, it is true, unsurpassed in far-reaching enterprise, skill, intelligence, and courage by any others in the world. But, with the increasing amount of our commercial tonnage in the aggregate, and the larger size and improved equipment of the ships now constructed, a deficiency in the supply of reliable seamen begins to be very seriously felt. The invasions may, perhaps, be met, in part, by due regulation for the introduction into our merchant ships of improved apprentices; while, it would afford useful and eligible opportunities to numerous young men, who have a tendency to make the character of seamen as a class. And it is necessary, in view of existing regulations, whether it may not be desirable to revise the existing laws for the maintenance of discipline at sea, upon which the security of life and property on the occasion must so greatly depend.

Although much attention has already been given by Congress to the proper construction and arrangement of steam vessels and all passenger ships, still it is believed that the achievements of scientific and mechanical skill in this direction have not been exhausted.

No good reason exists for the marked distinction, which appears upon our statutes between the laws for protecting life and property at sea, and those for protecting them on land.

In most of the States severe penalties are provided to punish conductors of trains, engineers, and others employed in the transportation of persons by rail, or by steam-boats on rivers. Why should not the same principle be applied to acts of insubordination, cowardice, or other misconduct on the masters and mariners producing injury or death to passengers on the high seas, beyond the jurisdiction of any of the States, and where such delinquencies can be reached only by the power of Congress? The whole subject is earnestly commended to your consideration.

The report of the Postmaster General, to which you are referred for many interesting details relating to this important and rapidly extending branch of the public service, shows that the expenditure of the year ending June 30, 1854, including one hundred and thirty-three thousand four hundred and eighty-three dollars of balance due to foreign offices, amounted to eight million seven hundred and eleven thousand nine hundred and seven dollars. The gross receipts during the same period amounted to six million nine hundred and fifty-five thousand five hundred and eighty-six dollars, exhibiting an expenditure over income of one million seven hundred and fifty-five thousand three hundred and twenty-nine dollars, and a diminution of deficiency, as compared with the last year, of three hundred and sixty-eight thousand seven hundred and fifty-six dollars. The increase of the gross receipts during the same period is attributed to six million nine hundred and fifty-five thousand five hundred and eighty-six dollars, exhibiting an expenditure over income of one million seven hundred and fifty-five thousand three hundred and twenty-nine dollars, and a diminution of deficiency, as compared with the last year, of three hundred and sixty-eight thousand seven hundred and fifty-six dollars.

It was my intention to present, on this occasion, some suggestions regarding internal improvements by the general government, which went of time at the close of the last session presented my submitting on the return of the House of Representatives, with objections of the bill entitled, "an act making appropriations for the reparation, completion and completion of certain public works heretofore commenced under authority of law," but the state in this communication, already occupied with other matters of immediate public exigency, constrains me to reserve that subject for a special message, which will be transmitted to the two houses of Congress at an early day.

The judicial establishment of the United States requires modification, and certain reforms in the manner of conducting the legal business of the government are also much needed; but as I have addressed you upon both of these subjects at length before, I have only to call your attention to the suggestions, which made.

My former recommendations, in relation to suitable provision for various objects of deep interest to the inhabitants of the District of Columbia, are renewed. Many of these objects partake largely of a national character, and are important, independently of their relation to the prosperity of the only considerable organized community in the Union, entirely unrepresented in Congress.

I have thus presented suggestions of such subjects as appear to me to be of particular interest or importance, and therefore most worthy of consideration during the short remaining period allotted to the labor of the present Congress.

Our forefathers of the united thirteen colonies, in acquiring their independence, and in founding the Republic of the United States, were compelled, faithfully to all business connected with the government, to do so by their own efforts, and by their own industry, and writing of all kinds will be done.

By so doing their interest may be better protected.

SCOTT, JOHNSTON & CO., April 1, 1854.

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