

REPORT

OF

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
November 30th, 1833.

To the President of the United States:

SIR: In submitting to your consideration a review of the operations of the naval branch of the public service during the past year, I would first invite attention to its administration in this place.

The separate organization of the Navy Department, in the manner originally established by Congress, and the change since made by the addition of a Navy Board, have, with the several clerks now allowed, furnished a sufficient number of persons for the suitable discharge of all ordinary duties immediately connected with this office. So far as my knowledge extends, those duties have generally been performed with promptitude and accuracy. But some changes in the present laws respecting them, would probably prove beneficial. Though the number of clerks, and the aggregate amount of salary paid to them, are deemed sufficient, yet more substantial justice could be enforced, if that amount was so appropriated as to permit the department to divide it in conformity to the usefulness of their respective services. It has happened that some of them, receiving large salaries, perform no greater or more difficult duties than those receiving less pay; and no power exists here to equalize their compensation, except by an occasional transfer of duties, not always convenient, appropriate, or useful.

A different arrangement of the Navy Board has, for a few years, been a subject of consideration by Congress. The board itself, and the head of this department, once united in recommending such a change as to apportion its ordinary business among the several members with a view to greater convenience, despatch, and responsibility. This could be accomplished without any material increase of expense; and it seems on many accounts very desirable. The reasons for the change have been so fully detailed in former reports, as not to need, at this time, further explanation.

There might be some useful alterations connected with the administration of the naval branch of the service in the office of the Fourth Auditor, whose duties, though nominally belonging to the Treasury Department, are intimately allied with, and very essential in most of, the operations of the navy. The great amount of property which is in charge of this department, and which is yearly increasing, seems to require that a regular account of it should be opened in that office, and kept in such manner as to insure safety and responsibility. In another particular, improvement could be made

The old balances on his books, due from defaulters who were once in the naval service, are large; and though few such balances have occurred lately, yet the collection of all of them would doubtless be promoted, if it were devolved upon him, as the person who, from his official station, is best acquainted with the situation of the claims, and the means of payment possessed by the debtors, and who could act with most promptitude in securing the public.

Auxiliary to the central administration of the naval service, the inspection of our ordnance was, a few years since, assigned to an officer of rank residing in this neighborhood, and authorized to receive the usual extra allowances while engaged in actual duty. His employment during the past season has been much extended, having embraced the inspection of all our ordnance and ordnance stores in depôt at all the naval stations. The result, it is hoped, may prove highly beneficial in our future operations. Under a similar arrangement, the custody and correction, as well as occasionally the purchase of charts, chronometers, compasses, and nautical instruments generally, were devolved on two intelligent officers stationed at this place. The system has worked favorably, and the small increase of expense attending it has been amply repaid in the better preservation and quality of those articles, and in the probable increase of safety to our vessels afloat, and to the lives of their gallant officers and crews. A specific estimate for the purchase and maintenance of a lithographic press is submitted as a means of saving, under charge of these officers, still more to the public in the procurement of charts, circulars, and blank forms, of such kinds as are employed, not only in this office, but at the several yards, and on board vessels in commission. (A.) Its various conveniences and usefulness in other respects, and especially in the drawings and plans connected with the survey of our coast now in progress, are more particularly detailed in the reports annexed. (B, 1 and 2.) To prevent any nominal or real increase of appropriations in consequence of the purchase of this press, it will be seen in the general estimates that a corresponding, or, indeed, a larger reduction has been made in what is asked for the general contingent appropriations for this office and for the service, and out of which appropriations most of the above articles are now provided.

It was formerly recommended to organize at this place a Naval Medical Bureau, and a bill is now on the files of Congress reported for that purpose. As that bill was not finally disposed of, I did not deem it proper to adopt any different system for attaining, in a different manner, most of the benefits expected to be accomplished by that measure. But if nothing be done during the ensuing session of Congress, regulating this subject, it is intended, under our present laws, that one of the older surgeons, in connexion with other services either at the barracks or navy yard in this city, shall be detailed and employed in performing many of the duties contemplated for a surgeon general.

The whole expenses, the past year, for all persons situated here, and belonging to the administration of this department, as well as the expenses for the care and repair of our furniture, buildings, and the grounds appurtenant, were about \$48,000. This amount, I trust, will be thought to bear a favorable comparison with the same class of expenses at former periods, or in other similar establishments, when the large increase and extent of duties at this place are duly considered.

Passing from the central administration of this department to that of the persons connected with its operations elsewhere, I would next submit to your consideration a few remarks on the situation of such of those persons

as fill official stations, but are not technically denominated naval officers. They are a large and useful class, belonging to what may be considered our civil list; and consist of agents, storekeepers, constructors, builders, schoolmasters, secretaries to commanders, clerks of yards, engineers, live oak superintendents; and some others attached to stations and hospitals.

In an establishment growing, like the navy, in a few years from so small a beginning to its comparatively great size at the close of the late war, and at the present moment, it was perhaps unavoidable that many measures and appointments, considered as incidental to other important objects expressly authorized, should be left to the discretion of the department. In this way, most of the above persons have been employed and paid, usually by virtue of estimates and general appropriations, without any specific provision in any act of Congress regulating the manner of their appointment, or the amount of their compensation. Indeed, a system similar in some respects has been extended to others; as the only limit which now exists to the number of every class of naval officers is the same discretion, restrained solely by estimates and appropriations, and by the confirmation required from the Senate in the case of commissioned officers. These practices have not, in my opinion, been the safest; though the custom of this department to submit to Congress, through the Executive and otherwise, full communications of its doings in relation to most of these subjects, enables the Government to exercise any control deemed necessary over any supposed abuse. My own desire has been, whenever convenient and practicable, to impose still further limits on that discretion. With this view, on a former occasion, the estimates for the contingent appropriations were made by me more specific, and settled rules of allowances and compensation, in most cases, were established or collected, and then digested and published. The revision of our whole naval regulations by the board heretofore appointed for that purpose, will, when finished and adopted, probably introduce greater system and certainty in relation to some of these matters. But it still deserves consideration, whether additional legal provision might not judiciously be made concerning the appointment and wages of some of the classes before named. All the persons on the civil list now under consideration, are believed to have conducted, during the past year, with fidelity to their duties. The only essential changes in relation to them have been the following. There has been a discontinuance of two naval constructors, whose services were no longer needed; and new and more economical arrangements have been made as to the duties of some of our agents and storekeepers abroad. The few live oak agents, appointed for certain districts, who remained in office last December, have been dispensed with; and no salary is now paying on that account, except to one person, in temporary employ for a few months, in the examination of an unfinished district. In some cases in which we have had warranted officers competent to perform the labors assigned to persons belonging to civil life, and hired at some of the yards, it has been deemed sound economy to order the former upon such duty, and to discontinue the services of the latter.

It has not been found necessary to select a permanent engineer; as the superintendents of the dry docks, and of the erection of the hospitals, have been able for the present to perform such duties as would have been required of him. But the additional schoolmasters authorized at the last session have been employed; and, it is hoped, with increased benefit to the class of younger officers. A general order has recently been issued with a view to

improve the education of these officers, by requiring all midshipmen, whether passed or not, after suitable relaxation under leaves of absence, to attend on one of the naval schools for further instruction in the studies, and proficiency in the duties, belonging to their profession. It is intended to employ them not only in appropriate reading, nautical observations, and recitations, but in forming a more practical acquaintance with the several materials used in the construction and equipment of vessels, and with the manner of preserving them, and of applying them in building and repairs. A due portion of their leisure will also be devoted to the performance of such services connected with our most important naval stations where the schools are established, as will be useful to the public, and at the same time advance them in a more thorough knowledge of the active duties which may soon devolve on them in higher and more responsible situations.

Excepting these variations, the civil establishments at the yards, and abroad, have not been materially altered during the year. It will be seen that the whole expenses of the persons connected with them have been considerably reduced, and are now annually about \$130,000. This does not include the wages of ordinary laborers; as these are more properly charged, according to their employment, under other heads, which will hereafter be considered—such, for example, as repairs of vessels, improvements at yards, or building of hospitals.

The only material change proposed in the civil list for the ensuing year, is a small addition to the very low compensation of some of the clerks at a few of the yards.

The remaining persons belonging to the naval establishment are the various officers and seamen of the navy. The general conduct of these the past year has been highly commendable. The very small number of courts martial, it is believed, has arisen from an improving spirit of harmony in the service, and from a mild, but firm and uniform system of discipline. Seldom has the health enjoyed on every station been better; and the superior condition of the medical corps, as well as of the hospitals, exercises on this subject a very salutary influence.

The number of officers in the different classes has generally been kept within the estimates. It is proposed to continue the number much as it now exists. There are now quite as many captains and surgeons as can be usefully employed; the former having been increased about one-third, and the latter one-fourth, during the last ten years. There are somewhat more lieutenants and midshipmen than might be deemed indispensable; the former within that time having been increased about one-half, and the latter one-fourth: though, in making this comparison, it is proper to state that, previous to 1824, all these classes had occasionally been more numerous than they were at that period. But, in relation to the two last classes, no reduction from the estimates of last year is contemplated. It is considered that, on a peace establishment, they ought to possess ample and valuable materials for any sudden or large increase of the higher classes, which any national emergency may at any time require; whilst nothing is found to prove more injurious to older officers than to be placed in a condition where no further incentives to improvement, by anticipated promotion, exist, and where the classes they already fill contain so large a number as to permit many years to elapse without the possibility of putting them all on active duty, unless at the expense, inconvenience, and injury, of more frequent changes of the su-

perior officers in stations and squadrons, than the public interests appear to justify.

The whole number of naval officers at this time, including those under warrants as well as commissions, is about one thousand; and our whole annual expenses, of every kind, for their maintenance is about \$850,000, or on an average about \$850 dollars for each officer. These expenses have not been increased during the last ten years, except what has been caused by the addition before mentioned to the numbers of some classes of officers, and the augmentation in pay in 1827 to passed midshipmen, in 1828 to surgeons and their assistants, and in 1830 to lieutenants. In the mean time, of late years, more useless officers have been placed on half pay, and some large allowances reduced. But no further essential reductions, in these particulars can, in my opinion, be effected without injury either to individual officers, or to the naval service. Whatever has been accomplished by myself on this subject, and on the requirement of a more equal portion of laborious duty from all officers of similar rank and date who were not invalids, has often caused to me much pain; but it has been prompted by a strong sense of the equal justice due to the officers themselves, and of the manifest propriety in this department of seeing that all those under its administration perform services for the public, when practicable, in some degree proportionate to the compensation they receive.

It is hoped that I may not be deemed importunate, if, once more urging on your attention a topic far more grateful to my feelings. I have long entertained a decided opinion that the compensation to some classes of officers ought to be increased. It is certain that more equal justice would be awarded to all, that services at sea could more easily be obtained, that greater cheerfulness and alacrity in the performance of duty would be evinced, and a higher grade of qualifications in some subordinate stations could be commanded, if the whole subject of pay was revised, and the compensation graduated in a fairer proportion among different ranks in the navy, and to similar ranks in the army; and if there was provision made for a larger and marked discrimination between duty afloat and leave of absence, or waiting orders, on shore. Such a discrimination formed a prominent feature in the act of Congress passed April 21st, 1806, and which regulates pay as now established. But that discrimination, amounting to one half of the whole pay, was virtually abolished by a rule of this department in 1819. During the continuance of the small compensation to some classes of officers, and after so long a practice under that rule, with the yearly sanction of Congress by means of the estimates and corresponding appropriations in conformity to the rule, I have not felt at liberty to alter it. Further details on this subject at this time are not deemed necessary, as they have fully and recently been laid before you in a special report from this department on a resolution of the Senate passed at the last session of Congress.

The whole number of seamen in the navy, including all the different grades, does not vary much from five thousand; and the annual expenses of their pay, rations, and enlistment, are not far from \$1,130,000, or, on an average, about \$226 for each seaman. These expenses are small, and indicate great popularity in the service when we advert not only to our facility in obtaining good seamen, but to the high rate of wages the past year in merchant vessels, and to the great cost of this class of persons in the navies of some countries, where labor is generally much lower than in the United States. These expenses have not been increased the last ten years, except

by an augmentation of about one-third in the whole number of seamen, arising chiefly from an increase of our force in commission. The complement of men to each vessel might advantageously, in some respects, be lessened, and the whole expenses on account of them be thus reduced, were it not considered of vital importance in so small a navy to have all our ships afloat as perfect as possible in every particular conducive to their efficiency, and to the reputation of the Government. It is expected that a laudable pride will then be felt and encouraged by all connected with the service, on a comparison of the condition of our own ships with those of other nations, and that the moral force of our navy—as a model for a larger one when wanted—as likely to vindicate its country's rights and honor in war, and protect its commerce in peace—will always be much greater with a small number of vessels afloat, built of the best materials and in the best manner, supplied with the most approved equipments, commanded by well educated and well disciplined officers, and navigated by full crews of hardy and contented seamen, with the whole ready on any emergency for immediate and efficient action—than with double the number of vessels half manned, and in other respects defectively provided. Every improvement in our materials, whether timber, cordage, or cannon—in our yards, docks, or harbors—in our hospitals or asylums—will add strength to this moral force, and better prepare us for any future conflict in which the violence or injustice of other nations may involve us.

In connexion with this part of the service, it is deemed proper to present some remarks concerning the condition of the Marine Corps. The subject of its allowances, in addition to pay, was not specially noticed by Congress the last year; though, in that way, it has of late been customary to regulate them. But, under a belief that the omission probably arose from accident, I have not interfered to revise the difficulties which have so long existed under that head. It will, however, be considered my duty, the ensuing year, to investigate, and attempt to adjust them, if not otherwise provided for. The commutation of the whiskey part of the ration, while the marines are at sea, has been extended to this corps; and the army regulation, entirely abolishing that part, has been applied to their rations while on shore.

The whole expenses of the corps, independent of the erection of barracks and officers' quarters, are yearly about \$190,000. The expenditures for such erections, on an average for the last ten years, have been about \$5,000, annually. The quarters authorized at Philadelphia have been completed; but the comfort and proper accommodation of the men require new barracks at New York. The estimates for this purpose, and for the support of this corps, are herewith submitted. (C, 1 & 2.)

The examination of the state of the pensioners upon the Navy Pension Fund, as those enjoying its privileges, have been, or are now, in the service, or were connected with those once in it, may also be deemed to come properly under the head of persons attached to the navy. Though the annual expenditures from that fund are about \$33,000, yet the fund itself did not spring from the public Treasury, except as derived from prizes captured by our public vessels. It was not till lately that its disbursements were classed with the navy expenditures; and now the only yearly expense this fund and its administration here impose on the Treasury, is the portion of time they occupy of the head of this department, and of one clerk. Its annual income now exceeds the annual expenses

about \$20,000, and, during, the past year, rules have been prepared, and the benefits of this surplus extended, as originally contemplated by the act of Congress creating the fund, so as to embrace those officers and seamen who, without being wounded, have, during long and faithful services, been visited by infirmities entitling them to relief. Five persons, coming under this description, have been added to the pension list, and are allowed suitable clothing, food, and medical attendance. The number of pensioners under this and the other provisions, is 298.

The condition of the privateer pensioners, placed under the exclusive administration of this department, has not essentially changed during the year. The fund for their relief, like that for navy pensioners, does not come from the public Treasury, and its management is no charge upon that Treasury, except in the particulars before mentioned. As the whole of this fund was derived from captures by privateers, it has been deemed expedient to exhaust it in the support of those disabled, and of proper persons connected with those, whose bravery and enterprise made the captures. It has therefore become gradually reduced to \$44,667. The annual charge on it at this time is about \$3,000, exceeding considerably the annual income, and thus, in due time, carrying into effect the original policy of the system. For further particulars about these two funds reference can be had to the annexed statement. (D, 1 to 5.)

On a review of the entire personal branch of our naval establishment, it will be seen that its annual cost, not including the marine corps, is about \$2,000,000; and, of that sum, about \$1,964,000 is an annual charge on the public Treasury. Considering the size and usefulness of the whole naval establishment, it is believed that this part of it, at the present time, bears a judicious and economical proportion to the whole, except in the particulars hretofore enumerated. Should improvements be made in those particulars, I am satisfied that the number and compensation of the persons employed, both on the civil list and in the navy, will be found to be such as to ensure the due care and preservation of the public property, to furnish officers and men sufficient for the present protection of our commerce and rights abroad, and to maintain among all classes a state of discipline and activity indispensable to efficiency in the discharge of ordinary duties, and to a supply of suitable candidates for promotion in the extraordinary exigencies of the future.

The deaths, dismissions, and resignations, in the service since my last report, may be seen in the tables annexed. (E. F. G.)

When we advert to the other subjects connected with the navy, and more especially to what may be considered as belonging to its materials, it is deemed proper to notice first the employment and condition of our public vessels. Those in commission have consisted of one ship of the line, four frigates, eleven sloops, and seven schooners. They have been distributed, as usual, on four foreign stations, keeping up a greater intercourse than formerly with the western coasts of Portugal and Africa, and with the adjacent islands, extending our cruises into various parts of the Indian ocean, and making the West India squadron act somewhat more as a home squadron, by requiring a portion of it to visit twice annually some of our Atlantic ports. By properly regulating these visits, much exposure in the two most dangerous months in a tropical climate is avoided, and great facilities are obtained to furnish necessary supplies, to relieve parts of their crews and exchange officers, as well as to have nearer at hand, during those visits, vessels in com-

mission, which, if any emergency should occur, may be despatched at once on any distant or important service. Efforts have been made to relieve seasonably all our vessels which have been more than two years abroad. The Fairfield and Vincennes have been sent to the Pacific to succeed the Potomac and Falmouth; the Natchez and Ontario, to the Brazilian station in place of the Lexington and Warren; the Experiment to the West Indies in place of the Shark; and the Shark and Delaware to the Mediterranean in place of the Concord, Boston, John Adams, and Brandywine. In making these changes so early as to prevent the expiration abroad of the service of our seamen, much discontent has been avoided, though this system has necessarily subjected the department to some additional expense, by having occasionally, for short periods, double sets of vessels afloat attached to the same station. But it has enabled us to perform our engagements faithfully with their crews, and to keep up a more regular and constant force on each station for protection. At the same time, caution has been taken to guard against an increase of our whole expenditures for the current year beyond the appropriations connected with this subject.

All those squadrons have been actively and efficiently employed; and it gives me great satisfaction to state, that our commerce in all quarters of the globe was probably, never known to be more free from menaces, danger, or actual violence.

The estimates for the ensuing year are for the same amount of force as was authorized the past year, consisting of about 530 guns, and distributed in such a proportion among vessels of every class belonging to our service, as to combine the greatest efficiency for naval purposes during peace, with the soundest economy. Few will deem that force either too large or extravagant, when it is considered that our foreign commerce, exposed on the ocean, exceeds one hundred millions of dollars in imports, and almost an equal amount of exports, with vessels exposed in their transportation of over half a million in tonnage, and probably twenty millions in value; and when it is remembered how much the security, not only of those vessels and their cargoes, but of their numerous crews, and of other classes of our citizens resident in some countries abroad, depends upon our navy being actively and widely distributed. On this point it may be well to reflect further, how safely that navy enables us not only to send to new and the most distant markets, and thus to give increased value to the surplus proceeds of our agriculture, manufactories, and fisheries, and to obtain in return whatever may conduce to comfort, improvement, or wealth, but what protection and enhanced worth it confers on most of our immense coasting trade; how much our national reputation abroad is everywhere known and appreciated by it; the respect it inspires, the security it yields, and the weight it affords in all our claims of justice, and negotiations with semi-barbarous nations; and how justly it may be apprehended that new perils will, ere long, await a portion of our trade, and the tranquillity of a part of our maritime frontier, from the operations of a new course of legislation by some foreign powers concerning an unfortunate portion of their population; and against which perils, as well as against the ordinary aggressions and piracies in peace, and much of the depredations which may threaten us in war, the navy, from the insular situation of our country as to the most of the world, must always be regarded as our great safeguard.

The facilities for the examination and repair of our vessels have been much increased the past year by the completion, in most respects, of the

two dry docks, and the expenses in refitting the classes of larger vessels will thereby become sensibly reduced.

The present policy of this department is to launch no more vessels of the same size with those in ordinary, until the latter are worn out. But it is proposed to build from time to time, and protect on the stocks till wanted, such new vessels as Congress may authorize to be constructed; because, in that condition, their timber will improve rather than decay, and the expense of taking care of them will be trifling compared with that of vessels in ordinary. This course has been adopted the past year with the Macedonian, now building. It is recommended, as sound policy, that authority should be given to procure the frame for another sloop, to be called the *Levant*, after the consort so gallantly captured with the *Cyane*; and the frame for another frigate, to be called the *Paul Jones*, in grateful memory of one of the earliest, bravest, and most distinguished commanders in our naval service during the revolution. The estimates for the purchase of these are submitted. (H.) Frames could not be bought for vessels of these names under any existing laws; and the timber, if procured and seasoned, whether soon set up or not, would become more valuable, being sheltered under either our present excellent sheds or ship-houses, and live oak probably becoming scarcer and dearer as our southern frontier is cleared for cultivation.

The vessels in ordinary and on the stocks, as well as the frames for others in depôt, have all been examined, and found to be in a good state of preservation, except a few of those in ordinary. Some of them are defective by their long continuance afloat before being covered, some by their great age, and some by the original imperfection of their timber. Those unworthy of being refitted are used at times for receiving ships; and the rest, as wanted, are placed in a proper state to go into commission for the relief of other vessels returning from long cruises, and needing extensive repairs. As vessels afloat grow older, their repairs must of necessity become more expensive. The cost of all repairs of all our vessels the past year has been about \$580,000. During the last ten years, the repairs have been, on an average, about \$500,000 annually.

A table showing the vessels in commission, with their commanders and stations, is submitted. (I.) The names and condition of those in ordinary and on the stocks, may be seen in the documents annexed, (K, 1 and 2.) Proceeding from the vessels to the materials used in their construction and equipment, not much has occurred the past year deserving notice. Some additions of valuable and durable articles have been made to our various stores on hand at the time of my last annual report. All these stores, and especially the timber in the docks and under sheds, are in good condition; and means have been taken to ascertain and supply any deficiency, in any article not perishable, which may be wanted for the building and perfect equipment of every vessel on the stocks, and every frame in depôt. As more timber may be needed, or thought proper to be purchased in advance, our means for the supply of live oak, it being the most important species, have been fully investigated and discussed in a special report to Congress from this department during the last session. Referring to that for detailed information on this point, I would only add, that subsequent examinations in some of the then unfinished districts have fully confirmed the impressions entertained concerning the great quantity of live oak timber on portions of the public lands in those districts. In respect to the other kinds of timber needed in ship-building, the Government has made little public provision;

and doubts exist whether it will be necessary to make any further public provision for its growth or preservation while the prices continue so moderate, and the resources of the country in such timber are likely, for many years, to remain so very abundant."

The erection of two new magazines, where none before existed, is proposed the next season; and an estimate for that purpose is submitted. (L.) Connected with this, a thorough inspection has been made not only of our present ordnance stores, but, as previously mentioned, of all our arms on hand, with a view to the sale of such as is defective or unsuitable, and to the procurement of what may be found necessary to produce uniformity, and the greatest power, in our future armaments. The usual sum of about \$10,000 has been expended for the purchase of such ordnance and ordnance stores as the current wants of the service required. The buying and manufacture of iron tanks for all our vessels in commission are in rapid progress under the late appropriation for that purpose; and, should Congress sanction the making of our own cordage as heretofore asked, and as now again proposed in the general estimates, the equipment of our vessels would soon become, throughout, all which the friends of the service could desire, for health, safety, efficiency, and national reputation.

After much deliberation, the department has become convinced that the building or purchase of two store-ships for the Pacific station, to be used in the transportation and the preservation there of supplies of all kinds, would promote sound economy, and increase the comforts of our seamen. An estimate for the procurement of one the ensuing year is submitted. (M.) We are obliged to pay freight for these supplies, heavy duties either on their being landed or re-shipped, and large rent for store-houses. The duties are a burden from which we are almost entirely exonerated under similar circumstances in other quarters of the world. The proposed measure would relieve us from them as well as the other charges; and the store-ships, by going out and returning separately and alternately, would afford great facilities to exchange or bring home invalid officers and seamen, without incurring the expense of their passages in merchant vessels from so distant a station.

The construction of two or three small steam batteries, for reasons heretofore recommended, is still deemed highly important to our future interests; and too long delay in making further experiments, and in acquiring further science on this subject in our naval service, may, on the sudden occurrence of hostilities, place us in a position not a little mortifying to our pride, and hazardous to our welfare.

The different navy yards are essential portions of our naval establishment, connected with its materials. The condition of most of them has been improved the past year either by new buildings for officers' quarters, or new store-houses and timber sheds, or new wharves and other conveniences.

The two dry docks at the yards near Norfolk and Boston, having been successfully completed in all essential particulars, the details on that subject will be found in the report annexed, (N, 1, 2, and 3.) This report shows the whole expenditures the last year not only on that subject, but on all others, under the head of gradual improvement. From the great advantages already realized in the ease and rapidity of repairs in vessels at the yards where these dry docks are situated, I am satisfied that others would be found very beneficial. Surveys were formerly had for two more—one at New York, and one at Portsmouth—and a report in favor of those two

was once made and approved in the House of Representatives. Much can be urged in favor of the former place on account of its central position, and great resources for repairs, stores, seamen, and workmen; and of the latter place, on account of the low price of labor, small cost of constructing a dock, and the easy access to it by vessels of all classes at all seasons of the year. But whether one or both, or neither, shall be selected at this time, is submitted to the proper authorities on a review of the whole subject. It must be obvious that the relative importance of different stations must undergo changes, as the capacities of different quarters of the country become more fully developed; and that some places, now employed as naval depôts, can be of very little use on the occurrence of war, while the positions of others, when that event may happen, will greatly increase their usefulness.

Among the new places which, on such an occasion, if not earlier, the interests of the country may require the Government to occupy for naval purposes, will undoubtedly be, Newport harbor on the north, and one or more positions on the long range of coast to the south between Norfolk and Pensacola. Whether the last selection should be made near Charleston or Savannah, at Key West or the Dry Tortugas—each of which possesses advantages for such purposes—can be better decided when the time and circumstances occur rendering immediate action necessary.

The continuance of Pensacola as a naval station seems to me judicious. This opinion arises not only from its convenient position as to the whole Gulf of Mexico, but its proximity to the mouths of the Mississippi and Mobile rivers, whose great and growing commerce is so amply entitled to the best protection. In the depth and size of its bay, in the excellent defences of its mouth, in its healthy situation, in its easy access to all our vessels, except of the two highest classes, Pensacola has no prominent rival in that neighborhood. The correspondence and documents annexed (O, 1 and 2,) are submitted to aid yourself and Congress to judge of the practicability and propriety of deepening the entrance to the bay, so as to admit vessels of the largest class. This, it is supposed, can be effected at a small expense, compared with the importance of such a measure to the full operations of our navy on that coast, and to the greater security and strength of our southern maritime defences.

The exchange of lands at the yard near New York, authorized at the last session of Congress, has been carried into effect. The controverted claim of the heirs of Mr. Harris to a part of the navy yard near Boston, has once been laid before Congress; and a new action having been instituted by them against the commander of that station, as will be seen by the letter annexed, such course will be pursued in its defence as Congress may be pleased to direct. (P.)

Some new pretensions have been set up to different parcels of land included in our possession and purchases at Norfolk; but their justice cannot be recognized on the facts known to the department, and those making them have been informed that no steps can be taken for their adjustment, unless, the parties previously obtain the sanction of Congress, or a judgment in their favor by the courts of law.

The expenditures on all the yards the last year, exclusive of the dry docks, but including houses, sheds, stores, wharves, enclosures, workshops, marine barracks, and incidental labor, have been about \$360,000. The expenditures on the dry docks are chargeable to a distinct appropriation for gradual improvement, and were about \$180,000. The other expenditures

under the last head were about \$150,000. (N, 1.) The estimates for the usual objects at the yards the ensuing year are about the average amount for the last two years. Beside these objects, they include an extra sum towards the erection of rope-walks, in conformity with the plan adopted by Congress in 1827; and yet the whole amount requested towards these and all other improvements, at all the yards, is only \$354,000.

Immediately connected with the subject of our yards, is that of our naval hospitals, and the naval asylum. Under the appropriations lately made by Congress, new hospitals have been commenced near Pensacola, New York, and Boston, on retired and healthy sites, combining great convenience and beauty. The plans of these have been formed on a scale suited only to the present wants of the service, but capable of easy and appropriate enlargement hereafter, whenever our necessities may require it. An additional sum will be needed to finish them in the manner proposed, and to make further progress in the hospital before built at Norfolk. (Q)

Such expenditures have been made the past year on the latter, from the general hospital fund, as could well be spared, and as the comforts of its inmates seemed most urgently to demand. This is much larger than our present necessities require; and, therefore, it is not proposed to finish the whole interior of it. But the exterior of this hospital is now chiefly completed, and it has become one of the most beautiful and useful public buildings belonging to the Government. The naval asylum at Philadelphia has been finished, and partly furnished; but it is much regretted that the department has not been able to obtain a cession of jurisdiction over it, without reservations that render the cession wholly nugatory. Besides retaining the usual power in the State to execute criminal and civil process, the reservations subject it to, and it is actually burdened by, the assessment of large taxes which are paid from the hard earnings of our seamen, and an unlimited right is retained to cut up the property by new streets. Further efforts are now making by the department to obtain relief from these onerous taxes and liabilities, so disadvantageous, if not fatal, to the success of this public and charitable institution. Should these efforts fail, all the correspondence and documents in the case will be submitted, in order that such legislation may be had as the whole circumstances connected with the subject shall be thought to require. The general condition of the hospital fund may be seen in the statement before referred to. (D, 6.)

The ordinary purchases of medicines and surgical instruments for use in hospitals and yards, and in vessels afloat, are included under a specific appropriation, and are about \$35,000 yearly. The pay and subsistence of the surgeons and assistant surgeons attached to the hospitals are provided for under the general appropriation for navy officers. The other annual expenses of our hospital establishment, independent of buildings, furniture, and repairs, are about \$1,000. These are defrayed wholly from assessments on the seamen and officers. From the same quarter come all other resources for the establishment, with the exception of such appropriations as Congress have made from time to time to aid in erecting and furnishing buildings. These last appropriations have been made but seldom, and have, within ten years, amounted to a sum which would be, on an average, about \$22,150 annually; and for the same purposes, during that period, the fund has furnished, from its annual increase and former accumulations, about \$45,000 annually. Should Congress grant what is now asked, more will probably not be wanted for many years. In immediate connexion with the yards,

hospitals, and other real estate belonging to our naval establishment, is the live oak plantation. Being situated only seven miles from our most southern yard, it has the past year been placed under the same general superintendence. The purchase of the land, and the cutting and removal of the underwood and common timber from about 200 acres of the plantation, had been accomplished before the charge of this department was placed in my hands. It seemed to me judicious in that state of things to attempt to preserve any benefits already attained, or fairly anticipated, by continuing to destroy a few years longer the annual growth of other wood injurious to the young live oak trees, to trim and train the thriftiest new ones appearing, and to employ merely the leisure of the hands so engaged in extending this process to more of the land. From 200 acres of land, and 22,000 live oak trees to which, in 1829, the above system had been applied, it has, since 1831, been so continued and extended, that the nursery has become enlarged to 225 acres, and includes over 60,000 trees. The expense attending this has been about \$1,200 a year: but should any considerable portion of the trees ever reach maturity, and attain a size suitable for ship building, the Government will be amply repaid. As the trees grow larger, the annual expense concerning the same number will rapidly diminish. Doubts exist whether some of them, from the poverty of the soil, and their apparently dwarfish character, will ever attain a valuable size. But it is now too early for forming a decisive opinion on the extent to which the operation of these causes may affect the whole plantation, and, under existing circumstances, sound policy appears to require that the experiment, having gone so far, should be allowed a further and full trial. The nearness of the plantation to the Pensacola yard and to water transportation, enhances much the value of any timber it may produce. Lately, I have not only placed this land under the general superintendence of the commander of that yard, but required his particular and constant vigilance over the live oak reservations in all that region of country. The whole agencies heretofore connected with our live oak have, as before suggested, been discontinued; all the districts, except small portions of two, having been explored as fully as is deemed useful till the surveys of the land into townships and sections shall be completed. Fast as they may be completed, arrangements have been made for additional reservations of public land on which live oak has been ascertained to abound, and the prospect of a sufficient supply of that kind of timber in future is flattering, if that on private lands, as these are wanted to be cleared for cultivation, be from time to time purchased at moderate prices, and placed in depôt for the frames of vessels specially authorized or collected under the head of gradual improvement. On this whole subject I have so recently, and at such length, submitted to Congress the views of this department, that further observations here are not deemed necessary. (See report on live oak to House of Representatives, December 14, 1832.)

Some miscellaneous matters connected with the navy deserve a brief notice. The usual attention has been bestowed on the suppression of the slave trade. The colony of Liberia has been visited by the schooner Porpoise while in pursuit of a piratical vessel, and which vessel, it is gratifying to add, is supposed to have been since captured by a British brig, and her criminal career terminated near the island of St. Thomas, on the coast of Africa. One half of the usual appropriation on the subject of the slave trade will probably be sufficient for the ensuing year, as may be seen by the state of the account herewith submitted. (R.)

The renewal of an appropriation for the relief of Alexander Claxton, made in May, 1830, has become necessary, in consequence of its having been transferred to the surplus fund before all the persons entitled to it were able to procure the necessary vouchers.

The proceedings of the board appointed, under a resolution of Congress, to revise the naval regulations, will be soon submitted in a separate report.

The survey of our sea coast having been placed in charge of the Treasury Department, it is not in my power, officially, to state its progress; but officers have been detailed, and all available facilities provided, whenever the wishes of those superintending the subject have been communicated.

Some expenses, under the contingent appropriation for enumerated objects, have not been included under any of the amounts already mentioned, but they belong to courts martial, to pilotage of vessels, to transportation of materials, to the purchase of charts and books, and various other small items, forming an aggregate of about \$80,000.

On a review of the whole affairs of this department, it appears that its expenditures on all naval subjects, the past year, have been somewhat less than four millions of dollars. It will be seen how this result compares with former periods, by adverting to the fact that, during the last twenty years, these expenditures, except during five years of that time, have never fallen so low as three millions; and, except during six years of that time, have never exceeded four millions.

The whole estimates made the past year, for the general wants of what is technically considered the navy, were only \$3,176,766. Those for the year previous were \$3,227,383. Those for the present year are \$3,292,224, (S. 1 to 8.) But it is to be remembered that, under the head of naval expenditures, besides what is paid from the amount voted on the annual naval estimates, it is customary to class what is paid from half a million appropriated for a term of years to gradual improvement; almost \$200,000 for the marine corps; the payments from the navy pension, hospital, and privateer pension funds, and several miscellaneous sums voted by Congress on motions, resolutions, and petitions; and part of which sums, though charged under this head, have little or no concern with our naval establishment. On the contrary, some of the expenses connected with the administration of the department, at this place, are included in the general appropriation bills for the support of Government; and are not usually classed under the head of naval expenditures.

It is a high gratification to be able to state that, since 1827, nearly half a million a year has been disbursed for gradual improvement; that within ten years a larger number than formerly of seamen and officers, with increased pay to four classes of the latter, have been maintained; very great and valuable improvements, besides the dry docks, have been begun and accomplished at many of the yards, and our force in commission considerably augmented; and yet that all our ordinary naval expenditures are, and probably can be kept, within four millions of dollars annually.

The smaller appropriations originally made for the navy served to maintain the few officers and seamen then employed, and supplied us with several fine vessels, four of which are still in existence. The subsequent appropriations on a more extended scale, besides supporting the current expenses of our force in its infancy, furnished the purchase money for most of our present yards, and defrayed the expenses of our brilliant hostilities with France, and afterwards with Tripoli; till a few years of comparative inacti-

vity having ensued, the commencement and progress of the last war with England led to a great addition to the naval establishment, and to expenditures much larger than at present. The liberal appropriations that were continued for some years after that war, aided in laying a good foundation for the gradual increase of the navy, and helped to build not only many of the vessels now in commission and ordinary, but most of those upon the stocks. The appropriations for some years past have been similar in amount, and have enabled the department to enlarge its policy, and widen the sphere of its operations. Besides building some additional vessels, and defraying all the current expenses of an increased force both personal and material, it has been able to erect hospitals, to construct dry docks, to improve, greatly, the old yards, to add and maintain a new one on our southern frontier, and to collect in dépôt a large amount of valuable stores as a part of the due preparation in peace for the various contingencies of war. With a careful regard to system and economy, and with strict accountability in agents and officers, this policy can long be pursued and extended without making the ordinary annual demands for this branch of the service often exceed four millions; and if, without essential changes by Congress, increasing our present expenses, and without any unforeseen and extraordinary wants, our fiscal operations can usually be confined within that amount yearly, it is confidently hoped the naval establishment will not be considered wasteful or burdensome beyond its benefits to the country.

In disbursing between three and four millions the past year, it is not known that a single instance of any loss has occurred.

The balances on hand, unexpended, are about \$1,400,000; but most of them will probably be wanted to close the different accounts, on all the different subjects, when finally adjusted.

Connected with our financial concerns, is one other circumstance of urgent importance. The period of time at which the annual appropriations for this branch of the service are usually made, is a source of great inconvenience and injury.

The estimates and appropriations are known generally not to extend beyond the current year. Consequently, it happens that, after the 1st of January, there is nothing on hand under some heads to meet the daily demands of the service, amounting, on an average, to \$10,000 per day, unless a new appropriation has been made, or there happen to be some balances of the former year not called for. Under some heads, such balances always exist, because some disbursements, by means of absence, distance, and other causes, are not completed within the year. But they seldom exist under other important heads; and ought not to, if the accounts are seasonably settled, and the estimates were accurate, and the appropriations, as is usual, conformed to the estimates. The power now vested in the President to transfer a balance from one appropriation to another, is confined to certain classes of claims small in amount; and hence, as to all others, no transfer can legally be made, and if no balance remain at the end of the year, and the new naval appropriation bills have not passed, payment is entirely stopped, or the whole operations of this department dependent on them are suspended. Considering how large a part of these operations, and of our expenditures, necessarily takes place in distant quarters of the world, it will be seen that the embarrassment in this branch of the service must often be peculiar and aggravated. In the case of bills of exchange drawn abroad, chargeable to appropriations already exhausted, the public faith, under the above circum-

stances, is sometimes in danger of being violated; our credit in foreign countries becomes injured; and the Treasury, as actually happened during the last winter, is exposed to large losses if the holders choose to resort to protests and claims for the mercantile rate of damages.

Under the present system of passing so late the naval appropriation bills, it happens that, unless money voted under one head is, without authority, as was once the practice, applied under other heads, this unfortunate condition continues every short session of Congress about two months, and every long session about four months. It can easily be remedied in two methods: One of them is, to make, previous to the 1st of January, new appropriations for a quarter or half of the year towards all permanent objects. By limiting them to such a time, and to such objects, and by taking the estimates of the former year as a guide, no inconvenience will interpose, and no error, can occur which may not be readily corrected when the residue of the appropriations for the whole year is voted at a later period in the session. Another mode is, to authorize the President to make necessary transfers from one head to another in all cases where the new naval appropriation bills do not pass by the commencement of the year, and to require from him a report to Congress of the amount and causes of such transfers. If the authority be thus restricted, it is difficult to discover any danger likely to result from its exercise; and it is believed that the surplus of balances on hand under some of the appropriations would usually prove sufficient to supply the wants under others. The detail and earnestness with which legislation on this subject is now urged, must find their excuse in my strong convictions that no measure whatever, requiring like this no increased expenditures, could be more conducive to the reputation and efficient operations of our naval establishment.

Thus, sir, under an examination of its central administration, of its personal, or civil and navy list, of its materials, with the appurtenants thereto, and of its miscellaneous concerns, I have submitted a review of all its transactions and expenditures during the past year that possess any great degree of importance. This has been accompanied by suggestions for such improvements as observation and reflection have convinced me might be useful; and should they meet with the approbation of yourself and Congress, I look forward with confidence to a long continuance of prosperity in the affairs connected with this department.

With great respect,

Yours, &c.,

LEVI WOODBURY.