THE RETIRED NAVY LIST.

We have been permitted, upon application at the Navy Department, to make public the following papers, which constitute apart of the record, not yet published, upon the interesting subject of the action of the Naval Board, recently convened under the provisions of the late law of Congress. The general orders in execution of the "finding" of the Board, as set forth in their report, as approved by the President of the United States, will soon be issued:

[Washington Union.

Navy Department,

September 5, 1855.

Sir: In the provisions of the "act to promote the efficiency of the Navy," approved February 28, 1855, it is made the duty of the Board of Officers assembled in pursuance thereof, to report to the Secretary of the Navy the names of their proceedings.

The board assembled in pursuance of the act was issued June 5, 1855. They assembled on the 20th of June, and concluded their labors on the 26th of July last. Their report to the Secretary, in accordance with the requirement of the law, and the regulations prescribed having been made, is herewith submitted for your approval or disapproval.

You have, however, informed me that you desire my views on the important and delicate subject, at as early a day as possible, and briefly as possible, will make the desired, yet I hope frankness.

You will, no doubt, recollect that in my last annual report I urged the importance of some measure of reform by which inefficient officers could be relieved, and efficient be promoted; and suggested the intervention of a Board of Naval Officers, with a view of reaching more surely a correct and just result.

The great end sought to be attained by Congress was, "to promote the efficiency of the navy" by removing from "the active service list" all officers found incompetent to do their whole duty efficiently and promptly, both ashore and afloat, and by dropping entirely from the rolls such as are to blame the most for the incompetency. Somp model, that was adopted, and some persons selected for examination, and hence a "finding" of not only the incompetent, but also of those who had become so from causes for which they were to "blame." The law on this point speaks plainly and distinctly. It does not impose this task upon, or intrust this delicate duty to, the Secretary of the Navy, or even the President. It does, however, provide that the persons who are to perform the work shall be fifteen "naval officers," to consist of five captains, five commanders, and five lieutenants, selected by the President. After thus selecting the persons who are to execute this work, it then provides how it is to be done. The board of fifteen naval officers "shall make a careful examination," what does the law next require? Is there again plain. They "shall report to the Secretary of the Navy" —not an argument to sustain their conclusions —not the facts, the evidence, nor the copies of records by which they formed their judgment— but simply "the names and rank of all officers of the said guards, who, in the judgment of said board, shall be incapable," &c., &c., and recommended these "to be taken altogether from the rolls," whenever a board shall hereafter find incompetency has arisen from causes inspiring sufficient blame.

It may not be uninteresting to call your attention to the fact that this mode of proceeding is by no means novel, and on occasion when Congress directed the reduction of the army, by which many officers were necessarily dropped from the service, the delicate task was performed in a somewhat similar manner by the President appointing a board, who after examination reported the names of such as in their opinion should be retained, without assigning any reasons or facts which caused them to prefer some and exclude others. I have before me the report of the board, on the reduction of the army under the act of 1815. They report the names and give merely the result of their examination, without facts or reasons, and their report was accepted by the President.

This finding—"this judgment" of the board—is not, however, permitted to go into execution without the sanction of the President, who is very wisely authorized to disapprove of their action, by which means a safe guard is provided to protect the public interests from any flagrant abuse of power.

At your suggestion I have examined carefully their report.

The peculiar fitness of the officers selected for this delicate and arduous duty has been commended with remarkable unanimity by both officers and citizens. They were unknown to many whom they applied for, and had a session of the board of the department