PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4, 1827.

The President of the United States transmitted, this day, to both Houses of Congress, the following

MESSAGE:

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

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

A revolution of the seasons has nearly been completed since the representatives of the people and States of this Union were last assembled at this place, to deliberate and to act upon the common important interests of their constituents. In that interval, the never-slumbering eye of a wise and beneficent Providence has continued its guardian care over the welfare of our beloved country. The blessing of health has continued generally to prevail throughout the land. The blessing of peace with our brethren of the human race has been enjoyed without interruption; internal quiet has left our fellow citizens, in the full enjoyment of all their rights, and in the free exercise of all their faculties to pursue the impulse of their nature, and the obligation of their duty, in the improvement of their own condition. The productions of the soil, the exchanges of commerce, the vivifying labors of human industry, have combined to mingle in our cup a portion of enjoyment as large and liberal as the indulgence of Heaven has perhaps ever granted to the imperfect state of man upon earth; and as the purest of human felicity consists in its participation with others, it is no small addition to the sum of our national happiness, at this time, that peace and prosperity prevail to a degree seldom experienced over the whole habitable globe; presenting, though as yet with painful exceptions, a foretaste of that blessed period of promise, when the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and wars shall be no more. To preserve, to improve, and to perpetuate, the sources, and to direct, in their most effective channels, the streams which contribute to the public weal, is the purpose for which Government was instituted. Objects of deep importance to the welfare of the Union are constantly recurring, to demand the attention of the Federal Legislature; and they call with accumulated interest, at the first meeting of the two houses, after their periodical renovation. To present to their consideration, from time to time, subjects in which the interests of the nation are most deeply involved, and for the regulation of which the legislative will is alone competent, is a duty prescribed by the constitution, to the performance of which the first meeting of the new Congress is a period eminently appropriate, and which it is now my purpose to discharge.

Our relations of friendship with the other nations of the earth, political and commercial, have been preserved unimpaired: and the opportunities to improve them have been cultivated with anxious and unremitting attention.—A negotiation upon subjects of high and delicate interest, with the Government of Great Britain, have terminated in the adjustment of some of the questions at issue, upon satisfactory terms, and the postponement of others for future discussion and agreement. The purpose of the Convention, concluded at St. Petersburg, on the 12th day of July, 1822, under the mediation of the late Emperor Alexander, have been carried into effect by a subsequent Convention, concluded at London on the 13th November, 1826, the ratifications of which were exchanged at that place on the 6th day of February last. A copy of the proclamation issued on the 19th day of March last, publishing this Convention, is herewith communicated to Congress.—The sum of twelve hundred and four thousand nine hundred and sixty dollars, therein stipulated to be paid to the claimants of indemnity under the first article of the Treaty of Ghent, has been duly received, and the Commission instituted, conformably to the act of Congress of the 2d of March last, for the distribution of the indemnity to the persons entitled to receive it, are now in session, and approaching the consummation of their labors. This final disposal of one of the most painful topics of collision between the United States and Great Britain, not only affords an occasion of gratulation to ourselves, but has had the happiest effect in promoting a friendly disposition, and in softening asperities upon other objects of discussion. Nor ought it to pass without the tribute of a frank and cordial acknowledgment of the magnanimity with which an honourable nation, by the reparation of their own wrongs, achieves a triumph more glorious than any field of blood can ever bestow

The Conventions of 3rd July, 1815, & of 20th October, 1818, will expire, by their own limitation, on the 20th October, 1828. These have regulated the direct commercial intercourse between the United States and Great Britain, upon terms of the most perfect reciprocity; and they effected a temporary compromise of the respective rights and claims to territory Westward of the Rocky Mountains. These arrangements have been continued for an indefinite period of time, after the expiration of the above mentioned Conventions; leaving each party the liberty of terminating them, by giving twelve months notice to the other. The radical principle of all commercial intercourse between independent nations, is the mutual interest of both parties. It is the vital spirit of trade itself; nor can it be reconciled to the nature of man, or to the primary laws of human society that any traffic should long be willingly pursued, of which all the advantages are on one side, and all the burdens on the other. Treaties of Commerce have been found, by experience, to be among the most effective instruments for promoting peace and harmony between nations, whose interests, exclusively considered on either side, are brought into frequent collisions by competition. In framing such treaties, it is the duty of each party, not simply to urge with unyielding pertinacity that which suits its own interest, but to concede liberally to that which is adapted to the interest of the other. To accomplish this, little more is generally required than a simple observance of the rule of reciprocity; and, were it possible for the statesmen of one nation, by stratagem and management, to obtain from the weakness or ignorance of another, an over-reaching treaty, such a compact would prove an invective to war rather than a bond of peace. Our Conventions with Great Britain are founded upon the principles of reciprocity. The commercial intercourse between the two countries is greater in magnitude and amount than between any two other nations on the globe. It is, for all purposes of benefit or advantage to both, as precious, and in all probability, far more extensive, than if the parties were still constituent parts of one and the same nation. Treaties between such States, regulating the intercourse of peace between them, and adjusting interests of such transcendent importance to both, which have been found, in a long experience of years, mutually advantageous, should not be lightly cancelled or discontinued. Two Conventions, for continuing in force those above mentioned, have been concluded between the Plenipotentiaries of the two Governments, on the 6th of August last, and will be forthwith laid before the Senate for the exercise of their constitutional authority concerning them.

In the execution of the Treaties of Peace, of November, 1782, and September, 1783, between the United States and Great Britain, and which terminated the war of our Independence, a line of boundary was drawn as the demarcation of territory between the two countries, extending over near twenty degrees of latitude, and ranging over seas, lakes and mountains, then very imperfectly explored, and scarcely opened to the geographical knowledge of the age. In the progress of discovery and settlement by both parties, since that time, several questions of boundary between their respective Territories have arisen, which have been found of exceedingly difficult adjustment. At the close of the last war with Great Britain, four of these questions pressed themselves upon the consideration of the negotiators of the Treaty of Ghent, but without the means of concluding a definite arrangement concerning them. They were referred to three separate Commissions, consisting of two Commissioners, one appointed by each party to examine and decide upon their respective claims. In the event of disagreement between the Commissioners, it was provided that they should make reports to their several Governments, and that the reports should finally be referred to the decision of a Sovereign, the common friend of both. Of these commissions, two have already terminated their sessions and investigations, one by entire & the other by partial agreement. The Commissioners of the fifth article of the Treaty of Ghent have finally disagreed, and made their conflicting reports to their own Governments. But from these reports a great difficulty has occurred in making up a question to be decided by the Arbitrator. This purpose has, however, been effected by a fourth Convention, concluded at London by the Plenipotentiaries of the two Governments on the 29th of September last. It will be submitted, together with the others, to the consideration of the Senate.

While these questions have been pending, incidents have occurred of conflicting pretensions and of dangerous character, upon the territory itself, in dispute between the two Nations. By a common understanding between the Governments, it was agreed that no exercise of exclusive jurisdiction, by either party, while the negotiation was pending, should change the state of the question of right to be definitively settled. Such collision, has, nevertheless, recently taken place, by occurrences the precise character of which has not yet been ascertained. A communication from the Governor of the State of Maine, with accompanying documents, and a correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Minister of Great Britain, on this subject are now communicated. Measures have been taken to ascertain the state of the facts more correctly, by the employment of a special Agent, to visit the spot where the alleged outrages have occurred, the result of whose inquiries, when received, will be transmitted to congress.

While so many of the subjects of high interest to the friendly relations between the two countries have been so far adjusted, it is matter of regret that their views respecting the commercial intercourse between the U. States and the British Colonial Possessions, have not equally approximated to a friendly agreement.

At the commencement of the last session of Congress, they were informed of the sudden and unexpected exclusion, by the British Government, of access, in vessels of the United States, to all their colonial ports, except those immediately bordering upon our own territories. In the amicable discussions which have succeeded the adoption of this measure, which, as it affected harshly the interests of the United States, became a subject of expostulation on our part, the principles upon which its justification has been placed, have been of a diversified character. It has been at once ascribed to a mere recurrence to the old long established principle of colonial monopoly, and at the same time to a feeling of resentment, because the efforts of an act of parliament, opening the colonial ports upon certain conditions, had not been grasped at with sufficient eagerness by an instantaneous conformity to them. At a subsequent period it has been intimated that the new exclusion was in resentment, because a prior Act of Parliament, of 1822, opening certain colonial ports, under heavy and burdensome restrictions to vessels of the United States, had not been reciprocated by an admission of British vessels from the colonies, and their cargoes, without any restriction or discrimination whatever. But, be the motive for the interdiction what it may, the British government have manifested no disposition, either by negotiation or by corresponding legislative enactments, to recede from it, & we have been given distinctly to understand, that neither of the bills which were under the consideration of Congress, at their last session, would have been deemed sufficient in their concessions, to have been rewarded by any relaxation from the British interdict. It is one of the inconveniences inseparably connected with the attempt to adjust, by reciprocal legislation, interests of this nature, that neither party can know what would be satisfactory to the other; and that, after enacting a statute for the avowed and sincere purpose of conciliation, it will generally be found utterly inadequate to the expectations of the other party, and will terminate in mutual disappointment.

The session of Congress having terminated without any act upon the subject, a Proclamation was issued, on the 17th of March last, conformably to the provisions of the 6th section of the Act of 1st March, 1823, declaring the fact that the trade and intercourse authorized by the British act of Parliament, of 24th June, 1822, between the United States and the British enumerated colonial ports, had been, by the subsequent Acts of Parliament, of 5th July, 1825, and the Order of Council, of 27th July, 1826, prohibited. The effect of this Proclamation, by the terms of the Act under which it was issued has been that each and every provision of the Act concerning navigation, of 18th April, 1818, and of the Act supplementary thereto, of 15th May, 1820, revived, and is in full force. Such, then, is the present condition of the trade, that, useful as it is to both parties, it can, with a single momentary exception, be carried on directly by the vessels of neither.—That exception itself is found in a Proclamation of the Governor of the Island of St. Christopher and of the Virgin Islands, inviting for three months from the twenty eighth of August last, the importation of the articles of the produce of the United States, which constitute their export portion of this trade, in the vessels of all nations. That period having already expired, the state of mutual interdiction has again taken place. The British Government have not only declined negotiation upon this subject, but, by the principle they have assumed with reference to it, have precluded even the means of negotiation. It becomes not the self respect of the United States either to solicit gratuitous favours, or to accept as the grant of a favour that for which an ample equivalent is exacted. It remains to be determined by the respective Governments, whether the trade shall be opened by acts of reciprocal legislation. It is in the meantime satisfactory to know, that, apart from the inconveniences resulting from a disturbance of the usual channels of trade, no loss has been sustained by the commerce, the navigation, or the revenue of the United States, and none of magnitude is to be apprehended from this existing state of mutual interdict.

With the other maritime and commercial Nations of Europe our intercourse continues, with little variation. Since the cessation, by the Convention of the 24th June, 1822, of all discriminating duties upon the vessels of the U. States and of France, in either country, our trade with that nation has increased and is increasing. A disposition on the part of France has been manifested to renew that negotiation; and, in acceding to the proposal, we have expressed the wish that it might be extended to other objects, upon which a good understanding between the parties would be beneficial to the interests of both. The origin of the political relations between the U. States & France is coeval with the first years of our Independence. The memory of it is interwoven with that of our arduous struggle for national existence. Weakened as it has occasionally been since that time, it can by us never be forgotten; and we should hail with exultation the moment which should indicate a recollection, equally friendly in spirit, on the part of France. A fresh effort has recently been made, by the Minister of the United States residing at Paris, to obtain a consideration of the just claims of citizens of the United States, to the reparation of wrongs long since committed, many of them frankly acknowledged, and all of them entitled, upon every principle of justice, to a candid examination. The proposal last made to the French Government has been to refer the subject, which has formed an obstacle to this consideration, to the determination of a sovereign the common friend of both. To this offer no definite answer has yet been received; but the gallant and honorable spirit which has at all times been the pride and glory of France, will not ultimately permit the demands of innocent sufferers to be extinguished in the mere consciousness of the power to reject them:

A new Treaty of Amity, Navigation and Commerce, has been concluded with the kingdom of Sweden, which will be submitted to the senate for their advice with regard to its ratification. At a more recent date, a Minister Plenipotentiary from the Hanseatic Republics of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Bremen, has been received, charged with a special mission for the negotiation of a treaty of Amity and Commerce between that ancient and renowned League and the United States. This negotiation has accordingly been commenced, and is now in progress, the result of which will, if successful, be also submitted to the Senate for their consideration.

Since the accession of the Emperor Nicholas to the imperial throne of all the Russias, the friendly dispositions towards the United States, so constantly manifested by his predecessors, have continued unabated, and have been testified by the appointment of a Minister Plenipotentiary to reside at this place.—From the interest taken by this Sovereign in behalf of the suffering Greeks, and from the spirit with which others of the Great European Powers are co-operating with him, the friends of freedom and humanity may indulge the hope, that they will obtain relief from that most unequal of conflicts, which they have so long and so gallantly sustained; that they will enjoy the blessing of self-government; which, by their sufferings in the cause of liberty, they have richly earned; and that their independence will be secured by those liberal institutions, of which their country furnished the earliest examples in the history of mankind, and which have consecrated to immortal remembrance the very soil for which they are now again profusely pouring forth their blood. The sympathies which the People and Government of the United States have so warmly indulged with their cause have been acknowledged by their Government, in a letter of thanks, which I have received from their illustrious President, a translation of which is now communicated to Congress, the Representatives of that nation, to whom this tribute of gratitude was intended to be paid, and to whom it was justly due:

In the American hemisphere, the cause of freedom and Independence has continued to prevail; and if signalized by none of those splendid triumphs which had crowned with glory some of the preceding years, it has only been from the banishment of all external force against which the struggle had been maintained. The shout of victory has been superseded by the expulsion of the enemy over whom it could have been achieved. Our friendly wishes and cordial good will, which have constantly followed the Southern nations of America in all the vicissitudes of their war of Independence, are succeeded by a solicitude, equally ardent and cordial, that by the wisdom and purity of their institutions, they may secure to themselves the choicest blessings of social order, and the best rewards of virtuous liberty. Disclaiming alike all right and all intention of interfering in those concerns which it is the prerogative of their Independence to regulate as to them shall seem fit, we hail with joy every indication of their prosperity, of their harmony, of their persevering and inflexible homage to those principles of freedom and of equal rights, which are alone suited to the genius and temper of the American nations. It has been therefore with some concern that we have observed indications of intestine divisions in some of the Republics of the South, and appearances of less union with one another, than we believe to be the interest of all. Among the results of this state of things has been that the Treaties concluded at Panama do not appear to have been ratified by the contracting parties, and that the meeting of the Congress at Tacubaya has been indefinitely postponed. In accepting the invitations to be represented at this Congress, while a manifestation was intended on the part of the United States, of the most friendly disposition towards the Southern Republics by whom it had been proposed, it was hoped that it would furnish an opportunity for bringing all the nations of this hemisphere to the common acknowledgment and adoption of the principles, in the regulation of their internal relations, which would have secured a lasting peace and harmony between them, and have promoted the cause of mutual benevolence throughout the globe. But as obstacles appear to have arisen to the re-assembling of the Congress, one of the two Ministers commissioned on the part of the United States has returned to the bosom of his country, while the Minister charged with the ordinary mission to Mexico remains authorized to attend at the conferences of the Congress whenever they may be resumed.

A hope was for a short time entertained, that a Treaty of Peace, actually signed between the Governments of Buenos Ayres and Brazil, would supersede all further occasion for those collisions between belligerent pretensions and neutral rights, which are so commonly the result of maritime war, and which have unfortunately disturbed the harmony of the relations between the United States and the Brazilian Government. At their last session, Congress were informed that some of the naval officers of that Empire had advanced and practised upon principles in relation to blockades and to neutral navigation, which we could not sanction, and which our commanders found it necessary to resist. It appears that they have not been sustained by the Government of Brazil itself. Some of the vessels captured under the assumed authority of these erroneous principles, have been restored; and we trust that our just expectations will be realized, that adequate indemnity will be made to all the citizens of the United States who have suffered by the unwarranted captures which the Brazilian tribunals themselves have pronounced unlawful.

In the diplomatic discussions, at Rio de Janerio, of these wrongs sustained by citizens of the United States, and of others which seemed as if emanating immediately from that Government itself, the Charge d'Affaires of the United States, under an impression that his representations in behalf of the rights and interests of his countrymen were totally disregarded and useless, deemed it his duty, without waiting for instructions, to terminate his official functions, to demand his passports, and return to the United States. This movement, dictated by an honest zeal for the honor and interest of his country, motives which operated exclusively upon the mind of the officer who resorted to it, has not been disapproved by me. The Brazilian Government, however, complained of it as a measure for which no adequate intentional cause had been given by them, and upon an explicit assurance, through their Charge d'Affaires, residing here, that a successor to the late Representative of the United States near that Government, the appointment of whom they desired, should be received and treated with respect due to his character, & that indemnity should be promptly made for all injuries inflicted on citizens of the United States, or their property, contrary to the laws of nations, a temporary commission as Charge d'Affaires to that country has been issued, which it is hoped will entirely restore the ordinary diplomatic intercourse between the two Governments, and the friendly relations between the respective nations.

Turning from the momentous concerns of our Union, in its intercourse with foreign nations, to those of the deepest interest in the administration of our internal affairs, we find the revenues of the present year corresponding as nearly as might be expected to the anticipations of the last, and presenting an aspect still more favorable in the promise of the next. The balance in the Treasury, on the first of January last, was six millions three hundred and fifty-eight thousand six hundred and eighty-six dollars and eighteen cents the receipts from that day to the 30th of September last, as near as the returns of them yet received can show, amount to sixteen millions eight hundred and eighty-six thousand five hundred and eighty-one dollars and thirty-two cents. The receipts of the present quarter, estimated at four millions five hundred & fifteen thousand, added to the above, form an aggregate of twenty one millions four hundred thousand dollars of receipts. The expenditures of the year may perhaps amount to twenty-two millions three hundred thousand dollars, presenting a small excess over the receipts. But, of these twenty-two millions, upwards of six have been applied to the discharge of the principal of the public debt; the whole amount of which approaching seventy-four millions on the first of January last, will on the first day of next year, fall short of sixty-seven millions and a half. The balances in the Treasury, on the first of January next, it is expected will exceed five millions four hundred and fifty thousand dollars; a sum exceeding that of the first of January, 1825, though falling short of that exhibited on the first of January last.

It was foreseen that the revenue of the present year would not equal that of the last, which had itself been less than that of the next preceding year. But the hope has been realized which was entertained, that these deficiencies would in no wise interrupt the steady operation of the discharge of the public debt by the annual ten millions devoted to that object by the Act of 3d March, 1817.

The amount of duties secured on merchandize imported from the commencement of the year until the 30th of September last is twenty-one millions two hundred and twenty-six thousand. and the probable amount of that which will be secured during the remainder of the year, is five millions seven hundred and seventy four thousand dollars; forming a sum total of twenty seven millions. With the allowances for drawbacks and contingent deficiencies which may occur, though not specifically foreseen, we may safely estimate the receipts of the ensuing year at twenty two millions three hundred thousand dollars, a revenue for the next, equal to the expenditure of the present year.

The deep solicitude felt by our citizens of all classes throughout the Union for the total discharge of the public debt, will apologize for the earnestness with which I deem it my duty to urge this topic upon the consideration of Congress—of recommending to them again the observance of the strictest economy in the application of the public funds. The depression upon the receipts of the revenue which had commenced with the year 1826, continued with increased severity during the two first quarters of the present year. The returning tide began to flow with the third quarter, and so far as we can judge from experience, may be expected to continue through the course of the ensuing year. In the meantime, an alleviation from the burthen of the public debt will, in three years, have been effected, to the amount of nearly sixteen millions, and the charge of annual interest will have been reduced upwards of one million. But among the maxims of political economy which the stewards of the public moneys should never suffer without urgent necessity to be transcended, is that of keeping the expenditures of the year within the limits of its receipts. The appropriations of the two last years, including the yearly ten millions of the sinking fund, have each equalled the promised revenue of the ensuing year. While we foresee with confidence that the public coffers will be replenished from the receipts, as fast as they will be drained by the expenditures, equal in amount to those of the current year, it should not be forgotten that they could ill suffer the exhaustion of larger disbursements.

The condition of the Army, and of all the branches of the public service under the superintendence of the Secretary of War, will be seen by the report from that officer, and the documents with which it is accompanied.

During the course of the last Summer, a detachment of the Army has been usefully and successfully called to perform their appropriate duties. At the moment when the Commissioners appointed for carrying into execution certain provisions of the Treaty of August 19th, 1825, with various tribes of the Northwestern Indians, were about to arrive at the appointed place of meeting, the unprovoked murder of several citizens, and other acts of unequivocal hostility committed by a party of the Winnebago tribe, one of those associated in the Treaty, followed by indications of a menacing character, among other tribes of the same region, rendered necessary an immediate display of the defensive and protective force of the Union in that quarter. It was accordingly exhibited by the immediate and concerted movements of the Governors of the State of Illinois and of the Territory of Michigan, and competent levies of militia under their authority, with a corps of seven hundred men of United States troops under the command of Gen. Atkinson, who, at the call of Governor Cass, immediately repaired to the scene of danger, from their station at St. Louis. Their presence dispelled the alarms of our fellow citizens on those borders and overawed the hostile purposes of the Indians. The perpetrators of the murders were surrendered to the authority and operation of our laws; and every appearance of purposed hostility from those Indian tribes has subsided.

Although the present organization of the Army, and the administration of its various branches of service, are, upon the whole, satisfactory, they are yet susceptible of much improvement in particulars, some of which have been heretofore submitted to the consideration of Congress, and others are now first presented in the Report of the Secretary of War.

The expediency of providing for additional numbers of Officers in the two corps of Engineers will, in some degree, depend upon the number and extent of the objects of national importance upon which Congress may think it proper that surveys should be made, conformably to the Act of the 30th of April, 1824. Of the surveys which, before the last session of Congress, had been made under the authority of that act, reports were made:

1. Of the Board of Internal Improvement, on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

2. On the continuance of the National Road from Cumberland to the tide waters within the District of Columbia.

3. On the continuation of the National Board from Canton to Zanesville.

4. On the location of the National Road from Zanesville to Columbus.

5. On the continuation of the same Road to the Seat of Government in Missouri.

6. On a Post road from Baltimore to Philadelphia.

7. Of a survey of Kennebeck river, (in part.)

8. On a National Road from Washington to Buffalo.

9. On the Survey of Saugetuck harbor and river.

10. On a canal from Lake Pontchartrain to the Mississippi river.

11. On Surveys at Edgartown, Newburyport, and Hyannis harbor.

12. On Survey of La Plaisance Bay, in the Territory of Michigan.

And reports are now prepared, and will be submitted to Congress.

On Surveys of the Peninsula of Florida, to ascertain the practicability of a canal to connect the waters of the Atlantic with the Gulf of Mexico, across that Peninsula, and also, of the country between the Bays of Mobile and of Pensacola, with the view of connecting them together by a canal:

On surveys of a route for a canal to connect the waters of James and Great Kenhawa rivers;

On the survey of the Swash in Pamtico Sound; and that of Cape Fear, below the town of Wilmington in North Carolina;

On the survey of the Muscle Shoals, in the Tennessee river, and for a route for a contemplated communication between the Hiwassee and Coosa rivers, in the state of Alabama.

Other reports of surveys, upon objects pointed out by the several acts of Congress of the last and preceding sessions are in the progress of preparation, and most of them may be completed before the close of this session. All the officers of both Corps of Engineers, with several other persons duly qualified, have been constantly employed upon these services from the passage of the Act of 30th April, 1824, to this time. Were no other advantage to accrue to the country from their labors than the fund of topographical knowledge which they have collected and communicated, that alone would have been a profit to the Union more than adequate to all the expenditures which have been devoted to the object; but the appropriations for the repair and continuation of the Cumberland Road, for the construction of various other roads, for the removal of obstructions from the Rivers and Harbors for the erection of Lighthouses, Beacons, Piers and Buoys, and for the completion of Canals, undertaken by individual associations but needing the assistance of means and resources more comprehensive than individual enterprise can command may be considered rather as treasures laid up from the contributions of the present age for the benefit of posterity than as unrequited applications of the accruing revenues of the nation. To such objects of permanent improvement to the condition of the country, of real addition to the wealth as well as to the comfort of the people by whose authority and resources they have been effected from three to four millions of the annual income of the nation have, by laws enacted at the three most recent sessions of Congress, been applied, without entrenching upon the necessities of the treasury; without adding a dollar to the taxes or debts of the community, without suspending even the steady and regular discharge of the debts contracted in former days, which, within the same three years, have been diminished by the amount of nearly sixteen millions of dollars.

The same observations are in a great degree, applicable to the appropriations made for the fortifications upon the coasts and harbours of the United States, for the maintenance of the Military Academy at West Point, and for the various objects under the superintendence of the Department of the Navy. The Report of the Secretary of the Navy, and those from the subordinate branches of both the Military Departments, exhibit to Congress in minute detail, the present condition of the public establishments dependent upon them the execution of the acts of Congress relating to them; and the views of the officers engaged in the several branches of the service, concerning the improvements which may tend to their perfection. The fortifications of the Coasts, and the gradual increase and improvement of the Navy are parts of a great system of national defence which has been upwards of ten years in progress, and which for a series of years to come will continue to claim the constant and persevering protection and superin-

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