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DOCUMENTS
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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

Navy Department, *6th, Dec.* 1830

The following report of the transactions of the Navy of the United States during the present year, with a view of the several subjects connected with its interests, is respectfully laid before the President of the United States.

The state of the Navy, since the communication made to you in December last, has been, generally, favorable to its active exertions in the important pursuits in which it has been engaged. No distressing casualty or marked calamity has assailed it since the loss of the sloop of war Hornet; information of which lamented event was received prior to the adjournment of the last session of Congress.

The active force employed within the year has not been essentially varied from that kept in service for several years past. This consists of five frigates, ten sloops of war, and four schooners: of these, the most efficient squadron, composed of two frigates and four sloops, has been required to cruize in the Mediterranean sea, where, from the large interest engaged in mercantile adventures to the several States on its coasts, its presence was deemed of most importance. This has continued under the command of Com. Biddle. Two of the vessels composing it have been relieved, their terms of service having expired, and their places supplied by the sloops of war Concord and Boston; the former being first ordered to convey the United States' Minister to Russia, and the latter to take the United States' Consul General to the Barbary Powers.

The state of these vessels has been represented to be, in point of order and preparation for service, every way worthy of approbation, and the discipline exact, without rigor—promising all required efficiency in its force. Under the command of this able and vigilant officer, all the necessary protection has been given to the trade in that quarter, no case having come to the knowledge of the Department of injuries from piratical attacks: and, with the several States and sovereignties bordering on its coasts, the best understanding has been preserved. This squadron continues to rendezvous at the port of Mahon, in the island of Minorca, a privilege which has been conceded by the Government of Spain, affording great conveniences to the United States' squadrons, especially at seasons when their safety would be endangered by remaining at sea. Here they enjoy a respite from the labors and dangers of the ocean, in a climate mild and favorable to the restoration of the health of their crews, after long and laborious service as sea.

Other changes in the vessels employed in this sea are contemplated during the next year, but the force is not proposed to be diminished; nor, in the present agitated condition of the contiguous States, could this be done, without subjecting the commercial enterprise of the country to the casualities attending a state of warfare, should such be the unhappy result of the present hostile indications in that quarter.

The squadron appointed to cruize on the coast of Brazil and Buenos Ayres, and the Pacific ocean, has been steadily engaged in guarding the United States' mercantile interests of these coasts. This service has been performed with fidelity and success; and the flag on the Union now gives full security to the merchandize it is authorized to introduce and exchange with the respective countries to which it is carried.

The cessation of hostilities between the States of Chili and Peru and the mother country, and between Brazil and Buenos Ayres, has greatly favored the advances of trade, and diminished the hazards of mercantile adventure with every part of the South American continent. But the unstable and inefficient governments of a part of these States forbid the idea that this can be long enjoyed, without embarrassments and vexatious interruptions, unless it shall be sustained by the presence of an active protecting force. It cannot, consequently, be believed to be consistent with good policy to lessen the efficiency of this force.

Several of the vessels composing these two squadrons will be relieved in the course of the next year, preparation for that purpose being in active progress. It is also contemplated to make some changes in the description of force to be employed on the Atlantic coast of South America, adapting it better for the harbors it is forced to look to for security against the tempestuous weather so often experienced on these coasts.

In a former communication made to you, it was noticed that the sloop of war Vincennes, commanded by Capt. Finch, which had composed one of the squadron in the Pacific ocean had been directed (after the expiration of the term limited for the cruize on the coasts of Chili and Peru) to touch at the Marquesas, Society, and Sandwich islands; and, after spending the necessary time in looking to the United States' commercial concerns in that quarter, to take Canton, &c. in the way, and thence by the Cape of Good Hope, pursue the usual route to the United States.

This order has been faithfully executed: the ship has returned in good condition, with its crew well disciplined, and in excellent health.

The particulars of this voyage are given in the report of Capt. Finch. These have a claim to the attention of the public, from the information afforded on many points relating to the character and habits of a people just emerging from a state of simplicity and ignorance, and, from their peculiar locality, necessarily controlling the comforts of the large number of the United States' citizens who annually visit them.

The great amount of tonnage and capital employed in the whale fisheries, in the adjoining seas, makes its convenient prosecution a matter of no considerable concern to the nation.

The necessity, also, for repose after the long voyages required by this trade, and the want of supplies for health and convenience, and repairs of the vessels, render these islands places of general rendezvous; and it is consequently of great importance that the most friendly intercourse be maintained with the inhabitants. Capt. Finch, by his judicious and conciliatory deportment, has probably secured a long continuance of kindly treatment to his countrymen from these people, and has added greatly to the prospects of a successful termination of their enterprises.

Some extracts from this report are herewith transmitted, marked A.

The squadron which has been maintained in the West Indies and Gulf of Mexico consists, at present, of four sloops of war and three schooners, under the command of Commodore Elliott. Several changes have been made in the vessels employed on this station, in consequence of the expiration of the terms of service of the crews, or the want of repairs of the vessels. No causes are supposed to exist making it necessary to add to this force; nor can it be safely diminished, though the energy and activity with which it has guarded the United States' trade, may be said, for the present, effectually to have suppressed piratical aggression.

The great facilities afforded by the inlets and harbors of the islands in the Mexican gulf for the resort and concealment of the vessels engaged in the commission of piracies, the class of population with which these islands abound, composed of refugees and outlaws, escaped from the punishment due for crimes committed in other countries, give advantages for piratical enterprises scarcely known in any other quarter of the globe. Nothing short of the exertion of positive and continued force can be expected to keep these marauders in check, and give the desired security to trade.

The invasion which took place during the last year, of the territories of the Mexican States, by an armament from the islands of Cuba, having given ground for apprehension that the United States' trade to these states might suffer from the pretext afforded by this state of conflict between the two countries, an act was passed at the last session of Congres, authorizing the employment of some additional force upon that station. In conformity to the provisions of that act, the frigate Brandywine, under the command of Capt. Ballard, was equipped and despatched for that coast, and continued for several months to cruize in its vicinity. Whatever danger might have threatened the trade in that quarter, has been effectually parried by the means taken for its protection; and this ship, after returning to the United States for necessary refitments, has since sailed to join the Mediterranean squadron and relieve the frigate Java.

It is believed that great advantages might be derived from changing, to a certain extent, the description of naval force employed in the West Indies, especially for the suppression of piracy.

The proposed change would consist of the substitution of three schooners in lieu of one of the sloops of war now employed in that service.

Vessels of this force would be fully able to cope with and capture any piratical cruizer which might be expected to be encountered on this station; and they would possess the greater advantage of multiplying, by the increased number of the squadron, the chances of discovering the enemy, while their structure and inferior size would diminish the risk of being known in their approaches. Their lighter draft of water would favor the pursuit into the obscure recesses and haunts of these cruizers, and give the important facility of entering many of the harbours on the Mexican gulf, for security against the frequent hurricanes prevailing in tropical climates.

It is respectfully recommended, that an appropriation be made for building the proposed number and description of vessels.

The health of the officers and crews of the United States' vessels of war has been generally good, and uninterrupted by the attacks of the epidemic and malignant fevers which are so readily engendered in tropical climates, and which exert such fatal influence on the constitutions of persons not familiarised to a residence in them. This may be ascribed, in some degree, to the improved system of ventilation, and the great neatness observed in the economy of vessels of war, and the adaptation of the diet and dress of the crews to the temperature of the coasts and countries where their duties are to be performed. The modern discoveries in chemical science have also been resorted to, to preserve the mariner from attacks of these fatal maladies. Several communications have been received from the Surgical Department of the Navy, by whom experiments on the chloride of lime were ordered to be made, giving the results of their observations on its powers in preventing the generation of such diseases.

From these a few extracts have been taken, and are herewith transmitted, marked B.

These furnish subjects for congratulation to the friends of the improvement of the condition of the seaman's life, and indicate that the period is not remote when a service in the climates of the torrid zone will no longer be the terror of nautical men, but will be performed with as fair a prospect of exemption from disease as is now experienced in the temperate latitudes.

It is to be regretted that an exception to this general healthfulness of the Navy has been experienced in one of the vessels of the West India squadron.

From the communications of Commodore Elliott, it appears that the yellow fever made its appearance on board the sloop of war Peacock some time in the month of June last, and that it continued to harrass the crew of that vessel after its return to Pensacola, in September; nor were its attacks intermitted until it had deprived the service of four valuable officers, and of several seamen.

It is worthy of remark, that on board this vessel, the powerful preventive agent abovementioned was not used, the surgeon relying, for the preservation of the health of the crew, on the superior cleanliness and well ventilated state of the vessel.

The Commissioners of the Navy Board, interpreting the act making an appropriation for the repairs of vessels in ordinary, and the wear and tear of vessels in commission, as admitting a greater latitude in its application to naval purposes, than, it is believed, was contemplated by the framers of the law, or was admissible by a fair construction of its terms, have caused to be built, out of that fund, a new sloop of war, in the place of the "John Adams," which had been found defective in the model, and otherwise unfit for repair.

This subject was referred to your consideration; and, in conformity to your decision, an order has been issued, requiring that, in future, the application of this fund shall be confined to the repairs of vessels in ordinary, and the wear and tear of vessels in commission; and that no vessels shall be built or rebuilt, unless authorized by a specific appropriation.

The condition of the Navy hospitals at most of the Navy yards in the United States, is entirely deficient in the means of giving accommodations to the invalids of the Navy who may be so unfortunate as to require it. At most of these places, the only provision made for their comfort during illness is some temporary shelter or old building, possessing no one of the requisites necessary for this purpose.—The mariner who returns after long and faithful service in distant and uncongenial climates, finds no asylum prepared for his reception and recovery from diseases incident to such service, but is compelled to linger out his life in crowded and confined apartments, even less favorable to his restoration than the hold of the vessel from which he has been discharged.

The funds which have accrued from the monthly deductions of the pay of the Navy, and the several appropriations made by Congress, have been expended in the erection of two magnificent buildings, neither of which has been finished, and but one of them (at Norfolk, Virginia,) is applicable to or designed for the accommodation of the sick. For several years to come, there cannot be such an accumulation of Navy hospital capital as will enable the Commissioners of that fund to engage in the construction of other useful and permanent buildings for these objects.

At Pensacola, to the mild and salubrious climate of which the invalids of the Navy look with so much anxiety as a place of refuge and restoration from tropical pestilence, there is no building which will even protect the sufferers from the inclemencies of the weather, much less secure to them the conveniences and comforts which their situation demands.

At New York, and Charlestown, Massachusetts, the necessary lands have been purchased with the Navy hospital funds for the erection of buildings for the use of the sick, and are in every respect favorably situated for affording the advantages which such establishments should possess.

These sites, in the vicinity of stations which are of so much importance to the Navy, from the number of efficient recruits enlisted at them for its service, remain unimproved, and unprovided with the buildings that are indispensable for the welfare of the invalid.

The laws passed at the last and preceding sessions of Congress for the gradual improvement of the Navy, the protection of the ships in ordinary, and for the preservation of the materials for naval purposes collected at the different Navy yards, have received a due share of the attention of the Department.

The construction of the two dry-docks authorized under the first of these acts, at Boston and Norfolk, is progressing. The one at Boston is now in such a state of advancement as to induce the expectation that it may be brought into operation during the ensuing year, or early in 1832. The completion of these two laborious and expensive works will mark an important advance in the progress of our naval improvements. Repairing the ships of war of the larger classes, hitherto a work of so much labor, expense and hazard, will, by the conveniencies afforded by these docks, be rendered comparatively easy, and may be executed, not only without risk and at far less cost than formerly, but in a manner better securing both the strength and durability of the ship. Paper marked C, annexed, contains information in detail on this subject.

Extensive houses have been prepared for the reception of materials provided under this act and other buildings are in progress, which will give complete protection to the large stores now deposited at the different yards, and those which are to be delivered under existing contracts.

The necessary examinations required by this act, to determine the practicability and expediency of erecting a marine railway at the Navy yard, Pensacola, have been made by one of the United States' Engineers.

The views of this officer on this subject were laid before the Board of Navy Commissioners, and they have expressed the opinion that it is not expedient or proper, under the restrictions and conditions imposed by the act, to cause the construction of this desirable improvement to be attempted.

It is indispensable, however, that some facility should be afforded at this most convenient position for the repairs of the vessels of war engaged in the West india service. It is proposed that a wharf suitable for these purposes should be built, in place of the contemplated rail-way; and the necessary estimates, for its erection are in readiness to be transmitted.

Further efforts have been made for the execution of this act as far as it relates to the preservation of the live oak growing on the coasts of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.

By the fourth section of this act, the President is authorized to provide for the preservation of this timber; but it seems to have been intended that the power should be limited to that object. An interpretation of the law has heretofore, been entertained, extending this power not only to the planting of the acorns, and the cultivation of plantations of young trees, but to the purchase from individuals of lands producing them. The paper accompanying this, marked D, shows the amount which has been expended on these plantations, and the sums which have been paid to individuals for the purchase of tracts of such land.

When it is considered that this timber is the natural product of the coast of the United States from the St. Mary's to the Sabine; that the greater part of this belongs to the United States, and is proposed to be retained with a view to preserving a supply of this important material for the Navy, it can scarcely be necessary for the present, to engage in its artificial propagation or culture.

Under an impression that this system is neither expedient, nor in conformity to the intentions of the act, an order has been given to discontinue the works after the expiration of the present year.

But the preservation of this timber is an object of great importance, and should be prosecuted with an active and undeviating purpose.

In aid of those measures which have been heretofore resorted to, a vessel of such draft of water as was adapted to the navigation of the rivers and creeks of the coast of Florida, and Gulf of Mexico, has been selected and fitted out, and the command given to a vigilant and enterprising officer of the Navy, who has been required to visit, from time to time, as the seasons or circumstances would permit, every section of these coasts, and to use the utmost efforts to suppress further depredations upon the public interests. Surveyors and agents have also been directed to explore such parts of the coast as abound with the live oak, to designate the boundaries between private and public claims to land, and to mark out such tracts as they may think it most conductive to the public interest should be reserved from sale.

The accompaning report of the Fourth Auditor of the Treasury, marked E, shows the several sums which have been paid in carrying into effect the act of 3d of March, 1819, and other acts making appropriations for supporting and removing certain persons of color from the United States to the coast of Africa. It appears from this statement, that under authority of these acts, 252 persons of this description, have been removed to the settlement provided by the Colonization Society on the coast of Africa; and that there has been expended therefor the sum of two hundred and sixty-four thousand seven hundred and ten dollars.

These several acts appear to have been passed in a spirit of justice and benevolence, to repair as far as possible, the injuries inflicted by the citizens of the United States upon the defenceless persons who are the subjects of the African slave trade; and the appropriations have been made with a liberality corresponding with the humane intentions of the framers of the laws.

The terms of these acts are sufficiently defined to be readily intelligible. It would seem that the authority given to the President was limited to the support of the negroes or persons of color during their stay in the United States, to their removal to the coast of Africa, and to the delivering of them to the care of an agent, &c. There is no power expressly vested in the Executive to provide, after such delivery, either for their support or protection.—A liberal interpretation of the law might permit some allowance to be made for their maintenance after being landed, until they could find employment by which it might be earned. But this even would be authority from inference only, and should be cautiously exercised.

The practice has been to furnish these persons with provisions for a period of time, after being landed in Africa, varying from six months to one year; to provide them with houses, arms, and ammunition; to pay for the erection of fortifications; for the building of vessels for their use; and, in short, to render all the aids required for the founding and support of a colonial establishment.

This latitudinous interpretation of the law has resulted in the heavy expenditures detailed in the annexed report. Understanding the law in the limited acceptation represented above, it will in future be executed accordingly, and every effort made by the Department to confine the application of this fund within the pale of its provisions.

The term for which the crew of the frigate Java had been enlisted having nearly expired, that vessel has been ordered to return to the United States; in doing which, the commander has been required, in furtherance of the humane policy pursued by the Government, to touch at the settlement at Liberia, and to aid in enforcing the laws which have been enacted for the suppression of the slave trade.

In a communication heretofore made to you, the opinion was expressed; that the number of Navy yards now established and in operation was greater than was required for the present wants of the naval service, and that a part of them were liable to the further objection of inconvenient location, both from their great distance from the ocean, and the deficiency in the depth of water for the larger classes of vessels.

This opinion has not been changed by any information since obtained, or by subsequent consideration of the subject.

Should it, however, become the necessary policy of the Government to make a great addition to its naval force, it is possible they may all be found useful, especially for the repairs of the smaller classes of vessels, and as depots for materials for the Navy, collected from the contiguous country.

Whatever course may be pursued in relation to these establishments, it is believed to be of the utmost importance to the security and general interests of the Navy that other positions be sought for, possessing greater advantages, and not liable to the objections which have been mentioned.

Few positions on our maritime frontier offer all the requisites for such purposes. But where these are found, it cannot be good policy, to neglect the measures necessary to secure the possession and improvement of them.

The advantages believed to be possessed by the Dry Tortugas, in the Gulf of Mexico, for such an establishment, have heretofore been represented to Congress, and it is much to be desired that the opinions of the intelligent naval officers who have recommended this position should be tested by the more minute examinations of Engineers possessing the scientific knowledge necessary for its accurate determination.

Pensacola, as a place of depot and resort for vessels of war requiring supplies or repairs, has much to recommend it, being contiguous to that part of the United States' coast which, it may be presumed, it will long be necessary should be guarded, particularly by that class on vessels which can safely enter its harbor, possessing a healthful climate, and the country in its neighborhood abounding with the best materials for the construction of vessels of war. But, as a place of general rendezvous for fleets or squadrons composed of ships of the largest classes, it cannot, in the present state of the entrance into its harbor, be regarded as offering the required facilities.

From a report made by the Department of War to the House of Representatives on the 5th February, 1830, it appears that a survey was made of this harbor during the preceding year, with a view of determining the practicability of deepening the channel of the entrance into this harbor, and thus adapting it to the great purposes of a naval depot for the United States' Navy.

The result of this survey was entirely favorable to the expectation of success from such an undertaking, and at an expense not estimated to exceed $107,000. Whether the work, if it could be accomplished, would secure a permanent facility of entrance, uninfluenced by the operations of the tides and storms, can only be determined by the experiment. The object, however, is one of deep interest to those sections of the United States embraced within the valley of the Mississippi, as well as to those engaged in conveying their productions to market.

The communication made by the Commissioners of the Navy, dated 19th October, 1829, and addressed to you, with the report on naval affairs, at the commencement of the last session of Congress, afforded some views in relation to the fitness of the harbor of Newport, Rhode Island, or some place in the Narraganset bay, for a naval depot and rendezvous for the United States' Navy.

From this it appears that the general advantages of this harbor or bay, for such purposes, are, in some respects, superior to any position east of the Chesapeake bay. In addition to the information furnished by this document, it will be found, on reference to the surveys of Captains Evans and Perry, made by order of the Navy Department in 1815 and 1817, that the places referred to combine almost every advantage desirable for such an establishment; especially a facility of ingress and egress, with a sufficient depth of water for ships of the largest classes, and of a capacity to permit the largest fleets to ride within their waters, in security from storms, or obstructions from accumulations of ice; that its proximity to the ocean gives all the advantages of convenient attack or retreat from an enemy; and that, from the number and nature of the channels of entrance and departure, a fleet could not be blockaded within it without an application of force incomparably greater than the one intended to be shut up; and that it is believed to be defensible at an expense far less than that which has been incurred for similar objects. In addition to these important advantages, it is described by the officers above-named as admitting of the entrance of vessels with the wind blowing from points of the compass during the prevalence of which it would be impossible to make a port in any harbor on the eastern coast of the United States. This peculiar facility might, if the harbor was properly defended, result in the security of a fleet from the attacks of a superior enemy, and affords the strongest inducements to provide for its scientifical survey, and the determination of all the points connected with the subject.

It is respectfully recommended that an appropriation be made, authorizing such survey by the proper Engineers, of the harbor of Newport, or other positions on Narraganset bay, with a view to the selection of a site offering the greatest number of these advantages, and susceptible of defence at the least expense to the nation.

Some difference of opinion having taken place between the Commissioners of Navy Yards, who were appointed to examine the sites at the Navy yard in Brooklyn and Governor's Island, to determine which of the two positions was more eligible for a naval depot and building yard, no selection had been made for the buildings which were required for the several purposes of the establishment. This yard had consequently remained unimproved, to the great injury of the store of materials which had been collected there, as well as the general operations of building and repairing.

The subject having been referred to your consideration, and all the documents explaining the relative advantages of the two sites having been laid before you, it has, in conformity with your opinion, been ordered that the timber-houses shall be erected at the old establishment at Brooklyn, until further surveys can be made, affording such minute information as will justify a final disposition of the subject.

The papers herewith transmitted, marked F, furnish statements communicated by the Board of Navy Commissioners.

No. 1 shows the number of vessels of war in ordinary at the different stations, their present condition, and the progress which has been made in protecting them from the effects of the weather, and the expense which must be incurred for their thorough repair.

No. 2 shows that there are now on the stocks, well protected from the weather, and in a very advanced stage of preparation, five ships of the line and seven frigates. These can be readily finished and put in commission, whenever the exigencies of the service may demand an increase of the naval force.

An important circumstance attending this condition of the vessels alluded to, is, that they may be retained for any length of time in their present situation, without material injury from any cause of decay, and that this is effected at an expense scarcely worth estimating.

No. 3 exhibits the measures taken for the protection of the vessels in ordinary from further decay.

The list marked 4, giving a view of the quantity of materials for the Navy collected at the several places of depot, shows that, making all due allowance for that portion which has been rendered unfit for use by their long exposure to the weather, there is still remaining a large supply of the most valuable qualities.

The great loss which has been suffered from the causes mentioned above, has made it necessary to urge the adoption of measures to prevent its future occurrence; and instructions have been issued, to provide in time the necessary houses and timber-sheds, so as to guard against the injurious exposure of the materials to the weather, after they shall have been deposited at the respective Navy yards.

The accompanying extracts of letters, marked G, addressed to the Departments by the officers of the Navy, who have had opportunities of witnessing the employment of canvass made from cotton on board their respective vessels, are herewith presented for your consideration.

The results of their observations go far to confirm the favorable anticipations which have been entertained of the value of this kind of canvass. And the opinion may now, with some confidence, be offered, that this article of domestic production will ultimately supersede the necessity for the importation of foreign hemp, for the manufacture of a large portion of the canvass required for the United States' Navy.

The laws for the government of the Navy are believed to require revision. Under the vague and indeterminate provision of these laws, it can scarcely happen, that similar degrees of punishment will be awarded for similar degrees of offence.

The tribunals invested with the power of trying persons charged with violations of these laws, may, in many cases, (if the party has been found guilty,) sentence the offender to suffer the severest penalties of the law, or dismiss him with the mere nominal punishment of reprimand—the words of the law, in several of its most important articles, being that the offender shall, on conviction, &c., "suffer death, or such other punishment as the Court shall adjudge."

Amongst the evils and odious features of the law, as an institution, this very uncertainty has been cited as one justly meriting the opprobrium which has been attached to it; and pervading as it does, almost every part of this system, it furnishes, independently of other defects, an urgent motive for a reconsideration of the subject by the National Legislature.

Believing that the usefulness and reputation of the Navy are connected essentially with its obedience to the laws and regulations enacted for its government, the Department has been assiduously engaged in endeavoring to promote their proper observance, and to cause the duties of its officers, especially of its junior members, to be discharged in alternate routine, imposing on each a share of the burdens, and giving to all the advantage to be derived from a practical attention to them.

In a communication made to the Honorable Chairmen of the Committees of Naval Affairs in the Senate and House of Representatives, on the 16th February last, proposing a Peace Establishment, some remarks were offered, supporting the opinion that it was just and expedient that an increase in the rank of its officers should constitute a part of the naval system.

While the United States' marine was confined to a few frigates and smaller vessels, no advantage could have been gained, in any point of view, from higher grades in the naval service than that of Captain. But since the great increase in the number and size of the U. States' vessels of war, and as occasions arise in the service for their combination into fleets or squadrons, other duties, arduous and responsible, and requiring the possession of superior nautical science and general intelligence, devolve upon their commanders. These higher degrees of qualification for the service, the fruit of long and unremitting devotion to their acquirment, merit a correspondent elevation in professional rank and distinction.

It has been supposed, also, that superiority has a tendency to secure the enforcement of discipline, in as much as the orders of a superior are more readily and faithful observed than those of one of equal grade.

The increase may certainly obviate some causes of irritation in the intercourse of the officers of the Navy with those of foreign nations, the least powerful of which have higher grades than are known in this service, and universally claim honors and precedence according to their rank. These must either be yielded, or intercourse suspended, and this could not but result injuriously should it be necessary for the United States' vessels to co-operate with those of other nations in any difficult naval enterprize.

The subject of an increase of the pay of the officers of the Navy has heretofore been brought to your consideration; and you are again respectfully referred to the suggestions offered in the report made to you on the 1st December last.

In anticipation that this measure will receive favorable consideration, estimates, founded on the scale of increased compensation proposed at the last session of Congress, are herewith transmitted.

The authority which is given to the Department to make allowances out of the contingent fund to cover the expenses of the officers of the Navy, for various incidental purposes, forms an important item in its duties and powers. The disposition of this large fund is wholly within the control of the Secretary of the Navy, and its application only limited by his sense of justice and expediency.

Without urging that this discretion has, at any time, been improperly or unjustly exercised, it may be said that it unquestionably offers the means of committing great abuses by extravagant grants or allowances to some, while these benefits may be wholly withheld from others.

As far as it is practicable, these allowances, now contingent, should be specifically designated, securing, without the abuse of the fund, a just return to the parties for the sums necessarily expended for such incidental purposes.

This, in many cases, may be effected by legislative enactments, particularly as relates to travelling expenses, attendance on courts martial, either as members or witnesses, the pay of Judge Advocates, and to officers engaged on extra duty beyond the limits of their stations, &c.

In the absence of precise legal provision on these points, the allowances in future will be confined strictly to the sums believed to be necessary to meet the expenses of officers so employed.

In the report made to the honorable the Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs in the House of Representatives, on the 21st of January last, a recommendation was offered, proposing some modification in the powers and duties of the Board of Commissioners of the Navy.

The Department has not found cause to change the opinion then expressed, that a division of the duties of the Navy Board would have a tendency to secure the discharge of its various duties more for the public benefit; that it would especially favor this, by directing "the undivided attention of the officer to the class of duties which may be confided to his management;" "that this exclusive devotion of his time and talents to a single train of services would enable him to attain a more intimate knowledge of their interests," to adopt a better system for their execution, and "that it would secure a stronger individual responsibility for their faithful discharge."

The considerations enumerated above offer their own recommendation; and being in concurrence with the sentiments of the Board itself, a body which from experience has derived the means of forming correct opinions on the subject, it may be fairly presumed that the adoption of the measures will result in much public utility.

The documents marked H, I, K, show the number of deaths, dismissals, and resignations, which have occured within the present year.

The estimates for the year 1831, are herewith transmitted, marked L.

The appropriations for the present year have been found more than sufficient for its current expenditures; and there will remain of them an unexpended balance probably exceeding one million of dollars.

It has been doubted by many able and observant officers of the Navy whether the marine corps, as constituting a part of the naval force, might not be dispensed with, without materially diminishing its efficiency. On this point, the opinions of many of the superior officers of the Navy were called for, and presented to the honorable Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs of the Senate, during the last session of Congress. These, it appeared, were by no means in accordance with each other; and this diversity of sentiment amongst persons best qualified to determine the question has induced the Department to withhold any recommendation on the subject.

The laws authorizing the establishment of this corps provides that it shall be governed by the "same rules and articles of war as are prescribed for the military establishment of the United States, according to the nature of the service in which it shall be employed," &c.—Under this provision, it has been determined that marines, while serving at Navy yards, shall be governed by military regulation. By this decision, two systems of discipline are brought into operation on persons employed on duty at the same establishment. The inconveniences of such an arrangement,

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