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The Commissioners of the Navy Board were directed, on their late visit of inspection into the condition of the Navy Yards, to examine them with a view to this reduction of their number, and to ascertain, as far as practicable, whether there may not be selected, on the numerous bays and harbors of the United States, other sites, embracing greater facilities and advantages than those which have heretofore been employed for those objects.

The report made by the Board, marked C, is herewith transmitted. It affords much interesting information on the points referred to them and connected therewith, and is especially entitled to commendation for the independence of its views on a subject which, from its effects on local interests, is calculated to excite local jealousy and opposition. The document is earnestly recommended to your consideration.

Various representations have been made to the Department, of the advantages offered by the harbors of the small keys in the Gulf of Mexico, called the "Dry Tortugas," as a Naval Rendezvous and Depot of supplies. Should these representations be correct, and the harbor found susceptible of defence, the importance of the position would be equal to that of any other in the Southern coast. In the month of May last, Commodore Rodgers & Patterson were instructed to visit them, and make such general examination, as would lead to a just estimate of their value & aptitude for the purposes contemplated. This service was performed by Commodore Rodgers - Commodore Patterson having unfortunately been prevented, by disease contracted on the journey, from joining in this examination.

The report made by Commodore Rodgers, marked D, is herewith transmitted. The result of his observations was so favorable as to justify a full and minute survey. Accordingly, Lieutenants Tattall and Geduey, experienced officers, and well qualified for this service, were ordered to repair to the point designated, and have, for some weeks, been engaged in the performance of this duty. Their return is daily expected; and when the information obtained by them shall have been received, it will be duly presented to your notice.

The value of the Live Oak growing on the public lands, on the Southern coast of the United States, as a source of supply of the best timber for the purposes of the Navy, has been long properly estimated by the public, and various laws have been enacted by Congress with a view to its preservation. This has been found to be a task of no ordinary difficulty. The great value of this material for the building of vessels of every description, and the high estimation in which it is held, make it an object of pillage to the unprincipled of all nations; and this is not likely to be restrained but by the adoption of measures more correct in their character than those which have been hitherto employed. It has been the practice to rely on the vigilance of Agents, distributed over different districts on the coast. These Agents have been required to guard the public interest, and to bring to justice such as should be found trespassing on its rights. Hitherto their efforts have been unsuccessful. In a few instances only have the Agents been able to detect the depredators, or obtain restitution of the property. From the nature of the country in which this timber is found, it must often happen that Agents on the land can afford but a very imperfect protection against these violators of the public rights. The whole coast presents a series of bays and creeks, readily accessible to such boats as can bring off the timber; while the adjacent district may consist of impervious forests or morasses and swamps, which forbid the approach of a superintending force.

It is respectfully proposed that these agencies be discontinued, and that the protection of the public interest in this timber be confided to a marine force, adapted to the navigation of the bays and inlets on which it is produced. Other important services might be rendered by the vessels employed on this duty. They might, if required, aid in the enforcement of the Revenue Laws, and, if competent officers were attached to them, afford facilities for the collection of materials for charts of those hitherto almost unexplored coasts.

Sundry testimonials have been presented to the Department (see copies and extracts marked E) showing that canvas, made of cotton, had been successfully employed in the merchant service of this and other countries, and partially in the Navy; all favoring the presumption, that this article might be advantageously used in the Navy of the United States.

It was determined, therefore, that some experiments should be made, to test the accuracy of these statements. The execution of this duty has, for the present, been committed to the superintendence of Commodore Elliot, and the experiments are now in progress.

Some trials will, also, be made of cordage prepared from this material. It is, also, proposed to institute a course of experiments on the canvas and cordage made of American water-rotted hemp, which has been represented as possessing durability and strength at least equal to the same qualities of the imported article. The importance of being relieved from a dependence on foreign supply, for materials essential to the very existence of a Navy, justifies a full and decided trial of the products of our own country.

The practice has, for some years past, prevailed in the Department, to make allowances, or extra compensation, to officers who have been required to perform services not strictly within the line of their professional duty.

It is presumed that this practice had its origin in the belief, that the compensation allowed these officers was insufficient for their necessary support, and an inadequate return for their merits and services. Congress has not only yielded to, but indirectly sanctioned, the procedure, by adopting estimates for the appropriations founded on these anticipated allowances; and the officers themselves now view it as a source of emolument, which ought not to be denied to them. This state of things is irregular and unequal in its operation, and not a little embarrassing to the officer having the administration of the Department. If the compensation now allowed by law is too small, it should be increased; but let it be fixed, and not left to be dispensed at the pleasure, or by the favoritism of any one.

The compensation now made to the officers of the higher grades in the Navy, is probably far below what their distinguished talents and services entitle them to receive; and compared with the amount given to officers of the same, or correspondent rank in the Army, is remarkable for its inequality and insufficiency. Annexed is an Exhibit, marked F, of the relative rank of the two classes of officers, and of the amount of compensation made to each under existing laws. It is difficult to understand on what principle of justice, or good policy, is founded this difference in the compensation made to officers in the same service, and of the same established rank. Is not the same eminent talent required for the command of a squadron as for the conduct of an army? An equal share of professional skill? Is the Naval officer less exposed to personal danger? Is his responsibility lighter? or are his labors less arduous? Does he contribute less to guard the interest, or sustain the rights and honor of his country?

The establishment of Schools for the instruction of the junior officers of the Navy, in the various branches of science appertaining to their profession, has so often been recommended to the favorable consideration of Congress, and has so uniformly been passed by, without obtaining their sanction, that it is with reluctance the subject is again introduced to their notice. A firm belief, however, that its tendency would be to qualify them for a better discharge of the high trust, which may at some future day devolve upon them, in their capacities of commanders, forms a sufficient motive for renewing the recommendation, and submitting some views on the subject, which have not been so much insisted on, and which may be entitled to consideration. It has been remarked by a naval officer of much experience and observation, that no inconvenience in the Navy is more sensibly felt than the general ignorance of the officers, of foreign languages. In addition to which, there is often great difficulty in procuring competent and proper persons to act in our ships of war as interpreters and linguists; nor has any allowance ever been made by Congress for the pay and subsistence of such persons. The perplexities and disadvantages under which our officers are placed by these circumstances, may readily be conceived. They are brought in contact, during their cruises, with nations speaking different languages; subject to be drawn

into correspondence with the authorities of different places; and, under the necessity, often, to board vessels of other nations for the purpose of examining their papers and documents; and often without the ability to understand their import and tendency. In time of war valuable prizes are lost from an inability to translate their papers, & to detect covered property and simulated documents; unnecessary and illegal detentions of vessels are made, and consequent damages obtained from the Government.

The schools which have been employed at New York and Norfolk, in the instruction of midshipmen in the elementary branches of mathematics, have been mere temporary arrangements made by the Department, and have never been fostered or recognized by law. Their introduction into use has not been effected by means very regular or direct, but they have been tolerated by Government, having been found useful, notwithstanding the very limited range of instruction afforded by them. It is respectfully proposed, that, until some better system can be matured, these schools be authorized by law; and that such appropriation be made for their extension and support, as will enable their young officers to acquire a knowledge of such foreign languages as may be important for them in the future pursuit of their profession.

The laws relating to Pursers in the Navy are believed to be defective in some of their provisions. At present, they do not provide a limitation to the periods of their continuance in office, nor for the renewal of their official bonds. Many advantages would probably result from their being appointed for stated periods, and made to renew their bonds, as is now required of Navy Agents, Collectors of the Customs, &c.

The mode of compensating them is not such as to lead to a correct discharge of their duties; nor such as is likely to advance the public interests. The profits of these officers arise, principally, from a percentage, which they are authorized to charge on the articles they sell to the crews of ships. A part of these is furnished from the stores of the Government, and the remainder by an advance made to them, to be sold at their risk, and for their own advantage. The temptation to increase their profits by improper demands upon a class of persons little qualified to detect imposition, may sometimes be difficult to be resisted, and ought not to be presented to them. When their dealings are conducted upon principles of the utmost fairness, the income of pursers, in ships of the largest class, amounts to two or three times the compensation of the commander - an extent of remuneration which their services cannot merit, and which is the more odious, when it is known to be drawn from the pockets of men, who, of all others in the employ of Government, earn their scanty wages with the most unremitted toil, and incessant personal danger.

In lieu of their present emoluments, it is proposed that they receive an annual salary, varied according to the responsibility imposed on them, by having a larger or smaller amount of stock entrusted to their care, and the degree of labor required for its disposition and preservation. Under a system of regulations which would enable the seaman to obtain his little supplies of nautical comforts, at rates fixed, known, and moderate, and without dread of imposition, the Naval service would acquire a popularity with them it has never enjoyed, and the present difficulty of recruiting seamen would be diminished to an extent important as to time and expenditure.

In conformity to an act of the last Session of Congress, in relation to the Africans stranded on the Coast of Florida, a vessel was chartered, and has sailed with them for Liberia, with the exception of two, who were unavoidably detained by sickness. They were placed under the direction of an Agent and an Assistant Surgeon of the Navy, with a liberal supply of hospital and other stores. An effort was made to send their native country, by the same vessel, two Africans who had been introduced into Alabama, a few years since; but, so strong had their attachment become to this country, that they availed themselves of an opportunity, while preparing for the voyage, to make their escape; since which time they have not been recovered by the Agent of the Government. No cases of importation of this description of persons have come to the knowledge of the Department within the present year.

It may be proper to remark that drafts have been lately presented by the Agent at Liberia for the purchase of munitions of war to enable

the Libonians to defend themselves against the attacks of the neighboring tribes, with which they were threatened. These claims were rejected, on the ground that no law was known to exist which authorized their payment, or which justified any expenditure beyond a temporary support to the restored empire.

The present confused and unsettled condition of the fiscal concerns of the Navy Department, makes it proper that the subject be brought to the notice of Congress; since, if believed, their interposition alone can lead to an equitable and final adjustment. In the month of March last, when it was discovered that these derangements in the finances existed, reference was made to the Board of Navy Commissioners, for such explanations as they might be enabled to give. Their communication in reply accompanies this report, marked G. From a desire to present such minute and detailed information on this subject as may be necessary for its proper illustration, the Fourth Auditor of the Treasury was requested by letter, (copy of which is annexed, marked H,) to report on the present condition of the accounts of his office, showing the probable origin of these embarrassments, and to suggest such measures as he might think necessary to correct the evil. His answer is annexed, marked I.

The vacancy created in the command of the Navy Yard at Washington, by the death of the venerable and highly esteemed Commodore Tingey, in February last, has been supplied by the appointment of Commodore Isaac Hull. In April, this officer commenced the discharge of the duties of the station, and has since, by great industry and judicious arrangement, reduced the chaos of materials accumulated there to good order, and introduced a system of discipline and economy favorable to the general operations of the establishment.

The laws concerning the Marine Corps, and the act of 1800, establishing regulations for the government of the Navy, are recommended for revision. The papers marked K and L contain the estimates for the Navy and Marine Corps; and those marked M, N, O, are lists of Deaths, Dismissals, and Resignations. The annual report on the Navy Pension and Hospital Funds, &c., will be presented at the usual time. The act of Congress authorizing the establishment of the Board of Navy Commissioners appears to have been designed to provide auxiliaries to the Secretary of the Navy in the discharge of the ministerial duties of the Department. This body was required to be selected from amongst the most experienced of the Naval Commanders, to whom a knowledge of those duties was presumed to be familiar, and by whom they might be expected to be most correctly discharged.

The subjects placed under the superintendence of the Board, by this distribution of the duties of the Department, are numerous and of almost unlimited variety. It may be justly questioned, whether the present organization of this body is such as to secure the necessary attention to the diversified subjects placed under its direction, and whether a judicious division of its duties would not facilitate the proper execution of the objects proposed by the institution of this branch of the Department.

Respectful reference is made to a communication from the Navy Board, in answer to inquiries having relation to this subject, here with transmitted, marked P.

The present Naval Corps of the United States is believed to be more numerous than is required for the wants of the service, and more than can be advantageously employed, with reference to their own advancement in the knowledge and practice of their profession.

"There can be no National Establishment," says a distinguished Naval character, "like that of the Navy of the United States, which will not, in the course of years, receive into its ranks some who are ill calculated to uphold its character, much less to contribute thereto by their talents and subordination."

"There may exist, also, some who, when received into the service, were calculated to become its ornaments, but who may, through various concurring causes, have degenerated into a reproach. Happily for this institution, the Government retains in its hands the corrective for any defects in the Corps."

"It is now twenty-eight years since a judicious pruning was given to the Navy; a period sufficient to admit some useless suckers to repose under the shade of its virtues and its valor. The time would, therefore, seem to have arrived, to correct some of the evils of the service by a Peace Establishment, and which it would go far to effect, by ridding it of the useless and insubordinate portion of its materials. The remainder would be preserved in more correct views of the service, and their management become more easy to the Executive Department."

If, in pruning these excrescences from the too luxuriant growth of the Navy, some branches should be lopped off, which, in their day, have borne good fruit, let it be remembered that the Navy Pension Fund, with its ample stores, is open for their sustenance and support; and, it may be added

that the Navy of the United States is now so near the completion of its establishment, as to be able to furnish a contingent force, to be employed in the West Indies, and to make good the deficiencies of the British Navy, in the event of their country being invaded.

JOHN BRANCH.

AMENDED CONSTITUTION  
A Plan of Government for Virginia.  
[Adopted 14th January, 1850.]

Whereas the Delegates and Representatives of the good people of Virginia in Convention assembled, on the twenty sixth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy six; and whereas, George, the third, King of Great Britain, and Ireland and Elector of Hanover, before that time, entered into the exercise of the kingly office in the Government of Virginia, had endeavored to pervert the same into a detestable and insupportable tyranny, by putting his negative on laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good; by denying his assent to laws for the relief of his subjects, and suspending his operation for his assent, and when so suspended neglecting to attend to them for many years; by refusing to pass certain other laws, unless the persons to be benefited, by them would relinquish the inalienable right of representation in the Legislature; by dissolving legislative assemblies repeatedly and continually, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions of the rights of the people; when dissolved, by refusing to call others for a long space of time, thereby leaving the political system without any legislative head; by endeavoring to prevent the population of our country, and for that purpose obstructing the laws for the naturalization of foreigners; by keeping among us, in time of peace, standing armies and ships of war; by affecting to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power; by combining with others to subject us to a foreign jurisdiction, giving his assent to their pretented acts of legislation, for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world, for imposing taxes on us without our consent, for depriving us of the benefits of the trial by jury, for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences, for suspending our own Legislatures and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever; by plundering our seas, ravaging our coasts, burning our towns, and destroying the lives of our people; by inciting insurrections of our fellow subjects with the allurements of forfeiture and confiscation, by prompting our negroes to rise in arms against us, those very negroes, whom by an inhuman use of his negative he had refused us permission to exclude by law; by endeavoring to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions of existence; by transporting hither a large army of foreign mercenaries, to complete the work of death, desolation and tyranny, then already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy unworthy the head of a civilized nation; by answering our repeated petitions for redress with a repetition of injuries; and finally, by abandoning the helm of government and declaring us out of his allegiance and protection; by which several acts of misrule, the government of this country, as before exercised under the Crown of Great Britain, was totally dissolved: Did, therefore, having maturely considered the premises, and viewing with great concern the deplorable condition to which this once happy country would be reduced, unless some regular and adequate mode of civil polity should be speedily adopted, and in compliance with the recommendation of the General Congress, ordain and declare, a firm of government of Virginia is.

And whereas the General Assembly of Virginia, by an act passed on the tenth day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine, entitled an act to organize a Convention, did authorize and provide for the election, by the people of Delegates and Representatives, to meet and assemble, in general Convention, at the Capital in the city of Richmond, on the first Monday of October in the year last aforesaid, to consider, discuss and propose, a new Constitution or alterations and amendments of the existing Constitution of this Commonwealth, to be submitted to the people, and to be by them ratified or rejected.

We, therefore, the Delegates and Representatives of the good people of Virginia, elected and in Convention assembled, in pursuance of the said act of Assembly, do submit and propose to the people the following amended Constitution and Form of Government for this Commonwealth, that is to say:

**ARTICLE I.**  
The Declaration of Rights made on the 12th June, 1776, by the representatives of the good people of Virginia assembled in full and free Convention, which pertained to them and their posterity, as the basis and foundation of Government; requiring in the opinion of this Convention no amendment, shall be preferred to this Constitution, and have the same relation thereto as it had to the former Constitution of this Commonwealth.

**ARTICLE II.**  
The Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary Departments, shall be separate and distinct, so that neither exercise the powers properly belonging to either of the others; nor shall any person exercise the powers of more than one of them at the same time, except that the Justices of the County Courts shall be eligible to either House of Assembly.

**ARTICLE III.**  
1. The Legislature shall be formed of two distinct branches, which together shall be called the General Assembly of Virginia.  
2. One of these shall be called the House of Delegates, and shall consist of one hundred and thirty-four members, to be chosen annually, for and by the several counties, cities, towns and boroughs of the Commonwealth, whereof thirty-one Delegates shall be chosen for and by the twenty-six counties lying West of the Alleghany mountains, twenty-five for and by the fourteen counties lying between the Alleghany and Blue Ridge mountains, forty-two for and by the twenty-nine counties lying East of the Blue Ridge mountains and above tide-water, and thirty-six for and by the cities, towns and boroughs lying upon tide-water; that is to say: Of the twenty-six counties lying West of the Alleghany, the counties of Harrison, Montgomery, Monongalia, Ohio and Washington, shall each elect two Delegates, and the counties of Brooke, Cabell, Grayson, Greenbrier, Giles, Kanawha, Lee, Lewis, Logan, Mason, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, Tyler, Wood, and Wythe, shall each elect one Delegate. Of the fourteen counties lying between the Alleghany and Blue Ridge, the counties of Frederick and Shenandoah, shall each elect three Delegates, the counties of Augusta, Berkeley, Botetourt, Hampshire, Jefferson, Rockingham and Rockbridge, shall each elect two Delegates, and the counties of Alleghany, Bath, Hardy, Morgan and Pen

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The other House of the General Assembly shall be called the Senate, and shall consist of thirty-two members, of whom thirteen shall be chosen for and by the counties lying West of the Blue Ridge mountains, and nineteen for and by the cities, towns and boroughs lying East thereof, and for the election of whom the counties, cities, towns and boroughs shall be divided into 32 districts, as herein after provided. Each county of the respective Districts at the time of the first election of a Delegate or Delegates under this Constitution, shall vote for one Senator or Senators, or other officers holding the office for each county, city, town or borough, in five days at farthest after the last county, town or borough election in the district, from the polls so taken in their respective counties, cities, towns or boroughs, retaining a Senator the person who shall have the greatest number of votes in the whole district. To keep up this Assembly by rotation the districts shall be equally divided into classes, and numbered by lot. At the end of one year after the first general election, eight members elected by the first district shall be displaced, and the vacancies thus occasioned, supplied from such class or district by new election in the manner aforesaid. This rotation shall be applied to each district according to its number, and continued in order annually. And for the election of Senators, the counties of Brooke, Ohio, Tyler, shall form one district; the counties of Monongalia, Preston and Randolph, shall form another district; the counties of Harrison, Lewis and Wood, shall form another district; the counties of Kanawha, Mason, Cabell, Logan and Nicholas, shall form another district; the counties of Greenbrier, Monroe, Giles and Montgomery, shall form another district; the counties of Tazewell, Wythe and Grayson, shall form another district; the counties of Washington, Russell, Scott and Lee, shall form another district; the counties of Berkeley, Morgan and Hampshire, shall form another district; the counties of Frederick and Jefferson, shall form another district; the counties of Shenandoah and Hardy shall form another district; the counties of Rockingham and Pendleton shall form another district; the counties of Augusta and Rockbridge shall form another district; the counties of Alleghany, Bath, Pocahontas and Botetourt, shall form another district; the counties of Loudoun and Warren, shall form another district; the counties of Fauquier and Prince William shall form another district; the counties of Stafford, King George, Westmoreland, Richmond, Lancaster and Northumberland, shall form another district; the counties of Culpeper, Madison and Orange, shall form another district; the counties of Albemarle, Nelson and Spotsylvania, shall form another district; the counties of Fluvanna, Goochland, Louisa and Hanover, shall form another district; the counties of Spotsylvania, Caroline and Essex, shall form another district; the counties of King and Queen, King William, Gloucester, Madison & Middlesex, shall form another district; the counties of Accomack, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York and Warwick, shall form another district; the counties of Charles City, James City, York, Kent and Henrico, and the city of Richmond, shall form another district; the counties of Bedford and Franklin, shall form another district; the counties of Buckingham, Campbell and Cumberland, shall form another district; the counties of Patrick, Henry and Pittsylvania, shall form another district; the counties of Halifax and Mecklenburg, shall form another district; the counties of Charlotte, Lunenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward, shall form another district; the counties of Amelia, Powhatan and Chesterfield, and the town of Petersburg, shall form another district; the counties of Brunswick, Dinwiddie and Greensville, shall form another district; the counties of Isle of Wight, Prince George, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex, shall form another district; and the counties of Norfolk, Nansemond and Princess Anne, and the borough of Norfolk, shall form another district.

4. It shall be the duty of the Legislature, to re-appoint, once in ten years, or within the year 1841, and every ten years thereafter, the representation of the counties, cities, towns and boroughs of this Commonwealth, in both of the Legislative bodies. Provided, however, that the number of Delegates from the aforesaid great districts, and the number of Senators from the aforesaid two great divisions, respectively, shall not be increased nor diminished by such re-appointment. And when a new county shall hereafter be created, or any city, town or borough, not now entitled to separate representation in the House of Delegates, shall have so increased in population as to be entitled, in the opinion of the General Assembly, to such representation, it shall be the duty of the General Assembly to make provision by law for securing to the people of such new county, or such city, town or borough, an adequate representation. And if the object cannot otherwise be effected, it shall be competent to the General Assembly to re-appoint the whole representation of the great district containing such new county, city, town or borough, within the limits, which re-appointment shall continue in force till the next regular decennial re-appointment.

5. The General Assembly, after the year 1841, and at intervals thereafter of not less than ten years, shall have authority, two thirds of each House concurring, to make re-appointments of Delegates and Senators, throughout the Commonwealth, so that the number of Delegates shall not at any time exceed 150, nor of Senators 36.

6. The whole number of members to which the State may at any time be entitled in the House of Representatives, shall be