

Such improvements, on account of particular circumstances, may be more advantageously and beneficially made in some States than in others, is doubtless true, but that they are of a character which should prevent an equitable distribution of the funds amongst the several States, is not to be conceded. The want of this equitable distribution cannot fail to prove a prolific source of irritation amongst the States.

We have it constantly before our eyes, that professions of superior zeal in the cause of internal improvements, and a disposition to lavish the public funds upon the objects of that character are daily and earnestly put forth by aspirants to power, as constituting the highest claims to the confidence of the people. Would it be strange, under such circumstances, and in times of great excitement, that grants of this description should find their motives in objects which may not accord with the public good? Those who have not had occasion to see and regret, the indication of a sinister influence in these matters in past time, have been more fortunate than myself in their observation of the course of public affairs. If to those evils be added the combinations and angry contentions to which such a course of things gives rise, with their baleful influences upon the legislation of Congress touching the leading and appropriate duties of the Federal Government, it was doing justice to the character of the people to expect the severe condemnation of the past which the recent exhibition of public sentiment has evinced.

Nothing short of radical change in the action of the Government upon the subject, can, in my opinion, remedy the evil. If, as it would be natural to expect, the States which have been least favored in past appropriations should insist on being redressed in those hereafter to be made, at the expense of the States which have so largely and disproportionately participated, we have, as matters now stand, but little security that the attempt would do more than change the inequality from one quarter to another.

Thus viewing the subject, I have heretofore felt it my duty to recommend the adoption of some plan for the distribution of the surplus funds which may at any time remain in the treasury after the national debt shall have been paid, among the States, in proportion to the number of their representatives, to be applied by them to objects of internal improvement.

Although this plan has met with favour in some portions of the Union, it has also elicited objections which merit deliberate consideration. A brief notice of these objections here, will not, therefore, I trust, be regarded as out of place.

They rest, as far as they have come to my knowledge, on the following grounds: 1st, an objection to the mode of distribution; 2d, an apprehension that the existence of such a regulation would produce improvident and oppressive taxation to raise the funds for distribution; 3d, that the mode proposed would lead to the construction of works of local nature, to the exclusion of such as are general, and as would consequently be of a more useful character; and, 4th, that it would create a dissatisfied and jealous dependence, on the part of the States, upon the Federal power.

Of those who object to the ratio of representation as the basis of distribution, some insist that the importations of the respective States would constitute one that would be more equitable; and others again, that the extent of their respective territories would furnish a standard which would be more expedient, and sufficiently equitable.

The ratio of representation presented itself to my mind, and it still does, as one of obvious equity, because of its being the ratio of contribution, whether the funds to be distributed be derived from the customs or from direct taxation. It does not follow, however, that its adoption is indispensable to the establishment of the system proposed. There may be considerations appertaining to the subject which would render a departure, to some extent, from the rule of contribution, proper. Nor is it absolutely necessary that the basis of distribution be confined to one ground. If, in the judgment of those whose right it is to fix it, be deemed politic and just to give it that character, have regard to several.

In my first message, I stated it to be my opinion that "it is not probable that any adjustment of the tariff upon principles satisfactory to the people of the Union will, until a remote period, if ever, leave the Government without a considerable surplus in the treasury beyond what may be required for its current service." It has had no cause to change that opinion, but much to confirm it. Should the expectations be realized, a suitable fund would thus be produced for the plan under consideration to operate upon; and if there be no such fund, its adoption will, in my opinion, work no injury to any interest, for I cannot assent to the justice of the apprehension that the establishment of the proposed system would tend to the encouragement of improvident legislation of the character supposed. Whatever the proper authority in the exercise of constitutional powers, shall, at any time hereafter, decide to be for the general good, will, in that as in other respects, deserve and receive the acquiescence and support of the whole country; and we have ample security that every abuse of power in that regard, by the agents of the people, will receive a speedy and effectual corrective at their hands. The views which I take of the future, founded on the obvious and increasing improvement of all classes of our fellow citizens, in intelligence, and in public and private virtue, leave me without much apprehension on that head.

I do not doubt that those who come after us will be as much alive as we are to the obligation upon all the trustees of political power to exempt those for whom they act from all unnecessary burdens; and as sensible of the great truth, that the resources of the nation, beyond those required for the immediate and necessary purposes of Government, can nowhere be so well deposited as in the pockets of the people.

It may sometimes happen that the interests of particular States would not be deemed to coincide with the general interest in relation to improvement within such States. But, if the danger to be apprehended from this source is sufficient to require it, a discretion might be exercised by Congress, to direct to such improvement of a general character as the States concerned might not be disposed to unite in the application of the quotas of those States, under the restriction of confining to each State the expenditure of its appropriate quota. It may, however, be assumed as a safe general rule, that such improvements as serve to increase the prosperity of the respective States in which they are made, by giving new facilities to trade, and thereby augmenting the wealth and comfort of their inhabitants, constitute the surest mode of conferring benefit on the whole. The strength, as well as the true glory of the confederacy, is mainly founded on the prosperity and power of the several independent sovereignties of which it is composed, and the certainty with which they can be brought into successful active cooperation,

through the agency of the Federal Government. It is, moreover, within the knowledge of all, that schemes of internal improvement have, from time to time, been proposed which from their extent and seeming magnificence were regarded as of national concernment, but which, upon fuller consideration and further experience would now be rejected with great unanimity.

That the plan under consideration would derive important advantages from its certainty; and that the moneys set apart for these purposes would be more judiciously applied and economically expended under the direction of the State Legislatures, in which every part of each State is immediately represented, cannot, I think, be doubted. In the new States particularly, where a comparatively small population is scattered over an extensive surface, and the representation in Congress consequently very limited, it is natural to expect that the appropriations made by the Federal Government would be more likely to be expended in the vicinity of those members through whose immediate agency they were obtained, than if the funds were placed under the control of the Legislature, in which every county of the State has its own representative. The supposition does not necessarily impugn the motives of such Congressional representatives, nor is it so intended. We are all sensible of the bias to which the strongest minds and purest hearts are, under such circumstances, liable. In respect to the last objection, its probable effect upon the dignity and independence of the State Governments, it appears to me only necessary to state the case as it is, and as it would be if the measure proposed were adopted, to show that the operation is most likely to be the very reverse of that which the objection supposes.

In the case, the State would receive its quota of the national revenue for domestic use, upon a fixed principle, as a matter of right, and from a fund to the creation of which it had itself contributed its fair proportion. Surely there could be nothing derogatory in that. As matters now stand, the States themselves, in their sovereign character, are not unfrequently petitioners at the bar of the Federal Legislature for such allowances out of the national treasury, as it may comport with their pleasure or sense of duty to bestow upon them. It cannot require argument to prove which of the two courses is most compatible with the efficiency or respectability of the State Governments.

But all these are matters for discussion and dispassionate consideration. That the desired adjustment would be attended with difficulty, affords no reason why it should not be attempted. The effective operation of such motives would have prevented the adoption of the Constitution under which we have so long lived, and under the benign influence of which our beloved country has so signally prospered. The framers of the sacred instrument had greater difficulties to overcome, and they did overcome them. The patriotism of the people, directed by a deep conviction of the importance of the Union, produced mutual concession and reciprocal forbearance. Strict right was merged in a spirit of compromise, and the result has consecrated their disinterested devotion to the general weal. Unless the American people have degenerated, the same result can be again effected, whenever experience points out the necessity of a resort to the same mode which would the fabric which their fathers have reared.

It is beyond the power of man to make a system of government like ours, or any other, operate with precise equality upon States situated like those which compose this Confederacy; nor is inequality always injustice. Every State cannot expect to shape the measures of the General Government to suit its own particular interests. The causes which prevent it are seated in the nature of things, and cannot be entirely counteracted by human means. Mutual forbearance, therefore, becomes a duty obligatory upon all; and we may, I am confident, count on a cheerful compliance with this high injunction, on the part of our constituents. It is not to be supposed that they will object to make such comparatively inconsiderable sacrifices for the preservation of rights and privileges, which other less favored portions of the world have in vain wraded through upon the same ground.

Our course is a safe one, if it be faithfully adhered to. Acquiescence in the constitutionally expressed will of the majority, and the exercise of that will in a spirit of moderation, justice, and brotherly kindness, will constitute a cement which would forever preserve our Union. Those who cherish and inculcate sentiments like these, render a most essential service to their country, whilst those who seek to weaken their integrity, are, however conscientious and praiseworthy their intentions, in effect its worst enemies.

If the intelligence and influence of the country, instead of laboring to foment sectional prejudices, to be made subservient to party warfare, were in good faith, applied to the eradication of cases of local discontent, by the improvement of our institutions, and by facilitating their adaptation to the condition of the times, this task would prove one of less difficulty. May we not hope, that to avoid the danger of collision between the authorities of the General and State Governments, on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters. By opening the whole territory between Tennessee on the north, and Louisiana on the south, to the settlement of the whites, it will, in the eyes of the whites, be a matter eminently worthy of your most deliberate attention.

It is very possible that one better calculated to effect the objects in view may yet be devised. If so, it is to be hoped that those who disapprove of the past, and dissent from what is proposed for the future, will feel it their duty to direct their attention to it, as they must be sensible that, unless some fixed rule for the action of the Federal Government in this respect is established, the course now attempted to be pursued will be equal resorted to. Any mode which is calculated to give the greatest degree of effect and harmony to our legislation upon the subject—which shall best serve to keep the movements of the Federal Government within the sphere intended by those who modeled and those who adopted it—which shall lead to the extinguishment of the national debt in the shortest period, and impose the lightest burdens upon our constituents, shall receive from me a cordial and firm support.

Among the objects of great national concern, I cannot omit to press again upon your attention that part of the Constitution which provides for the election of President and Vice President. The necessity for its amendment is made so clear to my mind by the observation of its evils, and by the many able discussions which they have elicited on the floor of Congress, that I should be wanting to my duty were I to withhold another expression of my deep solicitude upon the subject. Our system fast nearly contemplating a reversion to first principles differing in this respect, from all that have preceded it, and securing it,

trust, equally against the decay & the commotions which have marked the progress of other Governments. Our fellow citizens, too, who in proportion to their love of liberty, keep a steady eye upon the means of sustaining it, do not require to be reminded of the duty they owe to themselves to remedy all essential defects in so vital a part of their system.

While they are sensible that every evil attendant upon its operation is not necessarily indicative of a bad organization, but may proceed from temporary causes, yet the habitual presence, or even a single instance of evil which can be clearly traced to organic defects, will not I trust, be overlooked through a scrupulous veneration for the work of their ancestors. The Constitution was an experiment devised to effect the best of the ends of the great mass of our countrymen, in whom ranks the framers of it themselves were to perform the part of patriotic observation and scrutiny; and if they have passed from the stage of existence with an increased confidence in its general adaptation to our condition, we should learn from authority so high the duty of fortifying the points in it which time proves to be exposed, rather than be deterred from approaching them by the suggestions of fear.

A provision which does not secure to the people a direct choice of their Chief Magistrate, but has tendency to defeat their will presented to my mind such an inconsistency with the general spirit of our institutions, that I was induced to suggest for your consideration, the substitute which appeared to me at the same time the most likely to correct the evil and to meet the views of our constituents. The most mature reflections since has added strength to the belief that the best interests of our country require the speedy adoption of some plan, people a direct choice of their Chief Magistrate, but has tendency to defeat their will presented to my mind such an inconsistency with the general spirit of our institutions, that I was induced to suggest for your consideration, the substitute which appeared to me at the same time the most likely to correct the evil and to meet the views of our constituents.

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It was a leading object with the framers of the Constitution to keep as separate as possible the action of the Legislative and Executive branches of the Government. To secure this object, nothing is more essential than to preserve the former from the temptations of private interest, and, therefore, so to direct the patronage of the latter as not to permit such temptations to be offered. Experience abundantly demonstrates that every precise election upon that body in almost every instance, and whatever choice may then be made among the candidates thus presented to them, to swell the influence of particular interest to a degree inconsistent with the general good. The consequences of this feature of the constitution appear far more threatening to the peace and integrity of the Union than any which I can conceive as likely to result from the present legislative action of the Federal Government.

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It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements, is approaching its happy consummation. It is unwilling to submit to the laws of the States, and mingle with their population. To save him from this alternative, or perhaps utter annihilation, the General Government kindly offers him a new home, and proposes to pay the whole expense of his removal and settlement.

In the consummation of the policy originated at an early period, and steadily pursued by every administration within the present century, to protect interests to local and minute, to justify a general exaction, and it also attempts to force some kinds of manufactures for which the country is not ripe.—Much relief will be derived, in some of these respects from the measures of your last session.

The best, as well as fairest mode of determining whether, from any just considerations a particular interest ought to receive protection, would be to submit the question singly, for deliberation. If after due examination of its merits, unconnected with extraneous considerations—such as a desire to sustain a general system, or to purchase support for a different interest—it should enlist in its favor a majority of the Representatives of the people, there can be little danger of wrong or injury in adjusting the tariff, with reference to its protective effect. If this obviously just principle were honestly adhered to, the branches of industry which deserve protection, would be saved from the prejudice excited against them, when that protection forms part of a system by which portions of the country feel or conceive themselves to be oppressed. What is inculcatedly more important, the vital principle of our system—the principle which requires acquiescence in the will of the majority—would be secured from the discredit and demerits, founded, not on identity of convention but on combination of small minorities, entered into for the purpose of mutual assistance in measures which, resting solely on their own merits, could never be carried.

I am well aware, that this is a subject of so much delicacy, as to account of the extended debate which it involves, and that it should be touched with the utmost caution; and that while an abandonment of the policy in which it originated—a policy coeval with our government, and pursued through successive administrations,

ble to this Government. As individuals, we may entertain and express our opinions of their acts; but, as a Government, we have as little right to control them as we have to prescribe laws to foreign nations.

With a full understanding of the subject, the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes have, with great unanimity, determined to avail themselves of the liberal offers presented by the act of Congress, and have agreed to remove beyond the Mississippi river. Treaties have been made with them, which, in due season, will be submitted for consideration. In negotiating these treaties, they were made to understand their true condition; and they have preferred maintaining their independence in the Western forests to submitting to the laws of the States in which they now reside. These treaties being probably the last which will ever be made with them, are characterized by great liberality on the part of the Government. They give the Indians a liberal sum in consideration of their removal, and comfortable subsistence on their arrival at their new homes. If it be their real interest to maintain a separate existence, they will there be at liberty to do so without the inconvenience and vexations to which they would unavoidably have been subjected in Alabama and Mississippi.

Humanity has often wept over the fate of the aborigines of this country; and philanthropy has been long busily employed in devising means to avert it. But its progress has never for a moment been arrested; and one by one have many powerful tribes disappeared from the earth. To follow to the tomb the last of his race, and to tread on the graves of his kindred, excites melancholy reflections. But true philanthropy reconciles the mind to these vicissitudes, as it does to the extinction of one generation to make room for another. In the monuments and fortresses of an unknown people, spread over the extensive regions of the West, we behold the memorials of a once powerful race, which was exterminated, or has disappeared; to make room for the existing savage tribes. Nor is there any thing in this, which, upon a comprehensive view of the general interests of the human race, would be deemed a calamity. Philanthropy could not wish to see this continent restored to the condition in which it was found by our forefathers. What good man would prefer a country covered with forests, and ranged by a few thousand savages, to our extensive republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms, embellished with all the improvements which art can devise, or industry execute; occupied by more than twelve millions of happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization, and the arts of life.

The present policy of the Government is but a continuation of the same progressive change, by a milder process. The tribes which occupied the countries now constituting the Eastern States were annihilated or have melted away, to make room for the whites.—The waves of population and civilization are rolling to the Westward, and we now propose to acquire the countries occupied by the red men of the South and West, by a fair and equal exchange of territory. The U. S. to send them to a land where their existence may be prolonged, and perhaps made perpetual.—Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers; but what do they more than our ancestors did, or than our children are now doing. To better their condition in an unknown land, our forefathers left all that was dear in early objects. Our children, by thousands, yearly leave the land of their birth, to seek new homes in distant regions.—Does humanity weep at these painful separations from every thing animate or inanimate, with which the young heart has become entwined? Far from it. It is rather a source of joy that our country affords scope where our young population may range unconstrained in body or in mind, developing the power and faculties of man in their highest perfection.—These remove hundreds, and almost thousands of miles, at their own expense, to purchase the lands they occupy, and support themselves at their new home from the moment of their arrival. Can it be cruel in this Government, when, by events which it cannot control, the Indian is made discontented in his ancient home, to purchase his lands, to give him a new and extensive territory, to pay the expense of his removal, and support him a year in his new abode? How many thousands of convulsions in the countries from which they are principally drawn. A part of the effect, too, is doubtless owing to an increase of operatives and improvements in machinery. But, on the whole, it is questionable whether the reduction in the price of lands, produce, and manufactures, has been greater than the appreciation of the standard of value.

While the chief object of duties should be revenue, they may be so adjusted as to encourage manufactures. In this adjustment, however, it is the duty of the government to be guided by the general good. Objects of national importance, alone ought to be protected, of these, the productions of our soil, our mines, and our workshops, essential to national defence, occupy the first rank. Whatever other species of domestic industry having the importance to which I have referred, may be expected after temporary protection, to compete with foreign labor on equal terms, merit the same attention in a subordinate degree.

The present tariff taxes some of the comforts of life unnecessarily high; it undertakes to protect interests to local and minute, to justify a general exaction, and it also attempts to force some kinds of manufactures for which the country is not ripe.—Much relief will be derived, in some of these respects from the measures of your last session.

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sign power within their own limits, in as full a manner before as after the purchase of the Indian lands; nor can this Government add to or diminish it.

May we not hope, therefore, that all good citizens, and none more zealously than those who think the Indians oppressed by subjection to the laws of the States, will unite in attempting to open the eyes of those children of the forest to their true condition, and by the evils, real or imaginary, present or prospective, with which they may be supposed to be threatened. Among the numerous causes of congratulation, the condition of our impost revenue deserves special mention, inasmuch as it promises the means of extinguishing the public debt sooner than was anticipated, and furnishes a strong illustration of the practical effects of the present tariff upon our commercial interests.

The object of the tariff is objected to by some as unconstitutional; and it is considered by almost all as defective in many of its parts.

The power to impose duties on imports originally belonged to the several States. The right to adjust those duties with a view to the encouragement of domestic branches of industry is so completely incidental to that power, that it is difficult to suppose the existence of the one without the other.—The States have delegated their whole authority over imports to the General Government, without limitation or restriction, saving the very inconsiderable reservation relating to their inspection laws.—This authority having thus entirely passed from the States, the right to exercise it for the purpose of protection does not exist in them; and, consequently, if it be not possessed by the General Government, it must be extinct. Our political system would thus present the anomaly of a people stripped of the right to foster their own industry, and to counteract the most selfish and destructive policy which might be adopted by foreign nations, and yet unable to secure the indispensable power, thus surrendered by the States, most within the scope of the authority on the subject expressly delegated to Congress.

In this conclusion, I am confirmed as well by the opinions of Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, who have each repeatedly recommended the exercise of this right under the Constitution, as by the uniform practice of Congress, the continued acquiescence of the States, and the general understanding of the people.

The difficulties of a more expedient adjustment of the present tariff, although great, are far from being insurmountable. Some are unwilling to improve any of its parts, because they would destroy the whole; others fear to touch the objectionable parts, lest those they approve should be jeopardized. I am persuaded that the advocates of these conflicting views do injustice to the American people, and to their Representatives. The general interest is the interest of each; and my confidence is, that, to secure the adoption of the modifications of the tariff as the general interest requires, it is only necessary that that interest should be understood.

It is an infirmity of our nature to mingle our interests and prejudices with the operation of our reasoning powers, and attributes to the objects of our likes and dislikes qualities they do not possess, and effects they cannot produce. The effects of the present tariff are doubtless overrated, both in its evils and in its advantages. By one class of reasoners, the tariff is pronounced to be the cause of the depression of cotton and other agricultural products, ascribed wholly to its influence, and by another, the reduced price of manufactured articles, the probability is, that neither opinion approaches the truth, and that both are induced by that influence of interests and prejudices to which I have referred. The decrease of prices extends throughout the commercial world, embracing not only the raw material and the manufactured article, but provisions and lands. The cause must, therefore, be deeper and more pervading than the tariff of the United States. It may, in a measure, be attributable to the increased value of the precious metals, produced by a diminution of the supply, and an increase in the demand; while commerce has rapidly extended itself, and population has augmented. The supply of gold and silver, the general medium of exchange, has been greatly interrupted by civil convulsions in the countries from which they are principally drawn. A part of the effect, too, is doubtless owing to an increase of operatives and improvements in machinery. But, on the whole, it is questionable whether the reduction in the price of lands, produce, and manufactures, has been greater than the appreciation of the standard of value.

While the chief object of duties should be revenue, they may be so adjusted as to encourage manufactures. In this adjustment, however, it is the duty of the government to be guided by the general good. Objects of national importance, alone ought to be protected, of these, the productions of our soil, our mines, and our workshops, essential to national defence, occupy the first rank. Whatever other species of domestic industry having the importance to which I have referred, may be expected after temporary protection, to compete with foreign labor on equal terms, merit the same attention in a subordinate degree.

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neither to be expected or desired, the people have a right to demand, and have demanded, it to be so modified as to correct abuses and obviate injustice.

That our deliberations on this interesting subject should be uninfluenced by those partisan conflicts that are incident to free institutions, was the earnest wish of my heart. To make this great question, which so deeply touches so much divides and excites the public mind, subservient to the short-sighted views of faction, must destroy all hopes of settling it satisfactorily to the great body of the people, and for the general interest. I cannot, therefore, on taking leave of the subject, too earnestly for my own feelings or the common good, warn you against the blighting consequences of such a course.

According to the estimates at the Treasury Department the receipts in the treasury during the present year will amount to twenty-four millions one hundred and sixty-one thousand and eighteen dollars, which will exceed by about three hundred thousand dollars the estimate presented in the last annual report of the Secretary of the Treasury.—The total expenditure during the year, exclusive of public debt, is estimated at thirteen millions seven hundred and forty-two thousand three hundred and eleven dollars; and the payment on account of public debt for the same period will have been eleven millions three hundred and fifty-four thousand six hundred and thirty dollars, leaving a balance in the treasury, on the first of January, 1831, of four millions eight hundred and ninety thousand seven hundred and eighty-one dollars.

In connection with the condition of our finances, it affords me pleasure to remark that judicious and efficient arrangements have been made by the Treasury Department for securing the pecuniary responsibility of the public officers, and the more punctual payment of the public dues. The revenue cutter service has been organized, and placed on a good footing; and, aided by an increase of inspectors at exposed points, and the regulation adopted under the act of May, 1830, for the inspection and appraisement of merchandise, have produced much improvement in the execution of the laws, and more security against the commission of frauds upon the revenue. Abuses in the allowances for fishing bounties have also been corrected, and a material saving in that branch of the service, thereby effected. In addition to these improvements, the system of expenditure for sick seamen belonging to the merchant service has been revised, and with an accuracy and economy, and economical, the benefits of the fund applicable to this object have been usefully extended.

The prosperity of our country is also further evinced by the increased revenue arising from the sale of public lands, as will appear from the report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, and the documents accompanying it, which are here with transmitted. I beg leave to draw your attention, to this report, and to the propriety of making early appropriations for the objects which it specifies.

Your attention is again invited to the objects connected with that portion of the public interests entrusted to the War Department. Some of them were referred to in my former message; and they are presented in detail in the report of the Secretary of War, herewith submitted. I refer you, also to the report of that officer for a knowledge of the state of the Army, fortifications, arsenals, and Indian affairs; all of which, it will be perceived, have been regarded with the most zealous attention and care. It is worthy of your consideration, that the armaments necessary for the fortifications on our maritime frontier, which are now, or shortly will be, completed, should not be in readiness sooner than customary appropriations will enable the Department to provide them. This precaution seems to be due to the general system of fortification which has been sanctioned by Congress, and is recommended by that maxim of wisdom which tells us in peace to prepare for war.

I refer you to the report of the Secretary of the Navy for a highly satisfactory account of the manner in which the concerns of that Department have been conducted during the present year. Our policy in relation to the most powerful nation of the earth, and the present condition of Europe, to cherish this arm of our nation, to fence with peculiar care. Separated by wide gulfs from all these Governments whose power we might have regarded with some apprehension, we have, from attempts at conquest, it is to be feared, upon our commerce, and harassing incursions upon our coast, against which we have to guard. Naval force adequate to the protection of our commerce, and the security of our coast, and the maintenance of a rapid extension in case of need, furnishes the power by which all such aggressions may be prevented or repelled. The attention of the Government has, therefore, been recently directed more to preparing the means for the frequency and certainty of the mail between some of the most important points of the Union.

Under the late contracts, improvements have been provided for the southern section of the country, and the same with an amounting made upwards of seventy-two thousand dollars, to meet the demands created by the rapid growth and extension of our flourishing country, yet the satisfactory assurance is given, that the future revenue of the Department will be sufficient to meet its extensive engagements. The system recently introduced, that subjects its receipts and disbursements to strict regulation, has entirely fulfilled its design. It gives full assurance of the punctual transmission, as well as the security of the funds of the Department. The efficiency and industry of its officers, and the ability and energy of the contractors, justify an increased confidence in its continued prosperity.

The attention of Congress was called, on a former occasion, to the necessity of such a modification of the office of Attorney General, as would render it more adequate to the wants of the public service. This resulted in the establishment of the office of Solicitor of the Treasury, and the earliest measures were taken to give effect to the provisions of the law which authorized the appointment of that officer and defined his duties. But it is not believed that this provision, however useful in itself, is calculated to supersede the necessity of extending the duties and powers of the Attorney General. On the contrary, I am convinced that the public interest would be greatly promoted by giving our law agents the general superintendence of the various proceedings, whether civil or criminal, in which the United States may be interested; allowing to him at the same time, such a compensation as would enable him to devote his undivided attention to the public and to the office.

Occasions of reference from the different executive departments to the Attorney General are of frequent occurrence, and the prompt decision of the questions so referred, tends much to facilitate the dispatch of business in those departments. The report of the Secretary of the Treasury, hereto appended, shows also a branch of the public service not generally ap-