

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Fellow-citizens of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives:

Being suddenly called, in the midst of the last session of Congress, by a painful dispensation of Divine Providence, to the responsible station which I now hold, I contented myself with such communications to the Legislature as the exigency of the moment seemed to require.

The country was shrouded in mourning for the loss of its venerated Chief Magistrate, and all hearts were penetrated with grief. Neither the time nor the occasion appeared to require or to justify, on my part, any general expression of political opinions, or any announcement of the principles which would govern me in the discharge of the duties to the performance of which I had been so unexpectedly called.

I trust, therefore, that it may not be deemed inappropriate, if I avail myself of this opportunity to re-assemble of Congress to make known my sentiments, in a general manner, in regard to the policy which ought to be pursued by the Government, both in its intercourse with foreign nations, and in its management and administration of internal affairs.

Nations, like individuals in a state of nature, are equal and independent, possessing certain rights, and owing certain duties to each other; arising from their necessary and unavoidable relations; which rights and duties there is no common human authority to protect and enforce.

Among the acknowledged rights of nations is that, which each possesses of establishing that form of government which it may deem most conducive to the happiness and prosperity of its own citizens; of changing that form, as circumstances may require; and of managing its internal affairs according to its own will.

The people of the United States claim this right for themselves, and they readily concede it to others. Hence it becomes an imperative duty not to interfere in the government or internal policy of other nations; and, although we may sympathize with the unfortunate or the oppressed, every where, in their struggles for freedom, our principles forbid us from taking any part in such foreign contests.

We make no wars to promote or to prevent successions to thrones; to maintain any theory of balance of power; or to suppress the actual government which any country chooses to establish for itself.

jects intrusted to Congress, its legislative authority is supreme. But here that authority ceases, and every citizen who truly loves the Constitution, and desires the continuance of its existence and its blessings, will resolutely and firmly resist any interference in those domestic affairs, which the Constitution has clearly and unequivocally left to the exclusive authority of the States.

The Constitution has made it the duty of the President to take care that the laws be faithfully executed. In a Government like ours, in which all laws are passed by a majority of the representatives of the people, and these representatives are chosen for such short periods, that any injurious or obnoxious law can very soon be repealed, it would appear unlikely that any great numbers should be found ready to resist the execution of the laws.

But it must be borne in mind that the country is extensive, that there may be local interests or prejudices rendering a law odious in one part, which is not so in another, and that the thoughtless and inconsiderate, misled by their passions, or their imaginations, may be induced madly to resist such laws as they disapprove.

Such persons should recollect that, without law, there can be no real practical liberty; that, when law is trampled under foot, tyranny rules, whether it appears in the form of a military despotism or of popular violence. The law is the only sure protection of the weak, and the only efficient restraint upon the strong.

When impartially and faithfully administered, none is beneath its protection, and none above its control. You, gentlemen, and the country may be assured, that to the utmost of my ability, and to the extent of the power vested in me, I shall at all times, and in all places, take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

In the discharge of this duty, solemnly imposed upon me by the Constitution, and by my oath of office, I shall shrink from no responsibility, and shall endeavor to meet events as they may rise, with firmness, as well as with prudence and discretion.

The appointing power is one of the most delicate with which the Executive is invested. I regard it as a sacred trust to be exercised with the sole view of advancing the prosperity and happiness of the people.

It shall be my effort to elevate the standard of official employment, by selecting for places of importance individuals fitted for the posts to which they are assigned, by their known integrity, talents, and virtues. In so extensive a country, with so great a population, and where few persons appointed to office can be known to the appointing power, mistakes will sometimes unavoidably happen, and unfortunate appointments be made, notwithstanding the greatest care.

In such cases, the power of removal may be properly exercised; and neglect of duty or malfeasance in office will be no more tolerated in individuals appointed by myself than in those appointed by others.

just been received of the appointment of an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of that Government to reside at Washington, whose arrival may soon be expected, it is hoped that no further impediments will be experienced in the prompt transaction of business between the two Governments.

Citizens of the United States have undertaken the connexion of the two oceans by means of a railroad across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, under grants of the Mexican Government to a citizen of that Republic. It is understood that a thorough survey of the course of the communication is in preparation, and there is every reason to expect that it will be prosecuted with characteristic energy, especially when that Government shall have consented to such stipulations with the Government of the United States as may be necessary to impart a feeling of security to those, who may embark their property in the enterprise.

Negotiations are pending for the accomplishment of that object, and a hope is confidently entertained that, when the Government of Mexico shall become duly sensible of the advantages which that country cannot fail to derive from the work, and learn that the Government of the United States desires that the right of sovereignty of Mexico in the isthmus shall remain unimpaired, the stipulations referred to will be agreed to with alacrity.

By the last advices from Mexico it would appear, however, that that Government entertains strong objections to some of the stipulations which the parties concerned in the project of the railroad deem necessary for their protection and security. Further consideration, it is to be hoped, or some modification of terms, may yet reconcile the differences existing between the two Governments in this respect.

Fresh instructions have recently been given to the Minister of the United States in Mexico, who is prosecuting the subject with promptitude and alacrity.

Although the negotiations with Portugal, for the payment of claims of citizens of the United States against that Government, have not yet resulted in a formal treaty, yet a proposition made by the Government of Portugal for the final adjustment and payment of those claims, has recently been accepted on the part of the United States. It gives me pleasure to say that Mr Clay, to whom the negotiation on the part of the United States had been entrusted, discharged the duties of his appointment with ability and discretion, acting always within the instructions of his Government.

It is expected that a regular convention will be immediately negotiated for carrying the agreement between the two Governments into effect. The commissioner appointed under the act of Congress for carrying into effect the convention with Brazil, of the 27th of January, 1849, has entered upon the performance of the duties imposed upon him by that act. It is hoped that those duties may be completed within the time which it prescribes. The documents, however, which the Imperial Government, by the third article of the convention, stipulates to furnish to the Government of the United States, have not yet been received.

As it is presumed that those documents will be essential for the correct disposition of the claims, it may become necessary for Congress to extend the period limited for the duration of the commission. The sum stipulated by the 4th article of the convention to be paid to this Government has been received.

The collection in the ports of the United States of discriminating duties upon the vessels of Chili and their cargoes has been suspended, pursuant to the provisions of the act of Congress of the 24th of May, 1828. It is to be hoped that this measure will impart a fresh impulse to the commerce between the two countries, which, of late, and especially since our acquisition of California, has, to the mutual advantage of the parties, been much augmented.

Peruvian guano has become so desirable an article to the agricultural interest of the United States, that it is the duty of the Government to employ all the means properly in its power for the purpose of causing that article to be imported into the country at a reasonable price. Nothing will be omitted on my part towards accomplishing this desirable end.

I am persuaded that in removing any restraints on this traffic, the Peruvian government will promote its own best interests, while it will afford a proof of a friendly disposition towards this country, which will be duly appreciated.

since the last annual report from the Treasury Department, \$495,276 79.

By the 19th section of the act of 28th January, 1847, the proceeds of the sales of the public lands were pledged for the interest and principal of the public debt. The great amount of those lands subsequently granted by Congress for military bounties, will, it is believed, very nearly supply the public demand for several years to come, and but little reliance can, therefore, be placed on that hitherto fruitful source of revenue.

Aside from the permanent annual expenditures, which have necessarily largely increased, a portion of the public debt, amounting to \$8,075,986 59, must be provided for within the next two fiscal years. It is most desirable that these accruing demands should be met without resorting to new loans.

All experience has demonstrated the wisdom and policy of raising a large portion of revenue, for the support of Government from duties on goods imported. The power to lay these duties is unquestionable, and its chief object, of course, is to replenish the treasury. But if, in doing this, an incidental advantage may be gained by encouraging the industry of our own citizens, it is our duty to avail ourselves of that advantage.

A duty laid upon an article which cannot be produced in this country—such as tea or coffee—adds to the cost of the article, and is chiefly or wholly paid by the consumer. But a duty laid upon an article which may be produced here, stimulates the skill and industry of our own country to produce the same article, which is brought into the market in competition with the foreign article, and the importer is thus compelled to reduce his price to that, at which the domestic article can be sold, thereby throwing a part of the duty upon the producer of the foreign article. The continuance of this process creates the skill, and invites the capital, which finally enable us to produce the article much cheaper than it could have been procured from abroad; thereby benefiting both the producer and the consumer at home.

The consequence of this is, that the artisan, and the agriculturist, are brought together, each affords a ready market for the produce of the other, the whole country becomes prosperous; and the ability to produce every necessary of life renders us independent in war as in peace.

A high tariff can never be permanent. It will cause dissatisfaction and will be changed. It excludes competition, and thereby invites the investment of capital in manufactures to such excess, that when changed it brings distress, bankruptcy, and ruin, upon all who have been misled by its faithless protection. What the manufacturer wants, is uniformity and permanency, that he may feel a confidence that he is not to be ruined by sudden changes. But to make a tariff uniform and permanent, it is not only necessary that the law should not be altered, but that the duty should not fluctuate. To effect this, all duties should be specific, wherever the nature of the article is such as to admit of it. Ad valorem duties fluctuate with the price, and offer strong temptation to fraud and perjury. Specific duties, on the contrary, are equal and uniform in all ports, and at all times, and offer a strong inducement to the importer to bring the best article, as he pays no more duty upon that than upon one of inferior quality. I therefore strongly recommend a modification of the present tariff, which has prostrated some of our most important and necessary manufactures, and that specific duties be imposed sufficient to raise the requisite revenue, making such discrimination in favor of the industrial pursuits of our own country as to encourage home production, without excluding foreign competition. It is also important that an unfortunate provision in the present tariff, which imposes a much higher duty upon the raw material that enters into our manufactures than upon the manufactured article, should be remedied.

The papers accompanying the report of the Secretary of the Treasury will disclose frauds attempted upon the revenue, in variety and amount so great, as to justify the conclusion that it is impossible under the present system, of ad valorem duties levied upon the foreign cost or value of the article, to secure an honest observance and effectual administration of the laws. The fraudulent devices to evade the law, which have been detected by the vigilance of the appraisers, leave no room to doubt that similar impositions not discovered, to a large amount, have been successfully practiced since the enactment of the law now in force. This state of things has already had a prejudicial influence upon those engaged in the foreign commerce. It has a tendency to drive the honest trader from the business of importing, and to throw that important branch of employment into the hands of unscrupulous and dishonest men, who are alike regardless of the obligations of an oath. By these means the main intentions of Congress, as expressed in the law, are daily defeated. Every motive of policy and duty, therefore, impel me to ask the earnest attention of Congress to this subject. If Congress should deem it unwise to attempt any important changes in the system of levying duties at this session, it will become indispensable to the protection of the revenue that such remedies, as in the judgment of Congress may mitigate the evils complained of, should be at once applied.

As before stated, specific duties would, in my opinion, afford the most perfect remedy for this evil; but, if you should not concur in this view, then, as a partial remedy, I beg leave respectfully to recommend that, instead of taking the invoice of the article abroad as a means of determining its value here, the correctness of which invoice it is in many cases impossible to verify, the law be so changed as to require a home valuation or appraisal, to be regulated in such manner as to give, as far as practicable, uniformity in the several ports.

There being no mint in California, I am informed that the laborers in the mines are compelled to dispose of their gold dust at a large discount. This appears to me to be a heavy and unjust tax upon the labor of those employed in extracting its value here, and I doubt not you will be disposed, at the earliest period possible, to relieve them from it by the establishment of a mint. In the mean time, as an assayer's office is established there, I would respectfully submit for your consideration the propriety of authorizing gold bullion, which has been assayed and found to be received in payment of government, to be received in full for its par value, and thereby save (if I am rightly informed) many millions of dollars to the laborers which are now paid in brokerage to convert this precious metal into available funds. This discount upon their

hard earnings is a heavy tax, and every effort should be made by the government to relieve them from so great a burden.

More than three-fourths of our population are engaged in the cultivation of the soil. The commercial, manufacturing, and navigating interests are all, to a great extent, dependent on the agricultural. It is, therefore, the most important interest of the nation, and has a just claim to the fostering care and protection of the government, so far as they can be extended consistently with the provisions of the constitution. As this cannot be done by the ordinary modes of legislation, I respectfully recommend the establishment of an Agricultural Bureau, to be charged with the duty of giving to this leading branch of American industry the encouragement which it so well deserves. In view of the immense mineral resources of our country, provision should also be made for the employment of a competent mineralogist and chemist, who should be required, under the direction of the head of the bureau, to collect specimens of the various minerals of our country, and to ascertain, by careful analysis, their respective elements and properties, and their adaptation to useful purposes. He should also be required to examine and report upon the qualities of different soils, and the manures best calculated to improve their productiveness. By publishing the results of such experiments, with suitable explanations, and by the collection and distribution of rare seeds and plants, with instructions as to the best system of cultivation, much may be done to promote this great national interest.

In compliance with the act of Congress passed on the 23d of May, 1850, providing among other things, for taking the survey of our common boundary with the Territory of the Mississippi, and all other measures adopted which were deemed necessary to ensure the prompt and faithful performance of that duty. The appropriation already made will, it is believed, be sufficient to defray the whole expense of the work, but further legislation may be necessary in regard to the compensation of some of the marshals of the Territories. It will also be proper to make provision by law, at an early day, for the publication of such abstracts of the returns as the public interests may require.

The unprecedented growth of our territories on the Pacific in wealth and population, and the consequent increase of their commerce, commercial relations with the Atlantic States, seem to render it the duty of the government to use all its constitutional power to improve the means of intercourse with them. The importance of opening "a line of communication, the best and most expeditious of which the nature of the country will admit," between the Territory of the Mississippi and the Pacific, was brought to your notice by my predecessor, in his annual message; and as the reasons which he presented in favor of the expediency of this measure, are still as true as all your attention to them, and to repeat the recommendations then made by him.

The uncertainty which exists in regard to the validity of land titles in California is a subject which demands your early consideration. Large bodies of land in that State are claimed under grants said to have been made by authority of the Spanish and Mexican governments. Many of these have not been perfected, others have been revoked, and some are believed to be fraudulent. But until they shall have been judicially investigated, they will continue to retard the settlement and improvement of the Territory, and therefore respectfully recommend that provision be made by law for the appointment of commissioners to examine all such claims with a view to their final adjustment.

I also beg leave to call your attention to the propriety of extending, at an early day, our system of land laws, with respect to the Territories of Utah and New Mexico. The mineral lands of California will, of course, form an exception to any general system which may be adopted. Various methods of disposing of them have been proposed, and it is respectfully recommended to favor the system of leasing, as it is inclined to promise the largest revenue to the government and to afford the best security against monopolies; but further reflection, and our exertions in relation to them, and the mining and selling lands upon credit, have brought my mind to the conclusion that there would be great difficulty in collecting the rents, and that the relation of debtor and creditor, between the citizens and the government, would be attended with many serious consequences. I therefore recommend that, instead of retaining the mineral lands under the permanent control of the government, they be divided into small parcels and sold, under such restrictions, as to quantity and time, as will ensure the best price, and guard most effectually against the combinations of capitalists to obtain monopolies.

The annexation of Texas and the acquisition of California and New Mexico have given increased importance to our Indian relations. The various tribes brought under our jurisdiction by these enlargements of our boundaries are estimated to embrace a population of one hundred and twenty-four thousand.

Texas and New Mexico are surrounded by powerful tribes of Indians, who are a source of constant terror and annoyance to the inhabitants. Several predatory bands, and all the year mounted, they overran the country, devastating farms, destroying crops, driving off herds of cattle, and occasionally murdering the inhabitants or carrying them into captivity. The great roads leading to our country are infested with them, whereby travelling is rendered extremely dangerous, and immigration is entirely arrested. The Mexican frontier, which, by the 11th article of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, we are bound to protect against the incursions of the Indians, is exposed to these incursions equally with our own. The military force stationed in that country (although forming a large proportion of the army) is represented as entirely inadequate to our own protection and the fulfillment of our treaty stipulations with Mexico. The principal deficiency is in cavalry, and I respectfully recommend that, as early as a period as practicable, provision be made for raising one or more regiments of mounted men.

For further suggestion on this subject, and others connected with our domestic interests, and the defence of our frontier, I refer you to the report of the Secretary of the Interior and of the Secretary of War.

I commend also to your favorable consideration the suggestion contained in the last mentioned report, and in the letter of the general-in-chief, relative to the establishment of an asylum for the relief of disabled and destitute soldiers. This subject appeals strongly to your sympathies, and it would be superfluous in me to say anything more, than barely to express my cordial approbation of the proposed object.

The navy continues to give protection to our commerce and other national interests in the different quarters of the globe, and, with the exception of one steamer on the Northern lakes, the vessels in commission are distributed in six different squadrons. The report of the head of that Department will exhibit the services of these squadrons, and the past year has been a source of gratification that, while they have been constantly prepared for any hostile emergency, they have everywhere met with the respect and courtesy, due as well to dignity as to the peaceful dispositions and just purposes of the nation.

The two brigantines accepted by the Government from a generous citizen of New York, and placed under the command of an officer of the British command, Sir John Franklin, in quest of his companions, in compliance with the act of Congress, approved in May last, had, when last seen, penetrated into a high northern latitude; but the success of this noble and humane enterprise is yet uncertain.

settlements on the shores of the Pacific, are too obvious to be overlooked or disregarded.

The questions in relation to rank in the Army and navy, and relative rank between officers of the two branches of the service, presented to the Executive by certain resolutions of the House of Representatives, at the last session of Congress, have been submitted to a board of officers in each branch of the service, and their report may be expected at an early day.

I also earnestly recommend the enactment of a law authorizing officers of the army and navy to be reviewed by the service, when incompetent to make suitable provision for those who have faithfully served their country, and awarding distinctions, by retaining in appropriate commands those who have been particularly conspicuous for gallantry and good conduct. While the obligation, to the exclusion of other pursuits, has devoted themselves to its arduous service, it is acknowledged this obligation should not be permitted to interfere with the efficiency of the service itself.

I am gratified in being able to state, that the estimates of expenditure for the navy, for the ensuing year are less, by more than one million of dollars, than those of the present, excepting the appropriation which may become necessary for the construction of a dock on the coast of the Pacific, proposals for which are now being considered, and on which a special report may be expected early in your present session.

There is an evident justice in the suggestion of the same report, that appropriations for the naval service proper, should be separated from those for fixed and permanent objects, such as building docks, and the fixtures attached; and from the Department which, however important, are not essentially naval.

A revision of the code for the government of the navy seems to require the immediate consideration of Congress, a system of crimes and punishments, had undergone for half a century, until the last session, though its details, have been often and ably pointed out, and the abolition of a particular species of corporal punishment, which then took place, without providing any substitute, has left the service in a state of uncertainty, and calls for prompt correction. I therefore recommend that the code be revised without delay, and such a system established for the enforcement of discipline, as shall be at once humane and effectual.

The accompanying report of the Postmaster General, presents a view of the operations of the general post office, for the year ending on the 30th of September last. At the close of the last fiscal year, the length of the inland mail routes in the United States (not embracing the service in Oregon and California) was 178,672 miles; the annual transportation of the mails was 18,117,323 miles, and the annual cost of such transportation \$2,734,348.

The increase of the annual transportation over that of the preceding year, was 3,997,354 miles, and the increase in cost was \$342,440. The number of Post Offices in the United States at the first day of July last, was 18,417, being an increase of 1670 during the year. The gross revenues of the Department for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1850, amounted to \$5,552,971 48, including the annual appropriation of \$2,000,000 for the franked matter of the Government, and including the foreign postage collected for & payable through the mails. The expenditures for the same period were \$5,212,955 43, leaving a balance of revenue over expenses of \$340,016 05.

I am happy to find that the fiscal condition of the department is such as to justify the Postmaster General's recommendation, regarding the reduction of our inland letter postage to 2 cents per cent, and that the letter and 5 cents when not prepaid. He also recommends that the prepaid rate shall be reduced to 2 cents whenever the revenues of the Department, after the reduction, exceed its expenditures by more than five per cent. I am in favor of the proposed reduction of postage upon California and other letters sent by our ocean steamers shall be much reduced; and that the rates of postage on newspapers, pamphlets, periodicals, and other printed matter, shall be modified, and the reduction thereon made.

It cannot be doubted that the proposed reductions will, for the present, diminish the revenue of the Department. It is believed that the deficiency, after the surplus already accumulated shall be exhausted, may be almost wholly met, by the modification of the existing privileges of sending free matter through the mails, or by paying out of the treasury to the Post Office Department a sum equivalent to the postage of which it is deprived by such privileges. The latter is supposed to be the preferable mode, and may be found necessary, so inconsiderable a form no obstacle to the proposed reductions.

I entertain no doubt of the authority of Congress to make appropriations for leading objects in the general classification of the Constitution, usually called "post office" improvements. This authority I suppose to be derived from the power of regulating commerce with foreign nations, and among the States, and the power of laying and collecting imposts. Where duties are levied, they are carried on, and imposts collected, there must be facilities for the collection, as well as wharfs and custom-houses. If ships, with valuable cargoes approach the shore, or sail along the coast, light-houses are necessary at suitable points for the protection of life and property, and other facilities and securities for commerce and navigation are equally important; and those clauses of the Constitution, therefore, to which I have referred, have received from the origin of the Government a liberal and beneficial construction. Not only have light-houses, buoys, and beacons been established, and floating lights, improved, piers constructed, and even breakwaters for the protection of shipping, and sea walls to protect harbors from being filled up, and rendered useless, by the action of the ocean, have been erected at very great expense. And this construction of the Constitution appears the more reasonable, of such evident importance and utility, are not to be accomplished by Congress, they cannot be accomplished by the adoption of the Constitution of the several States, which is parted with the power of collecting duties of import and export, and it is not to be expected that they should raise money, by internal taxation, direct or indirect, for the benefit of that commerce, the revenue derived from which do not, either in the whole or in part, go into the treasury of the Post Office. I perceive any difference between the power of Congress to make appropriations for objects of this kind on the ocean and the power to make appropriations for similar objects on lakes and rivers, wherever they are large enough to bear on the waters an extensive traffic. The magnificent Mississippi, the Ohio, the Missouri, and the vast lakes of the north and the northwest, appear to me to fall within the exercise of the power, as justly and as clearly as the Ocean and the Bay of Mexico. It is a mistake to regard expenditures judiciously made for these objects as expenditures for local purposes. The nature, or site of the work, is necessarily local; but its utility is general. A ship canal under the falls of St. Mary of less than a mile in length, though local in its construction, would yet be national in its purposes and its benefits, and it would remove the only obstruction to a navigation, as well as a thousand miles, affecting several States, as well as our commercial relations with Canada. So, too, the Breakwater at the mouth of the Delaware River is a national work, and the benefit of the States bordering on the Bay and river of that name, but for that of the whole coastwise navigation of the United States, and, to a considerable extent also, of foreign commerce. If a ship be lost on the bar at the entrance of a southern port for want of sufficient depth of water, it is very likely to be a northern ship; and if a steamboat be sunk in any part of the Mississippi on account of its channel not having been properly cleared of obstructions, it may be a boat belonging to either of eight or ten States. I may add, as somewhat remarkable, that among all the thirty-one States, there is not a single one, not to a greater or less extent, bounded on the