PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Full Text of President Arthur's Last Message.

His Views on the Tariff—Our Foreign Relations—Home Affairs—Silver Coinage—The American Navy, and Other Matters of Interest

To the Congress of the United States:

Since the close of your last session, the American people, in the exercise of their highest right of suffrage, have chosen their Chief Magistrate for the four years ensuing. When it is remembered that at no period in the country's history has the long political contest which customarily precedes the day of the National election been waged with greater fervor and intensity, it is a subject of congratulation that after the controversy at the polls was over, and while the slight preponderance by which the issue had been determined was as yet unascertained the public peace suffered no disturbance, but the people everywhere patiently and quietly awaited the result. Nothing could more strikingly illustrate the the temper of the American citizen, his love of order, and his loyalty to law. Nothing could more signally demonstrate the strength and wisdom of our political institutions. Eight years have passed since a controversy concerning the result of a National election sharply called the attention of the Congress to the necessity of providing more definite regulations for counting the electoral vote. It is of great importance that this question be solved before conflicting claims to the Presidency shall again distract the country, and I am persuaded that by the people at large any of the measures of relief thus far proposed would be preferred to continued inaction.

Our relations with all foreign powers continue to be amicable. With Belgium a convention has been signed whereby the scope of present treaties has been so enlarged as to secure to the citizens of either country, within the jurisdiction of the other, equal rights and privileges in the acquisition and alienation of property. A trade mark treaty has also been concluded. The war between Chili and Peru is at an end. For the arbitration of the claims of American citizens who, during its continuance, suffered through the acts of the Chilian authorities, a convention will soon be negotiated.

The state of hostilities between France and China continues to be an embarrassing feature of our Eastern relations. The Chinese government has promptly adjusted and paid the claims of American citizens whose property was destroyed in the recent riots at Canton. I renew the recommendation of my last annual message that the Canton indemnity fraud be returned to China. The true interpretation of our recent treaty with that country permitting the restriction of Chinese immigration is likely to be again a subject of your deliberations. It may be seriously questioned whether the statutes passed at the last session do not violate the treaty rights of certain Chinese who left this country with return certificates valid under the old law, and which now seem to be debarred from landing from a lack of the certificates required by the new. The recent purchase by the United States of a large trading fleet heretofore under the Chinese flag has considerably enhanced our commercial importance in the East, in view of the large vessels built or purchased by American citizens in other countries, and exclusively employed in legitimate traffic between foreign ports under the recognized protection of our flag. It might be well to provide a uniform rate of their registration and documentation so that the bona fide property rights of our citizens therein shall be duly evidenced and properly guarded. Pursuant to the advice of the Senate at the last session I recognized the flag of the International Association of the Congo as that of a friendly Government, proceeding in so doing any prejudgment of the conflict in international claims in that region. Subsequently in execution of the expressed wish of Congress I appointed a commercial agent for the Congo basin. The importance of the rich prospective trade of the Congo valley has led to a general election that it should be open to all nations upon equal terms. At the international conference for the consideration of this subject called by the Emperor of Germany and now in session at Berlin, delegates are in attendance in behalf of the United States. Of the results of the conference you will be duly advised.

The Government of Corea has generously aided the efforts of the United States officer to secure suitable premises for a Minister of the Legation. As the conditions of diplomatic intercourse with Eastern nations demand that the legation premises be owned by the represented power, I advise that an appropriation be made for the acquisition of this property by the Government. The United States possesses valuable premises at Tangier as a gift from the Sultan of Morocco. As stated hereafter, they have lately received a similar gift from the Siamese Government. The Government of Japan stands ready to present to us extensive grounds at Tokio, whereon to erect a suitable building for the legation court house and jail, and the four privileges can probably be secured in China and Persia. The owning of such premises would not only effect a very large annual present pecuniary saving, but would permit of the assertion of extra territorial rights in these countries, and would the better serve to maintain the dignity of the United States. The failure of Congress to make any appropriation for our representative at Autonomous Court of the Khedive, has proved a source of embarrassment in our intercourse with Egypt, and in view of the necessary intimacy of diplomatic relationship due to the participation of this Government as one of the treaty powers in all matters of administration thereby affecting rights of foreigners, I advise the restoration of the agency and Consulate-General at Cairo on its former basis. I do not conceive it to be the wish of Congress that the United States should withdraw from the honorable position they have hitherto held with respect to the Khedive, or that the citizens of the Republic sojourning in Egypt should hereafter be without the aid and protection of a competent representative. With France the traditional cordial relationship continues. The Bartholdi statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World," the generous gift of the people of France, is expected to reach New York in May next. I suggest that Congressional action be taken in relation to the spirit which has prompted this gift and in aid of the speedy completion of the pedestal upon which it is to be placed. Our relations with Germany, a country which contributes to our own some of the best elements of citizenship, continue to be cordial. The United States have extradition treaties with several of the German States, but by reason of the confederation of these States under the Imperial rule, the application of such treaties is not as uniform and comprehensive as the interests of the two countries require. I propose, therefore, to open negotiations for a single convention of extraditions to embrace all the territory of the Empire. It affords me pleasure to say that our intercourse with Great Britain continues to be of a most friendly character. The Government of Brazil has indicated its willingness to continue for seven years the provisions of the existing reciprocity treaty. Such continuance, in view of the relations of that country to American system of State, should in my judgment be favored. The revolution in Haiti against the established Government has terminated. While it was in progress it became necessary to enforce our neutrality laws by instituting proceedings against individuals and vessels charged with their infringement. All these prosecutions were, in all cases, successful. Much anxiety has lately been displayed by various European Governments, and especially by the Government of Italy, to the abolition of our import duties upon works of art. It is well to consider whether the present discrimination in favor of productions of American artists abroad is not likely to result as they themselves believe very generally to believe it may, in the practical exclusion of our painters and sculptors from the rich fields for occupation, study and labor which they have hitherto enjoyed. There is prospect that the long pending revision of the foreign treaties of Japan may be concluded at a new conference to be held at Tokio. While this Government fully recognizes the equal and independent station of Japan in the community of nations, I would not oppose the general adoption of such terms of compromise as Japan may be disposed to offer in furtherance of uniform policy of intercourse with western Nations. During the past year the increasing good will between our own Government and that of Mexico has been variously manifested. The treaty of commercial reciprocity concluded January 20, 1883, has been ratified and awaits the necessary tariff legislation of Congress to become effective. The legislation will, I doubt not, be among the first measures to claim your attention. A full treaty of commerce, navigation and consular rights is much to be desired, and such a treaty I have reason to believe the Mexican Government stands ready to conclude. Some embarrassment has been caused by the failure of Congress at its session to provide means for the due execution of the treaty of July 29, 1882, for the survey of the Mexican boundary and the erection of the boundary monuments. The Republic of Nicaragua a treaty has been signed which authorizes the construction by the United States of a canal or railway or telegraph line across the Nicaraguan territory on the terms of this treaty. The Mexican boundary and the River San Juan as well as the inland sea forty miles in length constitute a part of the property. This covers for actual service seventeen miles on the Atlantic and twenty-six miles on the Atlantic States, whose rich territory for the ordinary purposes practically cut off from intercourse with Atlantic ports, commercial advantages of which can not be overestimated. A treaty is laid before you the justice and liberality of its provisions will command universal approval at home and abroad. The death of our representative in Russia while at his post at St. Petersburg afforded to the Imperial Government a renewed opportunity to testify its sympathy in a manner telling the intimate friendliness which has ever marked the intercourse of the two countries.

The course of this Government in raising its representation at Bang Kok to the diplomatic rank has evoked from Siam evidences of warm friendship, and augurs well for our enlarged intercourse. The Siamese Government has presented to the United States a commodious mansion and grounds for the occupancy of the legation, and suggest that by Government resolution, Congress attest its appreciation of this generous gift. The Government has more than once been called upon of late to take action in fulfillment of its international obligation towards Spain. Agitation in the island of Cuba to the Spanish crown having been fomented by persons abusing the sacred rights of hospitality which our territory affords, the officers of the Government have been instructed to use vigilance to prevent infractions of our neutrality laws at Key West and at the other points near the Cuban coast. I am happy to say that in only one instance were these precautionary measures successfully eluded. The offenders when found in our territory were subsequently tried and convicted. The growing need of a close relationship of intercourse and traffic between the Spanish Antillas and their natural market the United States led to the adoption in January last of a commercial agreement looking to that end. This agreement has since been superseded by a more carefully framed and comprehensive one which I shall submit to the Senate for approval. It has been the aim of this negotiation to open such a favored reciprocal exchange of productions carried under the flag of either country as to make the intercourse between Cuba and Porto Rico and ourselves scarcely less intimate than the commercial movement between our domestic ports, and to insure a removal of the burdens on shipping in the Spanish Indies, of which in the past our shipowners and shipmasters have so often had cause to complain. The negotiations of the convention have for a time posponed the prosecution of certain claims of our citizens which were declared to be without the jurisdiction of the late Spanish-American Claims Commission, and which we therefore permitted to diplomatic channels for adjustment. The speedy settlement of these claims will now be urged by the Government. Negotiations for a treaty of commercial reciprocity with the Dominican Republic have been successfully concluded, and its result will shortly be laid before the Senate. Certain questions between the United States and the Ottoman Empire still remain unsolved. Complaints in behalf of our citizens are not satisfactorily adjusted. The porte has sought to withhold from our commerce the right of favored treatment to which we are entitled by existing conventional stipulations, and the revision of the tariffs unaccomplished. The final disposition of pending questions with Venezuela has not as yet been reached, but I have good reason to expect an early settlement which will provide the means of re-examining the Caracas awards in conformity with the expressed desire of Congress and which will recognize the justice of certain claims preferred against Venezuela. The Central and South American commission appointed by authority of the act of July 7, 1884, will soon proceed to Mexico. It has been furnished with instructions which will be laid before you. They contain a statement of the general policy of the Government for enlarging its commercial intercourse with American States. The commissioners have accordingly preparing for their responsible tasks by holding conferences in the principal cities with merchants in the Central and South American trade. The international American conference, lately held in Washington upon the invitation of the Government of the United States, was composed of representatives from twenty-five nations. The conference concluded its labors on the 19th of November, having with substantial unanimity agreed upon the Greenwich as the initial point whence longitudes to be computed through 180 degrees eastward and westward, and on the adoption for all purposes for which it may be found convenient of a universal day which shall begin at midnight on the initial meridian, and whose hours shall be counted from zero up to twenty-four. The formal reports of the transactions of this conference will be hereafter transmitted to Congress. This Government is in frequent receipt of invitations from foreign states to participate in international exhibitions, often of great interest and importance. Occupying, as we do, an advanced position on the world's production, and aiming to secure a profitable share for our industries in the general competitive markets, it is a matter of serious concern that the want of means for participation in these exhibits should so often exclude our products from the advantages enjoyed by those other countries. During the past year the attention of Congress was drawn to the formal invitations in this regard by the Governments of England, Holland, Belgium, Germany and Austria. The Executive has in some instances appointed honorary commissioners. This is, however, a most unsatisfactory expedient, for without some provision to meet the necessary working expenses of a commissioner, it can effect little or nothing in behalf of exhibitors. An International Inventor's Exhibition is to be held in London next May. This will cover a field of special importance, in which our country holds a foremost rank; but the Executive is at present powerless to organize a proper representation of our vast National interests in this direction. I have in several previous messages related to this subject. It seems to me that a statute giving to the Executive general discretionary authority to accept such invitations, and to appoint honorary commissioners, without salary, and placing at the disposal of the Secretary of State a small fund defraying their reasonable expenses would be of great public utility.

This Government has received official notice that the revised international regulations for preventing collisions at sea have been adopted by all the leading marine powers except the United States, and came into force on the first of September last. For the due protection of our shipping interest, provisions of our statutes should at once be brought into conformity with these regulations. The question of securing to authors, composers, and artists copyright privileges in this country in return for reciprocal rights abroad was one that may justly challenge your attention. It is true that a convention will be necessary for fully accomplishing this result; but Congress shall by statue fix the extent to which foreign holders of copyright shall be here privileged. It has been deemed advisable to negotiate such conventions. For this reason the United States were not represented at the recent conference at Berne.

AFTER THE DYNAMITERS.

I recommend that the scope of the neutrality laws of the United States be so enlarged as to cover all patent acts of hostilities committed in our territory, and aimed against the peace of a friendly nation. Existing statutes prohibit the fitting out of armed expeditions and restrict the shipment of explosives, though the enactment in the latter respect were not framed with regard to international obligations, but simply for the protection of passenger travel. All those statutes were intended to meet special emergencies that had already arisen. Other emergencies have arisen since, and modern ingenuity supplies means for the organization of hostilities without open resort to armed vessels or filibustering parties. I see no reason why overt preparations in this country for the commission of criminal acts, such as are here under consideration, should not be alike punishable, whether such acts are intended to be committed in our own country or in a foreign country with which we are at peace. The prompt and thorough treatment of this question is one which naturally concerns the National honor.

Our existing naturalization laws also need revision. Those sections relating to persons residing within the limits of the United States in 1783 and 1798 have now only an historical interest. Section 2,712, recognizing the citizenship of the children of naturalized parents, is ambiguous in its terms, and partly obsolete. There are special provisions of law favoring the naturalization of those who served in the Army or in merchant vessels, while no similar privileges are granted those who serve in the Navy or Marine corps. An uniform rule of naturalization, such as the constitution contemplates should, among other things clearly define the status of persons born within the United States subject to a foreign power (Sec. 1,992) and of minor children of fathers who have declared their intention of becoming citizens but failed to perfect their naturalization. It might be wise to provide for a central bureau registry wherein should be filed authenticated transcripts of every naturalization in the several Federal and State Courts and to make provision also for the vacation or cancellation of such record in cases where fraud had been practiced upon the Court by the applicant himself or where he had removed or forfeited his acquired citizenship. A just and uniform law in this respect would strengthen the hand of the Government in protecting its citizens abroad and would pave the way for the conclusion of treaties of naturalization with foreign countries.

A community of sixty millions of people should be adequately represented in its intercourse with foreign nations. The project for the reorganization of the Consular Service, or for recasting the scheme of extra territorial jurisdiction is now before you. With the limits of a short session will not allow full consideration, I trust you will not fail to make suitable provision for the pressing needs of the service. It has been customary to define in the appropriation acts the rank of each diplomatic office to which a salary is attached. I suggest that this course be endorsed, and that it be left to the President with the advice and consent of the Senate to fix from time to time the diplomatic grade of the Representatives of this Government abroad, as may seem advisable, such action being made, however, subject to the amount of salary attached to the respective station.

THE TREASURY.

The condition of our finances and the operations of the various branches of the public service which are connected with the Treasury Department, are very fully discussed in the report of the Secretary. It appears that the ordinary revenues for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1884, were from customs $195,987,469.78; from internal revenue, $121,596,672.51; from all other sources, $11,498,307.65; total ordinary revenue, $349,319,909.92. The public expenditures during the same period, for civil expenses, $22,312,907.71; for foreign intercourse, $1,269,799.27; for Indians, $6,475,999.29; for pensions, $55,429,228.36; for the military establishment, including river and harbor improvements and arsenals, $32,429,662.36; for the naval establishments, including vessels, machinery and improvements at navy yards, $17,232,601.44; for miscellaneous expenditures, including public buildings, light-houses and collecting the revenue, $43,359,710; for expenditures on account of the District of Columbia, $3,407,049.22; for interest on the public debt, $56,478,378.48; for the sinking fund, $46,900,229.50; total ordinary expenditures, $250,916,483, leaving a surplus of $67,603,426, or as compared with the preceding fiscal year there was a net decrease of $20,000,000 in the amount of expenditures. The aggregate receipts were less than those of the year preceding by about $4,000,000. The falling off of revenue from customs made up nearly $20,000,000 of this deficiency, and about $20,000,000 of the remainder was due to the diminished receipts from the internal taxation. The Secretary estimates the total receipts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1885, at $325,000,000, and the total expenditures at $240,630,261.16, in which are included the interest on the debt and the amount payable to the sinking fund. This would leave a surplus for the entire year of about $84,000,000. The value of exports from the United States to foreign countries during the year ending June 30th, 1884, was as follows: Domestic merchandise, $719,964,852; foreign merchandise, $15,548,771; total merchandise, $740,513,609; specie, $67,133,883; total exports of merchandise and specie, $807,646,992. The cotton and cotton manufactures included in this statement are valued at $206,700,415; the breadstuffs at $182,544,715; the provisions at $114,415,547, and the mineral oils at $47,114,348. During the same period the imports were as follows: Merchandise, $667,697,693; gold and silver, $37,426,262; total, $705,123,955. More than ninety-three per cent. of the entire value of imported merchandise consisted of the following articles: Sugar and molasses, $103,584,274; wool and woolen manufactures, $53,542,292; silk and its manufactures, $40,940,126; coffee, $49,666,705; iron and steel and manufactures thereof, $41,461,509; chemicals, $384,669.65; flax, hemp, jute and like substances and manufactures thereof, $21,463,286; cotton and manufactures of cotton, $53,435,476; hides and skins other than fur skins, $22,350,995.

SILVER COINAGE.

I concur with the Secretary of the Treasury in recommending the immediate suspension of the coinage of silver dollars and the issue of silver certificates. This is a matter to which, in former communications, I have more than once invoked the attention of the National legislature. It appears that annually for the past six years there have been coined, in compliance with the Act of February 28, 1878, more than twenty-seven million silver dollars. The number now outstanding is reported by the Secretary to be nearly one hundred and eighty-five millions, whereof a little more than forty millions or less than twenty-two per cent. are in actual circulation. The mere instance of this fact seems to me to furnish of itself a cogent argument for the repeal of the statute which has made such a fact possible, but there are other and graver considerations that tend in the same direction. The Secretary avows his conviction that unless the coinage and the issuance of silver certificates be suspended, silver is likely at no distant day to become our sole metallic standard. The commercial disturbance and the impairment of the National credit that would be thus occasioned cannot be over-estimated. I hope that the Secretary's suggestions respecting the withdrawal from circulation of the one dollar and two dollar notes will receive your approval. It is likely that a considerable portion of the silver now in the vaults of the Treasury might find its way into currency. While trade dollars have ceased, for the present at least, to be an element of active disturbance in our currency system, some provision should be made for their surrender to the Government. On view of the circumstances under which these were coined, and of the fact that they have never had a legal tender quality, there should be no difficulty on slight grounds of science over their bullion value. The Secretary in the course of his report considers the propriety of beautifying the designs of our subsidiary silver coins, and of so increasing their weight that they may bear their due ratio of value to the standard dollars. His conclusions in this regard are cordially approved.

In my annual message of '83 I referred to the abolition of all excise taxes, except those relating to distilled liquors. That recommendation is now renewed. In case these taxes shall be abolished the revenues that will still remain to the Government will be, in my opinion, not only sufficient to meet its reasonable expenditures, but will afford a surplus large enough to permit such

TARIFF REDUCTION

as may seem to be advisable when the results of recent revenue laws and commercial treaties shall have shown in what quarter these reductions can be most judiciously effected.

One of the gravest of the problems which appeal to the wisdom of Congress for solution is the ascertainment of the most effective means of increasing our foreign trade and thus relieving the depression under which our industries are laboring. The Secretary of the Treasury advises that the duty of investigating this subject be entrusted in the first instance to a competent commission. While fully recognizing the considerations that may be urged against this course, I am nevertheless of the opinion that upon the whole no other would be likely to effect speedier or better results.

That portion of the Secretary's report which concerns the condition of the interest cannot fail to command your attention. He emphatically recommends that as an incentive to the investment of American capital in American bottoms, the Government shall by liberal payments for mail transportation or otherwise lend its active assistance to individual enterprise, and declares his belief that unless this course be pursued our foreign carrying trade must remain as it is today—almost exclusively in the hands of foreigners. On this question I would be specially pronounced in view of he repeal by the act of June 26, 1884, of all salutary provisions arbitrarily compelling American vessels to carry the mails to and from the United States. As it is necessary to make provisions to compensate the owners of such vessels for performing that service after April 1, 1885, it is hoped that the whole subject will receive early consideration that will lead to the enactment of such measures for the revival of our merchant marine as the wisdom of Congress may devise.

The three per cent. bonds of the Government to the amount of more than $1,000,000,000 have since my last annual been redeemed by the Treasury. The bonds of that issue still outstanding amount to a little over $300,000,000, about one-fourth of which will be retired through the operations of the sinking fund during the coming year as these bonds still continue the basis for the calculation of National banking. The question of how to avoid the withdrawal of the currency caused by their retirement is one of constantly increasing importance.

It seems to be generally conceded that the law governing that matter exacts from the banks excessive security, and that upon their present bonus deposit larger circulation than is now allowed may be granted with safety. I hope that the bill which passed the Senate at the last session, permitting the issue of notes equal to the face value of the deposited bonds, will commend itself to the approval of the House of Representatives.

In the expenses of the War Department the Secretary reports a decrease of more than $9,000,000, of which reduction $5,900,000 was effected in the expenditures for rivers and harbors, and $2,700,000 in expenditures for the Quartermaster's Department. Outside of that department, the annual expenses of all the army bureaus proper (except possibly the ordinance bureau) are substantially charges which cannot be materially diminished without a change in the numerical strength of the army. The expenditures in the Quartermaster's Department are readily to be subjected to administrative discretion, and it is reported by the Secretary of War that as a result of exercising such discretion in reducing the number of draft animals in the army, the annual cost of supplying and caring for such animals is over $1,100,000 less than it was in 1882.

The reports of the military governors show that the last year has been marked for its entire freedom from Indian outbreaks. In defiance of the President's proclamation of July 1, 1884, certain intruders sought to make settlements in the Indian Territory. They were promptly removed by a detachment of troops. During the last session of Congress a bill to provide for a suitable fire proof buildings for the army medical museum and the library of the Surgeon-General's office, received the approval of the Senate. A similar bill reported favorably by the House of Representatives by one of its committees is still pending before that body. It is hoped that during the coming session the measure may be taken to secure a place of safe deposit for these valuable collections now in a state of insecurity.

The funds with which these works for the improvement of rivers and harbors were prosecuted during the past year were derived from the appropriations of the act of August 2, 1882, together with few balances as were on hand from previous appropriations. The balance in the Treasury subject to requisition July 1, 1883, was $10,022,609.53. The amount appropriated during the fiscal year 1884 was $12,128,300.[illegible], and the amount drawn from the Treasury during the fiscal year was $[illegible], leaving a balance of $11,[illegible] in the Treasury, subject to requisition July 1, 1884.

HARBOR DEFENSES.

The Secretary of War submits the report of the Chief of Engineers as to the practicability of protecting our important cities on the sea board by fortifications and other defenses able to repel modern methods of attack. The time has come when such defenses can be prepared with confidence that they will not prove abortive, and when, the possible result of delay in making such preparations is considered, delay seems inexcusable, for the most important cities are those whose destruction or capture would be a National humiliation. Adequate defenses, inclusive of guns, may be made by the gradual expenditure of $60,000,000, a sum much less than a victorious enemy could levy as a contribution. An appropriation of about one-tenth of that amount is asked to begin the work, and I concur with the Secretary of War in urging that it be granted. The War Department is proceeding with the conversion of ten-inch smooth bore guns into eight-inch rifles, lining the former with tubes of forged or coiled wrought iron. Fifty guns will thus be converted within the year. This, however does not obviate the necessity of providing means for the construction of guns of the highest power, both for the purpose of coast defense and for the armament of war vessels. The report of the Gun Foundry Board appointed April 2, 1883, in pursuance of the act of March 3, 1883, was transmitted to Congress in a special message of February 8, 1884. In my message of March 26, 1884, I called attention to the recommendation of the Board that the Government should encourage the production of private steel works of the required material for heavy cannon, and that it has received information which indicates that there are responsible steel manufacturers in this country who, although not provided at present with the necessary plant, are willing to construct the same and to make bids for contracts with the Government for the supply of the requisite material for the heaviest guns adapted to modern warfare. If a guarantee order of sufficient magnitude, accompanied by a positive appropriation extending over a series of years shall be made by Congress, all doubts as to the feasibility of the plan being thus removed. I renew my recommendation that such action be taken by Congress will enable the Government to construct its own ordnance upon its own territory, and so to provide the armament demanded by considerations of National safety and honor.

THE NAVY.

The report of the Secretary of the Navy exhibits the progress which has been made on the new steel cruisers authorized by the acts of August 5, 1882, and March 3, 1883, of the four vessels under contract. The "Chicago," of 4,500 tons, more than half finished, the "Atlanta," 3,000 tons, has been successfully launched and her machinery is now filling; the Boston, also of 3,000 tons, is now ready for launching and the Dolphin, a dispatch steamer of 1,500 tons, is ready for sailing. Certain adverse criticisms upon the designs of these cruisers are discussed by the Secretary, who insists that the correctness of the conclusions reached by the advisory board and by the Department has been confirmed by recent developments in ship building abroad. The machinery of the double turreted monitors, Puritan, Terror and Amphitrite, contracted for under the act of March 3, 1883, is in process of construction. No work has been done during the past year on their armor for lack of the necessary appropriation. A fourth monitor, the Monadnock, still remains unfinished at the navy yard in California. It is recommended that early steps be taken to complete these vessels, and to provide also an armament for the monitor Miantonomoh. The recommendations of the Naval Advisory Board, approved by the Department, comprise the construction of one steel armored vessel, one cruiser of 3,000 tons, two heavily armed gunboats, one long cruising gunboat, one despatch vessel armed with Hotchkiss cannon, one armored ram, and three torpedo boats. The general designs, all of which are calculated to meet the existing wants of the service, are now well advanced, and the construction of the vessels can be undertaken as soon as you shall grant the necessary authority. The act of Congress approved August 7, 1882, authorized the removal to the United States of the bodies of Lieutenant Commander George W. DeLong and his companions of the Jeannette expedition. This removal has been successfully accomplished by Lieutenants Harber and Schuetz. The remains were taken from their graves in the Lena delta in March, 1883, and were detained at Yakutsk until the following winter, the season being too far advanced to admit of their immediate transportation. They arrived at New York February 21, 1884. They were received with suitable honors.

In pursuance of the joint resolution of Congress approved February 16, 1884, a naval expedition was fitted out for the relief of Lieutenant A. W. Greely, United States Army, and of the party who had been engaged, under his command, in scientific observations at Lady Franklin Bay. The expedition consisted of the steam sealer Thetis, purchased in England; the Bear, purchased at St. Johns, Newfoundland; and the Alert, which was generously provided by the British Government. Preparations for the expedition were promptly made by the Secretary of the Navy with the active cooperation of the Secretary of War. Commander George W. Coffin was placed in command of the Alert and Lieutenant W. H. Ewing in command of the Bear. The Thetis was entrusted to Commander Winfield S. Copely, to whom also was assigned the superintendency of the entire expedition. Immediately upon the arrival at Upernavik the fleet began the dangerous navigation of Melville Bay, and in spite of every obstacle reached Little Island on June 22, a fortnight earlier than any vessel had before attained that point. The same day it crossed over to Cape Sabine, where Lieutenant Greely and the other survivors of his party were discovered. After taking on board the living and the bodies of the dead, the relief ships sailed for St. John, where they arrived on July 17. They were afterwards received at Portsmouth, N. H., on August 1 and at New York on August 8. One of the bodies was landed at the former place. The others were put on shore at Governor's Island with the exception of one, which was interred in the National Cemetery, were forwarded thence to the destination indicated by friends. The organization and conduct of this relief expedition reflects great credit upon all who contributed to its success.

HIS LAST MESSAGE.

In this, the last of the stated messages that I shall have the honor to transmit to the Congress of the United States, I cannot too strongly urge on its attention the duty of restoring our navy, as rapidly as possible, to the high state of efficiency which formerly characterized it, as the long peace that has lulled us into a sense of fancied security may at any time be disturbed. It is plain that the policy of strengthening this arm of the service is dictated by considerations of use, of economy, of just regard for our future tranquility, and of a true appreciation of the dignity and honor of the Republic.

The report of the Postmaster General accompanies you with the present needs of the postal service. It discloses the gratifying fact that the loss of revenue from the reduction in the rate of letter postage, recommended in my message December, 1882, and effected by the act of March 3, 1883, has been much less than was generally anticipated. My recommendation of this reduction was based upon the belief that the actual falling off in receipts from letter postage for the year immediately succeeding the change of rate, could be $3,000,000; it has proved to be only $2,000,000. This is a trustworthy indication that the revenue will soon be restored to the former volume by the natural increase of sealed correspondence. I confidently repeat therefore, the recommendation of my last annual message that the single rate of postage upon drop letters be reduced to one cent wherever the payment of two cents is now required by law. The double rate is only exacted at offices where the carrier system is in operation, and it appears at the offices where the carrier system is in operation that the increase in tax upon local letters defrays cost not only of its own collection and delivery, but of the collection and delivery of all other classes of mail matter. This is an inequality that ought no longer to exist. I approve the recommendation of the Postmaster General that the unit of weight in the rating of first class matter should be one ounce instead of one-half ounce as it now. In view of statistics furnished by the Department it may well be doubted whether the change would result in any loss of revenue; that it would greatly promote the convenience of the public is beyond dispute. The free delivery system has been lately applied to five cities, and the total number of offices in which it is now in operation is 126. Experience shows that in opposition under proper conditions is equally a recommendation to the public and an advantage to the postal service. It is more than half self-sustaining and for the reasons urged by the Postmaster General may properly be extended. It is the opinion of that officer that it is proper to provide means whereby exceptional dispatch in dealing with letters in free delivery offices may be secured by paying extraordinary postage. This scheme might be made effective by the employment of a special stamp whose cost should be commensurate with the expense of extra service in some of the large cities.

Of the various governmental concerns in charge of the Interior Department, the reports of its Secretary present an interesting summary. Among the topics deserving of particular attention I refer to his observations respecting our Indian affairs, the preemption and timber culture acts, the failure of railroad companies to take title to lands granted by the Government, and the operations of the pension office, the patent office, the census bureau, and the bureau of education. Allusion has been made to the circumstance that both as between different Indian tribes and as between Indians and the whites the past year has been one of unbroken peace. In this circumstance the President is glad to find justification for the policy of the Government in dealing with the Indian question and confirmation of views which were fully expressed in his first communication to the forty-seventh Congress. The Secretary urges a new re-enactment of a statute for the punishment of crimes committed on the Indian Reservations, and recommends the passage of a bill now pending in the House of Representatives for the purchase of a tract of land 1[illegible] square miles from the Sioux Reservation. Both of these measures are worthy of approval. I concur with him also in advising the repeal of the pre-emption law; the enactment of statutes resolving the legal complications touching land grants to railroad companies; and the funding of the debt of the several Pacific Railroads under such guarantee as shall effectually ensure its ultimate payment.

The report of the Attorney-General will be read with interest. It discusses the results of recent legislation looking to the prevention and punishment of polygamy in that Territory. I still believe that of that abominable practice can be suppressed by law it can only be by the most radical legislation consistent with restraints of the constitution. I can again recommend, therefore, that Congress assume absolute political control of the Territory of Utah, provide for the appointment of a commission with such governmental powers as it in its judgment may justly and wisely put into their hands. In the course of this communication reference has more than once been made to the policy of this Government as regards the extension of our foreign trade, it seems proper to declare the general principles that should, in my opinion, underlie our National efforts in this direction. The main conditions of the problem may thus be stated. We are a people in the material pursuits and fortune by no means dependent upon foreign territory such as are required to furnish markets for the products of our industries and nearly all the raw materials necessary to successful manufacture. We have a system of productive establishments more than sufficient to supply our own demand. The wages of labor are somewhat higher than elsewhere, but not so much so as to secure their personal comfort and the development of those higher motives and intellectual qualities that go to the making of good citizens. Our system of taxation by legislation is yielding a revenue which is in excess of the present needs of the Government. These are elements from which it is sought to derive a scheme by which, without unfavorably changing the conditions of the workingmen our merchant marine shall be raised from its enfeebled condition and new markets provided for the sale beyond our borders of the manifold fruits of our industrial enterprise. The system is complex, and can be solved by no simple application of innovation or reform. The countries of the American continent and the adjacent islands are for the United States the natural market of supply and demand. It is from them that we should obtain what we do not produce, or do not produce in sufficiency for our needs. It is to them that the surplus productions of our farms and our workshops should flow under conditions which would favor them in comparison with foreign competition. Four paths of policy seem to lead to this end. First, a series of reciprocal commercial treaties with the countries of America which shall foster between us and them an unhampered interchange of trade. The conditions of these treaties should be the free admission of such merchandise as the country does not produce in return for admission free or under a favorable scheme of duties of our products, the benefits of such exchange to apply on these goods carried under the flag of the parties to the contract. Reciprocity treaties with Mexico and Spain are urged as of this character. Second, discriminating duties of tonnage dues and National imposts, so that their vessels may pay unlike dues between our ports and those of the other contracting parties, though without infringing on the deserved home coasting trade, the removal or reduction of burdens would inure to the benefit of those countries coming within the benefits of reciprocal trade and the avoidance of the technical restrictions and penalties as at present hampered. Secondly, the establishment of the consular services of the United States on a salaried footing, permitting the relinquishment of consular fees not only as respects vessels not under the flag of the United States, but as respects vessels of the treaty nations bearing goods entitled to the benefits of the treaties. Thirdly, the enactment of measures to favor the construction and maintenance of a steam carrying marine under the flag of the United States. Fourthly, the establishment of a uniform currency basis for the countries of America, so that the coined products of our mints may circulate on equal terms throughout the whole system of commonwealths. This would require a monetary union of America, whereby the output of the bullion producing countries and the circulation of those which have adopted the gold standard be adjusted in conformity with the population, wealth and commercial needs of each, as many of the countries furnish no bullion to the common stock. The surplus production of our mines and mints might thus be utilized and a step taken toward the general recognition of silver to the accomplishment of these ends so far as they can be attained by separate treaties. The negotiations already concluded and now in progress have been directed and the favorable action which this enlarged policy has thus far received warrants the belief that its operations will ere long embrace nearly all the nations of this hemisphere. It is by no means desirable, however, that the policy under consideration should be applied to these countries as well as the healthful enlargement of trade with Europe, Asia and Africa should be sought. By

REDUCING TARIFF BURDENS

on such of these wares as neither we nor the other American States are fitted to produce, and thus enabling ourselves to obtain in return a better market for our supplies of food, of raw materials and of the manufactures in which we excel, it seems to me that many of the embarrassing elements in the great National conflict between protection and free trade may thus be turned to good account; that the revenue may be reduced so as to no longer overtax the people; that protection duties may be retained without becoming burdensome; that our shipping interests may be judiciously encouraged, the currency fixed on a firm basis, above all such an amity established between the States of the American system as will be of great and ever increasing advantage to them all. All treaties in the line of this policy which have been negotiated, or are in process of negotiation, contain a provision deemed to be requisite under the clause of the constitution, limiting to the House of Representatives the authority to originate bills for raising revenue.

On the twenty-ninth of February last I transmitted to Congress the first annual report of

THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION,

together with communications from the heads of several Executive Departments of the Government, respecting the special workings of the law under which the commission had been acting. The good results therein foreshadowed have been more than realized. The system has fully answered the expectations of his friends in securing competent and faithful public servants, and in protecting the appointing officers of the Government from the importunity of personal applicants, and from the labor of examining the claims and pretensions of rival candidates for public employment. The law has had the unqualified support of the President and of the heads of the several departments and the members of the commission have performed their duties with zeal and ability. A report shortly to be submitted, and will be accompanied by such recommendations for enlarging the scope of the existing statute as shall commend themselves to the executive and the commissioners charged with its administration.

In view of the general and persistent demand throughout the commercial community for a National bankrupt law, I hope that the differences of sentiment which have hitherto prevented its enactment may not outlast the present sessions.

The pestilence which for the past two years has been raging in the countries of the East recently made its appearance in Europe with which we are in constant communication. The then Secretary of the Treasury, in pursuance of a proclamation of the President, issued certain regulations restricting and for a time prohibiting the importation of rags and the admission of baggage of immigrants or travelers arriving at the ports of entry. Lest the course may have been without strict warrant or law, I approve the recommendation of the present Secretary, that the Congress take action in the premises, and I also recommend the immediate adoption of such measures as will be likely to ward off the dreaded epidemic and to mitigate its severity in case it shall unhappily extend to our shores.

The annual report of the commissioners of the District of Columbia reviews the operations of the several departments of its municipal government. I ask your careful consideration of its suggestions in respect to legislation I commend, such as relate to a revision of the civil and criminal code, the performance of labor by persons sentenced to imprisonment in jail, the construction and occupation of wharves along the river front, and the erection of a suitable building for district officers.

FOR GRANT.

I recommended that in the recognition of services of Ulysses S. Grant, late General of the Armies of the United States, and twice President of this Nation, the Congress confer upon him a suitable pension.

I am certain of the measures that seem to me necessary and expedient. I have now, in obeyance to that constitution, recommended for your adoption as a recipe to others of no less importance. I shall content myself with receiving the recommendations already made to the Congress without restating the grounds upon which recommendations were based. The preservation of forests on the public domain; the founding of Government aid for popular education; the amendment of the Federal Constitution, so as to make effective the disapproval by the President of particular items in appropriating bills; the enactment of statutes in regard to the filling of vacancies in Presidential offices and the determining of vexed questions respecting Presidential availability on measures which may justly receive your serious consideration.

As the time draws nigh when I am to retire from the public service, I cannot refrain from expressing to the members of the National Legislature with whom I have been brought into personal and official intercourse, my sincere appreciation of their unfailing courtesies of their harmonious co-operation with the executive in so many measures calculated to promote the best interests of the nation, and to my fellow citizens generally, I can only edge a deep sense of obligation for the support which they have accorded the administration of the Executive Department.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR.

Washington, D. C., December 4, 1884.

HOME, FARM AND GARDEN.

—There is [illegible] more promising field in the production of [illegible] than the growing [illegible] seedling gooseberries of the American species.

—Cold [illegible] turnips make a nice garnish [illegible] roast beef or hash. Cut them in [illegible] slices and brown in butter, pouring [illegible] gravy over them. Place them on the platter around the meat.—*Boston Globe.*

—A putty can be removed without injury to the sash or glass by passing a hot soldering iron over it. The heat of the iron softens it readily and permits its removal with a knife or chisel without much trouble.

—Mock Oysters.—Grate six large ears of sweet corn, raw; beat one egg, stirring in one tablespoonful of flour and one of milk; season with salt and pepper; drop in hot butter; turn so as to brown. Serve hot.—*Exchange.*

—If we consult our health we should plant the garden with odoriferous plants such as wall fl