

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *December 4, 1854.*

Sir: I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of the army for the past year; and to lay before you the reports of the Commanding General, and of the heads of the several bureaus of the War Department.

The authorized strength of the army (as now posted) is 14,216 officers and men, but the accompanying tables, prepared in the Adjutant General's office, show that at the date of the last returns, the actual strength was only 10,745. This difference, however, between the authorized and actual strength of the army is fast disappearing under the operation of the law of the 4th of August last, "to increase the pay of the rank and file of the army, and to encourage enlistments."

The general distribution of the army is nearly the same as shown in my last report. The most important changes will be briefly noticed. The 3d artillery has been reorganized since the wreck of the steamer San Francisco, and six companies sent to the Pacific, via the Isthmus of Panama. Two of the companies of that regiment and a detachment of recruits for companies of dragoons serving in the department of the Pacific, have been sent by the overland route, for the purpose of exercising a salutary influence over the Indians inhabiting the country through which they will pass, and holding to account the tribe implicated in the massacre of Captain Gunnison's party. They will winter in the Great Salt Lake Valley, and proceed to their destination in the spring. Six companies of the 2d infantry have been reorganized, and are now posted in the Department of the West. The remaining companies of that regiment will be sent to the same department as soon as their organization is completed. The 6th infantry has been ordered to the Department of the Pacific. Six companies of the regiment are concentrated at Jefferson barracks, preparatory to sailing for the Pacific, by way of the Isthmus, and two others, which were also under orders for Jefferson barracks, have been sent to Fort Laramie in consequence of the difficulties that recently occurred in that vicinity. The remaining companies now at Forts Kearney and Laramie will be sent to their destination next spring, by the overland route, if a continuation of the Indian difficulties in that quarter should not interfere with this intention. The headquarters and two companies of the 1st dragoons have been transferred to the Department of New Mexico, and replaced in the Department of the West by four companies of the 2d dragoons from New Mexico. The troops on the Indian frontier of Florida have recently been reinforced by two companies of artillery, drawn from the Atlantic coast. Some other changes of minor importance have also been made with a view of effecting a greater concentration of the troops.

The removal from Florida of the remnant of the Seminole tribe, who, in violation of treaty, have continued to occupy the southern part of that State, has received the constant attention of the department; but, from peculiar circumstances, the efforts directed to this object have been attended with but little success. It is, however, believed that better results may be anticipated in the ensuing year. The troops have taken a line of observation which greatly contracts the limits of the territory occupied by the Indians; and it is proposed to make expeditions through the region where they have hitherto remained securely concealed. By opening roads, and by the use of boats adapted to the navigation of the lakes, swamps, and bayous, which have heretofore enabled them to elude pursuit, (including a small steamer, as recommended by the Quartermaster General,) the department expects to acquire an accurate knowledge of the country, and to impress them with the conviction of their inability to escape from or resist the power of the United States. Measures have been taken to cut off their trade, and to make them feel the great inconvenience which will attend an attitude of defiance on their part towards this government. By these means it is hoped the Indians may be peaceably removed to the home provided for them west of the Mississippi, and the claim of Florida to be relieved from their presence be speedily answered. Should this hope not be fulfilled, the measures above referred to are the proper and most efficient steps preliminary to active operations for their removal by force.

In the other military departments the Indians have repeatedly come into collision with our troops. Depredations upon our frontier inhabitants and upon emigrants passing through the Indian country have been, and are still, of frequent occurrence. In the Department of the West, besides the depredations committed by smaller tribes, hostilities have occurred with the Sioux Indians, the most powerful and warlike tribe of the Northwest. In Texas they have been so frequent and of so threatening a character that it was considered necessary to authorize the commander of that department to call upon the governor of the State, from time to time, as exigencies might arise, for such volunteer force as might be required to repel Indian incursions. In New Mexico serious hostilities were repressed by the prompt and energetic action of the troops employed there, but depredations upon the inhabitants are still of occasional occurrence; and in the Department of the Pacific outrages of the most revolting character have recently been perpetrated on parties of emigrants on their way to California and Oregon. To repress such disorders, the troops have been actively and constantly employed; and in the arduous and harassing duties that have devolved on them, have exhibited a gallantry, zeal, and devotion that merit the favorable notice of the government. The details of these operations will be found in the reports transmitted herewith.

During the past year the Sioux Indians have committed many depredations upon the property of the emigrants passing Fort Laramie, on their route to Oregon and Utah. On the 19th of August Lieutenant Grattan, of the 6th infantry, was sent, by the commander of that post with thirty men to arrest an offender. This entire detachment was massacred by the Indians, with the exception of one man, who escaped

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severely wounded, and subsequently died. The circumstances of this affair were at first involved in much obscurity, but authentic details have since proved that the massacre was the result of a deliberately formed plan, prompted by a knowledge of the weakness of the garrison at Fort Laramie, and by the temptation to plunder the large quantity of public and private stores accumulated at and near that post. The number of the Indians engaged in this affair was between 1,500 and 2,000.

I regret that it has not been in the power of the department to concentrate the troops in sufficient force to prevent and, in all cases, to punish these disorders. The circumstances of the service have been such, and the want of troops in all sections of the country so great, that the concentration would have exposed portions of the frontier to Indian hostilities without any protection whatever. Every favorable opportunity will be taken to post the troops in commanding positions, from which they can exercise a supervision of the Indian country, and operate to the best advantage. The events of the past year have furnished many examples of the inefficiency of small posts. Our entire loss in the several actions with the Indians during the year has been four officers and sixty-three men killed, and four officers and forty-two men wounded.

While the occurrences on our frontier and in the Indian territory present gratifying evidences of the zeal and devotion of the troops, they also furnish deplorable proofs of the insufficiency of our military force, and the absolute necessity of the increase which it was my duty to urge in my last annual report. I again solicit attention to this subject, and in doing so must repeat, to some extent, what was then urged.

For military purposes, the territory of the United States is divided into five geographical commands.

1. *The Department of the East*, embracing all the country east of the Mississippi river. This department has 2,800 miles of sea-board, 1,800 miles of foreign, and about 200 miles of Indian frontier. Of the fifty permanent fortifications and barracks on the lake, Atlantic, and gulf coasts, now completed, or nearly so, and requiring garrisons to protect the ports, cities, and national establishments which they cover, only eleven are now garrisoned, leaving the remainder exposed to a sudden or unexpected attack from any naval power. The total force in this department at the date of the last returns was only 1,574 officers and men; and of this number 500 are employed on the Indian frontier of Florida.

2. *The Department of the West* includes the country between the Mississippi river and the Rocky mountains, except the departments of Texas and New Mexico. It has a sea-board, foreign, and Indian frontier of 2,400 miles; 2,000 miles of routes through the Indian country constantly traversed by emigrants on their way to Utah, New Mexico, and our possessions on the Pacific, and an Indian population of 180,000, a large proportion of whom are, in feeling, hostile to us, and many of them at this time actively so. The total force in the department at the date of the last returns was 1,855 officers and men.

3. *The Department of Texas*, nearly the whole of that State, has a seaboard frontier not yet protected by fortifications of 400 miles, a foreign and Indian frontier of nearly 2,000 miles, and communications

through the Indian country of more than 1,200 miles. The Indian population is estimated at 30,000, nearly all of whom are nomadic and predatory; and the western and northern frontiers of the State are exposed to constant inroads from the Indians of Mexico and the plains. The force in that department at the date of the last returns was 2,886 officers and men.

4. *The Department of New Mexico.*—This department has an Indian and foreign frontier of 1,500 miles, communications through the Indian country of more than a thousand miles, and an Indian population of 50,000, a great proportion of whom are bands who do not acknowledge the authority of the United States. The force in this department, at the date of the last returns, was 1,654 officers and men.

5. *The Department of the Pacific,* embracing the State of California and the Territories of Oregon, Washington, and Utah, and a part of the Territory of New Mexico. This department has a sea-board frontier of 1,500 miles, entirely unprotected by fortifications, except the works in progress at San Francisco, an Indian and foreign frontier of 1,600 miles, and more than 2,000 miles of communications through the Indian country; an Indian population of 134,000, who are becoming formidable from concentration, from the acquisition of fire-arms and a knowledge of their use. The force in this department is only 1,365 officers and men, but as heretofore mentioned, they will be increased by an additional regiment ordered there.

To recapitulate. We have a sea-board and foreign frontier of more than 10,000 miles, an Indian frontier, and routes through the Indian country, requiring constant protection, of more than 8000 miles, and an Indian population of more than 400,000, of whom, probably, one-half, or 40,000 warriors, are inimical, and only wait the opportunity to become active enemies. If our army should be expanded to its greatest limit, it would have a force of 14,731 officers and men; but as a large allowance must always be made for absentees, invalids, &c., the effective force would probably never exceed 11,000.

That this force is entirely inadequate to the purposes for which we maintain any standing army needs no demonstration, and I take occasion again to urge the necessity of such immediate increase as will at least give some degree of security to our Indian frontier. That, for this purpose, a regular force is not only the efficient and cheap, but the proper and constitutional means, seems to me demonstrable, if not obvious. The President is authorized to call out the militia to repel invasion and suppress insurrection. These are the emergencies for which it was deemed proper to confer upon the Executive the power to call citizens from their homes and ordinary avocations, and these are the great occasions on which they may be justly expected to make all the personal sacrifices which the safety of the country may require. It is in this view that we habitually and securely look to the militia as our reliance for national defence. It was not the design of the constitution and laws to enable the President to raise and maintain a standing army, yet this would be the practical effect of a power, at his discretion, to call the militia into service, and employ them for the ordinary duty of preserving order in the Indian territory. The abuse to which such a power, if it were possessed, would be subject, sufficiently attests the

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wisdom of our forefathers in not conferring it, and must remove far from us any desire to possess it. If this view of the subject be correct, it follows that the Executive must look to the army regularly authorized by law to preserve police among the Indian tribes, and to give that protection to pioneer settlements which interest, humanity, and duty alike demand. The organization of the two new territories, and the impulse given thereby to emigration towards the western frontier, and the increase in the overland trains to our Pacific possessions, have multiplied the opportunities as well as the causes of Indian depredations and hostilities. It is reasonable to expect that the ensuing year will be marked by more numerous and serious Indian outrages than the last or any preceding year.

Our border settlements, extending from the Missouri westward, and from the Pacific ocean eastward, are steadily pressing the savage tribes into narrower limits and an unproductive region, from which result combinations of bands heretofore separated from each other, producing at the same time, by their concentration, an increase of power and a diminution of their ability to live by the precarious products of the chase. Hence, a two-fold necessity for an increase of our military force.

The question of economy in the employment of the means for this purpose has been frequently and fully discussed. It may not, however, be without benefit to advert to some instructive facts in our past experience of Indian wars.

The expenses occasioned by the war with the Sac and Fox Indians, in 1832, amounted to more than three millions of dollars; the definite appropriations for the suppression of Indian hostilities from 1836 to 1841, inclusive, amounted to more than eighteen millions of dollars. Within the past six years, large appropriations have been made for the same object in Texas, New Mexico, Utah, California, and Oregon. The aggregate of such expenditures in the last twenty-two years, independent of the regular appropriations for the support of the army, is estimated at more than thirty millions of dollars, a sum sufficient to have maintained, for the whole period, a much greater force than that recommended in my report of last year. This sum is independent of the expenditures for property destroyed, compensation to suffering inhabitants, and on account of pensions and bounty lands, and of course does not include the losses occasioned by the destruction of private property nor those consequent upon the interruption of agriculture and of the progress of settlement. These cannot be measured by any specific sum, and, although private in their character, are not limited in their effects to individuals, but, by diminishing the resources of the country, become public losses, and, as such, are widely felt.

It has been stated by those conversant with all the facts, that if in 1831 a small mounted force had been at the disposal of the War Department, the Black Hawk war might have been prevented; and that in 1835, if a few additional companies had been sent to Florida, the Seminole war would not have occurred.

The state of the recruiting service is shown by the report of the Adjutant General and the accompanying tables. Since the passage of the

law of August 4, 1854, to encourage enlistments, that service has progressed very satisfactorily, both as regards the number and character of the men enlisted. In the months of September and October last, 1,005 enlistments were made, while in the corresponding months of 1853, the number was only 309. In consequence of the number of companies that have been placed on the maximum establishment under the law of June 17, 1850, the little success that attended the recruiting service prior to the passage of the law above cited, and the greater than usual number of casualties that have occurred during the past year, the number of recruits that will be required for the service for the ensuing year will probably not be less than 6,000.

The estimates for the support of the army during the next fiscal year exceed those submitted at the last session, for the current year, by the sum of \$681,663 39. The increase is to be found in the items for the pay of the rank and file at the higher rates fixed at the last session of Congress, and for recruiting, clothing, and subsisting the better filled ranks of the army. In other items there is a decrease, so that, leaving out of view the pay of the army, which, being fixed by law, this department can in no way increase or diminish, the expense of keeping the army in active service, with its ranks thus increased, during the next fiscal year, will not, according to the estimates, exceed that of the current year. The item of transportation, one of the heaviest expenses, is not increased, and is, therefore, relatively less than that for the current year: thus verifying the expectation stated in the last annual report, that an increase of the army would not be attended with a proportionate increase of expense. In fact, an undue expense in proportion to numbers always results from not keeping on foot a sufficient force. If the force is too small for the line it protects, it must be kept moving. The result is that stated in the Quartermaster General's report. The cost of transportation comes upon the war scale, as for armies in the field.

The means of transportation have, in some instances, been improved, and it is hoped further developments and improvements will still diminish this large item of our army expenditure. In this connexion, waiving other considerations, I again invite attention to the advantages to be anticipated from the use of camels and dromedaries for military and other purposes, and, for the reasons set forth in my last annual report, recommend that an appropriation be made to introduce a small number of the several varieties of this animal, to test their adaptation to our country.

I think it but an act of justice to the officers of the army again to call attention to the recommendation made in my last annual report, relative to an increase of their pay. The present rates of pay were established more than forty years ago, when money had a much higher value, as measured by the price of food; even as late as 1845, the cost of the soldier's ration was 12½ cents, whilst the estimates of the Commissary General for the present year are based on the price of 25 cents for a ration. The necessities of life generally have had a like, if not always an equal appreciation, and, under such circumstances, it would not be just that salaries should remain fixed, which were originally graduated to afford the means proper to the officer's support.

The justice of an advance in the salaries of public officers corresponding with the increased cost of the means of living, has been recognised by the government in the recent laws for increasing the compensation of most of those employed in the civil departments of the public service. These considerations apply with greater force to the case of officers of the army, many of whom are compelled, by the nature of their duties, to reside in parts of the country where even scanty supplies can be obtained only at exorbitant prices.

If it were deemed necessary to offer other considerations than those of justice and equality, many would present themselves appealing alike to the pride, the liberality, and the gratitude of the American people, to sustain a proposition which only seeks to relieve the military officers of a discrimination alike onerous and wounding.

It can require but little reflection to convince any one that a policy which confines so large a body of intelligent and instructed men to a rate of compensation below that given in the ordinary avocations of life, must tend to drive from the military service its more active and efficient officers. If, as I doubt not, there will be many honorable exceptions to this general proposition, resulting from strong professional attachment to the army, they are exactly such exceptions as would claim increased consideration from every one who can estimate the patriotism and elevation which should characterize the officer to whom the honor and flag of his country is entrusted.

In the law of the last session of Congress to increase the pay of the rank and file of the army, the terms used to designate the grades of enlisted men are construed to exclude those of the Ordnance department. As this exclusion is supposed to be accidental and unintentional, it is suggested that an explanatory act should be passed to extend the increase of pay to all enlisted men of the army. The pay of ordnance laborers and mechanics would still be much below the ordinary wages of such employments.

I would again call attention to the propriety of additional legislation which shall place the widows and orphans of the officers and soldiers of the army on an equality with those of the officers and sailors of the navy. The subject has been repeatedly recommended by the Commanding General of the army, and it is again brought to notice in his report of this year.

In some important particulars, our military legislation, in regard to rank and command, as well as to organization, needs revision. In armies, it is essential that it should be known, under all possible circumstances, who is the officer entitled to command. Doubt as to the source from which orders are to emanate, is destructive of discipline and subordination, and might, on many occasions, compromise the safety of troops. On this important point our military law is exceedingly vague and defective. Much of the mischief that otherwise would have resulted, has been prevented by the care of the department in keeping asunder officers whose claims would come in conflict, and by the patriotic self-denial of the officers themselves who, in many instances, have waived claims to command which they believed to be well founded, and served under those whom they considered as their juniors. Nevertheless, many unseemly controversies have arisen, en-

gendering jealousy, rancor, and insubordination; and the decisions in such cases, so far from putting at rest the questions involved, present a mass of conflicting arguments, from which no general principle can be deduced, and which serve only to furnish to every disputant the means of maintaining his own cause. So numerous and contradictory have been the decisions of the highest authority on questions of rank, that no executive regulation or judgment of a court-martial could now establish any certain rule, or fix the interpretation of the law; for either of these would be met by as high authority for a contrary doctrine, and would probably be, in turn, overruled. Congress only can apply the remedy; and whatever rule they may, in their wisdom adopt, should be simple in its terms, and universal in its application.

One fruitful source of difficulty arises from double rank. In our service, as in the English, an officer may have one grade by brevet in the army, or at large, and another in a particular regiment or corps. The law has attempted to define the cases in which one or the other of these commissions shall take effect, and it is to the defective and insufficient manner in which this is done, that much of the confusion above alluded to is due. The statutory provision on the subject is copied from the English. Even in their service it has proved a source of much trouble; and, as in ours, there is a class of commissions not known to theirs—commissions in the army at large, not by brevet—the interpretation of the law is further embarrassed by the necessity of applying it to a class of cases for which it was not intended.

To remove this cause of difficulty, some have proposed to abolish brevet rank altogether, but there are many strong reasons against this course. Brevet rank affords an honorable incentive and reward to distinguished conduct, and enables the government to avail itself of the services and abilities of meritorious officers in higher commands than they would be entitled to exercise by their ordinary rank. It is true, indeed, that these arguments lose much of their force and application, if the system of brevet promotion is not discreetly and justly administered, and that the system itself produces a shifting of rank dangerous to discipline and military authority. The main benefit of the system is in affording selections for command, but the present law gives brevet rank effect in all detachments composed of different corps, and selection is as much restrained by this rule in favor of brevet rank as by the rule in favor of ordinary commissions. To avoid the evils without forfeiting the benefits of the system, it is proposed to give effect to brevet rank only when the President may see fit to authorize it. As these commissions are designed only to take occasional effect, there seems to be a propriety in requiring his sanction, either direct or delegated, as constitutional commander-in-chief of the army, to give them effect. A further limitation, however, should be put on them. As they are not intended, and ought not to be allowed, to advance an officer in his own corps over his proper seniors, the exercise of them ought to be forbidden, as it now is, in the regiment, troop, or company where the officer belongs and is mustered.

A difficulty of still greater magnitude is found in the enactments intended to regulate rank and command when different regiments and corps do duty together. The general provision is, that the command

shall devolve upon the officer highest in rank "in the line of the army," but these words were new in that connexion, and of undefined signification, and it cannot be determined whether they were intended to include officers holding commissions by brevet, in the staff or in certain special corps. The interpretation that has prevailed in our service is, that they do not embrace any officers of the general staff, except the major general and the two brigadier generals; but this is not acquiesced in by many, and the question is still productive of frequent controversy, attended with all the evils which have been above enumerated.

I find much difficulty in proposing any general rule to govern in this particular such a military organization as ours. It is clearly improper to exclude from command, according to their rank, the officers of the military staff, whose duties are as important to the service as any other class of military duties below the chief command, and require equal general capacity, professional skill, and experience. This would, in effect, convert the military staff, so essential to an army, into a *quasi* civil corps. On the other hand, officers whose duties, being confined to a special corps, remove them from the ordinary service of troops, ought not to take, by seniority, the military command for which their special service has not qualified them.

This remark does not, indeed, now apply to all officers of the staff corps, in the higher grades of which are found many officers who, having long served with troops, and won distinction in battle, were transferred to the places they now hold. But the principle of promotion has been since applied to these corps, and under its operation their places must ultimately be filled by officers early separated from the general service, and thenceforth confined to a round of special duties. These difficulties can be obviated only by a change in the organization of the general staff itself; and I propose it with less reluctance, as I share the conviction entertained by officers of experience, that the organization is not well calculated for the duties of the staff itself. And I think that not only the efficiency of the staff, but the general good of the whole military service, would be promoted by some essential changes which I shall proceed to submit to your consideration.

Our military general staff, besides the major general and the two brigadier generals, who are habitually in command of troops, is composed of an Adjutant General's department, Inspectors General, a Quartermaster General's department, and a Commissariat of Subsistence. The officers of these departments, all of whom have military rank, form so many corps distinct from the rest of the army, with promotion confined to their own corps. The embarrassments in regard to rank and command, resulting from this arrangement, have been stated. But worse evils result from it in the ordinary staff service. In the first place, most of these staff duties require military knowledge only to be derived from general service and experience. In the second place, from various causes and accidents, errors may be made in the first selection; either the officers selected may not be qualified, or they may become disqualified for their special functions, and yet be fit for the general service. These are evils which the government should at all times be allowed the means of correcting. A good staff is so essential

to army operations that it is important to secure its constant efficiency. These are, to my mind, conclusive reasons why the staff should not be organized into permanent corps, and experience in the administration of the War Department has furnished many practical proofs of them. If the duties of the staff were performed by officers holding temporary appointments for such service, all the benefits might be secured of a large field of selection, at all times open, of general experience in the service, and of special qualifications for staff duties. The principal officers found particularly qualified for their special duties would naturally be retained. Those who might not be useful on the staff, would be replaced in their regiments. Either class not having been always confined to a staff corps would be qualified for such military duty or command as the course of service, according to their rank, might devolve upon them.

It has been stated that our organization is peculiar. A brief reference to some of the European systems may aid in illustrating the views hereinafter submitted of a well organized staff.

The French staff is divided into two branches, a military and a civil. The military has charge of all that relates to orders, movements, and military operations. The civil furnishes all the supplies of the army.

The officers who furnish the supplies have no rank. The military staff have rank, and succeed ordinarily to command by virtue of it. This military staff is composed of two classes of officers—the highest positions in it are filled by selection from the general officers of the army, so as to secure the best capacity and experience in the service. For the subordinate and more routine duties they have a special corps. But the functions of this corps are of much importance; and to supply it with fit officers, they have provided a special military school and a complete system of instruction in all its duties.

This system is simple, with many obvious merits. It brings all the military staff into one line and under one head. It secures the double benefit of experience in the general service and in the special duties of the corps. But it is a system only practicable in a large army. The permanent corps must be such as to afford a sufficient field of promotion. A small establishment does not allow of both selections and permanent appointments. Nor is the separate school and corps for the staff needed in our army, in which a large proportion of the officers are prepared for such duties by the complete course of studies at our Military Academy. This is an advantage which our service has over those services where the size of armies does not permit the education of officers by government, except for those corps in which it is indispensable, and has attracted the attention of foreign officers and writers.

Instead of one corps, to which all the military staff business is assigned, the English army has two principal military staff departments; the Adjutant General's and the Quartermaster General's. The chief officers of these are generals of the army, appointed temporarily on the staff; the inferior are appointed, in like manner, from the regiments. Neither class gain rank by these appointments.

The Adjutant General's is the department of military orders and regulations, of the recruiting of the army, and of all correspondence connected with the discipline and equipment of the troops.

The duties of the Quartermaster General's department relate to the marching, embarking, transportation, billeting, encamping and cantoning of the troops and the distribution of their quarters. It is the office of all correspondence relating to military science and topography, maps and plans.

Besides these military departments of the staff, is the Ordnance, which, though not strictly a staff department, and having many important functions not of the staff, yet provides many supplies for the army, and is charged with much of that part of its staff business.

Both these systems, it will be observed, avoid the mischiefs indicated as arising from corps organization like ours, limited to permanent officers. As to which is best where they differ—the English in dividing, the French in uniting, the military functions of the staff—there seems not much room for doubt, if the purely military business of the staff only were in question. The advantages gained by unity of responsibility and authority in military operations overbalance those of special experience and skill that arise from division of labor. But there are a mass of staff duties, not purely military, connected with army supplies and equipments. All these cannot be accumulated upon one military staff; and an organization which provides only a single military staff makes necessary the employment of other agents for supplies. But supplies are as essential as the movement of troops to the operations of an army. To separate the furnishing of army supplies from the other staff duties, is at last to destroy the unity of military administration in a point where it is always useful and sometimes necessary to preserve it. And to confide the supplies to civil agents, is to lose the control where it is so important to retain it, which commanders exercise over military officers. It was in his first great campaign to the frontiers of Russia that the Emperor Napoleon found the great utility of giving a military organization not only to his artillery trains, but also to the general equipage and transportation trains of his armies. The civil machinery of the French staff is now censured by some of their able military critics as too expensive and too much removed from military control. In these respects it is contrasted with the Prussian system, where every branch of the army administration is brought under military supervision and direction, to which is attributed that admirable efficiency and economy which enable Prussia to maintain so large an army in proportion to her revenue. In lieu of this control, the French system substitutes as a machinery of paper checks, a mass of writings and an amount of bureau labor, which have been justly condemned as hardly possible in war, and as really affording no efficient security for the fidelity and economy of the expenditures. In a comparison of the relative expense of the two systems, the French is stated at more than \$1,020,000 a year in salaries, and the Prussian at \$19,000.

It is not recommended to bring our military staff into one corps, or to incur the increased hazards and expense of a separate corps for supplies. On the contrary, it is thought that, without attempting so entire a revolution of the system to which we have been accustomed, a staff organization may be devised, which will avoid the evils of our present system, and will secure the benefits of the French and English systems, with others which neither of them affords. One principle,

however, should govern in any system that may be adopted—that of throwing open the appointments on the staff to selection from the officers of the army at large.

I proceed here to state, somewhat more in detail, the organization recommended.

We have now one major general commanding the army, and five other general officers commanding as such, by brevet or other commissions, the five geographical departments, and one brigadier general at the head of the Quartermaster's Department.

It is proposed that the brigadier generals shall be nine in number. This will give one for each department, as now; one for quartermaster general, as now; one for adjutant general, and two for the inspectors general, being an addition of three to those who now, by brevet or otherwise, have rank and command as brigadier general.

The duties of the adjutant general of the army are those which in other services, belong to the chief of the staff. It is obvious that he should have as high rank as any other member on the staff with him, and as the department commanders. Congress marked their sense of the duties of this office by a special act, allowing to the late Adjutant General the exercise of his rank of brigadier general.

Inspectors general must have different functions in war and peace. It is impossible for them, (and so the regulations of the French service explain the employment of these officers) to exercise their inspection functions with troops in actual campaign. There, the generals in command must take care of the condition of the troops. But, in peace, and with scattered garrisons, and in a service distributed like ours, the inspection service is highly important. By taking, in time of peace, inspectors from officers of the grade of generals, they will have a proper rank and authority for the inspection service when so employed. Their duties suggest the special reasons why the inspectors should not be commissioned permanently and solely for that service.

Besides the adjutant general of the army, there will be needed in this branch of the staff about seven officers, taken from the regiments and corps; one at the head quarters of the army, one at the office of the adjutant general, and one at each department or district headquarters. One of these would probably be available when any important detachment may be collected for actual service; or if others are needed with armies in the field, they may be authorized as occasion may require.

The ordinary service of the Quartermaster's department in regiments, posts, and detachments, should be performed by the detail of capable officers from the command. A limited number of experienced officers will be needed to perform the more important duties of the department with large commands, or at the principal stations, and to supervise and control, under the generals in command, the operations of the inferior officers in the parts of the country most remote from the seat of government, and from the direct authority of the Quartermaster General. Ten field officers would probably be sufficient at any time. It is doubted if so many would be always required. Selection and temporary appointments will regulate the number employed by the actual wants of the service.

At the head of the Subsistence department there should be a commissary general, taken from the field officers of the army, with the pay and allowances of colonel, as at present.

A few officers would be required for the principal stations and duties; but the ordinary business of the department, being mainly the care and issue of rations to the troops at posts, and with troops on the march, should be performed by proper officers detailed from the subalterns. The officers of this department should be charged with the supply of clothing for the army.

It may be proper again to advert to one effect of this plan of details; that in selecting a sufficient number of junior officers to perform the ordinary service of the staff in the field and in garrison, most of them still serve immediately with the troops, and will not cease to be instructed in regimental and field duties.

It is not proposed to disturb the present system as regards the pay of the troops and the hospital service. Hospital supplies may undoubtedly be best procured by the medical officers who administer them; and in this business no other agency is needed for economy or efficiency. To maintain a separate corps for the mere payment of the troops is an expense rather disproportioned to the strength of our army. But our troops are distributed over so great an extent of country, that the pay officers on the establishment seem to have sufficient employment. When troops are assembled in campaign, the paymasters might have additional duties imposed on them; as the care of the military chest, and the payment (as to some extent in other services) of money upon orders and warrants for other branches of the military administration.

Topographical services being included in the functions of the corps of engineers, and of officers of the general staff, it is not deemed expedient to retain a separate organization for the topographical corps. Engineers should be instructed by proper practice and employment in all the various and important duties of the engineer service; and that organization is very objectionable which makes a permanent distribution of duties which should be equally shared and practised by all, and appropriates a large portion of officers to one, and that, ordinarily, a less important portion of its services.

In this connexion it may be in place to remark, that as the duties of engineers require a continued study and experience of a special kind, they require a permanent body of officers. But no injury can result from entrusting the command of troops, according to their military rank, to officers whose functions, in the language of our articles of war, appertain "to the most elevated branch of military science." It is therefore recommended to give effect to the rank of engineers, as of other officers charged with military duties, in accordance with the rule which governs all other services.

The remarks relative to the speciality of the duties and studies of engineers, in some measure apply to those of officers of the ordnance. But advantage will be found in giving on the one hand to the officers of ordnance the benefit of a previous service with troops, and on the other hand in giving to the officers of troops the opportunity of acquiring useful practical information relative to the construction and preser-

vation of their arms and equipments. With this view it is recommended to retain in the ordnance corps only a small number of permanent officers for the more important arsenals and duties, and to associate with them, as assistants, junior officers, taken, by detail, from the regiments and corps.

The judge advocate's department has now only one permanent officer. Officers to officiate as judge advocates at courts martial, are appointed by the officers who order the courts. This duty requires legal study and experience, but it also requires a familiarity with military laws and the customs and regulations of the service. It is therefore proper that judge advocates should be appointed from military officers, which is the system now practised.

In the proposed organization, it is not intended to give increased rank, by virtue of their temporary appointments, to the officers employed on the military staff. Their rank would remain according to their commissions in the army. It may be inexpedient to narrow the field of selection by defining the grade from which they shall be taken. They should receive the cavalry pay and allowances of the next higher grade.

This organization removes all grounds of controversy and objection to the rank and exercise of command by staff officers. It leaves military rank to all the military staff.

I cannot doubt that an organization upon these principles would materially increase the efficiency of the staff and promote the general good of the service. It would require, of course, a greater number of officers in the regiments than the law now provides, to furnish the necessary details and appointments on the staff, as well as for regimental duty. No injustice or undue hardship would probably result to individual officers of the present staff corps in assigning them to regiments. If the law for the retired list shall pass, there will be no difficulty on this head. But, in any event, the interest of individuals must yield to the public good.

The present organization of the regiments is also capable of material reforms. In the artillery line we have now a larger body, in proportion to the strength of the army, than can be spared for the proper service of artillery. In fact, most of our artillery has always been armed, drilled, and employed as infantry. As, however, it is necessary that every regular army should have a proportion of artillery, armed, instructed, and ready for service, it is proposed to reduce our artillery to the size which our service requires and can maintain. The regimental organization is now given to it; but in the field, our artillery serves by batteries, and it is proposed to organize it in one corps, of such size only as may suffice for instruction and for necessary service in the field and in fortifications—the officers and men now in the artillery, not required for the reduced corps, to be converted into regular infantry. A sufficient artillery would be about half the strength of the present four regiments of artillery, and would leave enough to make two regiments of infantry.

The cavalry force of our army being all required for active service of the same kind, there appears no propriety in making a permanent distinction in the designation and armament of the several regiments;

it is, therefore, proposed to place all the regiments of cavalry on the same footing in these respects, and to leave it in the power of the executive to arm and equip them in such manner as may be required by the nature of the service in which they may be employed.

The remarks just made in regard to dragoons and mounted riflemen apply to the case of infantry and foot riflemen. In increasing the force of foot troops, it is proposed to designate them all as infantry, leaving to the Executive the selection of the arms and mode of instruction applicable to their service in the field.

A strong reason for this arrangement exists in the fact that, with the recent improvements in small arms, it is probable that the distinction in the armament of heavy and light infantry, and riflemen, will nearly cease, especially in our service, where the whole force is liable to be employed as light troops. In the Prussian army, even before the adoption of the new arms, the service of skirmishers or light troops regulated the instruction of the whole body of infantry.

It has always been difficult to devise a rule of military promotion by which the interests of the State may be secured in advancing none but competent men, without affecting the just pride of the officer, or violating the consideration due to long and faithful service. Undoubtedly, if it were possible that the appointing power should always exercise a perfectly enlightened and impartial judgment, the rule of promotion by selection might be advantageously applied in filling up all the grades of the army. But in no military service has it been thought safe to adopt this rule to such an extent, and in our army the difficulty of its application is vastly increased by the usually scattered condition of the forces, as well as by other considerations.

The appointment of fit men for commissions in the lower grades of the army may be, in a great measure, secured by requiring, in all cases, a preliminary examination, as is now required for the promotion of cadets and non-commissioned officers. But, with every precaution in the first appointment, some officers will be found unsuitable for discharging the duties of the higher grades, or they may become disqualified in consequence of the infirmities of age or other disability. The proposed organization of the general staff provides a remedy, so far as relates to their important duties, by opening a wide field for the selection of general and staff officers, and for replacing those who may, on trial, be found to want the peculiar qualifications requisite for those duties. This principle may, perhaps, be advantageously extended to the selection of officers for some other important stations in the army, just as it is now applicable by law to the appointment of a commander of the corps of engineers. It is necessary, therefore, in order to maintain an efficient body of officers, that some provision shall be made for the cases above alluded to, where officers may be disabled or disqualified for promotion. The only means for effecting this object without injustice to faithful public servants is, to create a retired list which may provide the means of retreat for disabled officers, like that which the institution of a military asylum has afforded to other disabled soldiers. This measure has already received the favorable consideration of one branch of Congress, and its final adoption is urgently re-

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commended, as being absolutely essential to an efficient reform. Its adaptation to the service may be tested by restricting to a short period (one year) the exercise of the power to place officers on the retired list, and requiring the renewed authority of law for its continuance; and as to the expense, though that is not the primary consideration in a question which involves the efficiency of the army, it need only be remarked that, by the present law, the disabled officer who renders no service draws full pay, while, on the retired list, he would receive a much smaller allowance. So far as relates to them, the expensive system is that which keeps them on full pay. Whatever military establishment a nation maintains, should be kept efficient; and it never can be so if the higher ranks are occupied by officers incapable of service. The only choice is to retire them on some reduced allowance, or to disband them. The last is a remedy too harsh to be applied to faithful officers, disabled and worn out in military service.

For detailed information concerning the Military Academy, I refer to the report of the last board of visitors, and to that of the chief engineer, *ex officio* inspector of the academy. The proposition submitted in my last annual report to increase the academic term of cadets by the addition of one year, has been matured and put into effect by dividing the class last admitted into two parts, the first to pursue the former course of four years, and the second, composed of the junior and less educated members, to pursue the newly arranged course of studies, which will occupy a term of five years. By this arrangement, we avoid an intermission in the supply of cadets to be attached as brevet second lieutenants to corps and companies, and all classes hereafter admitted will be instructed according to the plan of studies arranged for the five years' course. In general terms, it may be stated that the scientific course has not been increased, and that the additions made are those appertaining to practical military instruction and extension of the course of languages and national law. These additions were deemed necessary to qualify military officers for the high and delicate duties they are sometimes required to perform; and they could not be added without increasing the term, or subtracting something from the thorough scientific education included in the course heretofore pursued.

From a recent inspection of the academy, I can bear testimony to its successful administration, and the many and decided improvements which have, from time to time, been made. Additional means of instruction have greatly facilitated the acquisition of knowledge, and better arrangements in the quarters and recitation rooms have materially contributed to the economy, comfort, and order of the corps.

I concur in the recommendation of the chief engineer for the establishment of a new professorship to replace that of "Ethics and English studies." This chair is now filled by the chaplain of the post, and if it was ever desirable that the pastor of cadets should also be a member of the academic staff, the wider range recently given to the study of philology, national law, and the contemplated addition of cognate branches, renders it impracticable for one person properly to perform both duties.

I also concur in the estimates of that officer for an appropriation for

the commencement of the construction of additional quarters for officers on duty at the Military Academy. The necessity for this is fully stated in the report of the board of visitors and of the chief engineer. The total cost of the proposed buildings is estimated at \$44,054,46, about one-half of which is asked for the current year.

The condition of the sea-coast defences is stated in the report of the chief engineer. The grant of appropriations for these works at the last two sessions of Congress, after their suspension for several years, during which the policy of continuing them was very fully discussed, is regarded as a final decision of the question, and I advert to the subject only to say that recent experience in Europe has placed beyond doubt the wisdom of that conclusion. No defences can long avail a people who cannot meet their foes in the open field, and our fortifications are not intended to serve as the refuge of weakness or as the strong-holds of unpopular power. On the sea-board, in advance of populous cities and important harbors, they are designed to arrest the progress of hostile fleets, and force the invader to abandon his attack, or disembark his troops, and pursue his attack by land. The capacity of sea-coast defences to effect this object against the most powerful armaments that have ever been placed afloat, is amply demonstrated by the results of the late military operations in the Black sea and the Baltic.

Happily we may profit by the experience of others without suffering the evils that attend the practical solution of such problems.

Though our arms have heretofore been considered the best in use, recent inventions in Europe have produced changes in small arms, which are now being used in war, with such important results as have caused them to be noticed among the remarkable incidents of battles, and indicate that material modifications will be made in the future armament of troops.

The superiority of the grooved or rifle barrel and elongated ball, in range and accuracy of fire, has been long known; yet the difficulty of loading this weapon has hitherto, for most military purposes, counterbalanced its advantages. To overcome this difficulty two methods have been proposed; the first, by loading the piece at the breech, has been for some time in use, but has defects which all the ingenuity expended on it has failed to entirely overcome. The second method, which has produced the important results above indicated, is to use an oblong ball of such diameter as to be readily introduced into the the piece, but which afterwards is expanded so as to fill the calibre. This was at first done by providing a rest or support at the junction of the chamber with the bore, as in Capt. Delvigne's method, or by means of a solid pillar in the axis of the barrel, upon which the ball rested, and was expanded by blows from a heavy rammer. This was the plan of Colonel Thouvenin, of the French army, and is known as the system "*à la tige*" which has been extensively used in their service. The same object was subsequently attained by inserting into the rear part of the ball a conical iron cup, which, being driven into the lead by the explosion of the charge, acted as a wedge to expand the ball. This is the plan known by the name of the inventor, Captain Minié, of the French army. Still more recently, in England, the ball has been improved so as to expand by the force of the powder alone,

without the aid of the cup. This is known as the Pritchett ball, having been brought into use by Mr. Pritchett, a gun-maker of London. This idea also had been suggested by Capt. Delvigne.

My attention being drawn to the subject, I directed experiments to be made by the Ordnance department, both as to the proper shape of the ball and the best mode of grooving the barrel. In the course of these trials some important conclusions were reached, agreeing, as was afterwards ascertained, with the results of the investigations then making in Europe. Although our experiments have been confined to our service rifle and are yet incomplete, they confirm the great superiority claimed for this invention abroad. They show that the new weapon, while it can be loaded as readily as the ordinary musket, is at least equally effective at three times the distance. The foreign experiments indicate a still greater superiority of the new arms. These results render it almost certain that smooth bored arms will be superseded as a military weapon; but great caution is requisite in introducing a general change in this important element of national defence, for the waste of public money is not the greatest of the evils resulting from the adoption of an erroneous system. The strong probability of a change, and the fact that we have already accumulated so large a supply, more than half a million of muskets and rifles, in the arsenals of the United States, besides about 300,000 in possession of the States, at a cost of near ten millions of dollars, render it not expedient to continue, at this time, on a large scale, if at all, the manufacture of small arms of our present patterns. But, until experience shall enable us to decide on the merits of the new improvements, I am of opinion that our expenditures for small arms should nearly be confined to the making of such as are required for fully testing these inventions. I have, however, asked for the usual appropriations for the national armories, in the hope that our experiments and trials in actual service, and the experience of the present war in Europe, will enable us soon to decide on the value of the recent modifications, and to continue the manufacture of arms upon improved models.

Congress, at its last session, made an appropriation for the purchase of a number of the best breech-loading rifles. To ascertain which, among the many that have been invented, are the best, public notice has been given, through the newspapers, of the appropriation and its object, inviting all inventors to furnish samples of their arms. When all who choose to compete shall have submitted their arms, a number of each kind, deemed worthy of trial, will be subjected to such practical tests as may determine their relative merits as military weapons. Should the result, as it probably will, secure a substantial and simple breech-loading arm, it will supersede our present patterns for the use of cavalry.

The efficacy of these new patterns of arms will be further increased by an improved mode of priming, invented by Dr. Edward Maynard, which has been approved by the highest officers in our military and naval services. Operations are now in progress to perfect the details of fabricating the new primer, and applying it to finished arms of the old pattern, as well as to new ones now in process of manufacture.

In anticipation of an increased, if not exclusive, use of rifle-arms by the regular army, and because of the belief that the rifle or light infantry system of instruction is best adapted to the foot-militia, I have caused inquiries to be instituted into the systems used by the light troops of other countries, that complete light infantry or rifle tactics might be introduced into our service, with such improvements as the experience of other armies has shown to be valuable. A work on this subject is now in the course of preparation, and it is expected will be, in a short time, submitted to you for such action as it may be deemed worthy to receive.

Attention is again called to the necessity for legislation to provide a more certain and equitable mode for the distribution of arms among the militia, and to the propriety of supplying them with books of tactical instruction, as contemplated in the clause of the constitution "for training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress."

I have to ask attention to the necessity for further legislation for the sale of useless military sites. According to the construction which has been given to the acts upon this subject, and which, though its correctness has been doubted, must be regarded as settled by the practice of the department, the act of March 3, 1819, applies only to military sites then held, and that of April 28, 1828, only to lands "conveyed to" the United States for forts, &c. According to these views, there is no provision for the sale of lands which, since the 3d of March, 1819, have been reserved from the public domain for military purposes, and I therefore recommend that the provisions of the acts giving authority to sell useless military sites, be extended to embrace those reservations.

Many reservations around military posts originally established on the frontier, and now rendered useless by the advance of population, have acquired great value, not only from the rise in the price of lands in such localities, but from improvements put upon them by the labor of the troops or at public expense. In disposing at public sale of some of these, which came within the act of 1819, it was found that the bids were far below the fair market value of the land—a result which has been attributed, no doubt correctly, to combinations among the bidders. I concur with the Quartermaster General in the opinion that similar results can be prevented in future only by establishing a minimum price, below which the land shall not be sold; and I recommend that provision be made for this purpose, in any act that may be passed on the subject.

The accounts of disbursing officers have been rendered with more than usual punctuality during the past year, but yet not with the promptitude which the department desires to enforce. Many officers, not having staff appointments, besides the performance of their appropriate duties in the active and arduous service of the frontier, are charged with the disbursement of public money, and with the care of public property. This, besides the labor it involves, subjects them to some loss which no care can avoid, and which is a tax upon their pay. To reimburse this loss, if not to remunerate their labor, I concur with the Quartermaster General in recommending that some additional pay be allowed.

I cannot too strongly urge the necessity of effectual measures being

taken for the prompt settlement of accounts of disbursing officers at the treasury. The delay to which they are now subjected exerts a most injurious effect, by destroying the salutary impression of a watchful superintendence of public expenditures, paralyzes the efforts of the department to enforce promptness in accounting, by keeping it in ignorance of the true state of officers' accounts, and exposes them to loss by failing to give them notice of errors or defects of evidence until the accidents and mutations incident to army life have destroyed their ability to rectify the one or supply the other. One cause of the delay has been the distribution of military accounts between two auditors, both of whom, in some cases, have to settle different parts of the same account, and even sometimes different items of the same voucher. It is hoped this inconvenient and useless arrangement will be abolished, and all the military accounts committed to a single auditor. It is scarcely to be expected, however, that this measure alone will remove an evil which has resisted the earnest efforts of this department for a long series of years. It is, however, the remedy suggested by our present knowledge of the case; and, if further investigation shall develop other causes of the delays complained of, it will also indicate the additional means necessary to complete the reform.

The arrangement made by the Treasury Department, by which disbursing officers are enabled to keep funds on deposit with the assistant treasurers of the United States, proves to be of great advantage to the service, and promises, when more perfectly understood and carried into full effect, to obviate most of the inconveniences heretofore experienced in transmitting funds and making disbursements in remote parts of the country. It preserves the control of the department over the public moneys till the moment of their expenditure, and enables it, in the event of the death of an officer, to reclaim its funds without waiting for the appointment of an administrator or the settlement of his accounts. It also removes, in a great measure, those temptations which the possession of large sums of ready money, in times of active speculative excitement, cannot fail to present.

I have again to invite attention to the necessity of some general provision for the prosecution of suits involving titles to lands and other public interests committed to the charge of this department, and for the settlement of accounts for counsel fees, costs, and other expenses incurred in maintaining the rights of the United States in such cases. In the absence of any provision of law on the subject, this department has been subject to exorbitant charges, and has experienced much embarrassment in the conduct of suits.

In pursuance of the views stated in my last annual report in reference to river and harbor improvements, the department has adhered, in the directions it has given, to the design of making them as complete as possible, without any operation being undertaken which would be dependent for its completion upon future appropriations. Some works have been completed in conformity with these views; but by reference to the reports of the colonels of the two corps of engineers, it will be seen that a large majority are unfinished, and that, in many cases, the balances of appropriations applicable thereto are not sufficient to effect results of much value. As no appropriations were made

at the last session of Congress, I have deemed it unnecessary to present further estimates at this time.

To the general remarks upon this subject in my last annual report, I have only to add, that experience confirms the opinion that no benefit at all commensurate with the expense has been obtained, or is to be expected, from appropriations granted and applied in the mode heretofore pursued. Much of the expenditure has been utterly lost for want of further appropriations to complete what has been commenced; and works completed have fallen into ruins for want of appropriations to preserve them from dilapidation by the violence of storms, the wear of currents, and the progress of natural decay. A rock or snag removed from a navigable channel is a benefit gained forever; but artificial structures to protect harbors, or change the course, or increase the velocity of currents, must undergo deterioration, which, however small, will be constant; and whatever policy may be hereafter adopted in regard to such works, it will be imperfect unless it embrace not only their completion upon the plans selected, but their preservation from the operation of the natural agencies which tend to destroy them, as well as from injury or occupation by trespassers. No means will be adequate for these objects, unless accompanied by a cession of exclusive jurisdiction over the site, or at least ownership of the soil. Questions have already arisen, which seem to indicate the difficulties which must inevitably occur from the want of jurisdiction and title whenever the powers now necessarily exercised in the prosecution of these works shall come in conflict with the rights or interests of individuals.

The survey of the northern and northwestern lakes has made steady progress, and the documents accompanying the report of the Colonel of Topographical Engineers show an unusual progress in this work accomplished during the past season.

The roads in course of construction in the Territory of Minnesota have been prosecuted with the means at the disposal of the department, and a document in the report from the Topographical Bureau will show the system pursued and the progress made in their construction. With regard to those in Oregon, Utah, and New Mexico, special instructions have been given from this department, of which copies are appended, designed, in each case, to secure, in the first place, a practicable wagon road between the termini, with such improvement afterwards as the balance of the appropriation would allow. The roads in New Mexico, from Taos to Santa Fé, and from Santa Fé to Doña Ana, authorized by the act of July 17, 1854, have not yet been commenced. The location of these, or at least of the latter, will depend in a great measure upon the success which may attend the efforts to obtain water along the route by wells, for which the act makes provision. The cheapest method of obtaining it will, it is believed, be by boring, for which purpose implements could not be obtained in that country. Measures have been taken to procure the necessary tools and apparatus in connexion with the examinations and trials to be made for the supply of water by artesian wells on the route for the Pacific railroad. When these have been completed, the same apparatus can be economically used for the wells on the military roads.

Since the date of my report of February 6, 1854, communicating to

Congress copies of all reports then received from the engineers and other persons employed in explorations and surveys to ascertain the most practicable and economical route for a railroad from the Mississippi river to the Pacific ocean, the six parties engaged in those surveys have completed their field duties; reports from four of them have been received and printed, under a resolution of the House of Representatives, passed at the last session. The two remaining reports, it is expected, will be ready for the printer in the course of next month. No provision was made, by the resolution above cited, for engraving the maps; without them the reports are comparatively useless.

In making surveys of this character, the maps and reports being hastily prepared in the field, and generally at night, after a day of fatiguing duty, require careful revision in the office, and are considered as merely preliminary to the more elaborate results which finally take their place. Hence it has been found necessary to return some of the reports for revision, and in some cases to replot the work and make new maps.

When all the reports and maps are received, they will be laid before Congress, with a general report, and a map exhibiting all the routes, and such profiles and other drawings as will be necessary to illustrate the subject.

An appropriation having been made, at the last session, for continuing these surveys, a party has been organized to make further explorations between the plains of Los Angeles and the waters of the bay of San Francisco, to determine whether there be a practicable route for a railroad through the mountain passes of the Sierra Nevada and coast range, which extend to the sea coast at Point Conception. A second party is making preparations for testing the practicability of procuring water, by means of artesian wells, upon the arid plains which occur on the several routes. The results of the surveys already made will, when assembled and compared, probably indicate the direction in which further explorations shall be made by parties organized to take the field next spring, as early as the season will permit.

I refer to the report of Captain Meigs, of the corps of engineers, the officer in charge of the Capitol extension, for a very satisfactory account of the progress of that work. The exterior facing of the walls has been retarded by the difficulty of obtaining, under the contract, a sufficient supply of marble; but the brick work is well advanced. The walls of the Senate chamber and Representatives hall are finished, and these rooms will be placed under roof during the present winter. It is expected they will be completed by the meeting of the next Congress; but the delay in the supply of marble may so retard the completion of the outer walls, and the corridors depending thereon, as to prevent their being occupied so early.

The style of the work, both in finish and strength, has been of a higher standard than was contemplated when the estimates were made, but the administrative capacity and professional skill of the officer in charge, have so kept down the expenditures that it is believed the cost will not exceed the estimates made for an inferior building.

The modifications made in the interior plan of the structure are now

so far completed as to be seen and easily understood, and I feel additional assurance as to the successful solution of the difficult problems of acoustics, optics, and ventilation, presented especially in the construction of the Hall of Representatives.

Operations on the work designed to supply this city with water have been suspended for want of funds. It is hoped that appropriations will no longer be withheld from this important work. I have seen no reason to change the opinion that it was judiciously planned and located. My confidence is strengthened that it will be completed at a cost within the estimate, and will secure the object in view with more certainty, and, taking into view the permanence of the work, its capacity to supply future wants, and the absence of machinery entailing annual expense, more economically than any other mode that has been suggested.

By the civil and diplomatic appropriation act, approved August 4, 1854, this department was authorized to purchase for \$200,000 the large fire-proof building at the corner of F and 17th streets, which has long been occupied in common by bureaus of the Treasury, Interior, Navy, and War Departments. The lease under which it was held expired on the 30th of June, and the owner, who had given the department due notice, refused to renew it for a less rent than \$30,000 per annum, which Congress had refused to appropriate. A thorough survey of the building was made by competent engineers and builders, who estimated its value in its actual condition at \$197,042, \$197,997, and \$198,342, respectively, and after some negotiation the owner agreed to accept the amount of the appropriation in payment for the building and in satisfaction of all claims for damages, and also for arrears of rent accrued since the termination of the lease—nearly three months, which could not be paid, as the act was regarded as making an appropriation either for purchase or rent, but not for both.

It is true the plan of the building was not considered as the best adapted for public offices, but Congress had refused to allow the rent demanded by the owner, and had thus left the department no alternative but to purchase or vacate it. Between these conditions there was scarcely a choice. Accommodations elsewhere could not be procured without much difficulty, and I should have felt great reluctance to place in insecure buildings the valuable records stored there; some of which, if destroyed by fire, could not be replaced at a cost less than the price of the building, while others could not be replaced at all; the purchase was therefore concluded upon the terms stated. I have submitted an estimate for repairs and improvements sufficient to put the building in proper condition. Much of the repairs now proposed would have been equally necessary had the government vacated the building, instead of purchasing, as the lease provided that the building should be restored in a good state of repair. The cost of the additional improvements will hardly exceed the amount of the rent that was released in the contract of purchase.

It is hardly necessary to remark that the purchase of this building in no degree obviates the necessity, heretofore frequently presented, of replacing the building assigned for the use of this department with a fire-proof structure.

REPORT OF THE

The accompanying reports of the Commanding General of the army and the chiefs of the several branches of the military service, contain full and exact information in relation to the duties with which they are respectively charged. To these I refer for such details as could not be embraced in this report.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JEFFERSON DAVIS,

Secretary of War.

To the PRESIDENT *of the United States.*

SECRETARY OF WAR.

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Documents accompanying the Report of the Secretary of War.

1. Reports from the Department of Texas.
2. Reports from the Department of New Mexico.
3. Reports from the Department of the West.
4. Instructions respecting Military Roads.
5. Report on the Capitol Extension.
6. Report of the Commanding General, with statements from the
Adjutant General.
7. Report of the Quartermaster General.
8. Report of the Commissary General.
9. Report of the Paymaster General.
10. Report of the Surgeon General.
11. Report of the Chief Engineer.
12. Report of the Colonel of Topographical Engineers.
13. Report of the Chief of Ordnance.