

The Wilmington Post

VOLUME XVI.

WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1883.

Single Copies 5 Cents

NUMBER 51.

WILMINGTON POST

Entered at the Postoffice at Wilmington, N. C., as Second Class Matter.

RATES OF ADVERTISING.

Eight (8) lines, Nonpareil type, constitute a square.

Fifty cents per line for the first insertion and twenty-five cents per line for each additional insertion.

All advertisements will be charged at the above rates, except on special contracts.

The subscription price to THE WILMINGTON POST is \$2.00 per year; six months \$1.00.

All communications on business must be addressed to THE WILMINGTON POST, Wilmington, N. C.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

DISCOURAGE CONGRATULATIONS UPON THE FAVORABLE ASPECT OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS—OUR COMMERCIAL RELATIONS—RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING FINANCES, COAST DEFENSES, THE NAVY, RAILROAD REGULATIONS, THE TELEGRAPH, &c.

To the Congress of the United States: At the threshold of your deliberations I congratulate you upon the favorable aspect of the domestic and foreign affairs of this government. Our relations with other countries continue to be upon a friendly footing. With the Argentine Republic, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Hayti, Italy, Santo Domingo, Sweden and Norway, no incident has occurred which calls for special comment. The recent opening of new lines of telegraphic communication with Central America and Brazil permitted the interchange of messages of friendship with the government of those countries.

During the year there have been perfected and proclaimed consular and commercial treaties with Serbia and a consular treaty with Rumania, thus extending our intercourse with the Danubian countries, while our eastern relations have been put upon a wider basis by treaties with Korea and Madagascar. The new boundary survey treaty with Mexico, a trade mark convention and a supplementary treaty of extradition extending the duration of the Franco-American claims commission, have also been proclaimed.

Notice of the termination of the fisheries articles of the treaty of Washington was duly given to the British government and the reciprocal privileges and exemptions of the treaty of commerce with Mexico, July 1, 1883. The fisheries pursued by a number of our citizens, on the northern coast, both of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, are worthy of the fostering care of Congress. Whenever brought into competition with the like industries of other countries, our fishermen as well as our manufacturers of fishing appliances and preparers of fish products have maintained a foremost place. I suggest that Congress create a commission to consider the general question of our rights in the fisheries and the means of opening to our citizens under just and enduring conditions the richly stocked fishing waters and sealing grounds off British and Russian North America.

Question has arisen touching the deportation to the United States from the British Islands by government or municipal aid of persons unable to earn a living and equally a burden on the community here. Such of these persons as fall under the pauper class as defined by law have been sent back in accordance with the provisions of Her Majesty's statute. The government has insisted that precautions be taken before shipment to prevent these objectionable visitors from coming hither without guarantee of support by their relations in this country. The action of the British authorities in applying measures for relief has, however, in so many cases proved ineffectual, and especially so in certain recent instances of needy immigrants reaching our territory through Canada, that a revision of our legislation upon this subject may be deemed advisable.

The legislation of France against the importation of prepared wine products from the United States has been repealed. That result is due no less to the friendly representations of this government than to the growing conviction in France that the restriction was not demanded by any real danger to health. Germany still prohibits the introduction of all wine products from America. I extended to the Imperial government a friendly invitation to send experts to the United States to inquire whether the use of those products was dangerous to health. This invitation was declined. I have believed it of such importance, however, that the exact facts should be ascertained and promulgated, that I have appointed a competent commission to make a thorough investigation of the subject. Its members have shown their public spirit by accepting their trust without pledge of compensation, but I hope that Congress will see in the national and international bearings of the matter a sufficient motive for providing at least for reimbursement of such expenses as they may necessarily incur.

The coronation of the Czar at Moscow afforded to this government an occasion for testifying its continued friendship by sending a special envoy and a representative of the navy to the ceremony. While there have been during the year no grave questions affecting the status in the Russian Empire of American citizens of other than that held by the national character, this government remains firm in its conviction that the rights of its citizens abroad should be no wise affected by their religious beliefs.

It is understood that measures for the removal of the restrictions which now burden our trade with Cuba and Puerto Rico are under consideration by the Spanish government. The proximity of Cuba to the United States, and the peculiar methods of administration which there prevail, necessitate constant discussions and appeal on our part from the proceedings of the local authorities. I regret to say that the just protests of this government have not as yet produced satisfactory results. The Helvetic Confederation has proposed the inauguration of a class of international treaties for the referral to arbitration of grave questions between nations. This government has assented to the proposed negotiations of such a treaty with Switzerland.

Under the treaty of Berlin, liberty of conscience and civil rights are assured to all strangers in Bulgaria. As to the United States we have no distinctive conventional relations with that country and are not a party to the treaty. It should be in my opinion maintain diplomatic representation at Sofia for the improvement of intercourse and the proper protection of the many American citizens who resort to that country as missionaries and teachers. I suggest that I be given authority to establish agents and consuls general at the Bulgarian capital. The United States are now participating in a revision of the tariff of the Ottoman Empire. They have assented to application of a license tax to foreigners doing business in Turkey, but have opposed the oppressive storage tax upon petroleum entering the ports of that country. The government of the Khedive has proposed that the authority of the mixed judicial tribunals in Egypt be extended so as to cover citizens of the United States accused of crimes who are now tried before consular courts. This government is not disposed to accept this change, but believes that its terms should be submitted for criticism to the commission appointed to revise the code of that country.

At no time in our national history has there been more manifest need of close and lasting relations with a neighboring state than now exists with respect to Mexico.

The rapid influx of our capital and enterprise into that country shows by what has already been accomplished the vast reciprocal advantages which must attend the progress of its internal development. The treaty of commerce and navigation of 1848 has been terminated by the Mexican government, and in the absence of conventional engagements the rights of our citizens in Mexico now depends upon the domestic statutes of that republic. There have been instances of harsh enforcement of the laws against our vessels and citizens in Mexico, and of denial of the diplomatic resort for their protection. The initial step towards a better understanding has been taken in the negotiation by the commission authorized by Congress of a treaty which is still before the Senate awaiting its approval. The provisions for the reciprocal crossing of the frontier by the troops in pursuit of hostile Indians have been prolonged for another year. The operations of the forces of both governments against these savages have been successful, and several of the most dangerous bands have been captured or dispersed by the skill and valor of United States and Mexican soldiers fighting in a common cause. The convention for the resurvey of the boundary from the Rio Grande to the Pacific having been ratified and exchanged, the United States and Mexico have been effected. It now rests with Congress to make provision for completing the survey and re-locating the boundary monuments. A convention was signed with Mexico on July 13, 1882, providing for the rehearing of the claims of Benjamin Well and the Abra Silver Mining Company; in whose favor awards were made by the late American and Mexican Claims Commission. That convention still awaits the consent of the Senate. Meanwhile, because of those charges of the most dangerous kind which have been made against the company, a new commission necessary, the executive has directed the suspension of payments of the distributive quota received from Mexico.

Our geographical proximity to Central America and our political and commercial relations with the states of that country justify, in my judgment, such a material increase of our consular corps as will place in each capital a consul general.

Diplomatic and naval representatives of this government, attended at Carracaras the centennial celebration of the birth of the illustrious Bolivar. At the same time the inauguration of the statue of Washington in the Venezuelan capital testified to the veneration in which his memory is there held. Congress at its last session authorized the executive to propose to Venezuela the opening of the awards of the mixed commission of Carracaras. The departure from this country of the Venezuelan minister has delayed the opening of negotiations for the reviving of the commission. This government holds that until the establishment of a treaty upon this subject the Venezuelan government must continue to make the payments provided for in the convention of 1886. There is reason for believing the dispute growing out of the unpaid obligations due from Venezuela to France will be satisfactorily adjusted. The French cabinet has proposed a basis of settlement which meets my approval; but as it involves a recasting of the annual quotas of the former debt, it has been deemed advisable to submit the proposal to the judgment of the cabinets of Berlin, Copenhagen, The Hague, London and Madrid.

In pursuance of the policy declared by this government of extending out of its territory the eastern nations, legations have, during the past year, been sent to Persia, Siam and Korea. It is probable that permanent missions of those countries will ere long be maintained in the United States.

Treaty relations with Korea were perfected by the exchange, on the 19th of May last, of the ratifications of the lately concluded conventions, and envoys from the King of Tab Choson have visited this country and received a cordial welcome. Korea, as yet, is unacquainted with the methods of western civilization, and now invites the attention of those interested in the advancement of our foreign trade, and it needs the implements and products which the United States are ready to supply. We seek no monopoly of its commerce and no advantages over other nations, but as the Koreans, in reaching for a higher civilization, have confided in the republic, we cannot regard with indifference any encroachments on their rights.

China, by the payment of a money indemnity, has settled many of the long pending claims of our citizens, and I have strong hopes that the remainder will soon be adjusted. Questions have arisen touching the rights of American and other foreign manufacturers in China under the provisions of treaties which permit aliens to exercise their industries in that country. On this specific point our consuls and consulate general at the Chinese capital, Peking, but under the operation of the most favored nation clause we have little privilege with those of other powers. While it is the duty of the government to see that our citizens have the full enjoyment of every benefit secured by the treaty, I doubt the expediency of leading in a movement to constrain China to admit an interpretation which we have only an indirect treaty right to exact. The transference of American capital for the employment of Chinese labor there in effect inaugurated a competition for the control of markets now supplied by our home industries. There is good reason to believe that the law restricting the immigration of Chinese has been violated intentionally or otherwise by officials of China, upon whom is devolved the duty of certifying that the immigrants belong to the excepted classes. Measures have been taken to ascertain the facts incident to this supposed infraction, and the government of China will cooperate with the United States in securing the faithful observance of the law. The same considerations which prompted Congress at its last session to return to Japan the Simonozaki indemnity, seems to me require at this time that the government of China will cooperate with the United States in securing the faithful observance of the law. The same considerations which prompted Congress at its last session to return to Japan the Simonozaki indemnity, seems to me require at this time that the government of China will cooperate with the United States in securing the faithful observance of the law.

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Through our ministers at London and at Monrovia, this government has endeavored to bring about a settlement of the claims of our citizens in Liberia in the case with Great Britain touching the northwestern boundary of that republic. There is a prospect of the adjustment of that dispute by the adoption of the Mannah river as the line. The arrangement is a compromise of the conflicting territorial claims and takes into consideration the rights of the citizens of the United States who have been settled in that territory. The rich and populous valley of the Congo is being opened to commerce by a society called the International African Association, of which the King of the Belgians is the president and the King of the United States the chief executive officer. Large tracts of territory have been ceded to the association by native chiefs, roads have been opened, steamboats placed on the Congo river, and a number of stations under one flag which offers freedom to commerce and prohibits the slave trade. The objects of the society are philanthropic. It does not aim at permanent political control, but seeks the neutrality of the United States, and the United States, in turn, has agreed to support the work not to the interests of their citizens involved in it. It may become advisable for us to cooperate with other commercial powers in promoting the rights of trade and residence in the Congo valley, free from the interference or political control of any one nation.

I have alluded in my previous messages to the injurious and vexatious restrictions suffered by our trade in the Spanish West Indies. Brazil, whose natural outlet for its great national staple—coffee—is in and through the United States, imposes a heavy export duty upon that product. Our petroleum exports are hampered in Turkey and in other eastern ports by restrictions as to storage and by onerous taxation. For this mischief adequate relief is not always afforded by reciprocal treaties like that of Hawaii or that lately negotiated with Mexico and that awaiting the action of the Senate. It is not advisable to provide some measure of equitable nature in our relations with governments which discriminate against our own. If, for example, the Spanish vessels and cargoes from Cuba and Puerto Rico the same rules of treatment and scale of penalties for technical faults which are applied to our own vessels and cargoes in the Atlantic, a resort to that course might not be barren of good results.

The report of the Secretary of the Treasury gives a full and interesting exhibit of the financial condition of the country. It shows that the ordinary revenues from all sources for 1883, fiscal year ending June 30, 1883, amounted to \$388,287,581.33, whereas there was received from customs \$214,706,496.93, from internal revenue \$144,730,368.98, from sales of public lands \$7,505,864.42, from tax on circulation and deposits of national banks \$9,141,008.55, from profits on coinage, bullion

deposits and assays \$4,460,205.17, from other sources \$17,338,587.60. For the same period the ordinary expenditures were for civil expenses \$22,443,285.76, for foreign intercourse \$2,419,276.24, for Indians \$7,369,500.84, for pensions \$66,012,573.64, for the military establishment, including rifle and harbor improvements and arsenals, \$38,911,382.93, for the naval establishment, including vessels, machinery and improvements at navy yards, \$25,283,437.17, for miscellaneous expenditures including public buildings, light houses and collecting the revenue, \$30,000,432.73, for expenditures on account of the District of Columbia, \$3,817,028.48, for interest on the public debt, \$59,469,131.25. Total \$286,408,137.54, leaving a surplus revenue of \$132,879,443.79, which with an amount drawn from the cash balance in Treasury of \$1,299,312.55, making \$134,178,756.35, was applied to the redemption of bonds. The receipts, actual and estimated, for the present fiscal year are \$373,000,000; total expenditures, actual and estimated, \$228,000,000; estimated amount due the sinking fund, \$45,816,741.07; leaving a balance of \$39,183,258.93. If the revenues for the fiscal year which will end on June 30, 1885, be estimated upon the basis of existing laws, the Secretary is of the opinion that for that year the receipts will exceed by \$60,000,000 the ordinary expenditures, including the amount devoted to the sinking fund.

Hitherto the surplus, as rapidly as it has accumulated, has been devoted to the reduction of the national debt. If the surplus shall hereafter be as large as the Treasury estimates now indicate, the 3 per cent. bonds may all be redeemed at least four years before any of the 4 1/2 per cent. bonds are called in. The latter, at the same rate of accumulation of surplus, can be paid at maturity, and the money requisite for the redemption of the 4 per cent. will be in the Treasury many years before these obligations become payable. There are cogent reasons why the national indebtedness should not be thus rapidly extinguished. Chief among them is the fact that only by excessive taxation is such rapidly attainable. In a communication to the Congress at its last session, I recommended that all excise taxes be abolished, except those relating to distilled spirits, and that substantial reductions be also made in the revenue from customs. A statute has since been enacted by which the annual tax on receipts of the government have been cut down to the extent of at least fifty or sixty million dollars. While I have no doubt that still further reductions may be wisely made, I do not advise the adoption of such a course. The revenue of the government is the basis of the national currency. The aggregate amount of bonds now on deposit in the Treasury to secure the National Bank circulation is about \$350,000,000; nearly \$200,000,000 of this amount consists of 3 per cent., which, as already stated, are payable at the pleasure of the government, and are likely to be called in any emergency. Our national credit, therefore, the surplus revenues shall be diminished. The probable effect of such an extensive retirement of the securities which are the basis of the National Bank circulation, would be such a contraction of the volume of the currency as to produce grave commercial embarrassments. How can this danger be obviated? The most effectual plan, and one whose adoption at the earliest practicable opportunity I shall heartily approve, has already been indicated: be the revenue of the United States for four years kept substantially commensurate with the expense, the volume of circulation will not be likely to suffer any material disturbance; if, on the other hand, there shall be great delay in reducing taxation, it will be liable to be increased by some other form of currency in place of national bank notes or to make important changes in the laws by which their circulation is now controlled. In my judgment the latter course is preferable. I commend to your attention the very interesting and thoughtful suggestions upon this subject which appear in the Secretary's report. The objections which he urges against the acceptance of any other securities than the obligations of the government itself, and the various aspects of the relations of the government to the telegraph. Such reflections as I have been able to give to this subject since my last annual message have not led me to change the views which I there expressed from the Secretary's recommendation of the then Postmaster General that the government assume the same control over the telegraph which it has always exercised over the mails. Admitting that its authority in the premises is as ample as has ever been claimed for it, it would not, in my judgment, be a wise use of that authority to purchase or assume the control of existing telegraph lines, or to construct others, with a view of entering into general competition with private enterprise. The objections which may be justly urged against either of those projects and indeed against any system which would require an enormous increase in the civil service list, do not, however, apply to the plans which have lately provoked public comment and discussion. It is likely that the whole subject will be considered by you at the present session. In the nature of things it involves so many questions of detail that your deliberations would probably be aided slightly if all by any particular suggestion of the Secretary's report. I favor my belief, however, that the government should be authorized by law to exercise some sort of supervision over inter-state telegraphic communication, and I express the hope that for attaining that end some measure may be devised which will receive your approbation.

The Attorney General criticizes in his report the provisions of the existing law fixing the fees of lawyers and witnesses upon the public domain. These provisions are contained in the act of February 26, 1853, though some of them were introduced into that act from statutes which had been passed many years previous. It is manifest that such compensation as might, were it reasonable, would in many instances be justly regarded as the present day as inadequate. I concur with

they have thus become a disturbing element. They should not be longer permitted to embarrass our currency system. I recommend that provision be made for the reception by the treasury and the mint of bullion, at a small per centage above the current market price of silver of like fineness. The Secretary of the Treasury advises a consolidation of certain of the customs districts of the country, and suggests that the President be vested with such power in relation thereto as is now given him in respect to collectors of internal revenue by section 3141 of the revised statutes. The statistics upon this subject which are contained in his report furnish of themselves a strong argument in defence of his views. I again call your attention to the present condition of our extended sea coast upon which are so many large cities whose wealth and importance to the country would in time of war invite attack from modern armored ships, against which our existing defensive works could give no adequate protection. These works were built before the introduction of modern heavy armor-plated guns into the navy, and if they are not put in an efficient condition we can easily be subjected to humiliation by a hostile power greatly inferior to ourselves. As Germany to this subject I call your attention to the importance of perfecting our submarine torpedo defenses. The board authorized by the last Congress to report upon the method which should be adopted for the manufacture of heavy ordnance adapted to modern warfare has visited the principal iron and steel works in this country and in Europe. It is hoped that Congress will thereupon be disposed to provide suitable facilities and plant for the manufacture of such guns as are now imperatively needed.

On several occasions during the past year, officers of the army have at the request of state authorities, visited their militia encampments, for inspection of the troops. From the reports of those officers I am induced to believe that the encouragement of the state militia organizations by the National Government would be followed by very gratifying results and would afford it in sudden emergencies the aid of a large body of volunteers educated in the performance of military duties. The Secretary of the Navy reports that under the authority of the act of August 5th, 1882, and March 3d, 1883, the work of strengthening our navy by the construction of modern vessels has been auspiciously begun. As an important measure of national defence the construction of an inter-coastal line of water ways across the peninsula of Florida, along the coast from Florida to Hampton Roads, between the Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware river, and through Cape Canaveral, is a project of great importance. I feel bound to impress upon the attention of Congress the necessity of continued progress in the reconstruction of the navy. The condition of the public treasury as I have already intimated, makes the present an auspicious time for putting this branch of the service in a state of efficiency. It is no part of our policy to create and maintain a navy able to cope with that of the other great powers of the world. We have no wish for foreign conquest and the peace which we have long enjoyed in our hemisphere is not to be interrupted. But that our naval strength should be made adequate for the defence of our harbors, the protection of our commercial interests and the maintenance of our national honor, is a duty which we cannot shirk. The resources of Alaska, especially in minerals, lumber and furs, are incalculable in extent and capable of large development, while while its geographical situation is one of political and commercial importance. The promptings of interest, therefore, as well as considerations of honor and good faith, demand the immediate establishment of civil government in that territory. Complaints have lately been numerous and urgent that certain corporations, controlling in whole or in part facilities for the inter-state carriage of persons and merchandise over the great railroads of the country, have resorted in their dealings with the public to divers measures unjust and oppressive in their character. In some instances the state governments have attacked and suppressed these evils, but in others they have been unable to afford adequate relief, because of the jurisdictional limitations which are imposed upon them by the federal constitution. The question, how far the national government may interfere in the premises, and what, if any supervision or control it ought to exercise, is one which merits your careful attention. While we cannot fail to recognize the importance of the vast railway systems of the country, and of their great and beneficial influence upon the development of our national wealth, we should, on the other hand, remember that no individual or no corporation ought to be invested with absolute power over the interests of any other citizen or class of citizens. The right of these railroads to corporations to the public domain, and to reasonable freedom in their regulations, must be recognized; but it seems only just that, so far as constitutional authority will permit, Congress should protect the people at large and the interstate traffic against acts of injustice which state governments are powerless to prevent.

In my last annual message I called attention to the necessity of protecting by suitable legislation the forests situated upon the public domain. In many portions of the west the pursuit of general agriculture is only made practicable by resort to irrigation, while successful irrigation would itself be impossible without the aid afforded by forests in contributing to the regularity and constancy of the supply of water. During the past year severe suffering and great loss to property have been

occasioned by profuse floods, followed by periods of unusually low water in many of the great rivers of the country. These irregularities were in a great measure caused by the removal of forests about the sources of the streams in question, and of the timber by which the water supply has been nourished and protected. The preservation of such portions of the forests in the national domain as essentially contribute to the equitable flow of important water courses is of the highest consequence.

The industrial exhibitions which have been held in the United States during the past year attracted attention in many foreign countries, when the announcement of those countries had been made public through the foreign agencies of the government. The industrial exhibition at Boston and the southern exposition at Louisville, were largely attended by the exhibition of foreign countries, notwithstanding the absence of any professed national character in those undertakings. The Centennial Exposition, to be held at New Orleans next year, in commemoration of the centenary of the first shipment of cotton from a port of the United States, bids fair to meet with a like gratifying success. Under the act of Congress of the 10th of February, 1883, declaring that exposition to be national and international in its character, all foreign governments with which the United States maintain relations have been invited to participate. The promoters of this important undertaking have already received assurances of the lively interest which it has excited abroad.

The annual report of the civil service commission, which will be soon submitted to Congress, will doubtless afford the means of a more definite judgment than I am now prepared to express as to the merits of the new system. I am persuaded that its effects will thus far proved beneficial. Its practical method appears to be adequate for the ends proposed, and there has been no serious difficulty in carrying them into effect.

At the time when the present Executive entered upon his office, his death, removal or resignation or inability to discharge his duties, would have left the government without a constitutional head. It is possible, of course, that a similar contingency may again arise, unless the wisdom of Congress shall provide against its recurrence. The practical method appears to be adequate for the ends proposed, and there has been no serious difficulty in carrying them into effect.

I repeat the recommendations that Congress prepare amendments that prescribe formality for the enactment of laws, whereby, in respect to bills for the appropriation of public moneys, Executive may be enabled, while giving his approval to particular items, to interpose his veto as to such others as do not commend themselves to his judgment.

The fourteenth amendment to the constitution confers the right of citizenship upon all persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof. It was the special purpose of this amendment to insure to members of the colored race, the full enjoyment of civil and political rights. Certain statutory provisions, intended to secure the enjoyment of those rights, have been recently declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Any legislation whereby Congress may lawfully supplement the guarantees which the constitution affords to the equal enjoyment by all the citizens of the full rights of every right, privilege and immunity of citizenship, will receive my unhesitating approval.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR.
Washington, D. C., Dec. 3, 1883.

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