PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

GENTLEMEN:

Sixty years have elapsed since the establishment of this Government, and the Congress of the United States again assembles to legislate for an empire of freemen. The predictions of evil prophets, who formerly pretended to foretell the downfall of our institutions, are now remembered only to be derided, and the United States of America, at this moment, present to the world the most stable and permanent Government on earth.

Such is the result of the labors of those who have gone before us. Upon Congress will eminently depend the future maintenance of our system of free government, and the transmission of it unimpaired to posterity.

We are at peace with all the world, and seek to maintain our cherished relations of amity with the rest of mankind. During the past year we have been blessed, by a kind Providence, with an abundance of the fruits of the earth; and, although the destroying angel for a time visited extensive portions of our territory with the ravages of a dreadful pestilence, yet the Almighty has at length deigned to stay his hand, and to restore the inestimable blessing of general health to a people who have acknowledged his power, deprecated his wrath, and implored his merciful protection.

While enjoying the benefits of amicable intercourse with foreign nations, we have not been insensible to the distractions and wars which have prevailed in other quarters of the world. It is a proper theme of thanksgiving to Him who rules the destinies of nations, that we have been able to maintain, amidst all these contests, an independent and neutral position towards all belligerent powers.

Our relations with Great Britain are of the most friendly character. In consequence of the recent alteration of the British navigation acts, British vessels, from British and other foreign ports, will, (under our existing laws,) after the first day of January next, be admitted to enter in our ports, with cargoes of the growth, manufacture, or production of any part of the world, on the same terms, as to duties, imposts and charges, as vessels of the United States with their cargoes; and our vessels will be admitted to the same advantages in British ports, entering therein on the same terms as British vessels. Should no order in council disturb this legislative arrangement, the late act of the British Parliament, by which Great Britain is brought within the terms proposed by the act of Congress of the 1st of March, 1847, it is hoped, will be productive of benefit to both countries.

A slight interruption of diplomatic intercourse, which occurred between this Government and France, I am happy to say, has been terminated, and our Minister there has been received. It is therefore unnecessary to refer, now, to the circumstances which led to that interruption. I need not express to you the sincere satisfaction with which we shall welcome the arrival of another Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from a sister republic, to which we have so long been, and still remain, bound by the strongest ties of amity.

Shortly after I entered upon the discharge of the Executive duties, I was apprised that a war-steamer, belonging to the German Empire, was being fitted out in the harbor of New York, with the aid of some of our naval officers, rendered under the permission of the late Secretary of the Navy. The permission was granted during an armistice between that Empire and the Kingdom of Denmark, which had been engaged in the Schleswig-Holstein war. Apprehensive that this act of intervention, on our part, might be viewed as a violation of our neutral obligations, incurred by the treaty with Denmark, and of the provisions of the act of Congress of the 20th of April, 1818, I directed that no further aid should be rendered by any agent or officer of the Navy; and I instructed the Secretary of State to apprise the Minister of the German Empire accredited to this Government, of my determination to execute the law of the United States, and to maintain the faith of treaties with all nations. The correspondence, which ensued between the Secretary of State and the Minister of the German Empire, is herewith laid before you. The execution of the law and the observance of the treaty were deemed by me to be due to the honor of the country, as well as to the sacred obligations of the Constitution. I shall not fail to pursue the same course, should a similar case arise with any other nation. Having avowed the opinion, on taking the oath of office, that, in disputes between conflicting foreign governments, it is our interest, not less than our duty, to remain strictly neutral, I shall not abandon it. You will perceive, from the correspondence submitted to you, in connection with this subject, that the course adopted in this case has been properly regarded by the belligerent powers interested in the matter.

Although a Minister of the United States to the German Empire was appointed by my predecessor in August, 1848, and has, for a long time, been in attendance at Frankfort-on-the-Maine; and although a Minister, appointed to represent that Empire, was received and accredited here, yet no such government as that of the German Empire has been definitively constituted. Mr. Donelson, our representative at Frankfort, remained there several months, in the expectation that a union of the German States, under one Constitution or form of Government, might, at length, be organized. It is believed, by those well acquainted with the existing relations between Prussia and the States of Germany, that no such union can be permanently established without her co-operation. In the event of the formation of such a union, and the organization of a central power in Germany, of which she should form a part, it would become necessary to withdraw our Minister at Berlin; but while Prussia exists as an independent kingdom, and diplomatic relations are maintained with her, there can be no necessity for the maintenance of the mission to Frankfort. I have, therefore, recalled Mr. Donelson, and directed the archives of the legation at Frankfort to be transfered to the American legation at Berlin.

Having been apprised that a considerable number of adventurers were engaged in fitting out a military expedition, within the United States, against a foreign country; and believing, from the best information I could obtain, that it was destined to invade the Island of Cuba, I deemed it due to the friendly relations existing between the United States and Spain; to the treaty between the two nations; to the laws of the United States, and, above all, to the American honor, to exert the full authority of this Government in suppressing the expedition and preventing the invasion.

To this end, I issued a proclamation, enjoining it upon the officers of the U States, civil and military, to use all lawful means within their power. A copy of that proclamation is herewith submitted. The expedition has been suppressed. So long as the act of Congress, of the 20th of April, 48, which owes its existence to the law of nations, and to the policy of Washington himself, shall remain on our statute-book, I hold it to be the duty of the Executive faithfully to obey its injunctions.

While this expedition was in progress, I was informed that a foreigner, who claimed our protection, had been clandestinely, and, as was supposed, forcibly, carried off in a vessel, from New Orleans to the island of Cuba. I immediately caused such steps to be taken as I thought necessary, in case the information I had received should prove correct, to vindicate the honor of the country, and the right of every person seeking an asylum on our soil to the protection of our laws. The person alleged to have been abducted was promptly restored, and the circumstance of the case are now about to undergo investigation before a judicial tribunal. I would respectfully suggest, that although the crime charged to have been committed in this case is held odious as being in conflict with our opinions on the subject of national sovreignty and personal freedom, there is no prohibition of it, or punishment for it, provided in any act of Congress. The expediency of supplying this defect in our criminal code is, therefore, recommended to your consideration.

I have scrupulously avoided any interference in the wars and contentions which have recently distracted Europe.

During the late conflict between Austria and Hungary, there seemed to be a prospect that the latter might become an independent nation. However faint that prospect at the time appeared, I thought it my duty, in accordance with the general sentiment of the American people, who deeply sympathised with the Magyar patriots, to stand prepared, upon the contingency of the establishment by her of a permanent government, to be the first to welcome independent Hungary into the family of nations. For this purpose I invested an agent, then in Europe, with power to declare our willingness promptly to recognise her independence in the event of her ability to sustain. The powerful interpolation of Russia, in the contest, extinguished all hopes of the struggling Magyars. The United States did not at any time interfere in the contest; but the feelings of the nation were strongly enlisted in the cause, and by the sufferings of a brave people, who had made a gallant though unsuccessful effort to be free.

Our claims upon Portugal have been, during the past year, prosecuted with renewed vigor, and it has been my object to employ every effort of honorable diplomacy to procure their adjustment. Our late Charge d'Affaires at Lisbon, the Hon. G. W. Hopkins, made able and energetic, but unsuccessful efforts to settle these unpleasant matters of controversy, and to obtain indemnity for the wrongs which were the subjects of complaint. Our present Charge d'Affaires at that court will also bring to the prosecution of these claims ability and zeal. The revolutionary and distracted condition of Portugal in times past, has been represented as one of the leading causes of her delay in indemnifying our suffering citizens. But I must now say it is matter of profound regret that these claims have not yet been settled.

With Russia, Austria, Prussia, Sweeden, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the Italian States, we still maintain our accustomed amicable relations.

During the recent revolutions in the Papal States, our Charge d' Affairs at Rome has been unable to present his letter of credence which, indeed, he was directed by my predecessor to withhold until he should receive further orders. Such was the unsettled condition of things in those States, that it was not deemed expedient to give him any instructions on the subject of presenting his credential letter different from those with which he had been furnished by the late administration, until the 25th of June last; when in consequence of want of accurate information of the exact state of things, at that distance from us, he was instructed to exercise his own discretion in presenting himself to the then existing government, if, in his judgment, sufficiently stable; or if not, to await further events. Since that period, Rome has undergone another revolution, and he abides the establishment of a government sufficiently permanent to justify him in opening diplomatic intercourse with it.

With the Republic of Mexico, it is our true policy to cultivate the most friendly relations. Since the ratification of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, nothing has occurred of a serious character to disturb them. A faithful observance of the treaty, and a sincere respect for her rights, cannot fail to secure the lasting confidence and friendship of that republic. The message of my predecessor to the House of Representatives, of the 8th of February last, communicating, in compliance with a resolution of that body, a copy of a paper called a protocol, signed at Queretaro on the 30th of May, 1848, by the commissioners of the United States and the minister of foreign affairs of the Mexican government, having been a subject of correspondence between the Department of State and the Envoy Extraordinary Minister Plenipotentiary of that republic accredited to this government, a transcript of that correspondence is herewith submitted.

The Commissioner on the part of the United States for marking the boundry between the two republics, though delayed in reaching San Diego by unforseen obstacles, arrived at that place within a short period after the time required by the treaty, and was there joined by the Commissioner on the part of Mexico. They entered upon their duties; and, at the date of the latest intelligence from that quarter, some progress had been in the survey. The expenses incident to the organization of the commission, and to its conveyance the point where its operations were to begin, have so much reduced the fund appropriated by Congress, that a further sum to cover the charges which must be incurred during the present fiscal year, will be necessary. The great length of frontier along which the boundary extends, the nature of the adjacent territory, and the difficulty of obtaining supplies, except at or near the extremes of the line, render it also indispensible that a liberal provision should be made to made to meet the necessary charges during the fiscal year ending on the 30th of June, 1851. I accordingly recommend this subject to your attention.

In the adjustment of the claims of American citizens on Mexico, provided for by the late treaty, the employment of counsel, on the part of the government, may become important for the purpose of assisting the commissioners in protecting the interests of the United States. I recommend this subject to the early and favorable consideration of Congress.

Complaints have been made in regard to the insufficiency of the means provided by the government of New Grenada for transporting the United States mail across the Isthmus of Panama, pursuant to our Postal convention with that republic, of the 6th of March, 1844. Our Charge d' Affaires at Bogota has been directed to make such representations to the government of New Grenada as will, it is hoped, lead to a prompt removal of this cause of complaint.

The sanguinary civil war with which the Republic of Venezuela has for some time past been ravaged, has been brought to a close. In its progress, the rights of some of our citizens resident or trading there have been violated. The restoration of order will afford the Venezulan government an opportunity to examine and redress these grievances and others of longer standing, which our representatives at Caraccas have, hitherto, ineffectually urged upon the attention of that government.

The extension of the coast of the United States on the Pacific, and the unexampled rapidity with which the inhabitants of California, especially, are increasing in numbers, have imparted new consequence to our relations with the other countries whose territories border upon that ocean. It is probable that the intercourse between those countries and our possessions in that quarter, particularly with the Republic of Chili, will become extensive and mutually advantageous in proportion as California and Oregon shall increase in population and wealth. It is desirable, therefore, that this Government should do every thing in its power to foster and strengthen its relations with those States, and that the spirit of amity between us should be mutual and cordial.

I recommend the observance of the same course towards all other American States. The United States stand as the great American power to which, as their natural ally and friend, they will always be disposed, first, to look for mediation and assistance, in the event of any collision between them and any European nation. As such, we may often kindly mediate in their behalf, without entangling ourselves in foreign wars or unnecessary controversies. Whenever the faith of our treaties with any of them shall require our interference, we must necessarily interpose.

A convention has been negotiated with Brazil, providing for the satisfaction of American claims on that government, and it will be submitted to the Senate. Since the last session of Congress, we have received an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from that empire, and our relations with it are founded upon the most amicable understanding.

Your attention is earnestly invited to an amendment of our existing laws relating to the African slave trade, with a view to the effectual suppression of that barbarious traffic. It is not to be denied, that this trade is still, in part, carried on by means of vessels built in the United States, and owned or navigated by some of our citizens. The correspondence between the Department of State and the Minister and Consul of the United States at Rio de Janeiro, which has from time to time been laid before Congress, represents that it is a customary device to evade the penalties of the laws by means of sea-letters.

Vessels sold in Brazil, when provided with such papers by the Consul, instead of returning to the United States for a new register, proceed, at once to the coast of Africa, for the purpose of obtaining cargoes of slaves. Much additional information, of the same character, has recently been transmitted to the Department of State. It has not been considered the policy of our laws to subject an American citizen, who, in a foreign country, purchases a vessel built in the United States, to the inconvenience of sensending her home for a new register, before permitting her to proceed on a voyage. Any alteration of the laws, which might have a tendancy to impede the free transfer of property in vessels between our citizens, or the free navigation of those vessels between different parts of the world, when employed in lawful commerce, should be well and cautiously considered; but I trust that your wisdom will devise a method by which our general policy, in this respect, may be preserved and at the same time the abuse of our flag, by means of sea-letters, in the manner indicated, may be prevented.

Having ascertained that there is no prospect of the reunion of the five states of Central America, which formerly composed the republic of that name, we have separately negotiated with some of them treaties of amity and commerce, which will be laid before the Senate.

A contract having been concluded with the State of Nicaragua, by a company composed of American citizens, for the purpose of constructing a ship canal, through the territory of that State, to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, I have directed the negotiation of a treaty with Nicaragua, pledging both governments to protect those who shall engage in and perfect the work. All other nations are invited by the state of Nicaragua to enter into the same treaty stipulations with her; and the benefit to be derived by each from such an arrangement, will be the protection of this great inter-oceanic communication against any power which might seek to obstruct it, or to monopolize its advantages. All states, entering into such a treaty, will enjoy the right of passage through the canal on payment of the same tolls.

The work, if constructed under these guarantees, will become a bond of peace, instead of a subject of contention and strife, between the nations of the earth. Should the great maratime States of Europe consent to this arrangement, (and we have no reason to suppose that a proposition so fair and honorable will be opposed by any,) the energies of their people and ours will co-operate in promoting the success of the enterprise. I do not recommend any appropriation from the National treasury for this purpose, nor do I believe that such an appropriation is necessary. Private enterprise, if properly protected, will complete the work, should it prove to be feasable. The parties who have procured the charter from Nicaragua, for its construction, desire no assistance from this Government beyond its protection; and they profess that, having examined the proposed line of communication, they will be ready to commence the undertaking whenever that protection shall be extended to them. Should there appear to be reason, on examining the whole evidence, to entertain a serious doubt of the practicability of constructing such a canal, that doubt could be speedily solved by an actual exploration of the route.

Should such a work be constructed, under the common protection of all nations, for equal benefits of all, it would be neither just nor expedient that any great maritime State should command the communication. The territory through which the canal may be opened ought to be freed from the claims of any foreign power. No such power should occupy a position that would enable it hereafter to exercise so controlling an influence over the commerce of the word, or to obstruct a highway which ought to be dedicated to the common uses of mankind.

The routes across the Isthmus, at Tehoantepec and Panama, are also worthy of our serious consideration. They did not fail to engage the attention of my predecessors. The negotiator of the treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo was instructed to offer a very large sum of money for the right of transit across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The Mexican government did not accede to the proposition for the purchase of the right of way, probably because it had already contracted with private inpividuals for the construction of a passage from the Guasacualco river to Tehuantepec.

I shall not renew any any proposition to purchase for money, a right which ought to be equally secured to be equally secured to all nations, on payment of a reasonable toll to the owners of the improvement, who would doubtless, be well contented with that compensation and the guatantees of the maritime States of the world, in separate treaties negotiated with Mexico, binding her and them to protect those who should construct the work. Such guarantees would do more to secure the completion of the communication through the territory of Mexico, than any other reasonable consideration that could be offered; and as Mexico herself would be the greatest gainer by the opening of this communication between the Gulf and the Pacific ocean; it is presumed that she would not hesitate to yield her aid, in the manner proposed, to accomplish an improvement so important to her own best interests.

We have reason to hope that the proposed railroad across the Isthmus of Panama will be successfully constructed, under the protection of the late treaty with New Grenada, ratified and exchanged by my predecessor on the 20th day of June 1848, which guarantees the perfect neutrality of the Isthmus, and the rights of sovreignty and property of New Grenada over that territory, "with a view that the free transit from ocean to ocean may not be interrupted or embarrassed" during the existence of the treaty. It is our policy to encourage every practicable route across the Isthmus, which connets North and South America, either by railroad or canal, which the energy and enterprise of our citizens may induce them to complete, and I consider it obligatory upon me to adopt that policy, especially in consequence of the absolute necessity of facilitating intercourse with our possession on the pacific.

The position of the Sandwhich Islands, with reference to the territory of the United States on the Pacific, thd success of our persevering and benevolent citizens who have repaired to that remote quarter in christianizing the natives and inducing them to adopt a system of government and laws suited to their capacity and wants; and the use made by our numerous whale ships of the harbors of the Island's as a resort for obtaining refreshments and repairs, all combine to render their destiny peculiarly interesting to us.

It is our duty to encourage the authorities of those islands in their efforts to improve and elevate the moral and political condition of the inhabitants; and we should make reasonable allowances for the difficulties inseparable from this task. We desire that the islands may maintain their independence, and that other nations should concur with us in this sentiment. We could in no event be indifferent to their passing under the dominion of any other power. The principal commercial States have in this a common interest; and it is to be hoped that no one of them will attempt to interpose obstacles to the inteire independence of the islands.

The receipts into the treasury for the fiscal year ending on the thirtieth of June last, were, in cash, $48,850,056 50, and in Treasury notes founded, $10,833,000, making an aggregate of $59,683,097 50; and the expenditures, for the same time were, in cash, $46,798,667 82, and in Treasury notes founded, $10,833,000, making an aggregate of $57,631,667 82.

The accounts and estimates which will be submitted to Congress in the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, show that there will probably be a deficit, occasioned by the expenses of the Mexican war and treaty, on the first day of July next, of $5,548,121 66, and on the first of July, 1851, of $10,517,092 73; making in the whole a probable deficit, to be provided for, of $17,575,241 39. The extraordinary expenses of the war with Mexico, and the purchase of California and New Mexico, exceed in amount this deficit, together with the loans heretofore made for those objects. I therefore recommend that authority be given to borrow whatever sum may be necessary to cover that deficit. I recommend the observance of strict economy in the appropriation and expenditure of public money.

I recommend a revision of the existing tariff, and its adjustment, on a basis which may augment the revenue. I do not doubt the right or duty of Congress to encourage domestic industry, which is the great source of national as well as individual wealth and prosperity. I look to the wisdom and patriotism of Congress for the adoption of a system which may place home-labor, at last, on a sure and permanent footing, and, by due encouragement of manufactures, give a new and increased stimulus to agriculture, and promote the developement of our vast resources, and the extension of our commerce. Believing that to the attainment of these ends, as well as the necessary augmentation of the revenue, and the prevention of frauds, a system of specific duties is best adapted, I strongly recommend to Congress the adoption of that system, fixing the duties at rates high enough to afford substantial and sufficient encouragement to our own industry, and at the same time so adjusted as to insure stability.

The question of the continuance of the Subtreasury system is respectfully submitted to the wisdom of Congress. If continued, important modifications of it, appear to be indispensable.

For further details and views on the above and other matters connected with commerce, the finances, and revenue, I refer to the report of the Secretary of the Treasury.

No direct aid has been given by the General Government to the improvement of agriculture, except by the expenditure of small sums for the collection and publication of agriculture statistics, and for some chemical analyses, which have been, thus far, paid for out of the patent fund.—This aid is, in my opinion, wholly inadequate.—To give to this leading branch of American industry the encouragement which it merits, I respectfully recommend the establishment of an Agricultural Bureau, to be connected with the Department of the Interior. To elevate the social condition of the agriculturist, to increase his prosperity, and to extend his means of usefulness to his country, by multiplying his sources of information, should be the study of every statesman, and a primary object with every legislator.

No civil government having been provided by Congress for California, the people of that Territory, impelled by the necessities of their political condition, recently met in convention, for the purpose of forming a constitution and State government, which, the latest advices give me reason to suppose, has been accomplished and it is believed they will shortly apply for the admission of California into the Union as a sovereign State. Should such be the case; and should their constitution be conformable to the requisitions of the Constitution of the United States, I recommend their application to the favorable consideration of Congress.

The people of New Mexico will also, it is believed, at no very distant period, present themselves for admission into the Union. Preparatory to the admission of California and New Mexico the people of each will have instituted for themselves a republican form of government, "laying its foundations in such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

By awaiting their action, all causes of uneasiness may be avoided, and confidence and kind feeling preserved. With a view of maintaining the harmony and tranquility so dear to all, we should abstain from the introduction of those exciting topics of a sectional character which have hitherto produced painful apprehensions in the public mind; and I repeat the solemn warning of the first and most illustrious of my predecessors against furnishing "any ground for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations.

A Collector has been appointed at San Francisco, under the act of Congress extending the revenue laws over California; and measures have been taken to organize the custom-houses at that and the other ports mentioned in that act, at the earliest period practicable. The collector proceeded over land, and advises have not yet been received of his arrival at San Francisco. Meanwhile, it is understood that the customs have continued to be collected there by officers acting under the military authority, as they were during the administration of my predecessor. It will, I think, be expedient to confirm the collections thus made, and direct the avails, (after such allowances as Congress may think fit to authorize,) to be expended within the Territory, or to be paid into the Treasury, for the purpose of meeting appropriations for the improvement of its rivers and harbors.

A party, engaged on the coast survey, was despatched to Oregon in January last. According to the latest advices, they had not left California and directions have been given to them, as soon as they shall have fixed on the sites of the two light-houses and the buoys authorized to be constructed and placed in Oregon, to proceed without delay to make reconnoissances of the most important points on the coast of California, and especially to examine and determine on sites for light-houses on that coast, the speedy erection of which is urgently demanded by our rapidly increasing commerce.

I have transferred the Indian Agencies from Upper Missouri and Council Bluffs to Santa Fe and Salt Lake; and have caused to be appointed sub-agents in the valleys of the Gila, the Sacramento, and San Joaquin rivers. Still further legal provisions will be necessary for the effective and successful extension of our system of Indian intercourse over the new Territories.

I recommend the establishment of a branch mint in California, as it will, in my opinion, afford important facilities to those engaged in mining, as well as to the Government in the disposition of the mineral lands.

I also recommend that commissions be organized by Congress, to examine and decide upon the validity of the present subsisting land titles in California and New Mexico; and that provision be made for the establishment of offices of Surveyor General in New Mexico, California, and Oregon, and for the surveying and bringing into market the public lands in these Territories.—Those lands, remote in position and difficult of access, ought to be disposed of on terms liberal to all, but especially favorable to the early emigrants.

In order that the situation and character of the principal mineral deposites in California may be ascertained, I recommend that a geological and mineralogical exploration be connected with the linear surveys; and that the mineral lands be devided into small lots suitable for mining, and disposed of, by sale or lease, so as to give our citizens an opportunity of procuring a permanent right of property in the soil.

This would seem to be as important to the success of mining as of agricultural pursuits. The great mineral wealth of California, and the advantages which its ports and harbors, and those of Oregon, afford to commerce, especially with the islands of the Pacific and Indian oceans, and the populous regions of Eastern Asia, make it certain that there will arise, in a few years, large and prosperous communities on our western coast.—It, therefore, becomes important that a line of communication, the best and most expeditious which the nature of the country will admit, should be opened, within the territory of the United States, from the navigable waters of the Atlantic or the Gulf of Mexico, to the Pacific. Opinion, as elicited and expressed by two large and respectable conventions, lately assembled at St. Louis and Memphis, points to a railroad as that which, if practicable, will best meet the wishes and wants of the country. But while this, if in successful operation, would be a work of great national importance, and of a value to the country which it would be difficult to estimate, it ought also to be regarded as an undertaking of vast magnitude and expense, and one of which most, if it be, practicable, encountes many difficulties in its construction and use.

Therefore, to avoid failure and disappointment, to enable Congress to judge whether, in the condition of the country through which it must pass, the work be feasible, and if it be found so, whether it should be undertaken as a national enterprise, and in the latter alternative, what aid, if any, ought to be extended to it by the Government, I recommend as a preliminary measure a careful reconnoissance of the several proposed routes by a scientific corps, and a report as to the practicability of making such a road, with an estimate of the cost of its construction and support.

For further views on these and other matters connected with the duties of the Home Department, I refer you to the report of the Secretary of the Interior.

I recommend early appropriations for continuing the river and harbor improvements which have been already begun, and also of the construction of those for which estimates have been made, as well as for examinations and estimates preparatory to the commencement of such others as the wants of the country, and especially the advance of our population over new districts, and the extension of commerce, may render necessary. An estimate of the amount which can be advantageously expended within the next fiscal year, under the direction of the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, accompanies the report of the Secretary of War, to which I respectfully invite the attention of Congress.

The cession of territory made by the late treaty with Mexico has greatly extended our exposed frontier, and rendered its defence more difficult. That treaty has also brought us under obligations to Mexico, to comply with which a military force is requisite. But our military establishment is not materially changed, so to its efficiency, from the condition in which it stood before the commencement of the Mexican war. Some addition to it will therefore be necessary; and I recommend to the favorable consideration of Congress an increase of the several corps of the army at our distant western posts, as proposed in the accompanying report of the Secretary of War.

Great embarrassment has resulted from the fact upon rank, in the army, heretofore given by brevet and staff commissions. The views of the Secretary of War, on this subject, are deemed important, and if carried into effect will, it is believed, promote the harmony of the service. The plan proposed for retiring disabled officers, and providing an asylum for such of the rank and file as from age, wounds, and other infirmities occasioned by service, have become unfit to perform their respective duties, is recommended as a means of increasing the efficiency of the army, and as an act of justice, due from a grateful country to the faithful soldier.

The accompanying report of the Secretary of the Navy presents a full and satisfactory account of the condition and operations of the naval service during the past year. Our citizens engaged in the legitimate pursuits of commerce have enjoyed its benefits. Wherever our national vessels have been received with respect, our officers have been treated with kindness and courtesy, and they have, on all occasions, pursued a course of strict neutrality, in accordance with the policy of our government.

The naval force at present in commission is as large as is admissable, with the number of men authorized by Congress to be employed.

I invite your attention to the recommendation of the Secretary of the Navy, on the subject of a re-organization of the Navy, in its various grades of officers, and the establishing of a retired list for such of the officers as are disqualified for active and effective service. Should Congress adopt some such measure as is recommended, it will greatly increase the efficiency of the Navy, and reduce its expenditures.

I also ask your attention to the views expressed by him in reference to the employment of war-steamers, and in regard to the contracts for the transportation of the United States' mails, and the operation of the system upon the prosperity of the Navy.

By an act of Congress passed Aug 14th, 1848, provision was made for extending post-office and mail accommodations to California and Oregon.—Exertions have been made to execute that law; but the limited provisions of the act, the inadequacy of the means it authorises, the ill adaption of our post-office laws to the situation of that country, and the measures of compensation for services allowed by those laws, compared with the prices of labor and rents in California, render those exertions, in a great degree, ineffectual. More particular and efficient provision by law is required on this subject.

The act of 1845, reducing postage, has now, by its operation during four years, produced results fully showing that the income from such reduced postage is sufficient to sustain the whole expense of the services of the Post Office Department, not including the cost of transportation in mail steamers on the lines from New York to Chagres, and from Panama to Astoria, which have not been considered by Congress as properly belonging to the mail services.

It is submitted to the wisdom of Congress, whether a further reduction of postage should not now be made, more particularly on the letter correspondence. This should be relieved from the unjust burthen of transporting and delivering the franked matter of Congress, for which public service provision should be made from the treasury. I confidently believe that a change may safely be made, reducing all single letter postage to the uniform rate of five cents, regardless of distance, without thereby imposing any greater burden on the treasury than would constitute a moderate compensation for their public service, and I therefore respectfully recommend such a reduction. Should Congress prefer to abolish franking privilege entirely, it seems probable no demand on the treasury would result from the proposed reduction of postage. Whatever further diminution should now be made, the result of the reduction to five cents, which I have recommended should be first tested, I submit to your decision.

Since the commencement of the present Congress, a Postal treaty with Great Britain has been received and ratified, and such regulations have been formed by the Post Office Departments of the two countries, in pursuance of that treaty, as to carry its provisions into full operation. An attempt to extend this same arrangement with England to France, has not been equally successful; but the purpose has not been abandoned.

For a particular statement of the condition of the Post Office Department, and other matters connected with that branch of the public service I refer you to the report of the Postmaster General.

By the act of the 3d of March, 1849, a Board was constituted to make arrangements for taking the census, composed of the Secretary of State, the Attorney General; and it was made the duty of this Board "to prepare and cause to be printed such forms and schedules as might be necessary for the full enumeration of the United States; and also proper forms and schedules for collecting in statistical tables, under proper heads, such information as to mines, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, education and other topics as would exhibit a full view of the pursuits, industry, education, and resources of the country."

The duties enjoined upon the Census Board, thus established, having been performed, it now rests with Congress to enact a law for carrying into effect the provision of the Constitution which requires an actual enumeration of the people of the United States within the ensuing year.

Among the duties assigned by the Constitution to the General Government is one of local and limited application, but yet, in that account, the less obligatory: I allude to the trust committed to Congress, as the exclusive legislature and sole guardian of the interests of the Districts of Columbia. I beg to commend these interests to your kind attention. As the National metropolis, the city of Washington must be an object of general interest, and, founded as it was under auspices of him whose in mortal name it bears, its claims to the fostering care of Congress present themselves with additional strength. Whatever can contribute to its prosperity must enlist the feelings of its Constitutional guardians, and command their favorable consideration.

Our Government is one of limited powers, and its successful administration eminently depends on the enforcement by each of its co-ordinate branches within its own appropriate sphere. The first section of the Constitution ordains that "all legislative powers therein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives. The Executive has authority to recommend (not to dictate) measures to Congress.—Having performed that duty, the Executive department of the Government cannot rightfully control the decision of Congress on any subject of Legislation, until that decision shall have been officially submitted to the Executive for approval. The check provided by the Constitution, in the clause conferring the qualified veto, will never be exercised by me, except in the cases contemplated by the fathers of the Republic. I view it as an extreme measure, to be resorted to only in extraordinary cases—as where it may become necessary to defend the Executive against the encroachments of the legislative power, or to prevent hasty and inconsiderate or unconstitutional legislation.

By cautiously confining this remedy within the sphere prescribed to it in the contemporaneous expositions of the framers of the constitution, the will of the people legitimately expressed on all subjects of legislation, through their constitutional organs, the Senators and Representatives of the United States will have their full effect. As indispensable to the preservation of our system of self-government, the independance of the Representative of the states and the people are guaranteed by the constitution; and they are responsible to any human power but their constituents. By holding the representative responsible