

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
December 1, 1859.

SIR: I have the honor to lay before you herewith the annual reports of the several officers who have the immediate control of those branches of the public service, which by law have been placed under the supervision of the Secretary of the Interior, except that of the Commissioner of Patents, who reports directly to Congress on the first day of January in each year, in pursuance of the requirements of a law enacted prior to the transfer of that bureau from the Department of State.

The papers now submitted embrace the reports of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Commissioner of Pensions, the Commissioner of Public Buildings, the Board of Inspectors and Warden of the Penitentiary, the Superintendent and Board of Visitors of the Government Hospital for the Insane, the Engineer in charge of the Potomac Water Works, and the President of the Columbian Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind. There will also be found a statement of the distribution of the journals, books, and documents printed or purchased by order of Congress. These reports will furnish information of the details of the service during the past year, and explain the manner in which the appropriations made by Congress for the support of the respective branches have been expended.

It gives me pleasure to bear testimony to the general good conduct and fidelity of the officers connected with this department. The calls upon each office are met with promptness; each bureau is generally up with current business, and I indulge the hope and belief that the duties of each have been performed in a manner satisfactory to the country. The General Land Office, owing to the location and sale in previous years of unusually large quantities of land, was unable for a time, with its regular clerical force, to issue the patents on those entries as rapidly as was desirable. During the past year, however, the attention of that office has been especially directed to this subject; and I have now the gratification of stating that, during the year ending the 30th September, 1859, 160,000 patents were transmitted or prepared for transmission and delivery, and lists of swamp and railroad lands were prepared and certified to the States, which, if divided by a fair average, would be equal to the preparation of an additional number of 134,000 cash patents.

The general policy of the laws which are administered through the agency of the different bureaus of this department is approved, and needs no change. In the regulation of the details but few amendments are required.

The legislation of Congress in relation to the public lands attracts a large share of the public attention, and interests directly a large num-

ber of our citizens. All the people of fourteen States and five Territories derive the title to their lands from the federal government, and the records and files evidencing the inception of their rights are preserved in the General Land Office. In the administration of the land laws of general and special application questions often arise which involve conflicting private interests of great magnitude, and are most complicated and difficult of solution. These have to be examined with care and patience. Counsel, in very many cases, claim the privilege of being heard; and yet decisions must be made without unreasonable delay, although they often involve the fortunes of whole families.

As Congress has, for a series of years, sanctioned by its legislation the extension of new surveys over the public lands at a rate proportionate to the progressive disposition thereof, this basis has been assumed in preparing and submitting the estimates for the surveys to be made during the next fiscal year.

During the five quarters ending September 30, 1859, 16,618,183 acres of the public lands were disposed of; 4,970,500 acres were sold for cash, yielding \$2,107,476; 3,617,440 acres were located with bounty land warrants; 1,712,040 acres were approved to the several States entitled to them under the swamp grants of March 2, 1849, and September 28, 1850; and 6,318,203 acres certified to States, as falling to them under the grants for railroad purposes.

During the same period of time 13,817,221 acres were surveyed and prepared for market, and 16,783,553 acres proclaimed and offered at public sale.

The aggregate quantity of public land that has been surveyed, but not yet proclaimed or offered at public sale, was, on the 30th September, 1859, 56,970,941 acres; and the estimated quantity which had been offered at public sale, and remained subject to private entry at the various land offices, was 80,000,000 acres.

It will be seen that the cash receipts from sales of public lands have been less than was anticipated in my last annual report, although the number of acres sold does not fall far short of the calculation then made. The lands which, by a long continuance in market, have graduated to low prices by virtue of the act of August 4, 1854, have been sold for cash; those held at the minimum of \$1 25 per acre have been entered almost exclusively with military bounty land warrants; and although large quantities of fresh lands have been brought into market by proclamation, less money in proportion to the amount of land offered has been received from sales than at any previous period. The expectation in the public mind that Congress would pass a law making a gratuitous distribution of the public domain, and the conviction that the passage of such a law would greatly depreciate the value of land in the new States, affords the only satisfactory explanation of this great diminution in the revenue derived from sales. Until the public mind is relieved from this expectation, no reliable estimate can be made of the amount of income which will be received from this source; but should this apprehension be removed, the receipts will, without doubt, exceed the amount of \$2,000,000 for the last three quarters of the present fiscal year, and \$4,000,000 for the year following.

In the early periods of the history of the country, Congress, in some cases, fixed by law the times at which public sales in particular land districts should be held, and in others directed the sales to commence at such times as the President should fix by proclamation. In carrying into effect the act of April 24, 1820, regulating land sales generally, it became the duty of the President to proclaim and offer for sale all the public lands as they might be surveyed and prepared for market. Prior to the year 1841 the legislation of Congress had not encouraged settlements upon the public lands before they had been exposed to public sale. The enactments granting preemption rights had been in the nature of relief laws, by which trespasses were waived, and a preference was given to those who were occupying public lands at the dates of the several laws.

By the act of September 4, 1841, settlements upon unoffered surveyed lands were authorized, and by several statutes of recent date settlements in particular States and Territories upon unsurveyed lands have been legalized and invited. All qualified preemptors who occupy unoffered lands are now allowed the privilege of entering the tracts to which they are entitled at any time before they are offered at public sale. But they are required to avail themselves of this privilege before the day fixed by the President's proclamation for the public offering of the body of lands in the vicinity; and if they fail to do so, they forfeit their rights of preemption, and the lands they have occupied are liable to be sold to the highest bidder. Hence the day of a public offering of lands becomes an epoch of great importance to those who are settlers thereon: and as the date of sale and the designation of the particular tracts to be advertised are determined by the President, in his discretion, the exercise of that discretion becomes a matter of difficulty and embarrassment.

When the exigencies of the public treasury demand the free offering and sale of lands, it is most likely to happen that settlers are least prepared to make payment for their preemptions; and a conflict arises between the private interests of a worthy class of citizens and the regular execution of the land laws. The consequence is, that most strenuous efforts are made, by petition and personal appeals to the Chief Magistrate, to induce a postponement of sales. This state of things should never arise, and can be easily avoided. The remedy is simple, and will prove just and advantageous to the country at large, as well as to the communities most deeply interested in the matter.

I would recommend that a law be passed, in a spirit of liberality to settlers on unoffered lands, allowing to each two years from the date of filing his declaratory statement within which to make his proof and pay for his land; and at the same time making it incumbent upon the President to offer at public sale, by proclamation, all lands that may have been surveyed by authority of Congress at any time within two years after the plats of survey have been approved. As a protection against fraudulent preemptions, no one should be permitted to effect an entry until after the expiration of three months from the date of filing his declaratory statement, and until he has produced satisfactory proof of three months' continued residence upon the land claimed.

By the adoption of such amendments, the President would have

before him a plain path of duty in bringing lands into market. No one could be taken by surprise. No expectations could be entertained or calculations made which would depend for solution on the exercise of Executive discretion. *Bona fide* preëmptors would be protected in the possession of the tracts upon which they had settled, and indulged with ample time within which to pay for them; and our entire land system would work with such simplicity, justice, and general benefit to the government and the citizen as has never been attained in any other country possessed of large bodies of unoccupied land.

The advantages and profits arising from the first settlement of a new country ought to be enjoyed by the early settlers. They have peculiar hardships and privations to undergo—especial dangers and labors to encounter. The law does not contemplate that they shall have any competition, except from other actual settlers, in selecting the most fertile lands and the choicest locations. But as all other citizens are debarred the privilege of purchasing a single tract until the lands are regularly in market, there is reason to believe that the withholding of lands from a public offering, and consequently from private entry, has often proved a temptation to fraud and an inducement to perjury; and unscrupulous speculators profit by it more than any other class.

How great this temptation to fraud is may be inferred from the fact, that in many instances lands which have been entered at \$1 25 per acre have been sold in twelve months after entry at from ten to one hundred dollars per acre.

Opposition to the public sale of the surveyed lands arises in certain communities also from the expectation that Congress will change the established policy of selling homesteads to settlers at a price, and adopt a new one of giving to them 160 acres of land or more on condition of a residence thereon for a term of years, and of reserving the unoffered public domain from all other disposition, in order to afford a continuous supply for future donations.

The enactment of a law embracing such objects would work a change hostile to all preceding legislation in reference to the public lands—a change, in my judgment, unsound in principle and fraught with ruinous consequences in its practical application.

Grants of a general character have heretofore been made to States for objects of public benefit—for schools, for internal improvements, for the reclamation of swamps, and the construction of railroads and public buildings; and the principle on which this policy has been inaugurated and sanctioned is, that the United States, as a proprietor, receives; from the application of the grants to the prescribed uses, a compensation in the enhanced value and salableness of the remaining lands. Congress has also, from time to time, authorized the issuance of bounty land warrants for military services rendered. Adherence to this policy has strengthened the military power of the republic, and encouraged a prompt response to all calls for volunteers in time of war. Special donations of land have heretofore been made in Florida, in Oregon, and Washington, and in New Mexico, with a view to the early establishment of a population there, which would strengthen the frontier, and serve as a military defense of the country.

The entire system of grants and donations is thus shown to have

been framed with reference to resulting ends highly important to the federal government; and it is but just to say that those ends have been to a good degree attained, and that the United States is now realizing the benefits of former grants. Should, however, the new policy of a gratuitous distribution of the public lands be adopted, it is evident that, while an undue stimulus will be given to emigration, land bounty can no longer be held out as an inducement to future military service. The ten millions of acres of bounty land warrants already issued and now outstanding will be greatly depreciated, the donations pledged to the new States will become worthless, and those heretofore made will be seriously impaired in value.

The laws by which the survey and sale of the public lands are now regulated have been the growth of more than half a century. The general preemption law has been in force for more than eighteen years, and was framed, after an experience of forty years, under special and limited enactments on the same subject. All the enactments regulating sales and preemptions have been carefully adjusted with reference to each other, and their practical bearings have become settled and generally known to the people of the whole country. The radical change of this policy, so well matured, so harmoniously arranged in its details, so long subsisting and well understood; so generally approved by the people of the country, and so triumphantly vindicated in the prosperous growth of new States under its operation, ought to be considered with great care and deliberation, and adopted with great caution—more particularly when the policy proposed as a substitute has been repeatedly tried on a small scale, and has as often failed.

In my annual report of last year allusion was made to the signal failure of the donation system in Florida. That devised and enacted for Oregon in 1850, which required a residence of four consecutive years to perfect a title, appears to have been adjusted with more care and wisdom, but it could not stand the test of practical application. Before two years had elapsed the settlers petitioned for the privilege of paying for their claims and obtaining titles, and Congress yielded to their request. By the act of 14th February, 1853, such provision of law was made as had been asked, and, beyond that, Congress, by the same act, fixed a time within which claims under the act of 1850 should be presented, or thereafter be forever barred. Thus the system in Oregon was abandoned before the causes which led to its adoption had ceased to exist.

In new settlements land and improvements are the chief articles of commerce. The true pioneer spends his life in the woods. When the frontier moves he moves with it. The improvements he has made he sells to some new comer, who is not inured to the hardships of a first beginning, and after a few years he too sells to one who desires to establish himself at once in a comfortable house and improvements. On each transfer the settler begins his term of residence anew.

Such is the true sketch of the process of establishing and extending communities in the wilderness.

The system of donations, therefore, while operating with flagrant injustice to the citizens of the older States, would not give satisfaction to those now occupying public lands with a view of complying with

existing laws, nor would it promote the prosperity of those States and Territories in which the unsold lands are situated. As the titles to lands occupied by claimants would remain in the United States until after the conditions of the donation law were fulfilled, the lands could not be taxed, nor could they be used, in any emergency, as a basis of credit by those who held them in possession.

The prevalence of such a system in any new community would exclude the introduction of capital from abroad, would retard improvements of every kind, would repress local enterprise and individual energy, and, in the numerous attempts to evade the restrictions of the law, would give rise to law suits and confuse titles.

Justice and equality, not bounty and favoritism, lie at the foundation of our institutions. If lands now be given to settlers in consideration of residence only, on what pretext will Congress refuse to those settlers who have heretofore completed the prescribed period of residence a return of the money which they have already paid for their homesteads?

The public lands of the United States constitute a legacy of inestimable value, which, if wisely administered, will be the basis of a public credit far more substantial than is possessed by any other nation in the world. The price at which they are now sold is little, if any, above prime cost, if we take into account the expense of removing the Indians and protecting the frontier; and it is but just and fair that those who appropriate to themselves the richest tracts and the choicest locations, and who especially have the benefits of the protection of the government whilst doing so, should make some reasonable return in money; and this they have been always willing, though not always prepared to do. Whoever charges preemption settlers with complaining of this reasonable requirement of paying a dollar and a quarter an acre for their land does great injustice to this entire class of citizens.

The recommendation of the Commissioner of Public Lands, suggesting that an act be passed limiting the time in which the States shall prefer claims for swamp lands, is approved. Such a law would work no injustice to the States entitled; and would have a good effect in quieting land titles in those States, and relieving the department from a vast amount of most complicated labor. Already the States have received, on this score, the munificent grant of more than forty-two millions acres, and some fourteen millions more have been selected.

The law which secured the right of preemption to mail contractors is found to be most difficult of administration. In my last annual report you were advised that a construction was placed upon that law which confined its benefits to contractors on the great routes through the territories. It has been contended, on the other hand, that every contractor on every route in the territories west of the Mississippi river is entitled to its benefits, and that each successive contractor on the same route, it matters not how often the contracts may have changed hands, or what may have been allowed to prior contractors, is entitled to enter lands under the provisions of that enactment.

In order to conclude present controversies, and to avoid others in future, the entries which have been allowed at the local land offices under a different construction of the law, should be confirmed, if the

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

97

lands are now held free from any valid adverse claim, and the act should be repealed or modified, as suggested in my last annual report.

The suggestion of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, that provision be made by law for the satisfaction of those Virginia military warrants which have issued since the 1st of March, 1852, on allowances made by the authorities of Virginia prior to that date, and on which no previous warrants had ever issued and been accepted by claimants, is approved, and an amendment of the law of August 31, 1852, to that effect is recommended. Such a provision would be an act of simple justice to those whose rights were admitted, but who, from a failure to take out their warrants prior to the day limited by the act of Congress, are unable to avail themselves of its benefits.

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

Our relations with the various tribes of Indians within our limits have continued during the past year in a satisfactory condition, and peace has been generally maintained with this dependent people. Occasional outbreaks have occurred, it is true, and crimes and outrages have been committed; but these have been perpetrated by bands of desperate outlaws, and in no case has a whole nation avowed the purpose of making open and deliberate war upon our settlements.

The attacks upon isolated mail and trading stations and emigrant trains have never, even when resulting in murder and pillage, shown signs of premeditation, or appeared to be the working out of a general and preconcerted plan. And when all the circumstances are taken into consideration; the immense number of our people who are constantly traversing the prairies of the interior; their careless, unguarded, and often provoking bearing; the natural irritation of the Indians, who attribute to their presence the rapid diminution of game, and the consequent hunger and want to which they are subjected; the impossibility of restraining them from violence, under these circumstances, except by the presence of an armed force; and the numerical weakness and scattered condition of our army, the wonder is, not that so many, but so few cases of violence have occurred. I regret to be obliged to add to this that reports and other official documents submitted to the department furnish sufficient evidence to justify the belief that the most atrocious cases of murder and rapine, charged to the account of the Indians, have in reality been committed by white men wearing the disguise of Indians. It cannot be doubted that the horrible massacres which have occurred during the past year on the routes leading through Utah Territory have been planned and directed, if not actually executed, by our own citizens. Still, though the officers of the army have at all times shown the most commendable vigilance and promptness, the facilities for escape are so great that condign punishment seldom overtakes the guilty perpetrators.

The average annual expenditure on Indian account, including the interest on stocks held in trust for the several tribes, and on sums which, by treaty provisions, it was stipulated should be invested, but which have remained in the treasury of the United States, is \$3,055,270 08.

The amount of stock held in trust for Indian tribes by the Department of the Interior is \$3,449,241 82, and the net annual interest thereon is \$202,002 89.

The present liabilities of the United States to Indian tribes, funding at five per cent. the perpetual annuities secured to some of them by treaty, and also the annuities payable during the pleasure of Congress, amount to \$21,472,423 88. This amount is made up of the following items, viz:

Principal, at five per cent. of permanent annuities, guaranteed by treaty, including amounts which it is stipulated by treaty shall be invested, but which are retained in the treasury, and on which the United States pay interest.....	\$7,013,087 80
Temporary annuities guaranteed by treaty, all of which will cease in a limited period.....	13,295,936 08
Principal, at five per cent. of temporary annuities, payable during the pleasure of the President or of Congress	1,163,400 00
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	21,472,423 88

Efforts have been made during the past year to ascertain, with some approach to accuracy, the number of our Indian population. So far as the annuity Indians are concerned, the required information is easily obtained; but it is almost impossible to ascertain with any certainty the numbers of the migratory and roving tribes of the far West. In respect to these, the estimates must be regarded as merely approximate. The total number of Indians within our borders may be set down, in round numbers, at three hundred and fifty thousand.

The statistical information in the possession of the Indian office is too meager and vague to enable us to determine with precision the ratio of increase or decrease among the aboriginal population. While it is known that some of the tribes are on the increase in point of numbers, at the same time that they are improving in other respects, thus holding out a gratifying promise for the future, it is equally well known that many of the tribes, the great majority, in fact, despite the liberality and fatherly protection of the government, the energy and fidelity of their agents, and the disinterested efforts and personal sacrifices of devoted missionaries, are rapidly on the decline. In these the contact with civilization excites no new life, awakens no new energy, and seems but to pave the way for debauchery, demoralization, and ruin. Unless the change of policy recently adopted by the government effect a corresponding change in their habits, there is but little ground for the hope of averting their utter extinction.

The policy heretofore adopted of removing the Indians from time to time, as the necessities of our frontier population demanded a cession of their territory, the usual consideration for which was a large money annuity to be divided among them *per capita* had a deleterious effect upon their morals, and confirmed them in their roving, idle habits.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

99

This policy we are now compelled by the necessity of the case to change. At present, the policy of the government is to gather the Indians upon small tribal reservations, within the well-defined exterior boundaries of which small tracts of land are assigned, in severalty, to the individual members of the tribe, with all the rights incident to an estate in fee-simple, except the power of alienation. This system, wherever it has been tried, has worked well, and the reports of the superintendents and agents give a most gratifying account of the great improvement which it has effected in the character and habits of those tribes which have been brought under its operation. The internal struggle which the red man necessarily undergoes in adopting the resolution to throw away the blanket, the scalping-knife, and the implements of the chase, and, in lieu thereof, to wear a dress and devote himself to pursuits which he has been taught to consider degrading, is terrible; and if he emerges from it victorious, he becomes a new man. Wherever separate farms have been assigned within the limits of a tribal reservation to individual Indians, and the owners have entered into possession, a new life is apparent, comparative plenty is found on every hand, contentment reigns at every fireside, and peace and order have succeeded to turbulence and strife. The greatest progress in this respect during the past year has been made in the agencies of the northern superintendency.

This is now adopted as the fixed policy of the government, and, sanctioned by Congress, has been the leading idea in all the treaties recently negotiated with the Indians. It is, however, only by slow degrees that so radical a change can be effected—a whole nation will not move at once. But the superior advantages and comforts enjoyed by those who labor over those who hunt, operating as a constant stimulus to the former to persevere, and to the latter to follow their example, will, it is hoped, eventually induce the great mass of the Indians to cooperate cheerfully in the general introduction of this system. As an additional means to this end, the superintendents and agents have been intrusted to use every exertion to persuade the Indians to consent that the large money annuities they now receive, and which have heretofore proved the fruitful source of drunkenness, insubordination, and vice, shall be applied to the purchase of stock and agricultural implements, the opening of farms, building houses, and other useful purposes.

It gives me great pain to refer to the treatment which the Texas reserve Indians and their superintendent and agents have received. Several years since Texas tendered to the government certain tracts of land for the occupancy of the Indians; the government accepted the lands, and proceeded to gather upon them as many Indians as could be induced to abandon their roving life and settle down to agricultural pursuits. The reports of their progress were most favorable; and the productions of the reservations promised, at an early day, to be more than sufficient for their comfortable subsistence. In the midst of this prosperity, so gratifying to the department, and at the very hour when it was believed that the reservation would prove eminently successful, a most determined and unreasonable hostility to these Indians and their agents exhibited itself among a portion of the settlers who had

100
PROPERTY OF
UNITED STATES SENATE

REPORT OF THE

come in and located in that section of the State. The removal of the Indians was demanded under a threat of extermination, but was prevented for a time by the tact and good management of the late superintendent, aided by the presence of a detachment of United States troops. With a desire to prevent bloodshed, and at the pressing instance of the authorities of the State of Texas, the department consented to issue an order for the breaking up of the reservations, to be carried into effect as soon as the then growing crop could be harvested. This concession, instead of satisfying these Texans, only stimulated them to further outrages, and they peremptorily demanded the immediate removal of the Indians. When it became apparent that the reserve Indians lived in daily fear of being murdered, and that under such circumstances no crop could be raised, permission was given, at the urgent request of the superintendent, that the removal should be made at once. Threats were then made that the Indians should not depart unmolested, and it became necessary to invoke the aid of the army to protect them in their exodus. Their removal was finally effected; and they are now, to the number of 1,415, colonized in the country leased for the purpose from the Choctaws and Chickasaws. On the return of the superintendent to the State of Texas he was wantonly attacked and murdered.

These Indians are now in a comparatively destitute condition, and to maintain them during the current year will require an enlarged appropriation.

The transfer of the Texas reserve Indians to the southern superintendency renders a longer continuance of the Texas superintendency and agencies unnecessary. I therefore recommend that these offices be abolished.

Immediately after the expiration of the last Congress several Indian treaties, previously negotiated, were ratified by the Senate at a called executive session. It was, of course, impossible to provide, in the appropriation bills for the current fiscal year, for the payment to the Indians of the amounts stipulated by the several treaties; yet, as the expenditure properly belongs to this year, it could not appropriately be submitted with the estimates for the next fiscal year. A special estimate will be prepared and submitted to Congress for an appropriation of \$539,350 to fulfill the stipulations of these treaties; and as the treaties have been ratified, the obligation incurred, and the faith of the government pledged, it is hoped that early action upon it will be taken by Congress.

The management of our Indian affairs in California has been embarrassed with a great variety of difficulties. Neither the government of the United States nor the State of California recognizes in the Indians any right of exclusive occupancy to any specific lands. Reservations have been provided by law; a large number of Indians has from time to time been collected upon them, and large sums of money have been expended to establish them, with the hope that the Indians would soon learn to support themselves by their own labor, and gradually become civilized. But these expectations have not been realized. Through the mismanagement and neglect of our employes, the interference of our citizens, and the apparent impossibility of inducing these Indians

to labor thereon, the reservation system of California has proved a failure. Yet the government cannot relieve itself from all obligation to make some provision for this destitute population.

The tribes of California divide themselves into two general classes by their respective localities. Those living in southern California, having already made some progress in civilization under the Mexican mission system, are scattered in small bands, cultivate the soil, and subsist, in part, upon the products of their own labor. For the security and happiness of these, nothing more need be done by government than to insure them the quiet, undisturbed possession of their present homes, keeping up possibly a single general reservation; and to effect this, no additional legislation is required.

The Indians in northern California with some exceptions, are roving, thriftless, idle and debased, often provoking the vengeance of the settlers, who are thus excited to acts of violence.

In this division of the State, some reservations, some retreats must be prepared for the reception of those who cannot obtain employment from our citizens, and hence become vagrants and nuisances to the community. Such Indians might be removed by force, if necessary, to the reservations, and there compelled to labor. With an anxious desire to devise some plan of operations which promises to secure the welfare of the Indians on the one hand, and relieve the treasury from the support of a helpless and dependent population on the other, I would recommend as the most practicable policy the abolition of the superintendency, agencies, and sub-agencies, and the division of the State into two distinct Indian districts. For each division a single agent should be provided, with power to employ such assistants as may be authorized by the department. Whenever it is possible to procure employment for the Indians among our own people, the agents should be required to aid them in obtaining places. It should be the duty of the agents to protect the bands that are settled down in the quiet possession of their homes, and to instruct them in the arts of husbandry. It should also be the duty of the agents to collect all vagrants upon the reservation, and induce them to labor. This plan is recommended by its economy and by the prospect it holds out for the security of the Indians.

PENSIONS.

It will be seen by the report of the Commissioner of Pensions that the whole number of pensioners of all classes now on the roll is eleven thousand five hundred and eighty-five, and that the aggregate amount per annum required for their payment is \$1,034,914 15. The amount paid on account of pensions during the year ending June 30, 1859, was \$1,183,140 89.

Of the aggregate number of pensioners on the rolls, ten thousand six hundred and sixty-seven are from the army, and nine hundred and eighteen from the navy. Of these, four thousand eight hundred and sixty-one of the former and three hundred and seventy-five of the latter are on the invalid rolls, and their pensions amount to \$469,457 53 per annum.

The number of revolutionary pensioners has dwindled down to one hundred and sixty-five, eighty-nine having died during the present year.

The number of widows of revolutionary officers and soldiers under all the acts of Congress granting pensions was, at the close of the year, three thousand seven hundred and fourteen; and the whole number of pensioners on the rolls under all the acts allowing *half-pay* to widows and orphans of deceased officers and soldiers was two thousand four hundred and fifty-two.

During the year ending 30th of September last six thousand eight hundred and one bounty land warrants were issued, calling for the aggregate quantity of one million thirty thousand eight hundred and sixty acres. This amount, added to that heretofore reported, makes the entire quantity of public land granted for military services sixty-three millions seven hundred and twenty thousand two hundred and twenty-two acres.

It is to be regretted that the penal statute against presenting fraudulent claims on the government continues to be violated. No less than one thousand false and forged bounty land claims have been discovered on the files of the Pension office during the past year, and the utmost vigilance has been exercised in ferreting out, arresting, and prosecuting those by whom they were presented. Eight of the offenders have been convicted and sentenced to the penitentiary, and twenty others have been indicted, of whom four have absconded, one has died, and fifteen await trial.

The suggestions in the report of the Commissioner of Pensions, regarding an amendment to the law of the last session of Congress, requiring biennial examinations of invalid pensioners, and an extension of time for the location of land warrants issued, or to be issued in certain cases, meet my approval, and their adoption is recommended.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

That provision of the Constitution which has wisely placed the District of Columbia under the exclusive legislation of Congress creates the relation of constituent and representative between the people of this District and each member of Congress. Everything, therefore, affecting its welfare must be regarded with peculiar interest by the whole country. This is more especially true of that portion of it embraced within the limits of the city of Washington, in which the national legislature annually assembles.

Prior to the year 1812 the mayor of Washington was appointed yearly by the President, and all the other officers of the corporation were appointed by the mayor. Since then, however, authority has been conferred upon the people of the city to elect their own officers, and the city councils have been clothed with additional legislative powers over municipal subjects. During the last ten years I am informed by the Commissioner of Public Buildings that \$2,376,042 86 have been raised by taxation of private property and expended for the general good; and since the city was laid out many millions, drawn from the treasury of the United States, have been expended in erect-

ing public buildings and making other improvements. But much yet remains to be done, for which large appropriations will be required. A portion of these should doubtless be made by Congress, but what portion that body alone must determine. It would be well for the government, and not less advantageous to the city, if some well-defined rule could be laid down, clearly showing what classes of improvements are to be made by the one or the other. For many years past appropriations have been asked and made for many objects of purely local if not of private interest, to the neglect or postponement of others of a public character. Thus certain avenues and streets have been improved and lighted at the cost of the general government, while others of equal importance have been improved and lighted at the expense of the individuals owning property upon them. These appropriations, made upon no just principle, have encouraged applications to be made for almost every conceivable purpose, until Congress, very naturally, has been led to view with distrust, if not with positive disfavor, even those objects which have been commended to its favorable regard as falling within the range of its exclusive patronage. This state of things, alike embarrassing to Congress and injurious to the true interests of the city, should not be allowed to continue. By the mode suggested it can be effectually remedied, so that both the city and the general government will each be able to understand the precise nature and extent of its obligations, and move forward with certainty and directness to discharge them. In addition to improvements of immediate interest to the city of Washington, others have been suggested which in their nature conduce equally to the convenience and advantage of the citizens of Georgetown and the county of Washington outside of either city; such as furnishing increased accommodations for the courts, and the erection of a new jail and penitentiary. For several years the judges of the courts within the District and the members of the bar have urged the necessity of an addition to the City Hall for the convenience of the courts; and the judges have expressed the opinion that, inasmuch as they are officers of the United States, and a very large portion of their business is of such a character as to involve directly the interests of the general government, this improvement should be paid for from the public treasury. The grand jury and many influential citizens have likewise called attention to the same subject, as well as to the insufficiency and insecurity of the jail.

These representations have been regularly communicated to Congress by this department, but no favorable action as yet has been taken with reference thereto. No reason can be assigned for this failure to act but the supposed one that Congress must have regarded the cost of these improvements as properly devolving upon the people of the District.

With a view to the advancement of the true interests of the city and District, and at the same time to remove all ground of complaint against Congress in reference to its non-action upon these subjects, I would recommend a radical change in the system of making appropriations, and the adoption of such an arrangement as will in future secure exact fairness and justice to every interest. The most feasible plan I could suggest would be this: Let the usual appropriations for the improve-

ment and lighting of streets and avenues, and the support of a general police force, be discontinued, as also all special appropriations for objects properly falling under the immediate control of the city authorities, or of the people of the District, and in lieu thereof let an annual appropriation be made, proportionate in amount to the value of the property owned by, and held for the exclusive use of, the United States within the District, to be applied in such manner and for such objects as Congress shall approve.

There are numerous reservations belonging to the government in different parts of the city, over which the corporate authorities have no control. Several of these have been tastefully inclosed and improved, and Congress has annually made appropriations to keep them in order. For the present year, however, the means allowed fall greatly below the amounts usually appropriated, and the Commissioner of Public Buildings reports them entirely inadequate to preserve the improvements which have been made as good taste, or even necessity, demands. But as the responsibility of making appropriations rests with Congress alone, and believing it to be my duty to adopt its policy, and limit the expenditure in all cases to such sums as may be placed at my command, I have directed him in no instance to exceed them, however strongly the necessity of any particular case should tempt him to do so, informing him, at the same time, that he will have discharged the full measure of his duty when he shall have faithfully applied the sums allowed as contemplated by law, and that if they fail to accomplish all that could be desired, he cannot be justly censured for such failure. I have, however, submitted estimates for the next fiscal year on the basis of the appropriations made for this, being determined, as far as I may have the power, to aid in carrying out such measures of economy as Congress may initiate.

During the approaching spring the equestrian statue of Washington, ordered by the thirty-second Congress, will be completed and placed, as directed by you, in the centre of the circle in and near the western extremity of Pennsylvania avenue. This will be a noble work of art, and reflect the highest credit upon Mr. Mills, the artist, who, indeed, regards it as his greatest and proudest achievement. When the statue shall have been erected, it will be due to propriety and good taste to inclose with a good iron fence and otherwise improve the reservation assigned to it. For these objects an appropriation will be required, and should be made at the approaching session.

The north front of the Patent Office building is nearly completed, and the appropriations already made for it will suffice for that purpose, and also for the improvement of the grounds around it. When finished the entire building will, as is believed, be the finest specimen of architecture of its order in this or any other country, and for the present will afford convenient accommodations for the entire department as now organized.

A law of the last Congress placed the completed portions of the Potomac water-works under the supervision of this department, and by your order Lieutenant Morton, of the corps of topographical engineers, was assigned to the immediate charge of them. His report herewith

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

105

affords information of the extent of the work transferred, and the supply of water furnished to the cities of Washington and Georgetown.

No appropriation has been made to defray the expense of carrying the law into effect, and I have therefore submitted an estimate of the amount that will be required for that purpose.

The management of the penitentiary for the District of Columbia during the past year, and its present condition and wants, are clearly set forth in the reports of the inspectors and warden. For years the labor of the convicts has not yielded an income sufficient for their maintenance, and the attention of the inspectors was some time since particularly directed by me to this defect, with the hope that some plan could be devised to remedy it. During the past year the prevalence of an epidemic in the prison occasioned much loss of time and some unusual expenditures, notwithstanding which, I have the gratification of stating that a decisive advance was made towards the attainment of an end so desirable. The institution ought to be self-sustaining, and no effort will be spared to make it so. The number of convicts in the prison was larger during the past year than in the year previous, and is constantly increasing; yet the estimate submitted for its support and maintenance for the next fiscal year is less by the sum of \$1,843 75 than the appropriation which was made at the last session of Congress.

The enlightened and humane policy which led to the establishment of the asylum for the reception and medical treatment of the insane of the army and navy, and of the District of Columbia, exhibits results alike beneficial to those for whom it was provided, and gratifying to the philanthropist.

On the first day of July, 1858, the number of the inmates of the hospital was one hundred and seventeen; on the first day of July, 1859, the number was one hundred and thirty-eight. During the year sixty-five were admitted, thirty-four were discharged, and ten died. Of those discharged, twenty had entirely recovered; six had greatly improved, and eight gave title or no evidence of improvement. The number of inmates at the date of this communication is one hundred and sixty-one.

Satisfactory progress has been made in the erection of the buildings. The plan originally adopted, which was on a magnificent scale, has been adhered to, and steadily pursued, until we now find ourselves in full view of its completion. Final estimates of appropriations are now submitted for the erection of the buildings, and also to finish the well devised arrangements for heating and ventilating the entire edifice, and furnishing the apartments. When all the buildings shall have been erected, the grounds inclosed, and the appointments completed, the institution will be a model of its kind; and with a continuance of the successful management it has heretofore received, will be an honor to the government, and an inestimable blessing to that unfortunate class for whose benefit it was designed. I therefore commend it to your favorable consideration.

From the accompanying report of the president of the institution for the instruction of the deaf and dumb, and the blind, it will be seen that during the last year fourteen deaf mutes and seven blind pupils participated in the benefits of that institution, all of whom, with a

single exception, were supported at the expense of the United States, under the provisions of the act of Congress, approved the 16th February, 1857. The amount drawn from the treasury on this account, and for salaries and incidental expenses paid by the government, as authorized by the act of May 29, 1858, was \$5,451 96, in addition to which the institution received from other sources \$1,158 32. It will also be perceived that a new and more commodious building has been erected for the accommodation of this unfortunate class of the community, at the expense of the president of the institution, and which he generously proposes to present to it "upon the sole condition that provision shall be made and continued for the instruction of the deaf and dumb and the blind of the District of Columbia, by public appropriations, or by private charity." It remains for Congress to determine what action, if any, shall be taken regarding this proposition, and such other suggestions as are made by that officer.

WAGON ROADS.

Since the date of my special report to Congress, at its last session, in respect to the wagon roads, the construction of which has been placed under the supervision of this department, the work has been continued on the road from Fort Kearny, *via* South Pass, to Honey Lake, and the same may now be regarded as completed. Its location and construction have given very general satisfaction to the numerous emigrants to the Pacific slope, who have traveled over it during the past season. As soon as the final report of the superintendent is received, it will be communicated to Congress.

TEXAS BOUNDARY.

The joint commission authorized by the act of June 5, 1858, for surveying the boundary lines between the State of Texas and the Territories of the United States, entered upon the field of duty early in January last, and have completed the survey and demarcation of the 32d parallel of north latitude from the Rio Grande to the 103d meridian of west longitude, and also of the 103d meridian, from thence to its intersection with the parallel of 36° 30' north latitude, with the exception of a short portion on the Llano Estacado, which, from physical causes, could not be surveyed. It is confidently expected that the whole work will be completed during the next season.

DISTRIBUTION OF DOCUMENTS.

In compliance with the requirements of the act of February last, the public documents and other books printed or purchased by order of Congress, were duly transferred to this department, and many of them have been distributed as will more fully appear on reference to the abstracts accompanying this report. There remains on hand, however, a considerable number of valuable works which cannot be disposed of under existing laws; and also a large accumulation of broken sets and odd volumes of various publications, for the distribution of which early provision should be made, as at present they are

wholly unavailable for any good purpose, and the room they occupy is greatly needed for other objects.

Several of the laws for the distribution of documents should be amended. That for the publication of the Biennial Register, or Blue Book, passed in 1816, provides only for a supply of five hundred copies, a number entirely insufficient to meet the wants of the present day.

That of April 20, 1818, authorizing the purchase of the laws published in pamphlet form at the close of each session of Congress, directs the procurement of 11,000 copies. If so large a number was then required a much larger supply should now be procured. I am of the opinion, however, that the number is still quite sufficient, but that the rule of distribution should be changed to adapt it to the state of things now existing. And the acts of August 29, 1842, and August 8, 1846, providing respectively for the distribution of the reports of the decisions of the Supreme Court, and of the laws and treaties, as published by Little & Brown, should also be modified in like manner, several important offices having been created since their passage, which should be supplied therewith.

The execution of so much of the act of the 5th of February last as directed all books, &c., previously deposited with the State Department, under the laws regulating copy-rights, to be transferred to this department, has been assigned to the Commissioner of Patents, as pertaining more particularly to his branch of the service, and the required transfer has been made. The clerks of the courts have also been instructed to forward all future works of this character to that officer, by whom they will be received and properly kept in rooms set apart for their accommodation.

CENSUS.

At the last session of Congress an appropriation was made to enable the department to make the necessary arrangements for taking the Eighth Census. This important work cannot be deferred. It must be accomplished during the next year. The carefully prepared law of 1850 will go into effect on the first day of January next. Steps have already been taken to have the proper instructions prepared and the blanks printed, so as to be in the hands of the marshals in time to enable them, with a complete understanding of the schedules, to enter vigorously upon the execution of their duty on the first day of June next.

Subsequent reflection has but confirmed me in the opinion expressed in my last annual report, that the Eighth Census, taken in all respects in conformity with the provisions of the law for taking the seventh, will prove most advantageous and satisfactory to the country. The necessary expense which will be incurred will require an appropriation of at least a million of dollars at the approaching session of Congress.

The sum of three thousand five hundred dollars having been heretofore appropriated for a digest of the statistics of manufactures, according to the returns of the Seventh Census, that compilation was

completed within the limits of the appropriation, and printed and distributed shortly after the adjournment of Congress.

JUDICIARY.

The judicial expenses during the fiscal year ending on the 30th June last exceeded, by a small amount, the appropriation of \$1,000,000 made therefor; and, from present appearances, those of the current year will be quite as great. This increase over the expenditures of any former year in the history of the government is to be attributed to the zeal, energy, and success of our officers in detecting violations of the penal statutes, and the consequent increase in the number of prosecutions for crime, and to the additional amount of business in the federal courts generally.

Frauds upon the Pension office, counterfeiting the coin of the United States, and depredations upon the mails, are the crimes of most frequent occurrence. To these, however, must be added murders upon the high seas, violations of the neutrality laws, of those prohibiting the African slave-trade, and those for the reclamation of fugitive slaves. Of these offences, violations of the African slave-trade laws, until lately, appear to have been almost unknown. But, although of recent occurrence, they are, nevertheless, crimes of the gravest character; and the district attorneys and marshals have been prompt and energetic in their efforts to bring those who have committed them to justice. The services they have thus rendered have been hazardous and expensive, and the existing laws provide no adequate compensation for the sacrifices which they have been compelled to make. If these laws are to be enforced, our officers must be induced to use the utmost vigilance, and to perform their duty with cheerfulness and readiness. Both as an act of justice to them and as a means of securing promptness and efficiency on their part, I would recommend that authority be vested in the President to make them a reasonable and proper allowance for such extraordinary services as they may render in detecting and bringing to trial the violators of these laws.

Under a usage which has prevailed, the judiciary fund is now charged with the expenses incurred in bringing home such prisoners and witnesses from foreign countries as our consuls find it necessary to send, although this department has within itself no means of determining the reasonableness of those expenses—all the dispatches relating to them being addressed to the Secretary of State. As these dispatches belong appropriately to the files of the State Department, it has been found most convenient, if not indeed necessary, to allow the accounts of these expenses to be audited under its direction, and to make payment of them upon such adjustment. This practise, however, is anomalous, and it should be discontinued. The consuls are under the direct supervision of the Secretary of State, and it is quite proper that this class of expenditures should likewise be subjected to his supervision, and I recommend that a special appropriation be made for their payment.

In May, 1858, Burton's theater, in the city of New York, was rented for the use of the courts, at the rate of \$16,000 per annum, and the

government has expended about \$30,000 in altering and fitting up the building. In the lease a clause was inserted securing the right to purchase this property within three years at a price not exceeding \$215,000. The officers of the courts, the members of the bar, and the people of New York generally, are well pleased with the location of the building, and the accommodations it affords. I believe the property to be well worth the money which is proposed to be paid for it; and provision should be made for its purchase without delay, as, otherwise, the lessor will be released from his proposition before the end of the next fiscal year. Believing it to be the true interest of the government, as well as a measure of sound economy, to embrace this opportunity of providing permanent and convenient accommodations for the courts of the United States in the city of New York, I earnestly recommend that the necessary appropriation for this object be made at the approaching session of Congress.

To insure promptness and fidelity in the collection of all sums falling due to the United States on judgments, forfeited recognizances, and fines, an amendment of the present statutes would be judicious. The district attorneys are now required and expected to give their attention to this business; but, for this service, this department has no authority to allow them compensation. It would be but just to them, and at the same time it would subserve the public interests, to allow them a liberal commission on all sums collected on these accounts; and I recommend the enactment of a law authorizing it.

An experience derived from the administration of the laws regulating the expenditures of the federal courts and their officers, for more than two years, has materially increased my confidence in the propriety of the amendments to those laws suggested in my former reports. I am also of opinion that a change should be made in the act of 1789, regulating the bonds of marshals, so as to authorize an increase of the penalty, or the requirement of a new bond, whenever from any cause it may be found necessary.

PATENT OFFICE.

The record of the operations of the Patent Office during the past year furnishes, as usual, a most satisfactory exhibit of the steady progress of our country in the application of science to the useful arts.

During the three quarters ending September 30, 1859, five thousand one hundred and sixty-seven applications for new patents were received; eight hundred and thirteen caveats filed; and three thousand three hundred and thirty-four patents issued and reissued. By a reference to my report of last year it will be seen there has been an increase in the business of the office for the past nine months, over the corresponding months of 1858, of one thousand and seventy-six applications for patents, one hundred and seven caveats, and five hundred and eighteen patents granted.

The receipts for the three quarters were \$188,538 77, being an increase of \$37,554 86 over the corresponding period of last year. The expenditures were \$157,101 15, leaving a surplus on hand of \$31,437 62.

Congress, at its last session, in making provision for the publication of the mechanical portion of the Patent Office Report, directed the Secretary of the Interior to cause the report "to be prepared and submitted in such manner as that the plates and drawings necessary to illustrate each subject shall be inserted so as to comprise the entire report in one volume, not to exceed eight hundred pages." With an anxious desire to comply, in all respects, with the expressed will of Congress, I have given to this subject unusual attention. The plates without descriptions and claims would be unintelligible; the descriptions and claims without the plates would be of no value. The plates, reduced to the smallest practicable dimensions, and the descriptions and claims, drawn up without a single redundant word, printed in the type required for all congressional documents, will necessarily occupy more space than eight hundred pages. A literal compliance with the law is, therefore, a physical impossibility. Yielding to the necessities of the case, I have directed the plates to be prepared with the greatest possible economy of space, and the descriptions and claims with the utmost brevity consistent with perspicuity, and submit the matter to the consideration of Congress, with a frank admission that the law has not been obeyed because it required an impossibility.

The principle upon which the Patent Office was organized and has been conducted up to this time is, that its business should produce so much in the way of fees as would prove sufficient to defray its necessary expenses. It has devolved no burden upon the treasury of the United States. It sustains itself, and for this reason its friends have felt the greater confidence in appealing to Congress for such legislation as may be required to perfect its organization. For several successive years the attention of Congress has been earnestly invoked to the propriety of certain amendments in the existing laws which experience has proved to be highly important, if not absolutely necessary.

The committees of Congress to whom the subject has been referred have uniformly approved these amendments, and reported in favor of their adoption; but in every case Congress has failed to consider and act upon the reports.

An increase of the business of the bureau without a corresponding increase of force to manage it results necessarily in one of two serious evils; either, on the one hand, vexatious delay, or, on the other, hasty and imperfect examinations of applications for patents. A few facts will suffice to illustrate this. In 1855, when the examining force of the bureau was increased to its present number, there were four thousand four hundred and thirty-five applications for patents. The number of applications per month for the year 1859, taking the average number of applications for the past ten months as the basis of the estimate, will be six thousand nine hundred, showing an increase of business for 1859 over 1855 of two thousand four hundred and sixty-five cases. In 1855 each examining room disposed of three hundred and sixty-nine applications; in 1859 each examining room will dispose of five hundred and seventy-five cases, being an increase in the amount of labor performed of fifty-five per cent. To this it may be added that the labor of making a thorough examination of any application for a patent increases from year to year somewhat in proportion to the num-

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

111

ber of similar applications previously received. Under these circumstances, it is impossible for the office to do full justice in the transaction of its business either to itself or to the public. This is not right. The income of the office is amply sufficient to meet all the expenses which may be incurred in reorganizing it upon such a basis as will give it the greatest efficiency, and enable it to meet promptly all the demands of the country. The inventors pay for having their business done, and it is therefore but simple justice that it should be done with a proper and careful examination, and without unnecessary delay. It would be judicious, then, in Congress to authorize the appointment, from time to time, of such additional examiners and first assistant examiners as may be required to transact the business of the office with dispatch, provided the annual expense of the office shall in no case exceed the annual receipts.

I take occasion here to renew the recommendation contained in my report of 1857, that the fees required from British subjects should be reduced. Her Britannic Majesty's representative at Washington has recently called the attention of this government to this subject. In the kingdom of Great Britain no discrimination is now made between American citizens and British subjects. I think this courtesy should be reciprocated, and that, in respect to office fees, British subjects should be placed on the same footing as citizens of the United States.

Long experience and greater familiarity with the working of this important bureau induce me to renew, not only the preceding, but *all* the recommendations contained in my previous reports with still greater confidence in their propriety and correctness; and I must add that the inventors of our country, now grown to be a large and most useful class, have a right to claim a share of the time and attention of the law-making branch of the government, and to complain when their interests and business are wholly neglected or overlooked.

AGRICULTURE.

The intrinsic importance of agriculture, and the number of our people engaged in this pursuit, justify the expenditures annually made for its improvement. Experience has demonstrated the incalculable benefits which the farmer has derived from the discoveries of science; and the diffusion of intelligence has generally removed his aversion to change in the modes of cultivation.

The agricultural reports which have been annually issued from this department have been favorably received by Congress; and large editions of each successive report have been printed and widely circulated. The influence exerted by them can never be ascertained; but their circulation has been followed by a spirit of inquiry in the public mind, and a readiness to adopt new methods of culture and improved implements of husbandry, and by a demand for concentrated manures from remote islands, and for the introduction of useful plants and animals from abroad.

It is impracticable to open and conduct an experimental farm, under the direction or supervision of this department, upon which the value of new plants and new theories of cultivation may be tested and deter-

mined. This task must be left to practical men, who have a direct pecuniary interest. Of such men are the various agricultural associations composed. Each society, in its locality, can cause each new theory, or plant, or seed, to be tested, and it can determine with ease and certainty the usefulness and profitableness of each. These peculiar facilities of the agricultural societies of the country have placed this branch of the public service in the position of a compiler of the facts established, and the information obtained through these agencies, and the experience of private individuals.

For years, seeds and cuttings of foreign and domestic growth have been distributed throughout the country. This has created such an active and extensive demand for them that it was impossible for the office to meet it; and, consequently, individual enterprise has enlisted in this service, and improved varieties have become articles of commerce in every part of the country. Those who engage in this trade justly complain of the injury done to their interests by a gratuitous distribution by government of large quantities of the very articles offered by them in the market. The last Congress having greatly reduced the appropriation below former estimates, the policy of distributing seeds of domestic growth was abandoned, and no portion of the appropriation has been expended for their purchase. It is believed to be both wise and just to confine operations to the purchase and distribution of such varieties of seeds, plants, cuttings, &c., as have not already been introduced into the country.

The tea seed has been introduced from China, and germinated in houses prepared for that purpose in Washington. The step next to be taken is to convey the plants to suitable localities, and to cause them to be tested under the supervision of intelligent and responsible persons. This will be done at the earliest practicable period, and with no apprehension as to their successful growth in all cases in which proper attention shall be given.

The successful cultivation of the vine in this country no longer remains an experiment. The breadth of land planted in vineyards is every day extending, and the yield is large and remunerative. The estimate is that we now have more than eleven thousand acres devoted to this culture; and while the product of some vineyards, in the most favorable season, has been eight hundred gallons to the acre, the average crop per acre of the whole country will compare favorably with that of the most successful wine-producing countries of Europe, and its value is five or six hundred per cent. greater at the several places of production. The different species of native grapes have been sought for, and, as far as practicable, the value of each for the manufacture of wine has been tested by chemical analysis. The modes of cultivation, and the processes of making and preserving wine have been examined, and much interesting and valuable information obtained. A large number of cuttings of the best and most approved varieties have been prepared for distribution.

Steps have been taken to introduce from foreign countries a variety of seeds, plants, and trees, which may be usefully cultivated and grown in this country.

A number of scientific gentlemen in various parts of the United

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

113

States have been engaged for several years past, without compensation, in making meteorological observations, which have been regularly communicated to the Patent Office—the necessary instruments being provided at the joint expense of the Patent Office and the Smithsonian Institution. To reduce these observations to a condensed tabular form has involved an expenditure which has also been jointly sustained. These observations, thus condensed, are now ready for the press, and will accompany the annual report of the Commissioner of Patents. They exhibit the mean temperature of the seasons in different parts of the country, and thus furnish data esteemed of high importance in scientific agriculture, and as of great value in supplying the facts on which are based important theories of the winds and storms that sweep over the continent. In justice to the gentlemen who have devoted their time and labor in this behalf, these tables should be printed; but whether the expense should be defrayed by the Smithsonian Institution or by the government, is a question submitted for the determination of Congress.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. THOMPSON,
Secretary of the Interior.

The PRESIDENT of the United States.