

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

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

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

1. Of the Board of Internal Improvement, on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.
2. On the continuance of the National Road from Cumberland to the tide waters within the District of Columbia.
3. On the continuation of the National Road from Canton to Zanesville.
4. On the location of the national Road from Zanesville to Columbus.
5. On the continuation of the same Road to the Seat of Government in Missouri.
6. On a Post Road from Baltimore to Philadelphia.
7. Of a survey of Kennebec River (in part.)
8. On a National Road from Washington to Buffalo.
9. On the survey of Saugatuck Harbour and River.
10. On a Canal from Lake Ponchartraine to the Mississippi River.
11. On Surveys at Edgartown, Newburyport and Hyannis Harbour.
12. On survey of La Plaisance Bay, in the Territory of Michigan.

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

On surveys of the peninsula of Florida, to ascertain the practicability of a Canal to connect the waters of the Atlantic with the Gulf of Mexico, across that peninsula; and also of the country between the Bays of Mobile and of Pensacola, with the view of connecting them together by a Canal;

On surveys of a route for a Canal to connect the waters of James and Great Annawaka rivers;

On the survey of the Swashin Pamlico

Sound, and that of Cape Fear below the town of Wilmington, in North Carolina;

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

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

The same observations are, in a great degree, applicable to the appropriations made for fortifications upon the coasts and harbours of the United States, for the maintenance of the Military Academy at West Point, and for the various objects under the superintendence of the Department of the Navy. The Reports of the Secretary of the Navy, and those from the subordinate branches of the Military Department, exhibit to Congress, in minute detail, the present condition of the public establishments dependant upon them; the execution of the acts of Congress relating to them, and the views of the officers engaged in the several branches of the service, concerning the improvements which may tend to their perfection. The fortification of the Coasts, and the gradual increase and improvement of the Navy, are parts of a great system of national defence, which has been upwards of ten years in progress, and which for a series of years to come, will continue to claim the constant and persevering protection and superintendence of the legislative authority. Among the measures which have emanated from these principles, the Act of the last Session of Congress for the gradual improvement of the Navy, holds a conspicuous place. The collection of timber for the future construction of vessels of war; the preservation and re-production of the

species of timber peculiarly adapted to that purpose; the construction of Dry Docks for the use of the Navy; and the improvement of the Navy Yards for the preservation of the public property deposited in them, have all received from the Executive the attention required by that Act; and will continue to receive it, steadily proceeding towards the execution of all its purposes. The establishment of a Naval Academy, furnishing the means of theoretic instruction to the youths who devote their lives to the service of their country upon the ocean still solicits the sanction of the Legislature. Practical seamanship and the art of navigation, may be acquired upon the cruisers of the squadrons, which from time to time are dispatched to distant seas; but a competent knowledge even of the art of ship building, the higher mathematics and astronomy; the literature which can place our officers on a level of polished education with the officers of other maritime nations, the knowledge of the laws, municipal and national, which in their intercourse with foreign States and their Governments are continually called into operation; and above all, that acquaintance with the principles of honor and justice, with the higher obligations of morals, and of general laws, human and divine, which constitute the great distinction between the warrior patriot, and the licensed robber and pirate; these can be systematically taught, and eminently acquired only in a permanent school, stationed upon the shore, and provided with the teachers, the instruments and the books conversant with and adapted to the communication of the principles of these respective sciences to the youthful and enquiring mind.

The report from the Post Master General exhibits the condition of that Department, as highly satisfactory for the present, and still more promising for the future. Its receipts for the year ending the first of July last amounted to one million four hundred and seventy-three thousand five hundred and fifty-one dollars, and exceeded its expenditures by upwards of one hundred thousand dollars. It cannot be an over sanguine estimate to predict that in less than ten years, of which one half have elapsed, the receipts will have been more than doubled. In the mean time, a reduced expenditure upon established routes has kept pace with increased facilities of public accommodation, and additional services have been obtained at reduced rates of compensation. Within the last year the transportation of the mail in stages has been greatly augmented. The number of Post Offices has been increased to seven thousand; and it may be anticipated that while the facilities of intercourse between fellow citizens in person or by correspondence, will soon be carried to the door of every villager in the Union, a yearly surplus of revenue will accrue, which may be applied as the wisdom of Congress, under the exercise of their constitutional powers, may devise, for the further establishment and improvement of the public Roads, or by adding still further to the facilities in the transportation of the mails. Of the indications of the prosperous condition of our country, none can be more pleasing than those presented by the multiplying relations of personal and intimate intercourse between the citizens of the Union dwelling at the remotest distances from each other.

Among the subjects which have heretofore occupied the earnest solicitude and attention of Congress, is the management and disposal of that portion of the property of the Nation which consists of the public lands. The acquisition of them, made at the expense of the whole Union, not only in treasure, but in blood, marks a right of

property in them equally extensive. By the report and statement from the General Land Office now communicated, it appears that under the present Government of the United States a sum little short of thirty-three millions of dollars has been paid from the common Treasury for that portion of this property which has been purchased from France and Spain, and for the extinction of the aboriginal titles. The amount of lands acquired is near two hundred and sixty millions of acres, of which, on the first of January, 1826, about one hundred and thirty-nine millions of acres had been surveyed, and little more than nineteen millions of acres had been sold. The amount paid into the Treasury by the purchasers of the lands sold is not yet equal to the sums paid for the whole, but leaves a small balance to be refunded; The proceeds of the sales of the lands have long been pledged to the creditors of the Nation; a pledge from which we have reason to hope that they will in a very few years be redeemed. The system upon which this great National interest has been managed was the result of long, anxious and persevering deliberation; matured and modified by the progress of our population and the lessons of experience, it has been hitherto eminently successful. More than nine-tenths of the land still remain the common property of the Union, the appropriation and disposal of which are sacred trusts in the hands of Congress. Of the lands sold, a considerable part were conveyed under extended credit, which, in the vicissitudes and fluctuations in the value of lands, and of their produce, became oppressively burdensome to the purchasers. It can never be the interest or the policy of the nation to wring from its own citizens the reasonable profits of their industry and enterprise, by holding them to the rigorous import of disastrous engagements. In March, 1821, a debt of twenty-two millions of dollars, due by purchasers of the public lands, had accumulated, which they were unable to pay. An act of Congress, of the 2d of March, 1821, came to their relief, and has been succeeded by others, the latest being the act of the 4th of May, 1826, the indulgent provisions of which expired on the 4th of July last. The effect of these laws have been to reduce the purchasers, to a remaining balance of about four millions three hundred thousand dollars due, more than three fifths of which are for lands within the State of Alabama. I recommend to Congress the revival and continuance for a further term, of the beneficent accommodations to the public debtors, of that statute; and submit to their consideration, in the same spirit of equity, the remission, under proper discriminations, of the forfeiture of partial payments on account of purchases of the public lands so far as to allow of their application to other payments.

There are various other subjects of deep interest to the whole Union, which have heretofore been recommended to the consideration of Congress, as well by my predecessors as under the impression of the duties devolving upon me, by myself. Among these are the debt rather of justice than gratitude to the surviving warriors of the Revolutionary War; the extension of the Judicial Administration of the Federal Government, to those extensive and important members of the Union, which have risen into existence since the organization of the present Judiciary establishment, now constitute at least one-third of its territory, power, and population; the formation of a more effective and uniform system for the government of the Militia, and the amelioration, in some form or modification, of the diversified and often oppressive codes relating to Insolvency. Amidst the multiplicity of