

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

FELLOW CITIZENS OF THE SENATE AND OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The past has been a eventful year and will be hereafter referred to as a marked epoch in the history of the world. While we have been happily preserved from the calamities of war, our domestic prosperity has not been entirely uninterrupted. The crops in portions of the country have been nearly cut off; disease has prevailed to a greater extent than usual, and the sacrifice of human life through the medium of sea and land has not been without a parallel. But the pestilence has swept by, and restored salubrity invites the absent to return to their homes, and the return of the country has been nearly cut off; disease has prevailed to a greater extent than usual, and the sacrifice of human life through the medium of sea and land has not been without a parallel.

If the earth has rewarded the labor of the husbandman less bountifully than in preceding seasons, it has left him with abundance for domestic wants and a large surplus for exportation. In the present, therefore, as in the past, we find ample grounds for reverent thankfulness to the God of our fathers for his merciful and abundant blessings upon us as a people. Although our attention has been arrested by painful interest in passing events, yet our country feels no more than the slight vibrations of the convulsions which have shaken Europe; as individuals we cannot repress sympathy with human suffering nor regret for the causes which produce it. As a nation we are reminded that whatever interrupts the peace or checks the prosperity of Christendom tends more or less to involve our own.

The condition of States is not unlike that of individuals; they are mutually dependent on each other. Amicable relations between them, and reciprocal good will is essential for the promotion of whatever is desirable in their moral, social and political condition. Hence it has been my earnest endeavor to maintain peace and friendly intercourse with all nations. The wise theory of this government, so early adopted and steadily pursued, of cherishing all friendly alliances, has hitherto extended to no other nations but those in which it would otherwise have been clearly defined and well sustained course of action, and our geographical position, so remote from Europe, increasing disposition has been manifested by its governments to supervise and in certain respects to direct our foreign policy. In plans for adjusting the balance of power among themselves, they have assumed to be us into account, or would contract with us in our conduct to their views. One or another of the nations of Europe has from time to time undertaken to enforce arbitrary regulations contrary in many respects to established principles of international law. That law the United States have, in their foreign intercourse, uniformly respected and observed, and they cannot recognize any such interpositions therein as the temporary interests of others may suggest. They do not admit that the sovereignty of one continent, or of a particular community of States, can legislate for all others. Leaving the trans-Atlantic nations to adjust their political systems in the way they may think best for the common welfare, the independent powers of this continent may well assert the right to be exempt from all annoying interference on their part. Systematic abstinence from intimate political connection with distant foreign nations, does not conflict with giving the widest range to our foreign commerce. This distinction, so clearly made in history, seems to have been overlooked or disregarded by some leading foreign States. Our refusal to be brought within and subjected to their peculiar systems, has, I fear, excited a jealous distrust of our conduct, and induced on their part occasional acts of disturbing effect on our foreign relations.

Our present attitude and past course give assurances which should not be questioned that our purposes are not aggressive, nor threatening to the safety and repose of other nations. Our military establishments in time of peace are adapted to maintain our defenses and to preserve order among the aboriginal tribes within the limits of the Union. Our national forces are only intended for the protection of our citizens abroad, and of our commerce, diffused as it is, over all the seas of the globe. The government of the United States being essentially pacific in policy, stands prepared to repel invasion, by the voluntary services of a patriotic people, and provides no permanent means of foreign aggression. These considerations, which lay all apprehension that we are disposed to encroach on the rights or endanger the security of other States. Some Europeans have regarded with disquieting concern the territorial expansion of the United States. This rapid growth has resulted from the legitimate exercise of sovereign rights, belonging alike to all nations and by many liberally exercised.

Under such circumstances it could hardly have been expected that among them which have, within a comparatively recent period, subdued and absorbed ancient kingdoms, planted their standards on every continent and now possess or claim the control of the islands of every ocean as their appropriate domain, would look with unfriendly sentiments upon the acquisitions of this country in every instance honorably obtained, or would feel themselves justified in impairing our advancement to a spirit of aggression or to a passion for political predominance. Our foreign commerce has risen to a magnitude and extent nearly equal to that of the first maritime power of the earth and exceeding that of any other. Over this great interest in which not only our merchants, but all classes of citizens at least indirectly are concerned, it is the duty of the Executive and Legislative branches of the Government to exercise a careful supervision and adopt proper measures for its protection.

The policy which I have had in view in regard to this interest, embraces its future as well as its present security. Long experience has shown that in general when the principles of Europe are engaged in War, the rights of neutral nations are endangered. This consideration led in the progress of the War of our independence to the formation of the celebrated confederation of armed neutrality. A primary object of which was to assert the doctrine that free ships make free goods, except in the case of articles contraband of war, a doctrine which from the very commencement of our national beginning has been a cherished idea of the statesman of every country. At one period or another, every maritime power has by some solemn treaty stipulation recognized that principle, and it might have been hoped that it would come to be universally received and respected as a rule of international law. But the spirit of one power prevailed over that of the rest, and the French revolution failed to be respected among the belligerent States.

of Europe. Notwithstanding this principle is conceded to be a sound and salutary one, so much so, that at the commencement of the existing war in Europe, Great Britain and France announced their purpose to observe it for the present, not, however, as a recognized international right, but as a mere conclusion for the time being.

The co-operation, however, of these two powerful nations in the interest of neutral rights, appeared to me to afford an occasion inviting, and justifying, on the part of the U. S., a renewed effort to make the doctrine in question a principle of international law by means of special conventions between the several powers of Europe and America. Accordingly a portion of my time was only the rule that free ships make free goods, except contraband articles, nor also the less contested on that neutral property other than contraband, though on board enemy's ships, shall be exempt from confiscation, has been submitted by this government to those of Europe and America. Russia acted promptly in this matter and a convention was concluded between that country and the United States, providing for the observance of the principle, not only as between them, but also between them and other nations which shall enter into like stipulations. None of the other powers have as yet taken final action on the subject. I am not waken, however, that any objection to the proposed stipulations has been made, but on the contrary, they have acknowledged them to be essential to the security of neutral commerce, and the only apparent obstacle to their general adoption is the possibility that they may be considered by the King of the Netherlands as an interference with his readiness to concur in our proposition relative to neutral rights, and to enter into a convention on that subject. The King of Prussia entirely approves of the project of a treaty to the same effect, submitted to him, but proposes in addition articles, providing for the prohibition of privateering. Such an article, for the most obvious reasons, is not desired by nations having naval establishments large in proportion to their foreign commerce. If it were adopted as an international rule, the commerce of a nation having comparatively a small naval force, would be very much at the mercy of its enemy in case of a war with a power of decided naval superiority.

The bare statement of the condition in which the United States would be placed after having surrendered the right to privateers in the event of a war with a belligerent, will not, I think, show that this government could never listen to such a proposition. The navy of the first maritime power in Europe is at least ten times as large as that of the United States. The foreign commerce of the two countries is nearly equal and about equally exposed to hostile depredations. In war between that power and the United States, without resort on our part to our mercantile marine, the means of our enemy to inflict injury upon our commerce would be ten fold greater than ours to retaliate. We could not extricate our country from this unequal condition with such an enemy unless we at once departed from our present peaceful policy and became a great naval power. Nor would this country be better situated in a war with one of the secondary naval powers. Though the naval disparity would be less the greater extent, the more exposed condition of our wide spread commerce, would give any of them a decided advantage over us. The proposition to enter into engagements to favor privateers, in case this country should be forced to war with a great naval power, is not entitled to more favorable consideration than would be a proposition to agree not to accept the services of volunteers for operations on land. When the honor or the rights of our country require it to assume a hostile attitude, it confidently relies on the patriotism of its citizens, not ordinarily devoted to the military profession to augment the army and navy, so as to make them fully adequate to the circumstances which call them into action.

The proposal to surrender the right to employ privateers is professedly founded upon the principle that private property of unoffending non-combatants though enemies should be exempt from the ravages of war, but the proposed surrender goes but little way in carrying out that principle which equally requires that such private property should not be seized or molested by national forces. It would be to concede to the leading powers of Europe a right to propose as a rule of international law to exempt private property on the ocean from seizure by public armed cruisers as well by privateers, the United States will readily meet them on that broad ground. Since the adjustment of Congress, the ratifications of the treaty between the United States and Great Britain relative to coast fisheries and to reciprocate trade with the British North American provinces have been exchanged and some of its anticipated advantages are secured by the United States, although its full execution is to be decided by certain acts of legislation not yet fully passed. So soon as it was ratified Great Britain opened to our commerce the free navigation of the River St. Lawrence and to our fishermen, unimpeded access to the shores and bays, from which they had been previously excluded on the coasts of her North American provinces; in return for which she asked for the introduction, free of duty, of fish caught on the coast by British fishermen. This being the compensation stipulated in the treaty for privileges of the highest importance and value to the United States, which were thus voluntarily yielded, before it became effected the request seemed to me a reasonable one, but it could not be accepted to from want of authority to suspend our laws imposing duties on all foreign fish introduced into the United States.

In the meantime the Treasury Department issued a regulation for ascertaining the duties paid or received by the fish caught on the coast by British fishermen and brought to our markets by British subjects after the fishing grounds had been made fully accessible to citizens of the United States. I recommend to your favorable consideration a proposition which will be submitted to you, for authority to refund the duties and cancel the bonds thus received. The provinces of Canada and New Brunswick have also anticipated the full operation of the treaty by legislative arrangements, and the products of the United States mentioned in the free list of the treaty and an arrangement similar to that regarding the British fish has been made for duties not chargeable on the products of those provinces enumerated in the same free list and introduced therefrom into the United States, a proposition for refunding which will, in my judgment, be in like manner entitled to your favorable consideration.

The difference of opinion between the United States and Great Britain as to the boundary line of the Territory of Washington, adjoining the British possessions on the Pacific, which has already led to difficulties on the part of the citizens and local authorities of the Territory, I recommend that provision be made for a commission to be joined by one of the part of Her Britannic Majesty, for the purpose of running and establishing the line in controversy. Certain stipulations of the 3d and 4th articles of the treaty concluded by the United States and Great Britain in 1846, regarding the possessory rights of the Hudson Bay Company and property of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, have given rise to serious disputes and it is important to all concerned that summary means of settling them amicably should be devised. I have reason to believe that an arrangement can be made on just terms for the extinguishment of the rights in question, embracing also the right of the Hudson Bay Company to the navigation of the river Columbia and I therefore suggest to your consideration the expediency of making a contingent appropriation for that purpose.

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this Government compelled the abandonment of the undertaking.

The commission to establish the new line between the United States and Mexico according to the provisions of treaty of the 30th of December, has been organized and is now already commenced. Our treaties with the Argentine Confederation and with the Republics of Uruguay and Paraguay secure to us the free navigation of the river La Plata and some of its larger tributaries. But the same success has not attended our endeavors to open the Amazon. The reasons of favor of the free use of that river I had occasion to present fully in a former message, and considering the cordial relations which have long existed between the United States and Brazil it may be expedient that pending negotiations will eventually reach a favorable result. Consequent means of transit between several parts of a country are not only desirable for the objects of commercial and personal communication but essential to its existence under one government. Separated as are the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the United States, by the whole breadth of the Continent, still the inhabitants of each are closely bound together by community of origins and institutions, and by strong attachments to the Union. Hence the constant and increasing intercourse and vast interchange of commercial productions between these remote divisions of the Republic.

At the present time the most practicable and only commodious routes for communication between them is by the way of the Isthmus of Central America. It is the duty of the Government to secure these avenues to the free transit of our citizens, and to protect them from interruption. In relation to Central America, perplexing questions existed between the United States and Great Britain at the time of the cession of California. These, as well as questions which subsequently arose concerning inter-oceanic communication across the Isthmus, were, as it was supposed, adjusted by the treaty of April 19th, 1850, but unfortunately they have been reopened by serious misunderstandings as to the import of some of its provisions. Our minister at London has endeavored strenuously to accomplish this desirable object, but has not yet been able to bring the negotiations to a termination, as incidental to these questions.

I deem it proper to notice an occurrence which happened in Central America near the close of the last session of Congress. So soon as the necessity was perceived of establishing inter-oceanic communication across the Isthmus, a company was organized under the authority of the State of Nicaragua, but continued to exist as a corporation of the United States, by the name of the San Juan and Lake Nicaragua, which soon became an eligible and much used route in the transportation of our citizens and property between the Atlantic and Pacific.

Meanwhile, and in anticipation of the completion and importance of this transit way, a number of adventurers had taken possession of the old Spanish port at the mouth of the river San Juan, in open defiance of the United States, and of Central America, which, upon their becoming independent, had rightfully succeeded to the local sovereignty and jurisdiction of Spain. These adventurers undertook to change the name of the place from San Juan del Norte to Greytown, and, though at first pretending to act as the subjects of the fictitious sovereignty of the Mosquito Indians, they subsequently repudiated the control of any power whatsoever, and declared themselves independent sovereign states.

If at some time a faint hope was entertained that they might become a stable and respectable community. That hope soon vanished, they proceeded to assert unfounded claims to civil jurisdiction over Punta Arenas, a position on the opposite side of the river San Juan, which was in possession of the United States, and their cargoes, when passing through the San Juan, higher duties than those of the most favored nations. This may be regarded as an implied agreement to submit to the tolls during the continuance of the treaty, and consequently may embarrass the assertion of our right to be released therefrom. There are also other provisions in the treaty which ought to be modified. It was to remain in force ten years, and until one year after either party should give notice to the other of intention to terminate it. I deem it expedient that the contemplated notice should be given to the Government of Denmark.

The naval expedition despatched about two years since for the purpose of establishing relations with the Empire of Japan, has been ably and skillfully conducted to a successful termination by the officers to whom it was entrusted. A treaty, opening certain of the ports of that populous country has been negotiated, and in order to give full effect thereto it only remains to exchange ratifications and to adopt requisite commercial regulations.

and taken to Greytown. The plunderers obtained shelter there and their pursuers were driven back by its people, who not only protected the wrong doers and shared the plunder, but treated with rudeness and insolence those who sought to recover their property. Such in substance are the facts submitted to my consideration, proved by trustworthy evidence. I could not doubt that the case demanded the interposition of this Government. Justice requires that reparation should be made for so many and such gross wrongs, and that a course of insolence and plunder, tending directly to the insecurity of the lives of numerous travellers and of the rich treasures belonging to our citizens passing over this transit way, should be peremptorily arrested.

Whatever it might be in other respects the community in question so prone to do mischief was not despicable. It was well provided with ordnance small arms, and ammunition, and might easily seize on the unarmed boats, freighted with millions of property, which passed almost daily within its reach.

I did not profess to belong to any regular government, and had in fact, no recognized dependence on, or connection with any one to which the United States or their injured citizens might apply for redress, for which they would be held responsible in any way by the outrage committed. Not standing before the world in the attitude of an organized political society, being neither competent to exercise the rights nor to discharge the obligations of a government, it was, in fact, a marauding establishment, too dangerous to be disregarded, and too guilty to pass unpunished, and yet incapable of being treated in any other way than as a piratical resort of outlaws, or a camp of savages, depreying on emigrant trains or caravans, and the peaceful elements of civilized States.

Reasonable notice was given to the people of Greytown that this government required them to repair the injuries they had done to our citizens, and to make suitable apology for their insult of our minister, and that a ship of war would be despatched thither to enforce compliance with these demands.

But the notice passed unheeded. Thereupon a commander of the navy, in charge of the sloop-of-war Cyane, was commanded to proceed to the demands, and to insist upon a compliance therewith. Finding that neither the populace nor those assuming to have authority over them, manifested any disposition to make the required reparation, or even to offer excuse for their conduct, he warned them by a public proclamation that if they did not give satisfaction within a time specified, he would bombard the town. By this procedure he afforded them the opportunity to comply with the demands, and to avoid loss of property, in that respect about to be inflicted on the offending town, by the means of removing their effects, by the boats of their own ship, and of a steamer which he procured and ordered them for that purpose. At length, perceiving no disposition on the part of the town to comply with his requisitions, he appealed to the commander of Her Britannic Majesty's schooner "Beranda," who was seen to have intercourse with the leaders among them—to interpose, and persuade them to take some course calculated to remove the necessity of resorting to the extreme measure indicated in his proclamation; but that officer, instead of acceding to the request, did nothing more than to protest against the contemplated bombardment.

No steps of any sort were taken by the people to give the satisfaction required. No individuals, if any there were, who regarded themselves as not responsible for the misdeeds of the community, adopted any means to separate themselves from the fate of the guilty. The several charges, on which the demands for redress were founded, had been publicly known to all for some time, and were again announced to them. They did not deny any of these charges; they offered no explanation, nothing in extenuation of their conduct; but contumaciously refused to hold any intercourse with the commander of the "Cyane." By their obstinate silence they seemed rather desirous to provoke a declaration of war, than to escape it.

There is ample reason to believe that the conduct of wanton defiance, on their part, had been chiefly to the delusive idea that the American government would be deterred from punishing them through fear of displeasing a formidable foreign power, which they presumed to think, looked with complacency upon their aggressive and insulting department towards the United States. The "Cyane" at length fired upon the town, for much injury had been done, the fire was twice suspended, in order to afford an opportunity for an arrangement; but this was declined. Most of the buildings of the place, of little value generally, were, in the sequel, destroyed; but, owing to the considerable precautions taken by our naval commander, there was no destruction of life.

When the "Cyane" was ordered to Central America, it was confidently hoped and expected that no occasion would arise for resort to violence and destruction of human life. Instructions were given that that effect were given to her commander. And no extreme act would have been requisite had not the people themselves, by their extraordinary conduct in the affair, frustrated all the possible mild measures for obtaining satisfaction. A withdrawal from the place, the object of his visit entirely defeated, would under the circumstances in which the commander of the Cyane found himself, have been an absolute abandonment of all claim of our citizens for indemnification, and a submission to acquiescence in national indignity. It would have encouraged in these lawless men a spirit of insolence and rapine most dangerous to the lives and property of our citizens at Punta Arenas, and probably emboldened them to grasp at the treasures and valuable merchandise continually passing over the Nicaragua route.

innocent made profusely to mingle with that of the guilty.

Passing from foreign to domestic affairs, your attention is naturally directed to the financial condition of the country, always a subject of general interest. For a complete and exact information regarding the finance, and the various branches of the public service connected therewith, I refer you to the report of the Secretary of the Treasury for the last fiscal year, from all sources, was seventy-three million five hundred and forty-nine thousand seven hundred and five dollars; and that the public expenditures for the same period, exclusive of payments on account of the public debt, amounted to fifty-one million eight hundred thousand two hundred and forty-nine dollars. During the same period, the payments made in redemption of the public debt, including interest and premium, amounted to twenty-four million three hundred and thirty-six thousand three hundred and eighty dollars.

To the sum total of the receipts of that year is to be added a balance remaining in the Treasury at the commencement thereof, amounting to twenty million nine hundred and forty-two thousand two hundred and ninety-two dollars; and at the close of the same year, a corresponding balance, amounting to twenty million one hundred and thirty-seven thousand nine hundred and sixty-seven dollars of receipts above expenditures also remained in the Treasury. Although, in the opinion of the Secretary of the Treasury, the receipts of the current fiscal year are not likely to equal in amount those of the last, yet they will undoubtedly exceed the amount of expenditures by at least fifteen millions of dollars. I will, therefore, continue to direct that the surplus revenue be applied, so far as it can be judiciously and economically done, to the reduction of the public debt, the amount of which, at the commencement of the last fiscal year, was 67,340,625 dollars, of which there had been paid on the 20th day of November, 1854, the sum of 22,365,172 dollars; leaving a balance of outstanding public debt of only 44,975,453 dollars, redeemable at different periods within fourteen years. There are also remnants of other government stocks, most of which are already due, and on which the interest has ceased, but which have not yet been presented for payment, amounting to 233,179 dollars. This statement exhibits the fact, that the annual income of the government greatly exceeds the amount of its public debt, which latter remains unpaid, only because the time of payment has not yet matured, and it cannot be discharged at once, at the option of public creditors, who prefer to retain the securities of the United States; and the other fact, not less striking, that the annual revenue from all sources exceeds, by many millions of dollars, the amount needed for a prudential and economical administration of the Government.

The estimates presented to Congress from the different Executive Departments, at the last session, amounted to \$38,508,581; and the appropriations made, to the sum of \$38,115,655. Of this excess of appropriations over estimates, however, only 20,000,000 was applicable to extraordinary objects, having no reference to the usual annual expenditures. Among these objects, was embraced \$10,000,000 to meet the third article of the treaty between the United States and Mexico; so that, in fact, for objects of ordinary expenditure, the appropriations were limited to considerably less than \$50,000,000. I therefore renew recommendation for a reduction of the duty on imports.

The report of the Secretary of the Treasury presents a series of tables for several successive years, and as the general principle of reduction of duties with a view to revenue and not protection, may now be regarded as the settled policy of the country, I trust that little difficulty will be encountered in settling the details of a measure to that effect.

In connection with this subject, I recommend a change in the laws, which recent experience has shown to be essential to the protection of the revenue. There is no express provision of law regarding the records and papers of a public character, to be left in their offices for the use of their successors, nor any provision declaring it felony on their part to make entries in the books, or return false accounts. In the absence of such express provision by law, the outgoing officers, in many instances have claimed and exercised the right to take into their own possession important books and papers, on the ground that these were their private property; and have placed them beyond the reach of the government. Conduct of this character, brought in several instances to the notice of the present Secretary of the Treasury naturally awakened his suspicion, and resulted in the disclosure that at four ports, namely, Oswego, Toledo, Sandusky and Milwaukee, the treasury had, by false entries, been defrauded, within the four years next preceding March, 1853, of the sum of one hundred and ninety-eight thousand dollars. The great difficulty with which the detection of these frauds had been attended, in consequence of the abstraction of books and papers by the retiring officers, and by the facility with which similar frauds in the public service may be perpetrated, render the necessity of new legal enactments, in the prospects above referred to, quite obvious.

For other material modification of the revenue laws which may seem to me desirable, I refer you to the report of the Secretary of the Treasury. That report, and the tables which accompany it, furnish ample proofs of the solid foundation on which the financial security of the country rests, and of the salutary influence of the independent treasury system upon commerce and all monetary operations.

The experience of the last year furnishes additional reasons, I regret to say, of a painful character, for the recommendation heretofore made, to provide for increasing the military force employed in the territory inhabited by the Indians. The settlers on the frontier have suffered much from the incursions of predatory bands, and large parties of emigrants to our Pacific possessions have been massacred with impunity. The recurrence of such scenes can only be prevented by teaching the wild tribes the power of our arms, and their responsibility to the United States.

From the garrisons of our frontier posts, it is only possible to detach troops in small bodies; and although these have on all occasions displayed a gallantry and a stern devotion to duty, which on a larger field would have commanded universal admiration, they have usually suffered severely in these conflicts with superior numbers, and have sometimes been entirely overpowered. All the disposal of the army is already employed in this service, and is known to be wholly inadequate to the protection it should be afforded.

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The public mind of the country has recently been excited by the reports of our military operations on the frontier, and the necessity of an increase of the military force has been anticipated with some apprehension. The bill of the last session, providing an increase of the pay of the rank and file of the army has had beneficial results, not only in facilitating enlistments, but in obvious improvement in the class of men who enter service.

I regret that corresponding consideration was not bestowed on the officers, who view of their character and services, the expenses to which they are necessarily subjected, receive at present what is, in judgment, inadequate compensation.

The valuable services constantly rendered by the Army, and its insistent importance, as the nucleus around which the valorous forces of the nation can promptly gather in the hour of danger, sufficiently attest the wisdom of maintaining a military establishment, not only for the purpose of the war and the peace practice under its discipline, and the wise practice under its discipline, and any proposed augmentation, in time of peace, be only commensurate with our external limits and frontier relations.

While scrupulously adhering to this principle, and in existing circumstances, a necessity for increase of our military force, as is believed that four new regiments, two infantry and two of mounted men, will be sufficient to meet the present exigency. It was necessary, in order to equip the regiments in a case of such urgency, it would be advisable that the additional expense would be comparatively light.

With the increase of the numerical force of the army should it think, be combined certain measures of reform in its organization and administration. The present organization is the result of partial legislation often directed to special objects and interests; and the laws regulating rank and pay, which have been adopted many years ago from the British army, are not now applicable to our service. It is not strange, therefore, that the system should be deficient in the symmetry and simplicity essential to the harmonious working of all several parts, and require a careful revision.

The present organization, by maintaining large staff corps for departments, separate military officers from that close connection with troops, and those active duties in the field which are deemed requisite to qualify them for the varied responsibilities of a command. Were the duties of the staff mainly discharged by officers detached from their regiments, it is believed that the special service would be equally well performed, and the discipline and instruction of the army be improved. While due regard to the security of the rights of officers and to the nice sense of honor which should be cultivated among them, would seem to exact compliance with the established rule of promotion in ordinary cases, still it can hardly be doubted that the range of promotion by selection, which is now practically confined to the grade of general officer, might be somewhat extended with benefit to the public service.

Observance of the rule of seniority sometimes leads, especially in times of peace, to the promotion of officers who, after meritorious and even distinguished service, may have been rendered by age or infirmity incapable of performing active duty, and whose advancement, therefore, would tend to impair the efficiency of the army. Stable provisions for the class of officers, the promotion of a retired list, would remedy the evil, without wounding the just pride of men, who, by past services, have established a claim to high consideration. In again commending this measure to the favorable consideration of Congress, I would suggest that the power of placing officers on the retired list is limited to one year.

The practical operation of the measure would thus be tested, after the lapse of years, there should be occasion for the provision, it can be reproduced with improvements which experience may indicate. The present organization of the artillery into regiments is liable to obvious objections. The service of artillery is not exacting, and has been, on duty as called for, the distinction between the two arms being merely nominal. The practical artillery in our service is entirely disproportionate to the whole force, and greater than the wants of the country demand. I therefore commend the discontinuance of a distinction which has no foundation in either the arms used or the character of the service expected to be performed.

In connection with the proposition for the increase of the army, I have presented certain suggestions with regard to certain measures of reform, as the completion of a system, which would produce the happiest results from a given expenditure, and which I hope may attract the early attention, and be deemed worthy of the approval of Congress.