

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 interest, 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 on our Southern coasts. In the month of May last, Commodores Rodgers and Patterson were instructed to visit them, and made such general examination, as would lead to a just estimate of their value and 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 Tatnall and Geddes, 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 coasts 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 coercive 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 coasts. 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 surmounting 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 these hitherto almost unexplored coasts.

Sundry testimonials have been presented to the Department (see copies and extracts marked E) showing that canvass, 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 experiment 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 Elliott, 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 canvass 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 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 the 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 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 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; 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, and to detect covered property and simulated documents; unnecessary 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 recognised 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 the young officers to acquire a knowledge of such foreign languages as may be important for them to possess in the future pursuits 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 per centage; 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 unremitting 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 seamen 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 Assistant Surgeon of the Navy, with a liberal supply of hospital and other stores. An effort was made to send to their native country, by the same vessel, two Africans who were 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 Colonists 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 captives.

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, it is believed, that 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, shewing 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 a chaos of material 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 reports 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, herewith 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 illly 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 Asylum, on the Schuylkill, is now so near its completion as to promise at an early day to afford a permanent and comfortable residence to its disabled founders, and to such as, though not disabled, may have merited, by their bravery, or long and faithful services, the gratitude of their country.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JOHN BRANCH.

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

#### SENATE.

Saturday, Dec. 5.—Mr. Davidson presented the petition of Jonas Clark, of Mecklenburg, for a pension; which was subsequently reported adverse to, and laid on the table. The bill to incorporate the Vance Circulating Library Society, was passed and sent to the other House for concurrence, and subsequently passed there also. The bill to prevent obstructions to the passage of fish up Rocky river, having passed both Houses, was ordered to be enrolled.

Monday, Dec. 7.—Mr. Allen presented a bill concerning the failure of duty in Sheriffs; and Mr. McEntire, a bill to provide for the permanent establishment of a public road from Lincoln to Rutherfordton; the sheriff's bill was referred to a select committee, composed of Messrs. Caldwell, Montgomery of Orange, Allen, Dick, and Sherrard.

Tuesday, Dec. 8.—Mr. Marshall offered a resolution to provide by law for compelling defendants in suits on plain notes or bonds, where they plead the general issue, to do so on oath. Mr. Welborn presented a bill fixing the fees of sheriffs and clerks of county and superior courts. Mr. Caldwell, from the committee of Internal Improvements, made a report, recommending the rejection of the resolution relative to Samuel Chunn; on motion of Mr. Allen, the report and resolution were laid on the table. Mr. Allen presented a bill to secure the passage of fish up Laurel creek, Bancombe county. Mr. McDiarmid presented a bill for the erection of a new county from portions of Cumberland, Wake, Chatham, and Moore to be called JACKSON. The bill for the relief of debtors for debts contracted prior to May, 1823, was rejected on 2d reading. Messrs. Davidson, Hinton, Riddick, Harris, and Crump, were appointed a select committee on that part of the Governor's message relative to the documents on the subject of Slavery, &c. In like manner, Messrs. Davidson, Spaight, Welborn, Mosely, and Welch, were appointed on that part of the message relating to the Tariff, &c. In like manner, Messrs. Caldwell, Mosely, Franklin, Mears, and

Wilson, were appointed on that part of the message relating to the appropriation of money by the General Government for purposes of INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

Wednesday, Dec. 9.—Mr. Love presented a petition of Joseph Chambers and others of Haywood, accompanied by a bill giving the assent of this State to certain acts of the Tennessee legislature. Mr. Crump presented a bill relative to the passage of Fish up Pedee and Yadkin rivers; and Mr. Moore a bill authorizing the Field Officers of the 1st regt. Stokes militia to remove their muster ground.

Thursday, Dec. 10.—Mr. Love presented the petition of Andrew Welch and Wm. Thomas of Macon county, for permission to erect gates; Mr. Dick presented a bill authorizing clerks and masters in equity to take depositions; Mr. Mitchell, a bill to regulate the entry of land in certain cases; and Mr. Allen, a bill for the relief of James D. Justice of Buncombe. The judiciary committee reported against the bill making provision in certain cases for the widows of intestates.

Friday, Dec. 11.—The judiciary committee made a report, recommending the rejection of the bill to provide for a more extensive distribution of the acts of assembly; the same com. recommended the rejection of the resolution proposing a consolidation of the Road Laws; the same com. recommended the rejection of the resolution to enable creditors to collect their debts out of the property of intestate persons where no administration has been granted.

Saturday, Dec. 12.—Mr. McEntire presented a petition from sundry citizens of Rutherford county, for an alteration in their county courts: the judiciary com. reported against the resolution for authorizing three justices of the peace to try free persons of color, on the ground that such an act would be unconstitutional; Mr. Montgomery offered a resolution for an appropriation to make a road from Ashe court-house to the Bank of Platen of Paris in Virginia. Mr. Matthews presented a bill to extend the time for registering powers of attorney, deeds of gifts, &c. Mr. Franklin offered a resolution for an appropriation to clear out and improve the road from Rockford in Surry county, to Ashe court-house.

Monday, Dec. 14.—Mr. Mears reported a bill to give Feme Coverts the right of suing and being sued; also, a bill more effectually to prevent injury to stock; the judiciary committee reported against the resolution proposing an equal distribution of the effects of insolvent debtors; Mr. McEntire presented a bill concerning the fees of the Standard Keeper of Rutherford county; and Mr. Johnson, a bill for the relief of debtors whose personal estate shall be sold by execution; Mr. Welborn offered a resolution, proposing to make the journals of the General Assembly competent evidence in the trial of a person for acting as a Magistrate after resignation; to prove the fact of resignation; the resignations of B. H. Bradley, Col. 5d regt. Rutherford militia; T. M. Sharpe, Maj. 2d regt. Iredell militia, and T. B. Love, Lt. Col. Macon county militia were read, and accepted.

Tuesday, Dec. 15.—Mr. Davidson presented the resignation of Robt. Kirkpatrick, Maj. of Cavalry in 11th brigade; which was read, and accepted. Mr. Mears presented a bill to amend the law relative to the stay of execution on judgment given by justices of the peace; the resolution authorizing the Public Treasurer to receive of the purchasers of Cherokee lands, S. Carolina and Georgia notes, in payment of their debts, was rejected on its first reading, 37 to 23.

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Saturday, Dec. 5.—Mr. Polk proposed an inquiry on the subject of providing for more effectually punishing those who pass U. S. notes, drafts, &c. Mr. Graham presented a bill relative to the Hickory Nut Gap road. The bill in favor of Jas. McKee of Haywood; the bill concerning the liability of certain persons in Lincoln to work on the roads; and the bill relative to the road from Morganton to Avery's turpicks; were finally passed through this House. Mr. Nash, from the judiciary com. reported against compelling attorneys to refund retaining fees, in any event. Mr. Stokes presented the petition of Leonard Whittington of Wilkes; and Mr. Kendall the petition of sundry citizens of Montgomery, relative to the number of petty musters. Mr. Nash from the judiciary com. reported against making all debts against a deceased person's estate, of equal dignity. The bill to alter the name of Boaz Adams of Montgomery, was rejected. Mr. Bogle presented a bill relative to the county court of Iredell: the bill relative to building a poor house in Iredell, has passed both Houses.

Monday, Dec. 7.—Mr. Polk, from the mil. com. reported a bill for establishing a troop of cavalry from Burke, Wilkes and Iredell counties. Mr. Newland presented a bill relative to the road from Watauga, to John's