some have escaped and the majority of the tribe are now on their reservation.

THE OKLOHOMA INVASION.

There is need of legislation to prevent intrusion upon the lands set apart for the Indians. A large military force at great expense is now required to patrol the boundary line between Kansas and the Indian territory; the only punishment that can at present be inflicted is the forcible removal of the intruder and the imposition of a pecuniary fine, which in most cases it is impossible to collect. There should be a penalty by imprisonment in such cases.

THE SIGNAL SERVICE.

The separate organization of the signal service is advised by the secretary of war, and a full statement of the advantages of such a permanent organization is presented in the report of the chief signal officer. A detailed statement of the usual work performed by the signal corps and the weather bureau is also given in that report.

THE SUBSISTENCE DEPARTMENT.

I ask attention to the statements of the secretary of war regarding the requisitions frequently made by the Indian bureau upon the subsistence department of the army for the casual support of bands or tribes of Indians for which appropriations are exhausted. The war departments should not be left, by reason of inadequate provision for the Indian bureau, to contribute for the maintenance of Indians.

RIVERS AND HARBORS.

The report of the chief engineer furnishes a detailed account of operations for the improvement of rivers and harbors. I commend to your attention the suggestions contained in this report, in regard to the condition of our fortifications, especially our coast defences, and recommend an increase of the strength of the engineer battalion by which the efficiency of our torpedo system would be improved.

I also call your attention to the remarks upon the improvement of the south pass of the Mississippi river, the proposed free bridge over the Potomac river at Georgetown, the importance of completing at an early day the north wing of the department building, and other recommendations of the secretary of war which appears in his report. The

ACTUAL EXPENDITURES

of this department for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1881, were $42,122,201.39. The appropriations for the year 1882 were $44,889,725.42. The estimates for 1883 are $44,541,296.91.

NAVY DEPARTMENT.

INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS NECESSARY.

The report of the secretary of the navy exhibits the condition of that branch of the service and presents valuable suggestions for its improvement. I call your especial attention, also, to the appended report of the advisory board, which he convened to devise suitable measures for increasing the efficiency of the navy, and particularly to report as to the character and number of vessels necessary to place it upon a footing commensurate with the necessities of the government. I cannot too strongly urge upon you my conviction that every consideration of national safety, economy and honor imperatively demands a thorough rehabilitation of our navy, with a full appreciation of the fact that compliance with the suggestions of the head of the department and of the advisory board must involve a large expenditure of the public moneys. I earnestly recommend such appropriations as will accomplish that which seems to be desirable. Nothing can be more inconsistent with true public economy than withholding the means necessary to accomplish the objects intrusted by the constitution to the national legislature. One of the objects, and one which is of paramount importance, is defined by our fundamental law to be the provision for the "common defence." Surely nothing is more essential to the defence of the United States and of all our people than the efficiency of our navy. We have for many years maintained with foreign governments the relations of honorable peace, and that such relations may be permanent is desired by every patriotic citizen of the republic. But if we read the teaching of history we shall not forget that in the life of every nation emergencya may arise when a resort to arms can only save it from dishonor. No danger from abroad now threatens this people, nor have we any cause to distrust the friendly professions of other governments, but for avoiding, as well as for repelling, dangers that may threaten in the future, we must be prepared to enforce any policy which we think wise to adopt. We must be ready to defend our harbors against aggression, to protect by distribution of our ships of war over the highways of commerce the varied interests of our foreign trade and the person and property of our citizens abroad, to maintain everywhere the honor of our flag and the distinguished position which we may rightfully claim among the nations of the world.

POSTOFFICE DEPARTMENT.

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES.

The report of the postmaster general is a gratifying exhibit of the growth and efficiency of the the postal service. The receipts from postages and other ordinary sources during the past fiscal year were $36,489,816.58; the receipts from the money order business were $245,581.39; making a total of $36,785,397.97. The expenditures for the fiscal year were 69,257,736.46; the deficit supplied out of the general treasury was $2,480,129.35, or 63 per cent. of the amount. The receipts were $3,469,918 63 in excess of those of the previous year and $4,575,397.97 in excess of the estimate made two years ago before the present period of business prosperity had fairly begun. The whole number of letters mailed in this country in the last fiscal year exceeded 1,000,000,000.

THE REGISTRY SYSTEM

is reported to be in excellent condition, having been remodeled during the past four years with good results. The amount of registration fees collected during the last fiscal year was $712,882.20, an increase over the fiscal year ending June 30, 1877, of $345,443.40. The entire number of letters and packages registered during the year was 8,338,919, of which only 2,061 were destroyed or lost in transit. The operations of

THE MONEY ORDER SYSTEM

are multiplying yearly under the impulse of immigration and the rapid development of the newer states and territories, and the consequent demand for additional means of intercommunication and exchange. During the past year 338 additional money order offices have been established, making a total number of 5,499 in operation at the date of this report. During the year the domestic money orders aggregated in value $105,675,769.35. A modification of the system is suggested, reducing the fees for money orders not exceeding $5 from 10 cents to 5 cents and making the maximum limit $100 in place of $50. Legislation for the disposition of unclaimed money orders in the possession of the postoffice department is recommended in view of the fact that their total value exceeds $1,000,000.

POSTAL SAVINGS BANKS.

The attention of congress is again pointed to the subject of establishing a system of savings depositories in connection with the postoffice department. The statistics of

MAIL TRANSPORTATION

show that during the past year railroad routes have been increased in length 6,249 miles and in cost $114,382, while steamboat routes have been decreased in length 2,182 miles and in cost $134,054. The so called star routes have been decreased in length 3,949 miles and in cost $364,149. Nearly all of the more expensive routes have been superseded by railroad service. The cost of the star service must therefore rapidly decrease in the western states and territories. The postmaster general, however, calls attention to the constantly increasing cost of the railway mail service as a serious difficulty in the way of making the department self-sustaining. Our postal

INTERCOURSE WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES

has kept pace with the growth of the domestic service. Within the past year several countries and colonies have declared their adhesion to the postal union. It now includes all those which have an organized postal service, except Bolivia, Costa Rica, New Zealand and the British colonies in Australia.

THE STAR ROUTE FRAUDS.

As has been already stated, great reductions have recently been made in the expenses of the star route service. The investigations of the department of justice and the postoffice department have resulted in the presentation of indictments against persons formerly connected with the service, accusing them of offenses against the United States. I have enjoined upon the officials who are charged with the conduct of the cases on the part of the government and upon the eminent counsel who before my accession to the presidency were called to their assistance, the duty of prosecuting with the utmost vigor of the law all persons who may be found chargeable with frauds upon the postal service.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

OVERBURDENED COURTS.

The acting attorney general calls attention to the necessity of modifying the present system of the courts of the United States—a necessity due to the large increase of business, especially in the Supreme Court. Litigation in our federal tribunals became greatly expanded after the close of the late war. So long as that expansion might be attributable to the abnormal condition in which the community found itself immediately after the return of peace, prudence required that no change be made in the constitution of our judicial tribunals. But it has now become apparent that an immense increase of litigation has directly resulted from the wonderful growth and development of the country. There is no ground for belief that the business of the United States Courts will ever be less in volume than at present. Indeed, that it is likely to be much greater is generally recognized by the bench and bar. In view of the fact that congress has already given much consideration to this subject, I make no suggestion as to detail, but express the hope that your deliberations may result in such legislation as will give early relief to our overburdened courts.

LAWLESS INCURSIONS TO MEXICO.

The acting attorney general also calls attention to the disturbance of the public tranquility during the past year in the territory of Arizona. A band of armed desperadoes known as "cow boys," probably numbering from fifty to one hundred men, have been engaged for months in committing acts of lawlessness and brutality, which the local authorities have been unable to repress. The depredations of these "cow boys" have also been extended into Mexico, which the marauders reach from the Arizona frontier. With every disposition to meet the exigencies of the case, I am embarrassed by lack of authority to deal with them effectually. The punishment of crimes committed within Arizona should ordinarily, of course, be left to the territorial authorities, but it is worthy of consideration whether acts which necessarily tend to embroil the United States with neighboring governments should not be declared crimes against the United States. Some of the incursions alluded to may, perhaps, be within the scope of the law, Revised Statutes, section 5,206, forbidding military expedition or enterprises against friendly states,—but in view of the speedy assembling of your body, I have preferred to await such legislation as in your wisdom the occasion may seem to demand. It may perhaps be thought proper to provide that the setting on foot within our own territory of brigandage and armed marauding expeditions against friendly nations, and their citizens shall be punishable as an offense against the United States. I will add that in the event of a request from the territorial government for protection by the United States against "domestic violence," this government would be powerless to render assistance. The act of 1795, chapter 36, passed at a time when territorial governments received little attention from congress, enforced this duty of the United States only as to state governments, and the act of 1807, chapter 39, applied also to territories. The law seems to have remained in force until the revision of the statutes, when the provision for the territories was dropped. I am not advised whether this alteration was intentional or accidental, but as it seems to me that the territories should be offered the protection which is accorded to states by the constitution, I suggest legislation to that end. It seems to me that whatever views may prevail as to the policy of recent legislation by which the army has ceased to be a part of the posse comitatus, an exception might well be made for permitting the military to assist the civil territorial authorities in enforcing the laws of the United States This use of the army would not seem to be within the alleged evil against which that legislation was aimed. From sparseness of population and other circumstances it is often quite impracticable to summons a civil posse in places where officers of justice require assistance and where a military force is within easy reach.

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT.

THE INDIAN PROBLEM.

The report of the secretary of the interior, with accompanying documents, presents an elaborate account of the business of that department. A summary of it would be too extended for this place. I ask your careful attention to the report itself. Prominent among the matter which challenges the attention of congress at its present session is the management of our Indian affairs. While this question has been a cause of trouble and embarrassment from the infancy of the government, it is but recently that any efforts have been made for its solution, at once serious, determined and consistent, and promising success. It has been easier to resort to convenient makeshifts for tiding over the temporary difficulties than to grapple with the great permanent problem, and accordingly the easier course has almost invariably been pursued. It was natural at a time when the national territory seemed almost illimitable and contained many millions of acres far beyond the bounds of civilized settlements, that a policy should have been initiated which more than aught else has been the fruitful source of our Indian complications. I refer, of course, to the policy of dealing with the various Indian tribes as separate nationalities, of regulating them by treaty stipulations, to the occupancy of immense reservations in the west, and of encouraging them to live undisturbed by any earnest and well directed efforts to bring them under the influences of civilization. The unsatisfactory results which have sprung from this policy are becoming apparent to all. As the white settlements have crowded the borders of the reservations, the Indians, some times contentedly and some times against their will, have been transferred to other hunting grounds, from which they have again been dislodged whenever their new found homes have been desired by the adventurous settlers. These removals and the advent of frontier colonists by whom they have often been succeeded, have led to frequent and disastrous conflicts between the races. It is profitless to discuss here which of them have been chiefly responsible for the disturbances whose recital occupies so large a space in the progress of our history. We have to detail with the appalling fact that thousands of lives have been sacrificed and hundreds of millions of dollars expended in the attempt to solve the Indian problem. It had until within the past few years seemed scarcely nearer a solution than it was half a century ago; but the government has of late been cautiously but steadily feeling its way to the adoption of a policy which has already produced gratifying results, and which in my judgment is likely, if congress and the executive are in accord in its support to relieve us ere long from the difficulties which have hitherto beset us. For the success of the efforts now making to introduce among the Indians the customs and pursuits of civilized life, and gradually to absorb them into the mass of our citizens, sharing their rights and holding to the responsibilities, there is imperative need for legislative action. My suggestions in that respect will be chiefly such as have been already called to the attention of congress and have received to some extent its consideration.

First. I recommend the passage of an act making the laws of the various states and territories applicable to the Indian reservations within their borders and extending the laws of the state of Arkansas to the portion of Indian territory not occupied by the five civilized tribes. The Indian should receive the protection of the law. He should be allowed to maintain in court his rights of person and property. He has repeatedly begged for this privilege. Its exercise would be very valuable in his progress toward civilization.

Second. Of the measure which has been frequently recommended by my predecessors in office, and in the furtherance of which several bills have been from time to time introduced in both houses of congress. The enactment of a general law permitting the allotment in severalty, to such Indians at least as desire it, of a reasonable quantity of land secured to them by patent and for their own protection and made alienable for from twenty or twenty-five years, is demanded for their present welfare and their permanent advancement. In return for such considerate action on the part of the government, there is reason to believe that the Indians in large numbers would be persuaded to sever their tribal relations and to engage at once in agricultural pursuits. They would see that their roaming days were over, and that it is now for their best interests to conform their manner of life to the new order of things. By no greater inducement than the assurance of permanent title of the soil can they be led to engage in the occupation of tilling it. The well attested reports of their increasing interest in husbandry justify the hope and belief that the enactment of such a statute as I recommend would be at once attended with gratifying results. A resort to the allotment system would have a direct and powerful influence in disolving the tribal band, which is a prominent feature of savage life and which tends so strongly to perpetuate them. I advise a liberal appropriation for the support of Indian schools, because of my confident belief that such a course is consistent with the wisest economy. Even among the most uncultured Indian tribes, there is reported to be a general desire on the part of the chiefs and older members for the education of their children. It is unfortunate, in view of this fact, that during the past years the means which have been at the command of the interior department for the purpose of Indian instruction have proved to be utterly inadequate. The success of the schools which are in operation at Hampton, Carlisle, and Forest Grove should not only encourage a more generous provision for the support of these institutions, but should prompt the establishment of others of similar character. They are doubtless much more potent for good than the day schools upon the reservations, as the pupils are altogether separated from the surroundings of the rough life, and brought into constant contact with civilization. There are many other phases of this subject which are of great interest, but which cannot be included within the becoming limits of this communication. They are discussed ably in the reports of the secretary of the interior and of the commissioner of Indian affairs.

THE MORMON QUESTION.

For many years the executive in his annual message to congress has suggested the necessity of stringent legislation for the suppression of polygamy in the territories, especially in Utah. The existing statute for the punishment of this odious crime, so revolting to the moral and religious sense of christianity, has been persistently and contemptuously violated ever since its enactment. Indeed, in spite of commendable efforts on the part of the authorities who represent the United States in that territory, the law has, in very rare instances, been enforced, and for a cause to which reference will presently be made, is practically a dead letter. The fact that adherents of the Mormon church, which rests upon polygamy as its corner stone, have recently been peopling in large numbers, Idaho, Arizona and other of our western territories, is well calculated to excite the liveliest interest and apprehension. It imposes upon congress and the executive the duty of using against this barbarous system all the power which under the constitution and the law they can wield for its destruction. Reference has already been made to the obstacles the United States officers have encountered in their efforts to punish violators of the law. Prominent among the obstacles is the difficulty of procuring legal evidence sufficient to warrant a conviction even in the case of the most notorious offenders. Your attention is called to the report of the supreme court of the United States, explaining its judgment of reversal in the case of Miles, who had been convicted of bigamy in Utah. The court refers to the fact that the secrecy attending the celebration of marriages in that territory makes that part of polygamy very difficult, and the propriety is suggested of modifying that law of evidence which now makes a wife incompetent to testify against her husband. This suggestion is approved. I recommend also the passing of an act providing that in the territories of the United States, the fact that a woman has been married to a person charged with bigamy shall not disqualify her as a witness upon his trial for that offense. I further recommend legislation by which any person solemnizing a marriage in any of the territories shall be required under stringent penalties for neglect or refusal to file a certificate of such marriage in the supreme court of the territory, unless congress make or devise other practicable measures for obviating the difficulties which have hitherto attended the efforts to suppress this iniquity. I assure you of my determined purpose to co-operate with you in any lawful and discreet measures which may be proposed to that end.

EDUCATIONAL.

Although our system of government does not contemplate that the nation should provide or support a system for the education of our people, no measures calculated to promote that general intelligence and virtue upon which the perpetuity of our institutions so greatly depends, have ever been regarded with indifference by congress or the executive. A large portion of the public domain has been from time to time devoted to the promotion of education. There is now especial occasion why, by setting apart the proceeds of its sales of public lands or by some other course, the government should aid the work of education. Many who now exercise the right of suffrage are unable to read the ballot which they cast. Upon many who had just emerged from a condition of slavery where suddenly devolved the responsibilities of citizenship in that portion of the country most impoverished by war, I have been pleased to learn from the report of the commissioner of education that there has been lately a commendable increase of interest and effort for their instruction; but all that can be done by local legislation and private generosity should be supplemented by such aid as can be constitutionally afforded by the national government. I would suggest that if any fund be dedicated to this purpose, it may be wisely distributed in the different states according to the ratio of illiteracy, as by this means those locations which are most in need of such assistance will reap its separate benefits.

AGRICULTURAL.

The report of the commissioner of agriculture exhibits results of the experiments in which that department has been engaged during the past year, and makes important suggestions in reference to the agricultural development of the country. The steady increase of our population, and the consequent addition to the numbers of those engaged in the pursuit of husbandry are giving to this department a growing dignity and importance. The commissioner's suggestions touching its capacity for greater usefulness deserve attention, as it more and more commends itself to the interest which it was created to promote.

THE PENSION BUREAU.

It appears from the report of the commissioner of pensions that since 1860, 789,063 original pension claims have been filed; 450,949 of these have been allowed and inscribed on the pension roll; 72,539 have been rejected and abandoned, being 13 plus per cent of the whole number of claims settled. There are now pending for settlement 266,575 original pension claims, 22,704 of which were filed prior to July 1, 1880. These, when allowed, will invoke the payment of arrears from the date of discharge in the case of an invalid, and from the date of death or termination of a prior right in all other cases. From all the data obtainable it is estimated that 15 per cent of the number of claims now pending will be rejected or abandoned. This would show the probable rejection of 34,040 cases and the probable addition of 193,000 claims, all of which involves the payment of arrears of pension. With the present force employed the number of adjudications remaining the same and no new business intervening, this number of claims (193,000) could be acted upon in a period of six years, and taking January 1, 1884, as a near period from which to estimate in each case an average amount of arrears, it is found that every case allowed would require for the first payment upon it the sum of $1,350. Multiplying this amount by the whole number of probable admissions gives $250,000,000 as the sum required for the first payments. This represents the sum which must be paid upon claims which were filed before July 1, 1880, and are now pending and entitled to the benefits of the arrears act. From this amount ($250,000,000) may be deducted from $10,000,000 to $15,000,000 for cases where the claimant dying there is no person who, under the law, would be entitled to such pension, leaving $235,000,000 as the probable amount to be paid.

In these estimates no account has been taken of the 38,500 cases filed since June 30, 1880, and now pending, which must receive attention. It is current business but does not involve payment of any arrears beyond the date of the filing of the claim. Of this number it is estimated that 86 per cent. will be allowed and as has been stated with the present force of the pension bureau (675 clerks) it is estimated that it will take six years to dispose of the claims now pending. It is stated by the Commissioner of Pensions that by an addition of 250 clerks (increasing the adjudicary force rather than the mechanical) double the amount of work could be accomplished, so that these cases could be acted upon within three years. Aside from the considerations of justice which may be urged for a speedy settlement of the claims now on the files of the pension office, it is no less important on the score of economy, inasmuch as fully one-third of the clerical force of the office is now wholly occupied in giving attention to correspondence with the thousands of claimants, whose cases have been on file for the past eighteen years. The fact that a sum so enormous may be expended by the government in paying for arrears of pensions is an admonition to congress and the executive to give cautious consideration to any similar project in the future. The great temptation to the presentation of fictitious claims afforded, by the fact the average sum obtained upon each application is $1,300, leads to the suggestion of the propriety of making some special appropriation for the prevention of fraud.

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

I advise appropriation for such internal improvements as in the wisdom of congress may seem to be of public importance. The necessity of improving the navigation of the Mississippi river justifies a special allusion to that subject. I suggest the adoption of some measure for the removal of obstructions which now impede the navigation of that great channel of commerce.

THE CIVIL SERVICE.

In my letter accepting the nomination for vice president, I stated that in my judgment "no man should be incumbent of office, the duties of which he is for any cause unfit to perform; who is lacking in the ability, fidelity or integrity which a proper administration of such office demands. This sentiment would doubtless meet with general acquiescence, but opinion has been widely divided upon the wisdom and practicability of the various reformatory schemes which have been suggested, and of certain proposed regulation governing the appointment to public office. The efficiency of such regulations has been distrusted mainly because they have seemed to exalt the mere educational and abstract tests above a general business capacity and even special fitness for the particular work in hand. It seems to me that the management of the public service may properly conform in the main to such as regulate the condition of successful private business. Original appointments should be based upon ascertained fitness. The tenure of office should be stable; positions of responsibility should be filled by the promotion of worthy and efficient officers. The investigation of all complaints and the punishment of all flicial misconduct, should be prompt and thorough." The views expressed in the foregoing letter are those which will govern my administration of the executive office. They are doubtless shared by all intelligent and patriotic citizens, however divergent in their opinion as to the best methods of putting them into practical operation. For example, the assertion that an original appointment should be based upon ascertained fitness is not open to dispute, but the question as to how in practice such fitness can be most effectually ascertained is one which has for years excited interest and discussion. The measure which, with slight variations in its details, has lately been urged upon the attention of congress and the executive has for its principal feature the scheme of competitive examination. With certain exceptions, which need not here be specified, this plan would allow admission to the service only at its lowest grade and would accordingly demand that all vacancies in higher positions should be filled by promotion alone. In these particulars it is in conformity with the existing civil service system of Great Britain, and indeed the success which has attended that system in the country of its birth is the strongest argument which has been urged for its adoption here. The fact should not, however, be overlooked that there are certain features of the English system which have not generally been received with favor in this country, even among the foremost advocates of civil service reform. Among them are (1,) a tenure of office which is substantially a life tenure; (2,) a limitation of the maximum age at which an applicant can enter the service, whereby all men in middle life or under are with some exceptions, rigidly excluded; (3,) a retiring allowance upon going out of office. These three elements are as important factors of the problem as any of the others. To eliminate them from the English system would effect a most radical change in its theory and practice. The avowed purpose of that system is to induce educated young men of the country to devote their lives to public employment by an assurance that having once entered upon it they need never leave it, and that after voluntary retirement they shall be recipients of an annual pension. That this system as an entirety has proved very successful in Great Britain seems to be generally conceded by those who once opposed its adoption. Its adpatation to a state which should incorporate all its essential features, I should feel bound to give my approval; but whether it would be for the best interests of the public to fix upon an expedient for immediate and extensive application, which embraces certain features of the English system, but excludes or ignores others of equal importance, may be seriously doubted even by those impressed, as I am myself, with the grave importance of correcting the evils which are in the present methods of appointment. If, for example, the English rule which shuts out persons above the age of 25 years from a large number of public employments is not made an essential part of our system, it is questionable whether the attainment of the highest number of marks at a competitive examination should be the criterion by which all applications for appointment should be put to test and under similar conditions it may also be questioned whether admission to the service should be strictly limited to its lowest rank. There are very many characteristics which go to make a model civil service. Prominent among them are probably industry, good sense, good habits, good temper, patience, order, courtesy, tact, self-reliance, manly deference to superior officers and manly considerations for inferiors. The absence of these traits is not supplied by wide knowledge of books, or by promptitude in answering questions, or by any other quality likely to be brought to light by a competitive examination. To make success in such a contest, therefore, an indispensable condition of public employment, would very likely result in the practical exclusion of the older applicants, even though they might possess qualifications far superior to their younger and more brilliant competitors. These suggestions must not be regarded as evincing any spirit of opposition to the competitive plan, which has been to some extent successfully employed already and which may hereafter vindicate the claim of its earnest supporters, but it ought to be seriously considered whether the application of the same educational standard to persons of mature years and to young men fresh from school and college would not be likely to exalt mere intellectual proficiency above other qualities of equal or greater importance. Another feature of the proposed system is the election for promotion of all officers of the government above the lowest grade, except such as would fairly be regarded as exponents of the policy of the executive and the principles of the dominant party. To afford encouragement to faithful public servants by exciting in their minds the hope of promotion if they are found to merit it, is much to be desired, but would it be wise to adopt a rule so rigid as to permit no other mode of supplying the intermediate ranks of the service? There are many persons who fill subordinate positions with great credit, but lack those qualities which are requisite for the higher posts of duty, and besides the modes of thought and action of one whose service in a govermental bureau has been long continued are often so cramped by routine procedure as almost to disqualify him from instituting the changes required by the public interests, and the infusion of new blood from time to time into the middle ranks of the service might be very beneficial in its results. The subject under discussion is one of grave importance. The evils which are complained of cannot be eradicated at once. The work must be gradual. The present English system is a growth of years and was not created by a single stroke of executive or legislative actions. Its beginnings are found in an order in council promulgated in 1855, and it was, after patient and courteous scrutiny of its workings, that fifteen years later it took its present shape. Five years after the issuance of the order in council, and at a time when resort had been made to competitive examinations as an experiment much more extensively than has yet been the case in this country, a select committee of the house of commons made a report to that house which, declaring its approval of the competitive method, deprecated, nevertheless, any precipitancy in its general adoption as likely to endanger its ultimate success. During this tentative period the results of the two methods of pass examination and competitive examination was closely watched and compared. It may be that before we confine ourselves upon this important question within the stringent bounds of statutory enactment, we may profitably await the result of further inquiry and experiment. The submission of a portion of the nominations to a central board of examiners selected solely for testing the qualifications of applicants, may, perhaps, without resort to the competitive test, put an end to the mischief which attends the present system of appointment and it may be feasible to vest in such a board a wide discretion, to ascertain the characteristics and attainments of candidates in these particulars which I have already referred to as being no less important than mere intellectual acquirements. If congress should deem it advisable at the present session to establish competitive tests for admission to the service, no doubts such as have been suggested shall deter me from giving the measure my earnest support, and I urgently recommend, should there be a failure to pass any other act upon this subject, that an appropriation of $25,000 per year be made for the enforcement of section 1,753 of the Revised Statutes. With the aid thus afforded me I shall strive to execute the provisions of that law according to its letter and spirit. I am unwilling, in justice to the present civil servants of the government, to dismiss this subject without declaring my dissent from the severe and almost indiscriminate censure with which they have been recently assailed—that they are, as a class, indolent, inefficient and corrrupt. It is a statement which has been often made and widely credited, but when the extent, variety, delicacy and importance of their duties are considered, the majority of the employes of the government are, in my judgment, deserving of commendation.

THE MERCHANT MARINE.

The continuing decline of the merchant marine of the United States is to be greatly deplored. In view of the fact that we furnish so large a proportion of the freights of the commercial world, and that our shipments are steadily and rapidly increasing, it is a cause of surprise. Not only is our navigation interest diminishing, but it is less than when our exports and imports were not half so large as now, either in bulk or in value. There must be a peculiar hindrance to the development of this interest, or the enterprise and energy of American mechanics and capitalists would have kept this country at least abreast of our rivals in the friendly contest for ocean supremacy. The substitution of iron for wood, and of steam for sail, have wrought a great revolution in the trade of the world, but these changes could not have been adverse to Americans if we had given to the navigation interests a portion of the aid and protection which have been so wisely bestowed upon our manufacturers, I commend the whole subject to the wisdom of congress, with the suggestion that no question of greater magnitude or frrther reaching importance can engage their attention.

IMMIGRATION.

In 1875 the supreme court of the United States declared unconstitutional the statutes of certain states which imposed upon shipowners and consignees a tax of $1 50 for each passenger arriving from a foreign country, or in lieu thereof required a bond to indemnify the state and local authorities against expense for the future relief or support of such passenger. Since this decision the expense attending the care and supervision of immigrants has fallen on the states at whose ports they have landed. As a large majority of such immigrants immediately upon their arrival proceed to the inland states and the territories to seek permanent homes, it is manifestly unjust to impose upon the state whose shores they first reach the burden which it now bears. For this reason, and because of the national importance of the subject, I recommend legislation regarding the supervision to transitory cares of immigrants in the ports of debarkation.

ALASKA.

I regret to state that the people of Alaska have reason to complain that they are as yet unprovided with any form of government by which life or property can be protected. While the extent of this population does not justify the application of the costly machinery of territorial administration, there is immediate necessity for constituting such a form of government as will promote the education of the people and secure the administration of justice.

THE CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY.

The senate at its last session passed a bill providing for the construction of a building for the library of congress, but it failed to become a law. The provision of suitable protection for this great collection of books and for the copyright department connected with it has become a subject of national importance and should receive prompt attention.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

The report of the commissioners of the District of Columbia herewith transmitted will inform you fully of the condition of the affairs of the District. The vital importance of legislation for the reclamation and improvement of the marshes and for the establishment of the harbor lines along the Potomac river from is presented. In their presen condition these marshes seriously affect the health of the residents of the adjacent parts of the city and they greatly mar the general aspect of the park in which stands the Washington monument. This improvement would add to that park and the park south of the executive mansion, a large are a of valuable land, and would transform what is now believed to be a dangerous nuisance into an attractive landscape extending to the river front. They recommend the removal of the steam railway lines from the surface of the streets of the city, and the location of the necessary depots in such places as may be convenient for the public accommodation. They call attention to the deficiency of the water supply which seriously affects the material prosperity of the city, and the health and comfort of its inhabitants. I commend these subject to your favorable consideration.

THE ELECTORAL VOTE.

The importance of timely legislation with respect to the ascertainment and declarations of the vote for presidential electors, was sharply called to the attention of the people more than four years ago. It is to be hoped that some well-defined measure may be devised before another national election, which will render unnecessary a resort to any expedient of a temporary character for the determination of questions upon contested returns.

PRESIDENTIAL INCAPACITY.

Questions which concern the very existence of the government and the liberties of the people were suggested by the prolonged illness of the late president and his consequent incapacity to perform the functions of his office. It is provided by the second article of the constitution in the fifth clause of its first section, that in case of the removal of the president from office or of his death, assassination or inability to discharge the powers and duties of said offic, the same shall de-