

# State of the Union Address eBook

## State of the Union Address by Jimmy Carter

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# Page 1

## Title: State of the Union Addresses of John Tyler

Author: John Tyler

Release Date: February, 2004 [EBook #5018] [Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule] [This file was first posted on April 11, 2002] [Date last updated: December 16, 2004]

Edition: 11

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

\*\*\* *Start of the project gutenberg EBOOK of addresses by John Tyler* \*\*\*

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Dates of addresses by John Tyler in this eBook:

December 7, 1841  
December 6, 1842  
December 1843  
December 3, 1844

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State of the Union Address  
John Tyler  
December 7, 1841

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

In coming together, fellow-citizens, to enter again upon the discharge of the duties with which the people have charged us severally, we find great occasion to rejoice in the general prosperity of the country. We are in the enjoyment of all the blessings of civil and religious liberty, with unexampled means of education, knowledge, and improvement. Through the year which is now drawing to a close peace has been in our borders and plenty in our habitations, and although disease has visited some few portions of the land with distress and mortality, yet in general the health of the people has been preserved, and we are all called upon by the highest obligations of duty to renew our thanks and our devotion to our Heavenly Parent, who has continued to vouchsafe to us the eminent blessings which surround us and who has so signally



crowned the year with His goodness. If we find ourselves increasing beyond example in numbers, in strength, in wealth, in knowledge, in everything which promotes human and social happiness, let us ever remember our dependence for all these on the protection and merciful dispensations of Divine Providence.

Since your last adjournment Alexander McLeod, a British subject who was indicted for the murder of an American citizen, and whose case has been the subject of a correspondence heretofore communicated to you, has been acquitted by the verdict of an impartial and intelligent jury, and has under the judgment of the court been regularly discharged.

Great Britain having made known to this Government that the expedition which was fitted out from Canada for the destruction of the steamboat Caroline in the winter of 1837, and which resulted in the destruction of said boat and in the death of an American citizen, was undertaken by orders emanating from the authorities of the British Government in Canada, and demanding the discharge of McLeod upon the ground that if engaged in that expedition he did but fulfill the orders of

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his Government, has thus been answered in the only way in which she could be answered by a government the powers of which are distributed among its several departments by the fundamental law. Happily for the people of Great Britain, as well as those of the United States, the only mode by which an individual arraigned for a criminal offense before the courts of either can obtain his discharge is by the independent action of the judiciary and by proceedings equally familiar to the courts of both countries.

If in Great Britain a power exists in the Crown to cause to be entered a nolle prosequi, which is not the case with the Executive power of the United States upon a prosecution pending in a State court, yet there no more than here can the chief executive power rescue a prisoner from custody without an order of the proper tribunal directing his discharge. The precise stage of the proceedings at which such order may be made is a matter of municipal regulation exclusively, and not to be complained of by any other government. In cases of this kind a government becomes politically responsible only when its tribunals of last resort are shown to have rendered unjust and injurious judgments in matters not doubtful. To the establishment and elucidation of this principle no nation has lent its authority more efficiently than Great Britain. Alexander McLeod, having his option either to prosecute a writ of error from the decision of the supreme court of New York, which had been rendered upon his application for a discharge, to the Supreme Court of the United States, or to submit his case to the decision of a jury, preferred the latter, deeming it the readiest mode of obtaining his liberation; and the result has fully sustained the wisdom of his choice. The manner in which the issue submitted was tried will satisfy the English Government that the principles of justice will never fail to govern the enlightened decision of an American tribunal. I can not fail, however, to suggest to Congress the propriety, and in some degree the necessity, of making such provisions by law, so far as they may constitutionally do so, for the removal at their commencement and at the option of the party of all such cases as may hereafter arise, and which may involve the faithful observance and execution of our international obligations, from the State to the Federal judiciary. This Government, by our institutions, is charged with the maintenance of peace and the preservation of amicable relations with the nations of the earth, and ought to possess without question all the reasonable and proper means of maintaining the one and preserving the other. While just confidence is felt in the judiciary of the States, yet this Government ought to be competent in itself for the fulfillment of the high duties which have been devolved upon it under the organic law by the States themselves.



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In the month of September a party of armed men from Upper Canada invaded the territory of the United States and forcibly seized upon the person of one Grogan, and under circumstances of great harshness hurriedly carried him beyond the limits of the United States and delivered him up to the authorities of Upper Canada. His immediate discharge was ordered by those authorities upon the facts of the case being brought to their knowledge—a course of procedure which was to have been expected from a nation with whom we are at peace, and which was not more due to the rights of the United States than to its own regard for justice. The correspondence which passed between the Department of State and the British envoy, Mr. Fox, and with the governor of Vermont, as soon as the facts had been made known to this department, are herewith communicated.

I regret that it is not in my power to make known to you an equally satisfactory conclusion in the case of the Caroline steamer, with the circumstances connected with the destruction of which, in December, 1837, by an armed force fitted out in the Province of Upper Canada, you are already made acquainted. No such atonement as was due for the public wrong done to the United States by this invasion of her territory, so wholly irreconcilable with her rights as an independent power, has yet been made. In the view taken by this Government the inquiry whether the vessel was in the employment of those who were prosecuting an unauthorized war against that Province or was engaged by the owner in the business of transporting passengers to and from Navy Island in hopes of private gain, which was most probably the case, in no degree alters the real question at issue between the two Governments. This Government can never concede to any foreign government the power, except in a case of the most urgent and extreme necessity, of invading its territory, either to arrest the persons or destroy the property of those who may have violated the municipal laws of such foreign government or have disregarded their obligations arising under the law of nations. The territory of the United States must be regarded as sacredly secure against all such invasions until they shall voluntarily acknowledge their inability to acquit themselves of their duties to others. And in announcing this sentiment I do but affirm a principle which no nation on earth would be more ready to vindicate at all hazards than the people and Government of Great Britain. If upon a full investigation of all the facts it shall appear that the owner of the Caroline was governed by a hostile intent or had made common cause with those who were in the occupancy of Navy Island, then so far as he is concerned there can be no claim to indemnity for the destruction of his boat which this Government would feel itself bound to prosecute, since he would have acted not only in derogation of the rights of Great Britain, but in clear violation of the laws of the United States; but that is a question

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which, however settled, in no manner involves the higher consideration of the violation of territorial sovereignty and jurisdiction. To recognize it as an admissible practice that each Government in its turn, upon any sudden and unauthorized outbreak which, on a frontier the extent of which renders it impossible for either to have an efficient force on every mile of it, and which outbreak, therefore, neither may be able to suppress in a day, may take vengeance into its own hands, and without even a remonstrance, and in the absence of any pressing or overruling necessity may invade the territory of the other, would inevitably lead to results equally to be deplored by both. When border collisions come to receive the sanction or to be made on the authority of either Government general war must be the inevitable result. While it is the ardent desire of the United States to cultivate the relations of peace with all nations and to fulfill all the duties of good neighborhood toward those who possess territories adjoining their own, that very desire would lead them to deny the right of any foreign power to invade their boundary with an armed force. The correspondence between the two Governments on this subject will at a future day of your session be submitted to your consideration; and in the meantime I can not but indulge the hope that the British Government will see the propriety of renouncing as a rule of future action the precedent which has been set in the affair at Schlosser.

I herewith submit the correspondence which has recently taken place between the American minister at the Court of St. James, Mr. Stevenson, and the minister of foreign affairs of that Government on the right claimed by that Government to visit and detain vessels sailing under the American flag and engaged in prosecuting lawful commerce in the African seas. Our commercial interests in that region have experienced considerable increase and have become an object of much importance, and it is the duty of this Government to protect them against all improper and vexatious interruption. However desirous the United States may be for the suppression of the slave trade, they can not consent to interpolations into the maritime code at the mere will and pleasure of other governments. We deny the right of any such interpolation to any one or all the nations of the earth without our consent. We claim to have a voice in all amendments or alterations of that code, and when we are given to understand, as in this instance, by a foreign government that its treaties with other nations can not be executed without the establishment and enforcement of new principles of maritime police, to be applied without our consent, we must employ a language neither of equivocal import or susceptible of misconstruction. American citizens prosecuting a lawful commerce in the African seas under the flag of their country are not responsible for the abuse or unlawful use of that flag by others; nor can they rightfully on account of any such alleged

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abuses be interrupted, molested, or detained while on the ocean, and if thus molested and detained while pursuing honest voyages in the usual way and violating no law themselves they are unquestionably entitled to indemnity. This Government has manifested its repugnance to the slave trade in a manner which can not be misunderstood. By its fundamental law it prescribed limits in point of time to its continuance, and against its own citizens who might so far forget the rights of humanity as to engage in that wicked traffic it has long since by its municipal laws denounced the most condign punishment. Many of the States composing this Union had made appeals to the civilized world for its suppression long before the moral sense of other nations had become shocked by the iniquities of the traffic. Whether this Government should now enter into treaties containing mutual stipulations upon this subject is a question for its mature deliberation. Certain it is that if the right to detain American ships on the high seas can be justified on the plea of a necessity for such detention arising out of the existence of treaties between other nations, the same plea may, be extended and enlarged by the new stipulations of new treaties to which the United States may not be a party. This Government will not cease to urge upon that of Great Britain full and ample remuneration for all losses, whether arising from detention or otherwise, to which American citizens have heretofore been or may hereafter be subjected by the exercise of rights which this Government can not recognize as legitimate and proper. Nor will I indulge a doubt but that the sense of justice of Great Britain will constrain her to make retribution for any wrong or loss which any American citizen engaged in the prosecution of lawful commerce may have experienced at the hands of her cruisers or other public authorities. This Government, at the same time, will relax no effort to prevent its citizens, if there be any so disposed, from prosecuting a traffic so revolting to the feelings of humanity. It seeks to do no more than to protect the fair and honest trader from molestation and injury; but while the enterprising mariner engaged in the pursuit of an honorable trade is entitled to its protection, it will visit with condign punishment others of an opposite character.

I invite your attention to existing laws for the suppression of the African slave trade, and recommend all such alterations as may give to them greater force and efficacy. That the American flag is grossly abused by the abandoned and profligate of other nations is but too probable. Congress has not long since had this subject under its consideration, and its importance well justifies renewed and anxious attention.

I also communicate herewith the copy of a correspondence between Mr. Stevenson and Lord Palmerston upon the subject, so interesting to several of the Southern States, of the rice duties, which resulted honorably to the justice of Great Britain and advantageously to the United States.

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At the opening of the last annual session the President informed Congress of the progress which had then been made in negotiating a convention between this Government and that of England with a view to the final settlement of the question of the boundary between the territorial limits of the two countries. I regret to say that little further advancement of the object has been accomplished since last year, but this is owing to circumstances no way indicative of any abatement of the desire of both parties to hasten the negotiation to its conclusion and to settle the question in dispute as early as possible. In the course of the session it is my hope to be able to announce some further degree of progress toward the accomplishment of this highly desirable end.

The commission appointed by this Government for the exploration and survey of the line of boundary separating the States of Maine and New Hampshire from the conterminous British Provinces is, it is believed, about to close its field labors and is expected soon to report the results of its examinations to the Department of State. The report, when received, will be laid before Congress.

The failure on the part of Spain to pay with punctuality the interest due under the convention of 1834 for the settlement of claims between the two countries has made it the duty of the Executive to call the particular attention of that Government to the subject. A disposition has been manifested by it, which is believed to be entirely sincere, to fulfill its obligations in this respect so soon as its internal condition and the state of its finances will permit. An arrangement is in progress from the result of which it is trusted that those of our citizens who have claims under the convention will at no distant day receive the stipulated payments.

A treaty of commerce and navigation with Belgium was concluded and signed at Washington on the 29th of March, 1840, and was duly sanctioned by the Senate of the United States. The treaty was ratified by His Belgian Majesty, but did not receive the approbation of the Belgian Chambers within the time limited by its terms, and has therefore become void.

This occurrence assumes the graver aspect from the consideration that in 1833 a treaty negotiated between the two Governments and ratified on the part of the United States failed to be ratified on the part of Belgium. The representative of that Government at Washington informs the Department of State that he has been instructed to give explanations of the causes which occasioned delay in the approval of the late treaty by the legislature, and to express the regret of the King at the occurrence.

The joint commission under the convention with Texas to ascertain the true boundary between the two countries has concluded its labors, but the final report of the commissioner of the United States has not been received. It is understood, however, that the meridian line as traced by the commission lies somewhat farther east than the position hitherto generally assigned to it, and consequently includes in Texas some part

of the territory which had been considered as belonging to the States of Louisiana and Arkansas.

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The United States can not but take a deep interest in whatever relates to this young but growing Republic. Settled principally by emigrants from the United States, we have the happiness to know that the great principles of civil liberty are there destined to flourish under wise institutions and wholesome laws, and that through its example another evidence is to be afforded of the capacity of popular institutions to advance the prosperity, happiness, and permanent glory of the human race. The great truth that government was made for the people and not the people for government has already been established in the practice and by the example of these United States, and we can do no other than contemplate its further exemplification by a sister republic with the deepest interest.

Our relations with the independent States of this hemisphere, formerly under the dominion of Spain, have not undergone any material change within the past year. The incessant sanguinary conflicts in or between those countries are to be greatly deplored as necessarily tending to disable them from performing their duty as members of the community of nations and rising to the destiny which the position and natural resources of many of them might lead them justly to anticipate, as constantly giving occasion also, directly or indirectly, for complaints on the part of our citizens who resort thither for purposes of commercial intercourse, and as retarding reparation for wrongs already committed, some of which are by no means of recent date.

The failure of the Congress of Ecuador to hold a session at the time appointed for that purpose, in January last, will probably render abortive a treaty of commerce with that Republic, which was signed at Quito on the 13th of June, 1839, and had been duly ratified on our part, but which required the approbation of that body prior to its ratification by the Ecuadorian Executive.

A convention which has been concluded with the Republic of Peru, providing for the settlement of certain claims of citizens of the United States upon the Government of that Republic, will be duly submitted to the Senate.

The claims of our citizens against the Brazilian Government originating from captures and other causes are still unsatisfied. The United States have, however, so uniformly shown a disposition to cultivate relations of amity with that Empire that it is hoped the unequivocal tokens of the same spirit toward us which an adjustment of the affairs referred to would afford will be given without further avoidable delay.

The war with the Indian tribes on the peninsula of Florida has during the last summer and fall been prosecuted with untiring activity and zeal. A summer campaign was resolved upon as the best mode of bringing it to a close. Our brave officers and men who have been engaged in that service have suffered toils and privations and exhibited an energy which in any other war would have won for them unfading laurels.

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In despite of the sickness incident to the climate, they have penetrated the fastnesses of the Indians, broken up their encampments, and harassed them unceasingly. Numbers have been captured, and still greater numbers have surrendered and have been transported to join their brethren on the lands elsewhere allotted to them by the Government, and a strong hope is entertained that under the conduct of the gallant officer at the head of the troops in Florida that troublesome and expensive war is destined to a speedy termination. With all the other Indian tribes we are enjoying the blessings of peace. Our duty as well as our best interests prompts us to observe in all our intercourse with them fidelity in fulfilling our engagements, the practice of strict justice, as well as the constant exercise of acts of benevolence and kindness. These are the great instruments of civilization, and through the use of them alone can the untutored child of the forest be induced to listen to its teachings.

The Secretary of State, on whom the acts of Congress have devolved the duty of directing the proceedings for the taking of the sixth census or enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States, will report to the two Houses the progress of that work. The enumeration of persons has been completed, and exhibits a grand total of 17,069,453, making an increase over the census of 1830 of 4,202,646 inhabitants, and showing a gain in a ratio exceeding 32 1/2 per cent for the last ten years.

From the report of the Secretary of the Treasury you will be informed of the condition of the finances. The balance in the Treasury on the 1st of January last, as stated in the report of the Secretary of the Treasury submitted to Congress at the extra session, was \$987,345.03. The receipts into the Treasury during the first three quarters of this year from all sources amount to \$23,467,072.52; the estimated receipts for the fourth quarter amount to \$6,943,095.25, amounting to \$30,410,167.77, and making with the balance in the Treasury on the 1st of January last \$31,397,512.80. The expenditures for the first three quarters of this year amount to \$24,734,346.97. The expenditures for the fourth quarter as estimated will amount to \$7,290,723.73, thus making a total of \$32,025,070.70, and leaving a deficit to be provided for on the 1st of January next of about \$627,557.90.

Of the loan of \$12,000,000 which was authorized by Congress at its late session only \$5,432,726.88 have been negotiated. The shortness of time which it had to run has presented no inconsiderable impediment in the way of its being taken by capitalists at home, while the same cause would have operated with much greater force in the foreign market. For that reason the foreign market has not been resorted to; and it is now submitted whether it would not be advisable to amend the law by making what remains undisposed of payable at a more distant day.



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Should it be necessary, in any view that Congress may take of the subject, to revise the existing tariff of duties, I beg leave to say that in the performance of that most delicate operation moderate counsels would seem to be the wisest. The Government under which it is our happiness to live owes its existence to the spirit of compromise which prevailed among its framers; jarring and discordant opinions could only have been reconciled by that noble spirit of patriotism which prompted conciliation and resulted in harmony. In the same spirit the compromise bill, as it is commonly called, was adopted at the session of 1833. While the people of no portion of the Union will ever hesitate to pay all necessary taxes for the support of Government, yet an innate repugnance exists to the imposition of burthens not really necessary for that object. In imposing duties, however, for the purposes of revenue a right to discriminate as to the articles on which the duty shall be laid, as well as the amount, necessarily and most properly exists; otherwise the Government would be placed in the condition of having to levy the same duties upon all articles, the productive as well as the unproductive. The slightest duty upon some might have the effect of causing their importation to cease, whereas others, entering extensively into the consumption of the country, might bear the heaviest without any sensible diminution in the amount imported. So also the Government may be justified in so discriminating by reference to other considerations of domestic policy connected with our manufactures. So long as the duties shall be laid with distinct reference to the wants of the Treasury no well-rounded objection can exist against them. It might be esteemed desirable that no such augmentation of the taxes should take place as would have the effect of annulling the land-proceeds distribution act of the last session, which act is declared to be inoperative the moment the duties are increased beyond 20 per cent, the maximum rate established by the compromise act. Some of the provisions of the compromise act, which will go into effect on the 30th day of June next, may, however, be found exceedingly inconvenient in practice under any regulations that Congress may adopt. I refer more particularly to that relating to the home valuation. A difference in value of the same articles to some extent will necessarily exist at different ports, but that is altogether insignificant when compared with the conflicts in valuation which are likely to arise from the differences of opinion among the numerous appraisers of merchandise. In many instances the estimates of value must be conjectural, and thus as many different rates of value may be established as there are appraisers. These differences in valuation may also be increased by the inclination which, without the slightest imputation on their honesty, may arise on the part of the appraisers in favor of their respective ports of entry. I recommend this

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whole subject to the consideration of Congress with a single additional remark. Certainty and permanency in any system of governmental policy are in all respects eminently desirable, but more particularly is this true in all that affects trade and commerce, the operations of which depend much more on the certainty of their returns and calculations which embrace distant periods of time than on high bounties or duties, which are liable to constant fluctuations.

At your late session I invited your attention to the condition of the currency and exchanges and urged the necessity of adopting such measures as were consistent with the constitutional competency of the Government in order to correct the unsoundness of the one and, as far as practicable, the inequalities of the other. No country can be in the enjoyment of its full measure of prosperity without the presence of a medium of exchange approximating to uniformity of value. What is necessary as between the different nations of the earth is also important as between the inhabitants of different parts of the same country. With the first the precious metals constitute the chief medium of circulation, and such also would be the case as to the last but for inventions comparatively modern, which have furnished in place of gold and silver a paper circulation. I do not propose to enter into a comparative analysis of the merits of the two systems. Such belonged more properly to the period of the introduction of the paper system. The speculative philosopher might find inducements to prosecute the inquiry, but his researches could only lead him to conclude that the paper system had probably better never have been introduced and that society might have been much happier without it. The practical statesman has a very different task to perform. He has to look at things as they are, to take them as he finds them, to supply deficiencies and to prune excesses as far as in him lies. The task of furnishing a corrective for derangements of the paper medium with us is almost inexpressibly great. The power exerted by the States to charter banking corporations, and which, having been carried to a great excess, has filled the country with, in most of the States, an irredeemable paper medium, is an evil which in some way or other requires a corrective. The rates at which bills of exchange are negotiated between different parts of the country furnish an index of the value of the local substitute for gold and silver, which is in many parts so far depreciated as not to be received except at a large discount in payment of debts or in the purchase of produce. It could earnestly be desired that every bank not possessing the means of resumption should follow the example of the late United States Bank of Pennsylvania and go into liquidation rather than by refusing to do so to continue embarrassments in the way of solvent institutions, thereby augmenting the difficulties incident to the present condition of things. Whether this Government,

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with due regard to the rights of the States, has any power to constrain the banks either to resume specie payments or to force them into liquidation, is an inquiry which will not fail to claim your consideration. In view of the great advantages which are allowed the corporators, not among the least of which is the authority contained in most of their charters to make loans to three times the amount of their capital, thereby often deriving three times as much interest on the same amount of money as any individual is permitted by law to receive, no sufficient apology can be urged for a long-continued suspension of specie payments. Such suspension is productive of the greatest detriment to the public by expelling from circulation the precious metals and seriously hazarding the success of any effort that this Government can make to increase commercial facilities and to advance the public interests.

This is the more to be regretted and the indispensable necessity for a sound currency becomes the more manifest when we reflect on the vast amount of the internal commerce of the country. Of this we have no statistics nor just data for forming adequate opinions. But there can be no doubt but that the amount of transportation coastwise by sea, and the transportation inland by railroads and canals, and by steamboats and other modes of conveyance over the surface of our vast rivers and immense lakes, and the value of property carried and interchanged by these means form a general aggregate to which the foreign commerce of the country, large as it is, makes but a distant approach.

In the absence of any controlling power over this subject, which, by forcing a general resumption of specie payments, would at once have the effect of restoring a sound medium of exchange and would leave to the country but little to desire, what measure of relief falling within the limits of our constitutional competency does it become this Government to adopt? It was my painful duty at your last session, under the weight of most solemn obligations, to differ with Congress on the measures which it proposed for my approval, and which it doubtless regarded as corrective of existing evils. Subsequent reflection and events since occurring have only served to confirm me in the opinions then entertained and frankly expressed. I must be permitted to add that no scheme of governmental policy unaided by individual exertions can be available for ameliorating the present condition of things. Commercial modes of exchange and a good currency are but the necessary means of commerce and intercourse, not the direct productive sources of wealth. Wealth can only be accumulated by the earnings of industry and the savings of frugality, and nothing can be more ill judged than to look to facilities in borrowing or to a redundant circulation for the power of discharging pecuniary obligations. The country is full of resources and the people full of energy, and the great and permanent remedy for present

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embarrassments must be sought in industry, economy, the observance of good faith, and the favorable influence of time. In pursuance of a pledge given to you in my last message to Congress, which pledge I urge as an apology for adventuring to present you the details of any plan, the Secretary of the Treasury will be ready to submit to you, should you require it, a plan of finance which, while it throws around the public treasure reasonable guards for its protection and rests on powers acknowledged in practice to exist from the origin of the Government, will at the same time furnish to the country a sound paper medium and afford all reasonable facilities for regulating the exchanges. When submitted, you will perceive in it a plan amendatory of the existing laws in relation to the Treasury Department, subordinate in all respects to the will of Congress directly and the will of the people indirectly, self-sustaining should it be found in practice to realize its promises in theory, and repealable at the pleasure of Congress. It proposes by effectual restraints and by invoking the true spirit of our institutions to separate the purse from the sword, or, more properly to speak, denies any other control to the President over the agents who may be selected to carry it into execution but what may be indispensably necessary to secure the fidelity of such agents, and by wise regulations keeps plainly apart from each other private and public funds. It contemplates the establishment of a board of control at the seat of government, with agencies at prominent commercial points or wherever else Congress shall direct, for the safe-keeping and disbursement of the public moneys and a substitution at the option of the public creditor of Treasury notes in lieu of gold and silver. It proposes to limit the issues to an amount not to exceed \$15,000,000 without the express sanction of the legislative power. It also authorizes the receipt of individual deposits of gold and silver to a limited amount, and the granting certificates of deposit divided into such sums as may be called for by the depositors. It proceeds a step further and authorizes the purchase and sale of domestic bills and drafts resting on a real and substantial basis, payable at sight or having but a short time to run, and drawn on places not less than 100 miles apart, which authority, except in so far as may be necessary for Government purposes exclusively, is only to be exerted upon the express condition that its exercise shall not be prohibited by the State in which the agency is situated. In order to cover the expenses incident to the plan, it will be authorized to receive moderate premiums for certificates issued on deposits and on bills bought and sold, and thus, as far as its dealings extend, to furnish facilities to commercial intercourse at the lowest possible rates and to subduct from the earnings of industry the least possible sum. It uses the State banks at a distance from the agencies as auxiliaries without imparting any power to trade

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in its name. It is subjected to such guards and restraints as have appeared to be necessary. It is the creature of law and exists only at the pleasure of the Legislature. It is made to rest on an actual specie basis in order to redeem the notes at the places of issue, produces no dangerous redundancy of circulation, affords no temptation to speculation, is attended by no inflation of prices, is equable in its operation, makes the Treasury notes (which it may use along with the certificates of deposit and the notes of specie-paying banks) convertible at the place where collected, receivable in payment of Government dues, and without violating any principle of the Constitution affords the Government and the people such facilities as are called for by the wants of both. Such, it has appeared to me, are its recommendations, and in view of them it will be submitted, whenever you may require it, to your consideration.

I am not able to perceive that any fair and candid objection can be urged against the plan, the principal outlines of which I have thus presented. I can not doubt but that the notes which it proposes to furnish at the voluntary option of the public creditor, issued in lieu of the revenue and its certificates of deposit, will be maintained at an equality with gold and silver everywhere. They are redeemable in gold and silver on demand at the places of issue. They are receivable everywhere in payment of Government dues. The Treasury notes are limited to an amount of one-fourth less than the estimated annual receipts of the Treasury, and in addition they rest upon the faith of the Government for their redemption. If all these assurances are not sufficient to make them available, then the idea, as it seems to me, of furnishing a sound paper medium of exchange may be entirely abandoned.

If a fear be indulged that the Government may be tempted to run into excess in its issues at any future day, it seems to me that no such apprehension can reasonably be entertained until all confidence in the representatives of the States and of the people, as well as of the people themselves, shall be lost. The weightiest considerations of policy require that the restraints now proposed to be thrown around the measure should not for light causes be removed. To argue against any proposed plan its liability to possible abuse is to reject every expedient, since everything dependent on human action is liable to abuse. Fifteen millions of Treasury notes may be issued as the maximum, but a discretionary power is to be given to the board of control under that sum, and every consideration will unite in leading them to feel their way with caution. For the first eight years of the existence of the late Bank of the United States its circulation barely exceeded \$4,000,000, and for five of its most prosperous years it was about equal to \$16,000,000; furthermore, the authority given to receive private deposits to a limited amount and to issue certificates

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in such sums as may be called for by the depositors may so far fill up the channels of circulation as greatly to diminish the necessity of any considerable issue of Treasury notes. A restraint upon the amount of private deposits has seemed to be indispensably necessary from an apprehension, thought to be well founded, that in any emergency of trade confidence might be so far shaken in the banks as to induce a withdrawal from them of private deposits with a view to insure their unquestionable safety when deposited with the Government, which might prove eminently disastrous to the State banks. Is it objected that it is proposed to authorize the agencies to deal in bills of exchange? It is answered that such dealings are to be carried on at the lowest possible premium, are made to rest on an unquestionably sound basis, are designed to reimburse merely the expenses which would otherwise devolve upon the Treasury, and are in strict subordination to the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of the Bank of Augusta against Earle, and other reported cases, and thereby avoids all conflict with State jurisdiction, which I hold to be indispensably requisite. It leaves the banking privileges of the States without interference, looks to the Treasury and the Union, and while furnishing every facility to the first is careful of the interests of the last. But above all, it is created by law, is amendable by law, and is repealable by law, and, wedded as I am to no theory, but looking solely to the advancement of the public good, I shall be among the very first to urge its repeal if it be found not to subserve the purposes and objects for which it may be created. Nor will the plan be submitted in any overweening confidence in the sufficiency of my own judgment, but with much greater reliance on the wisdom and patriotism of Congress. I can not abandon this subject without urging upon you in the most emphatic manner, whatever may be your action on the suggestions which I have felt it to be my duty to submit, to relieve the Chief Executive Magistrate, by any and all constitutional means, from a controlling power over the public Treasury. If in the plan proposed, should you deem it worthy of your consideration, that separation is not as complete as you may desire, you will doubtless amend it in that particular. For myself, I disclaim all desire to have any control over the public moneys other than what is indispensably necessary to execute the laws which you may pass.

Nor can I fail to advert in this connection to the debts which many of the States of the Union have contracted abroad and under which they continue to labor. That indebtedness amounts to a sum not less than \$200,000,000, and which has been retributed to them for the most part in works of internal improvement which are destined to prove of vast importance in ultimately advancing their prosperity and wealth. For the debts thus contracted the States are alone responsible. I can do not more than express the belief that each



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State will feel itself bound by every consideration of honor as well as of interest to meet its engagements with punctuality. The failure, however, of any one State to do so should in no degree affect the credit of the rest, and the foreign capitalist will have no just cause to experience alarm as to all other State stocks because any one or more of the States may neglect to provide with punctuality the means of redeeming their engagements. Even such States, should there be any, considering the great rapidity with which their resources are developing themselves, will not fail to have the means at no very distant day to redeem their obligations to the uttermost farthing; nor will I doubt but that, in view of that honorable conduct which has evermore governed the States and the people of the Union, they will each and all resort to every legitimate expedient before they will forego a faithful compliance with their obligations.

From the report of the Secretary of War and other reports accompanying it you will be informed of the progress which has been made in the fortifications designed for the protection of our principal cities, roadsteads, and inland frontier during the present year, together with their true state and condition. They will be prosecuted to completion with all the expedition which the means placed by Congress at the disposal of the Executive will allow.

I recommend particularly to your consideration that portion of the Secretary's report which proposes the establishment of a chain of military posts from Council Bluffs to some point on the Pacific Ocean within our limits. The benefit thereby destined to accrue to our citizens engaged in the fur trade over that wilderness region, added to the importance of cultivating friendly relations with savage tribes inhabiting it, and at the same time of giving protection to our frontier settlements and of establishing the means of safe intercourse between the American settlements at the mouth of the Columbia River and those on this side of the Rocky Mountains, would seem to suggest the importance of carrying into effect the recommendations upon this head with as little delay as may be practicable.

The report of the Secretary of the Navy will place you in possession of the present condition of that important arm of the national defense. Every effort will be made to add to its efficiency, and I can not too strongly urge upon you liberal appropriations to that branch of the public service. Inducements of the weightiest character exist for the adoption of this course of policy. Our extended and otherwise exposed maritime frontier calls for protection, to the furnishing of which an efficient naval force is indispensable. We look to no foreign conquests, nor do we propose to enter into competition with any other nation for supremacy on the ocean; but it is due not only to the honor but to the security of the people of the United States that no nation should be permitted to invade our waters at pleasure and



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subject our towns and villages to conflagration or pillage. Economy in all branches of the public service is due from all the public agents to the people, but parsimony alone would suggest the withholding of the necessary means for the protection of our domestic firesides from invasion and our national honor from disgrace. I would most earnestly recommend to Congress to abstain from all appropriations for objects not absolutely necessary; but I take upon myself, without a moment of hesitancy, all the responsibility of recommending the increase and prompt equipment of that gallant Navy which has lighted up every sea with its victories and spread an imperishable glory over the country.

The report of the Postmaster-General will claim your particular attention, not only because of the valuable suggestions which it contains, but because of the great importance which at all times attaches to that interesting branch of the public service. The increased expense of transporting the mail along the principal routes necessarily claims the public attention, and has awakened a corresponding solicitude on the part of the Government. The transmission of the mail must keep pace with those facilities of intercommunication which are every day becoming greater through the building of railroads and the application of steam power, but it can not be disguised that in order to do so the Post-Office Department is subjected to heavy exactions. The lines of communication between distant parts of the Union are to a great extent occupied by railroads, which, in the nature of things, possess a complete monopoly, and the Department is therefore liable to heavy and unreasonable charges. This evil is destined to great increase in future, and some timely measure may become necessary to guard against it.

I feel it my duty to bring under your consideration a practice which has grown up in the administration of the Government, and which, I am deeply convinced, ought to be corrected. I allude to the exercise of the power which usage rather than reason has vested in the Presidents of removing incumbents from office in order to substitute others more in favor with the dominant party. My own conduct in this respect has been governed by a conscientious purpose to exercise the removing power only in cases of unfaithfulness or inability, or in those in which its exercise appeared necessary in order to discountenance and suppress that spirit of active partisanship on the part of holders of office which not only withdraws them from the steady and impartial discharge of their official duties, but exerts an undue and injurious influence over elections and degrades the character of the Government itself, inasmuch as it exhibits the Chief Magistrate as being a party through his agents in the secret plots or open workings of political parties.



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In respect to the exercise of this power nothing should be left to discretion which may safely be regulated by law, and it is of high importance to restrain as far as possible the stimulus of personal interests in public elections. Considering the great increase which has been made in public offices in the last quarter of a century and the probability of further increase, we incur the hazard of witnessing violent political contests, directed too often to the single object of retaining office by those who are in or obtaining it by those who are out. Under the influence of these convictions I shall cordially concur in any constitutional measure for regulating and, by regulating, restraining the power of removal.

I suggest for your consideration the propriety of making without further delay some specific application of the funds derived under the will of Mr. Smithson, of England, for the diffusion of knowledge, and which have heretofore been vested in public stocks until such time as Congress should think proper to give them a specific direction. Nor will you, I feel confident, permit any abatement of the principal of the legacy to be made should it turn out that the stocks in which the investments have been made have undergone a depreciation.

In conclusion I commend to your care the interests of this District, for which you are the exclusive legislators. Considering that this city is the residence of the Government and for a large part of the year of Congress, and considering also the great cost of the public buildings and the propriety of affording them at all times careful protection, it seems not unreasonable that Congress should contribute toward the expense of an efficient police.

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State of the Union Address  
John Tyler  
December 6, 1842

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

We have continued reason to express our profound gratitude to the Great Creator of All Things for numberless benefits conferred upon us as a people. Blessed with genial seasons, the husbandman has his garners filled with abundance, and the necessaries of life, not to speak of its luxuries, abound in every direction. While in some other nations steady and industrious labor can hardly find the means of subsistence, the greatest evil which we have to encounter is a surplus of production beyond the home demand, which seeks, and with difficulty finds, a partial market in other regions. The health of the country, with partial exceptions, has for the past year been well preserved, and under their free and wise institutions the United States are rapidly advancing toward the consummation of the high destiny which an overruling Providence seems to have marked out for them. Exempt from domestic convulsion and at peace with all the world, we are left free to consult as to the best means of securing and advancing the

happiness of the people. Such are the circumstances under which you now assemble in your respective chambers and which should lead us to unite in praise and thanksgiving to that great Being who made us and who preserves us as a nation.

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I congratulate you, fellow-citizens, on the happy change in the aspect of our foreign affairs since my last annual message. Causes of complaint at that time existed between the United States and Great Britain which, attended by irritating circumstances, threatened most seriously the public peace. The difficulty of adjusting amicably the questions at issue between the two countries was in no small degree augmented by the lapse of time since they had their origin. The opinions entertained by the Executive on several of the leading topics in dispute were frankly set forth in the message at the opening of your late session. The appointment of a special minister by Great Britain to the United States with power to negotiate upon most of the points of difference indicated a desire on her part amicably to adjust them, and that minister was met by the Executive in the same spirit which had dictated his mission. The treaty consequent thereon having been duly ratified by the two Governments, a copy, together with the correspondence which accompanied it, is herewith communicated. I trust that whilst you may see in it nothing objectionable, it may be the means of preserving for an indefinite period the amicable relations happily existing between the two Governments. The question of peace or war between the United States and Great Britain is a question of the deepest interest, not only to themselves, but to the civilized world, since it is scarcely possible that a war could exist between them without endangering the peace of Christendom. The immediate effect of the treaty upon ourselves will be felt in the security afforded to mercantile enterprise, which, no longer apprehensive of interruption, adventures its speculations in the most distant seas, and, freighted with the diversified productions of every land, returns to bless our own. There is nothing in the treaty which in the slightest degree compromises the honor or dignity of either nation. Next to the settlement of the boundary line, which must always be a matter of difficulty between states as between individuals, the question which seemed to threaten the greatest embarrassment was that connected with the African slave trade.

By the tenth article of the treaty of Ghent it was expressly declared that—

Whereas the traffic in slaves is irreconcilable with the principles of humanity and justice, and whereas both His Majesty and the United States are desirous of continuing their efforts to promote its entire abolition, it is hereby agreed that both the contracting parties shall use their best endeavors to accomplish so desirable an object.



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In the enforcement of the laws and treaty stipulations of Great Britain a practice had threatened to grow up on the part of its cruisers of subjecting to visitation ships sailing under the American flag, which, while it seriously involved our maritime rights, would subject to vexation a branch of our trade which was daily increasing, and which required the fostering care of Government. And although Lord Aberdeen in his correspondence with the American envoys at London expressly disclaimed all right to detain an American ship on the high seas, even if found with a cargo of slaves on board, and restricted the British pretension to a mere claim to visit and inquire, yet it could not well be discerned by the Executive of the United States how such visit and inquiry could be made without detention on the voyage and consequent interruption to the trade. It was regarded as the right of search presented only in a new form and expressed in different words, and I therefore felt it to be my duty distinctly to declare in my annual message to Congress that no such concession could be made, and that the United States had both the will and the ability to enforce their own laws and to protect their flag from being used for purposes wholly forbidden by those laws and obnoxious to the moral censure of the world. Taking the message as his letter of instructions, our then minister at Paris felt himself required to assume the same ground in a remonstrance which he felt it to be his duty to present to Mr. Guizot, and through him to the King of the French, against what has been called the "quintuple treaty;" and his conduct in this respect met with the approval of this Government. In close conformity with these views the eighth article of the treaty was framed; which provides "that each nation shall keep afloat in the African seas a force not less than 80 guns, to act separately and apart, under instructions from their respective Governments, and for the enforcement of their respective laws and obligations." From this it will be seen that the ground assumed in the message has been fully maintained at the same time that the stipulations of the treaty of Ghent are to be carried out in good faith by the two countries, and that all pretense is removed for interference with our commerce for any purpose whatever by a foreign government. While, therefore, the United States have been standing up for the freedom of the seas, they have not thought proper to make that a pretext for avoiding a fulfillment of their treaty stipulations or a ground for giving countenance to a trade reprobated by our laws. A similar arrangement by the other great powers could not fail to sweep from the ocean the slave trade without the interpolation of any new principle into the maritime code. We may be permitted to hope that the example thus set will be followed by some if not all of them. We thereby also afford suitable protection to the fair trader in those seas, thus fulfilling at the same time the dictates of a sound policy and complying with the claims of justice and humanity.

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It would have furnished additional cause for congratulation if the treaty could have embraced all subjects calculated in future to lead to a misunderstanding between the two Governments. The Territory of the United States commonly called the Oregon Territory, lying on the Pacific Ocean north of the forty-second degree of latitude, to a portion of which Great Britain lays claim, begins to attract the attention of our fellow-citizens, and the tide of population which has reclaimed what was so lately an unbroken wilderness in more contiguous regions is preparing to flow over those vast districts which stretch from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. In advance of the acquirement of individual rights to these lands, sound policy dictates that every effort should be resorted to by the two Governments to settle their respective claims. It became manifest at an early hour of the late negotiations that any attempt for the time being satisfactorily to determine those rights would lead to a protracted discussion, which might embrace in its failure other more pressing matters, and the Executive did not regard it as proper to waive all the advantages of an honorable adjustment of other difficulties of great magnitude and importance because this, not so immediately pressing, stood in the way. Although the difficulty referred to may not for several years to come involve the peace of the two countries, yet I shall not delay to urge on Great Britain the importance of its early settlement. Nor will other matters of commercial importance to the two countries be overlooked, and I have good reason to believe that it will comport with the policy of England, as it does with that of the United States, to seize upon this moment, when most of the causes of irritation have passed away, to cement the peace and amity of the two countries by wisely removing all grounds of probable future collision.

With the other powers of Europe our relations continue on the most amicable footing. Treaties now existing with them should be rigidly observed, and every opportunity compatible with the interests of the United States should be seized upon to enlarge the basis of commercial intercourse. Peace with all the world is the true foundation of our policy, which can only be rendered permanent by the practice of equal and impartial justice to all. Our great desire should be to enter only into that rivalry which looks to the general good in the cultivation of the sciences, the enlargement of the field for the exercise of the mechanical arts, and the spread of commerce—that great civilizer—to every land and sea. Carefully abstaining from interference in all questions exclusively referring themselves to the political interests of Europe, we may be permitted to hope an equal exemption from the interference of European Governments in what relates to the States of the American continent.

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On the 23d of April last the commissioners on the part of the United States under the convention with the Mexican Republic of the 11th of April, 1839, made to the proper Department a final report in relation to the proceedings of the commission. From this it appears that the total amount awarded to the claimants by the commissioners and the umpire appointed under that convention was \$2,026,079.68. The arbiter having considered that his functions were required by the convention to terminate at the same time with those of the commissioners, returned to the board, undecided for want of time, claims which had been allowed by the American commissioners to the amount of \$928,620.88. Other claims, in which the amount sought to be recovered was \$3,336,837.05, were submitted to the board too late for its consideration. The minister of the United States at Mexico has been duly authorized to make demand for payment of the awards according to the terms of the convention and the provisions of the act of Congress of the 12th of June, 1840. He has also been instructed to communicate to that Government the expectations of the Government of the United States in relation to those claims which were not disposed of according to the provisions of the convention, and all others of citizens of the United States against the Mexican Government. He has also been furnished with other instructions, to be followed by him in case the Government of Mexico should not find itself in a condition to make present payment of the amount of the awards in specie or its equivalent.

I am happy to be able to say that information which is esteemed favorable both to a just satisfaction of the awards and a reasonable provision for other claims has been recently received from Mr. Thompson, the minister of the United States, who has promptly and efficiently executed the instructions of his Government in regard to this important subject.

The citizens of the United States who accompanied the late Texan expedition to Santa Fe, and who were wrongfully taken and held as prisoners of war in Mexico, have all been liberated.

A correspondence has taken place between the Department of State and the Mexican minister of foreign affairs upon the complaint of Mexico that citizens of the United States were permitted to give aid to the inhabitants of Texas in the war existing between her and that Republic. Copies of this correspondence are herewith communicated to Congress, together with copies of letters on the same subject addressed to the diplomatic corps at Mexico by the American minister and the Mexican secretary of state.

Mexico has thought proper to reciprocate the mission of the United States to that Government by accrediting to this a minister of the same rank as that of the representative of the United States in Mexico. From the circumstances connected with his mission favorable results are anticipated from it. It is so obviously for the interest of both countries as neighbors and friends that all just causes of mutual dissatisfaction should be removed that it is to be hoped neither will omit or delay the employment of any practicable and honorable means to accomplish that end.

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The affairs pending between this Government and several others of the States of this hemisphere formerly under the dominion of Spain have again within the past year been materially obstructed by the military revolutions and conflicts in those countries.

The ratifications of the treaty between the United States and the Republic of Ecuador of the 13th of June, 1839, have been exchanged, and that instrument has been duly promulgated on the part of this Government. Copies are now communicated to Congress with a view to enable that body to make such changes in the laws applicable to our intercourse with that Republic as may be deemed requisite.

Provision has been made by the Government of Chile for the payment of the claim on account of the illegal detention of the brig *Warrior* at Coquimbo in 1820. This Government has reason to expect that other claims of our citizens against Chile will be hastened to a final and satisfactory close.

The Empire of Brazil has not been altogether exempt from those convulsions which so constantly afflict the neighboring republics. Disturbances which recently broke out are, however, now understood to be quieted. But these occurrences, by threatening the stability of the governments, or by causing incessant and violent changes in them or in the persons who administer them, tend greatly to retard provisions for a just indemnity for losses and injuries suffered by individual subjects or citizens of other states. The Government of the United States will feel it to be its duty, however, to consent to no delay not unavoidable in making satisfaction for wrongs and injuries sustained by its own citizens. Many years having in some cases elapsed, a decisive and effectual course of proceeding will be demanded of the respective governments against whom claims have been preferred.

The vexatious, harassing, and expensive war which so long prevailed with the Indian tribes inhabiting the peninsula of Florida has happily been terminated, whereby our Army has been relieved from a service of the most disagreeable character and the Treasury from a large expenditure. Some casual outbreaks may occur, such as are incident to the close proximity of border settlers and the Indians, but these, as in all other cases, may be left to the care of the local authorities, aided when occasion may require by the forces of the United States. A sufficient number of troops will be maintained in Florida so long as the remotest apprehensions of danger shall exist, yet their duties will be limited rather to the garrisoning of the necessary posts than to the maintenance of active hostilities. It is to be hoped that a territory so long retarded in its growth will now speedily recover from the evils incident to a protracted war, exhibiting in the increased amount of its rich productions true evidences of returning wealth and prosperity. By the practice of rigid justice toward the numerous Indian tribes residing within our territorial

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limits and the exercise of a parental vigilance over their interests, protecting them against fraud and intrusion, and at the same time using every proper expedient to introduce among them the arts of civilized life, we may fondly hope not only to wear them from their love of war, but to inspire them with a love for peace and all its avocations. With several of the tribes great progress in civilizing them has already been made. The schoolmaster and the missionary are found side by side, and the remnants of what were once numerous and powerful nations may yet be preserved as the builders up of a new name for themselves and their posterity.

The balance in the Treasury on the 1st of January, 1842, exclusive of the amount deposited with the States, trust funds, and indemnities, was \$230,483.68. The receipts into the Treasury during the three first quarters of the present year from all sources amount to \$26,616,593.78, of which more than fourteen millions were received from customs and about one million from the public lands. The receipts for the fourth quarter are estimated at nearly eight millions, of which four millions are expected from customs and three millions and a half from loans and Treasury notes. The expenditures of the first three quarters of the present year exceed twenty-six millions, and those estimated for the fourth quarter amount to about eight millions; and it is anticipated there will be a deficiency of half a million on the 1st of January next, but that the amount of outstanding warrants (estimated at \$800,000) will leave an actual balance of about \$224,000 in the Treasury. Among the expenditures of this year are more than eight millions for the public debt and about \$600,000 on account of the distribution to the States of the proceeds of sales of the public lands.

The present tariff of duties was somewhat hastily and hurriedly passed near the close of the late session of Congress. That it should have defects can therefore be surprising to no one. To remedy such defects as may be found to exist in any of its numerous provisions will not fail to claim your serious attention. It may well merit inquiry whether the exaction of all duties in cash does not call for the introduction of a system which has proved highly beneficial in countries where it has been adopted. I refer to the warehousing system. The first and most prominent effect which it would produce would be to protect the market alike against redundant or deficient supplies of foreign fabrics, both of which in the long run are injurious as well to the manufacturer as the importer. The quantity of goods in store being at all times readily known, it would enable the importer with an approach to accuracy to ascertain the actual wants of the market and to regulate himself accordingly. If, however, he should fall into error by importing an excess above the public wants, he could readily correct its evils by availing himself of the benefits and advantages of the system thus established. In the storehouse the goods imported would await the demand of the market and their issues would be governed by the fixed principles of demand and supply. Thus an approximation would be made to a steadiness and uniformity of price, which if attainable would conduce to the decided advantage of mercantile and mechanical operations.

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The apprehension may be well entertained that without something to ameliorate the rigor of cash payments the entire import trade may fall into the hands of a few wealthy capitalists in this country and in Europe. The small importer, who requires all the money he can raise for investments abroad, and who can but ill afford to pay the lowest duty, would have to subduct in advance a portion of his funds in order to pay the duties, and would lose the interest upon the amount thus paid for all the time the goods might remain unsold, which might absorb his profits. The rich capitalist, abroad as well as at home, would thus possess after a short time an almost exclusive monopoly of the import trade, and laws designed for the benefit of all would thus operate for the benefit of a few—a result wholly uncongenial with the spirit of our institutions and antirepublican in all its tendencies. The warehousing system would enable the importer to watch the market and to select his own time for offering his goods for sale. A profitable portion of the carrying trade in articles entered for the benefit of drawback must also be most seriously affected without the adoption of some expedient to relieve the cash system. The warehousing system would afford that relief, since the carrier would have a safe recourse to the public storehouses and might without advancing the duty reship within some reasonable period to foreign ports. A further effect of the measure would be to supersede the system of drawbacks, thereby effectually protecting the Government against fraud, as the right of debenture would not attach to goods after their withdrawal from the public stores.

In revising the existing tariff of duties, should you deem it proper to do so at your present session, I can only repeat the suggestions and recommendations which upon several occasions I have heretofore felt it to be my duty to offer to Congress. The great primary and controlling interest of the American people is union—union not only in the mere forms of government, forms which may be broken, but union rounded in an attachment of States and individuals for each other. This union in sentiment and feeling can only be preserved by the adoption of that course of policy which, neither giving exclusive benefits to some nor imposing unnecessary burthens upon others, shall consult the interests of all by pursuing a course of moderation and thereby seeking to harmonize public opinion, and causing the people everywhere to feel and to know that the Government is careful of the interests of all alike. Nor is there any subject in regard to which moderation, connected with a wise discrimination, is more necessary than in the imposition of duties on imports. Whether reference be had to revenue, the primary object in the imposition of taxes, or to the incidents which necessarily flow from their imposition, this is entirely true. Extravagant duties defeat their end and object, not only by exciting in the public mind an hostility to



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the manufacturing interests, but by inducing a system of smuggling on an extensive scale and the practice of every manner of fraud upon the revenue, which the utmost vigilance of Government can not effectually suppress. An opposite course of policy would be attended by results essentially different, of which every interest of society, and none more than those of the manufacturer, would reap important advantages. Among the most striking of its benefits would be that derived from the general acquiescence of the country in its support and the consequent permanency and stability which would be given to all the operations of industry. It can not be too often repeated that no system of legislation can be wise which is fluctuating and uncertain. No interest can thrive under it. The prudent capitalist will never adventure his capital in manufacturing establishments, or in any other leading pursuit of life, if there exists a state of uncertainty as to whether the Government will repeal to-morrow what it has enacted to-day. Fitful profits, however high, if threatened with a ruinous reduction by a vacillating policy on the part of Government, will scarcely tempt him to trust the money which he has acquired by a life of labor upon the uncertain adventure. I therefore, in the spirit of conciliation, and influenced by no other desire than to rescue the great interests of the country from the vortex of political contention, and in the discharge of the high and solemn duties of the place which I now occupy, recommend moderate duties, imposed with a wise discrimination as to their several objects, as being not only most likely to be durable, but most advantageous to every interest of society.

The report of the Secretary of the War Department exhibits a very full and satisfactory account of the various and important interests committed to the charge of that officer. It is particularly gratifying to find that the expenditures for the military service are greatly reduced in amount—that a strict system of economy has been introduced into the service and the abuses of past years greatly reformed. The fortifications on our maritime frontier have been prosecuted with much vigor, and at many points our defenses are in a very considerable state of forwardness. The suggestions in reference to the establishment of means of communication with our territories on the Pacific and to the surveys so essential to a knowledge of the resources of the intermediate country are entitled to the most favorable consideration. While I would propose nothing inconsistent with friendly negotiations to settle the extent of our claims in that region, yet a prudent forecast points out the necessity of such measures as may enable us to maintain our rights. The arrangements made for preserving our neutral relations on the boundary between us and Texas and keeping in check the Indians in that quarter will be maintained so long as circumstances may require. For several years angry contentions have grown out of the disposition

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directed by law to be made of the mineral lands held by the Government in several of the States. The Government is constituted the landlord, and the Citizens of the States wherein lie the lands are its tenants. The relation is an unwise one, and it would be much more conducive of the public interest that a sale of the lands should be made than that they should remain in their present condition. The supply of the ore would be more abundantly and certainly furnished when to be drawn from the enterprise and the industry of the proprietor than under the present system.

The recommendations of the Secretary in regard to the improvements of the Western waters and certain prominent harbors on the Lakes merit, and I doubt not will receive, your serious attention. The great importance of these subjects to the prosperity of the extensive region referred to and the security of the whole country in time of war can not escape observation. The losses of life and property which annually occur in the navigation of the Mississippi alone because of the dangerous obstructions in the river make a loud demand upon Congress for the adoption of efficient measures for their removal.

The report of the Secretary of the Navy will bring you acquainted with that important branch of the public defenses. Considering the already vast and daily increasing commerce of the country, apart from the exposure to hostile inroad of an extended seaboard, all that relates to the Navy is calculated to excite particular attention. Whatever tends to add to its efficiency without entailing unnecessary charges upon the Treasury is well worthy of your serious consideration. It will be seen that while an appropriation exceeding by more than a million the appropriations of the current year is asked by the Secretary, yet that in this sum is proposed to be included \$400,000 for the purchase of clothing, which when once expended will be annually reimbursed by the sale of the clothes, and will thus constitute a perpetual fund without any new appropriation to the same object. To this may also be added \$50,000 asked to cover the arrearages of past years and \$250,000 in order to maintain a competent squadron on the coast of Africa; all of which when deducted will reduce the expenditures nearly within the limits of those of the current year. While, however, the expenditures will thus remain very nearly the same as of the antecedent year, it is proposed to add greatly to the operations of the marine, and in lieu of only 25 ships in commission and but little in the way of building, to keep with the same expenditure 41 vessels afloat and to build 12 ships of a small class.

A strict system of accountability is established and great pains are taken to insure industry, fidelity, and economy in every department of duty. Experiments have been instituted to test the quality of various materials, particularly copper, iron, and coal, so as to prevent fraud and imposition.



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It will appear by the report of the Postmaster-General that the great point which for several years has been so much desired has during the current year been fully accomplished. The expenditures of the Department for current service have been brought within its income without lessening its general usefulness. There has been an increase of revenue equal to \$166,000 for the year 1842 over that of 1841, without, as it is believed, any addition having been made to the number of letters and newspapers transmitted through the mails. The post-office laws have been honestly administered, and fidelity has been observed in accounting for and paying over by the subordinates of the Department the moneys which have been received. For the details of the service I refer you to the report.

I flatter myself that the exhibition thus made of the condition of the public administration will serve to convince you that every proper attention has been paid to the interests of the country by those who have been called to the heads of the different Departments. The reduction in the annual expenditures of the Government already accomplished furnishes a sure evidence that economy in the application of the public moneys is regarded as a paramount duty.

At peace with all the world, the personal liberty of the citizen sacredly maintained and his rights secured under political institutions deriving all their authority from the direct sanction of the people, with a soil fertile almost beyond example and a country blessed with every diversity of climate and production, what remains to be done in order to advance the happiness and prosperity of such a people? Under ordinary circumstances this inquiry could readily be answered. The best that probably could be done for a people inhabiting such a country would be to fortify their peace and security in the prosecution of their various pursuits by guarding them against invasion from without and violence from within. The rest for the greater part might be left to their own energy and enterprise. The chief embarrassments which at the moment exhibit themselves have arisen from overaction, and the most difficult task which remains to be accomplished is that of correcting and overcoming its effects. Between the years 1833 and 1838 additions were made to bank capital and bank issues, in the form of notes designed for circulation, to an extent enormously great. The question seemed to be not how the best currency could be provided, but in what manner the greatest amount of bank paper could be put in circulation. Thus a vast amount of what was called money—since for the time being it answered the purposes of money—was thrown upon the country, an overissue which was attended, as a necessary consequence, by an extravagant increase of the prices of all articles of property, the spread of a speculative mania all over the country, and has finally ended in a general indebtedness on the part of States and individuals, the prostration of public

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and private credit, a depreciation in the market value of real and personal estate, and has left large districts of country almost entirely without any circulating medium. In view of the fact that in 1830 the whole bank-note circulation within the United States amounted to but \$61,323,898, according to the Treasury statements, and that an addition had been made thereto of the enormous sum of \$88,000,000 in seven years (the circulation on the 1st of January, 1837, being stated at \$149,185,890), aided by the great facilities afforded in obtaining loans from European capitalists, who were seized with the same speculative mania which prevailed in the United States, and the large importations of funds from abroad—the result of stock sales and loans—no one can be surprised at the apparent but unsubstantial state of prosperity which everywhere prevailed over the land; and as little cause of surprise should be felt at the present prostration of everything and the ruin which has befallen so many of our fellow-citizens in the sudden withdrawal from circulation of so large an amount of bank issues since 1837—exceeding, as is believed, the amount added to the paper currency for a similar period antecedent to 1837—it ceases to be a matter of astonishment that such extensive shipwreck should have been made of private fortunes or that difficulties should exist in meeting their engagements on the part of the debtor States; apart from which, if there be taken into account the immense losses sustained in the dishonor of numerous banks, it is less a matter of surprise that insolvency should have visited many of our fellow-citizens than that so many should have escaped the blighting influences of the times.

In the solemn conviction of these truths and with an ardent desire to meet the pressing necessities of the country, I felt it to be my duty to cause to be submitted to you at the commencement of your last session the plan of an exchequer, the whole power and duty of maintaining which in purity and vigor was to be exercised by the representatives of the people and the States, and therefore virtually by the people themselves. It was proposed to place it under the control and direction of a Treasury board to consist of three commissioners, whose duty it should be to see that the law of its creation was faithfully executed and that the great end of supplying a paper medium of exchange at all times convertible into gold and silver should be attained. The board thus constituted was given as much permanency as could be imparted to it without endangering the proper share of responsibility which should attach to all public agents. In order to insure all the advantages of a well-matured experience, the commissioners were to hold their offices for the respective periods of two, four, and six years, thereby securing at all times in the management of the exchequer the services of two men of experience; and to place them in a condition to exercise perfect independence



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of mind and action it was provided that their removal should only take place for actual incapacity or infidelity to the trust, and to be followed by the President with an exposition of the causes of such removal, should it occur. It was proposed to establish subordinate boards in each of the States, under the same restrictions and limitations of the power of removal, which, with the central board, should receive, safely keep, and disburse the public moneys. And in order to furnish a sound paper medium of exchange the exchequer should retain of the revenues of the Government a sum not to exceed \$5,000,000 in specie, to be set apart as required by its operations, and to pay the public creditor at his own option either in specie or Treasury notes of denominations not less than \$5 nor exceeding \$100, which notes should be redeemed at the several places of issue, and to be receivable at all times and everywhere in payment of Government dues, with a restraint upon such issue of bills that the same should not exceed the maximum of \$15,000,000. In order to guard against all the hazards incident to fluctuations in trade, the Secretary of the Treasury was invested with authority to issue \$5,000,000 of Government stock, should the same at any time be regarded as necessary in order to place beyond hazard the prompt redemption of the bills which might be thrown into circulation; thus in fact making the issue of \$15,000,000 of exchequer bills rest substantially on \$10,000,000, and keeping in circulation never more than one and one-half dollars for every dollar in specie. When to this it is added that the bills are not only everywhere receivable in Government dues, but that the Government itself would be bound for their ultimate redemption, no rational doubt can exist that the paper which the exchequer would furnish would readily enter into general circulation and be maintained at all times at or above par with gold and silver, thereby realizing the great want of the age and fulfilling the wishes of the people. In order to reimburse the Government the expenses of the plan, it was proposed to invest the exchequer with the limited authority to deal in bills of exchange (unless prohibited by the State in which an agency might be situated) having only thirty days to run and resting on a fair and bona fide basis. The legislative will on this point might be so plainly announced as to avoid all pretext for partiality or favoritism. It was furthermore proposed to invest this Treasury agent with authority to receive on deposit to a limited amount the specie funds of individuals and to grant certificates therefor to be redeemed on presentation, under the idea, which is believed to be well founded, that such certificates would come in aid of the exchequer bills in supplying a safe and ample paper circulation. Or if in place of the contemplated dealings in exchange the exchequer should be authorized not only to exchange its bills for actual deposits of specie, but, for specie



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or its equivalent, to sell drafts, charging therefor a small but reasonable premium, I can not doubt but that the benefits of the law would be speedily manifested in the revival of the credit, trade, and business of the whole country. Entertaining this opinion, it becomes my duty to urge its adoption upon Congress by reference to the strongest considerations of the public interests, with such alterations in its details as Congress may in its wisdom see fit to make.

I am well aware that this proposed alteration and amendment of the laws establishing the Treasury Department has encountered various objections, and that among others it has been proclaimed a Government bank of fearful and dangerous import. It is proposed to confer upon it no extraordinary power. It purports to do no more than pay the debts of the Government with the redeemable paper of the Government, in which respect it accomplishes precisely what the Treasury does daily at this time in issuing to the public creditors the Treasury notes which under law it is authorized to issue. It has no resemblance to an ordinary bank, as it furnishes no profits to private stockholders and lends no capital to individuals. If it be objected to as a Government bank and the objection be available, then should all the laws in relation to the Treasury be repealed and the capacity of the Government to collect what is due to it or pay what it owes be abrogated.

This is the chief purpose of the proposed exchequer, and surely if in the accomplishment of a purpose so essential it affords a sound circulating medium to the country and facilities to trade it should be regarded as no slight recommendation of it to public consideration. Properly guarded by the provisions of law, it can run into no dangerous evil, nor can any abuse arise under it but such as the Legislature itself will be answerable for if it be tolerated, since it is but the creature of the law and is susceptible at all times of modification, amendment, or repeal at the pleasure of Congress. I know that it has been objected that the system would be liable to be abused by the Legislature, by whom alone it could be abused, in the party conflicts of the day; that such abuse would manifest itself in a change of the law which would authorize an excessive issue of paper for the purpose of inflating prices and winning popular favor. To that it may be answered that the ascription of such a motive to Congress is altogether gratuitous and inadmissible. The theory of our institutions would lead us to a different conclusion. But a perfect security against a proceeding so reckless would be found to exist in the very nature of things. The political party which should be so blind to the true interests of the country as to resort to such an expedient would inevitably meet with final overthrow in the fact that the moment the paper ceased to be convertible into specie or otherwise promptly redeemed it would become worthless, and would in the end dishonor

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the Government, involve the people in ruin and such political party in hopeless disgrace. At the same time, such a view involves the utter impossibility of furnishing any currency other than that of the precious metals; for if the Government itself can not forego the temptation of excessive paper issues what reliance can be placed in corporations upon whom the temptations of individual aggrandizement would most strongly operate? The people would have to blame none but themselves for any injury that might arise from a course so reckless, since their agents would be the wrongdoers and they the passive spectators.

There can be but three kinds of public currency—first, gold and silver; second, the paper of State institutions; or, third, a representative of the precious metals provided by the General Government or under its authority. The subtreasury system rejected the last in any form, and as it was believed that no reliance could be placed on the issues of local institutions for the purposes of general circulation it necessarily and unavoidably adopted specie as the exclusive currency for its own use; and this must ever be the case unless one of the other kinds be used. The choice in the present state of public sentiment lies between an exclusive specie currency on the one hand and Government issues of some kind on the other. That these issues can not be made by a chartered institution is supposed to be conclusively settled. They must be made, then, directly by Government agents. For several years past they have been thus made in the form of Treasury notes, and have answered a valuable purpose. Their usefulness has been limited by their being transient and temporary; their ceasing to bear interest at given periods necessarily causes their speedy return and thus restricts their range of circulation, and being used only in the disbursements of Government they can not reach those points where they are most required. By rendering their use permanent, to the moderate extent already mentioned, by offering no inducement for their return and by exchanging them for coin and other values, they will constitute to a certain extent the general currency so much needed to maintain the internal trade of the country. And this is the exchequer plan so far as it may operate in furnishing a currency.

I can not forego the occasion to urge its importance to the credit of the Government in a financial point of view. The great necessity of resorting to every proper and becoming expedient in order to place the Treasury on a footing of the highest respectability is entirely obvious. The credit of the Government may be regarded as the very soul of the Government itself—a principle of vitality without which all its movements are languid and all its operations embarrassed. In this spirit the Executive felt itself bound by the most imperative sense of duty to submit to Congress at its last session the propriety of making a specific pledge of the land fund as the

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basis for the negotiation of the loans authorized to be contracted. I then thought that such an application of the public domain would without doubt have placed at the command of the Government ample funds to relieve the Treasury from the temporary embarrassments under which it labored. American credit has suffered a considerable shock in Europe from the large indebtedness of the States and the temporary inability of some of them to meet the interest on their debts. The utter and disastrous prostration of the United States Bank of Pennsylvania had contributed largely to increase the sentiment of distrust by reason of the loss and ruin sustained by the holders of its stock, a large portion of whom were foreigners and many of whom were alike ignorant of our political organization and of our actual responsibilities.

It was the anxious desire of the Executive that in the effort to negotiate the loan abroad the American negotiator might be able to point the money lender to the fund mortgaged for the redemption of the principal and interest of any loan he might contract, and thereby vindicate the Government from all suspicion of bad faith or inability to meet its engagements. Congress differed from the Executive in this view of the subject. It became, nevertheless, the duty of the Executive to resort to every expedient in its power to do so.

After a failure in the American market a citizen of high character and talent was sent to Europe, with no better success; and thus the mortifying spectacle has been presented of the inability of this Government to obtain a loan so small as not in the whole to amount to more than one-fourth of its ordinary annual income, at a time when the Governments of Europe, although involved in debt and with their subjects heavily burthened with taxation, readily obtained loans of any amount at a greatly reduced rate of interest. It would be unprofitable to look further into this anomalous state of things, but I can not conclude without adding that for a Government which has paid off its debts of two wars with the largest maritime power of Europe, and now owing a debt which is almost next to nothing when compared with its boundless resources—a Government the strongest in the world, because emanating from the popular will and firmly rooted in the affections of a great and free people, and whose fidelity to its engagements has never been questioned—for such a Government to have tendered to the capitalists of other countries an opportunity for a small investment in its stock, and yet to have failed, implies either the most unfounded distrust in its good faith or a purpose to obtain which the course pursued is the most fatal which could have been adopted. It has now become obvious to all men that the Government must look to its own means for supplying its wants, and it is consoling to know that these means are altogether adequate for the object. The exchequer, if adopted, will greatly aid in bringing about this result.

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Upon what I regard as a well-rounded supposition that its bills would be readily sought for by the public creditors and that the issue would in a short time reach the maximum of \$15,000,000, it is obvious that \$10,000,000 would thereby be added to the available means of the Treasury without cost or charge. Nor can I fail to urge the great and beneficial effects which would be produced in aid of all the active pursuits of life. Its effects upon the solvent State banks, while it would force into liquidation those of an opposite character through its weekly settlements, would be highly beneficial; and with the advantages of a sound currency the restoration of confidence and credit would follow with a numerous train of blessings. My convictions are most strong that these benefits would flow from the adoption of this measure; but if the result should be adverse there is this security in connection with it—that the law creating it may be repealed at the pleasure of the Legislature without the slightest implication of its good faith.

I recommend to Congress to take into consideration the propriety of reimbursing a fine imposed on General Jackson at New Orleans at the time of the attack and defense of that city, and paid by him. Without designing any reflection on the judicial tribunal which imposed the fine, the remission at this day may be regarded as not unjust or inexpedient. The voice of the civil authority was heard amidst the glitter of arms and obeyed by those who held the sword, thereby giving additional luster to a memorable military achievement. If the laws were offended, their majesty was fully vindicated; and although the penalty incurred and paid is worthy of little regard in a pecuniary point of view, it can hardly be doubted that it would be gratifying to the war-worn veteran, now in retirement and in the winter of his days, to be relieved from the circumstances in which that judgment placed him. There are cases in which public functionaries may be called on to weigh the public interest against their own personal hazards, and if the civil law be violated from praiseworthy motives or an overruling sense of public danger and public necessity punishment may well be restrained within that limit which asserts and maintains the authority of the law and the subjection of the military to the civil power. The defense of New Orleans, while it saved a city from the hands of the enemy, placed the name of General Jackson among those of the greatest captains of the age and illustrated one of the brightest pages of our history. Now that the causes of excitement existing at the time have ceased to operate, it is believed that the remission of this fine and whatever of gratification that remission might cause the eminent man who incurred and paid it would be in accordance with the general feeling and wishes of the American people.

I have thus, fellow-citizens, acquitted myself of my duty under the Constitution by laying before you as succinctly as I have been able the state of the Union and by inviting your attention to measures of much importance to the country. The executive will most zealously unite its efforts with those of the legislative department in the accomplishment

of all that is required to relieve the wants of a common constituency or elevate the destinies of a beloved country.



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State of the Union Address  
John Tyler  
December 1843

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

If any people ever had cause to render up thanks to the Supreme Being for parental care and protection extended to them in all the trials and difficulties to which they have been from time to time exposed, we certainly are that people. From the first settlement of our forefathers on this continent, through the dangers attendant upon the occupation of a savage wilderness, through a long period of colonial dependence, through the War of the Revolution, in the wisdom which led to the adoption of the existing forms of republican government, in the hazards incident to a war subsequently waged with one of the most powerful nations of the earth, in the increase of our population, in the spread of the arts and sciences, and in the strength and durability conferred on political institutions emanating from the people and sustained by their will, the superintendence of an overruling Providence has been plainly visible. As preparatory, therefore, to entering once more upon the high duties of legislation, it becomes us humbly to acknowledge our dependence upon Him as our guide and protector and to implore a continuance of His parental watchfulness over our beloved country. We have new cause for the expression of our gratitude in the preservation of the health of our fellow-citizens, with some partial and local exceptions, during the past season, for the abundance with which the earth has yielded up its fruits to the labors of the husbandman, for the renewed activity which has been imparted to commerce, for the revival of trade in all its departments, for the increased rewards attendant on the exercise of the mechanic arts, for the continued growth of our population and the rapidly reviving prosperity of the whole country. I shall be permitted to exchange congratulations with you, gentlemen of the two Houses of Congress, on these auspicious circumstances, and to assure you in advance of my ready disposition to concur with you in the adoption of all such measures as shall be calculated to increase the happiness of our constituents and to advance the glory of our common country.

Since the last adjournment of Congress the Executive has relaxed no effort to render indestructible the relations of amity which so happily exist between the United States and other countries. The treaty lately concluded with Great Britain has tended greatly to increase the good understanding which a reciprocity of interests is calculated to encourage, and it is most ardently to be hoped that nothing may transpire to interrupt the relations of amity which it is so obviously the policy of both nations to cultivate. A question of much importance still remains to be adjusted between them. The territorial limits of the two countries relation to what is commonly known as the Oregon Territory still remain in dispute. The

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United States would be at all times indisposed to aggrandize itself at the expense of any other nation; but while they would be restrained by principles of honor, which should govern the conduct of nations as well as that of individuals, from setting up a demand for territory which does not belong to them, they would as unwillingly sent to a surrender of their rights. After the most rigid and, as far as practicable, unbiased examination of the subject, the United States have always contended that their rights appertain to the entire region of country lying on the Pacific and embraced within 42° and 54° 40' of north latitude. This claim being controverted by Great Britain, those who have preceded the present Executive—actuated, no doubt, by an earnest desire to adjust the matter upon terms mutually satisfactory to both countries—have caused to be submitted to the British Government propositions for settlement and final adjustment, which, however, have not proved heretofore acceptable to it. Our minister at London has, under instructions, again brought the subject to the consideration of that Government, and while nothing will be done to compromise the rights or honor of the United States, every proper expedient will be resorted to in order to bring the negotiation now in the progress of resumption to a speedy and happy termination. In the meantime it is proper to remark that many of our citizens are either already established in the Territory or are on their way thither for the purpose of forming permanent settlements, while others are preparing to follow; and in view of these facts I must repeat the recommendation contained in previous messages for the establishment of military posts at such places on the line of travel as will furnish security and protection to our hardy adventurers against hostile tribes of Indians inhabiting those extensive regions. Our laws should also follow them, so modified as the circumstances of the case may seem to require. Under the influence of our free system of government new republics are destined to spring up at no distant day on the shores of the Pacific similar in policy and in feeling to those existing on this side of the Rocky Mountains, and giving a wider and more extensive spread to the principles of civil and religious liberty.

I am happy to inform you that the cases which have from time to time arisen of the detention of American vessels by British cruisers on the coast of Africa under pretense of being engaged in the slave trade have been placed in a fair train of adjustment. In the case of the William and Francis full satisfaction will be allowed. In the cases of the Tygris and Seamew the British Government admits that satisfaction is due. In the case of the Jones the sum accruing from the sale of that vessel and cargo will be paid to the owners, while I can not but flatter myself that full indemnification will be allowed for all damages sustained by the detention of the vessel; and in the case of the Douglas Her Majesty's Government has expressed its determination to make indemnification. Strong hopes are therefore entertained that most, if not all, of these cases will be speedily adjusted. No new cases have arisen since the ratification of the treaty of Washington, and it is confidently anticipated that the slave trade, under the operation of the eighth article of that treaty, will be altogether suppressed.

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The occasional interruption experienced by our fellow-citizens engaged in the fisheries on the neighboring coast of Nova Scotia has not failed to claim the attention of the Executive. Representations upon this subject have been made, but as yet no definitive answer to those representations has been received from the British Government.

Two other subjects of comparatively minor importance, but nevertheless of too much consequence to be neglected, remain still to be adjusted between the two countries. By the treaty between the United States and Great Britain of July, 1815, it is provided that no higher duties shall be levied in either country on articles imported from the other than on the same articles imported from any other place. In 1836 rough rice by act of Parliament was admitted from the coast of Africa into Great Britain on the payment of a duty of 1 penny a quarter, while the same article from all other countries, including the United States, was subjected to the payment of a duty of 20 shillings a quarter. Our minister at London has from time to time brought this subject to the attention of the British Government, but so far without success. He is instructed to renew his representations upon it.

Some years since a claim was preferred against the British Government on the part of certain American merchants for the return of export duties paid by them on shipments of woolen goods to the United States after the duty on similar articles exported to other countries had been repealed, and consequently in contravention of the commercial convention between the two nations securing to us equality in such cases. The principle on which the claim rests has long since been virtually admitted by Great Britain, but obstacles to a settlement have from time to time been interposed, so that a large portion of the amount claimed has not yet been refunded. Our minister is now engaged in the prosecution of the claim, and I can not but persuade myself that the British Government will no longer delay its adjustment.

I am happy to be able to say that nothing has occurred to disturb in any degree the relations of amity which exist between the United States and France, Austria, and Russia, as well as with the other powers of Europe, since the adjournment of Congress. Spain has been agitated with internal convulsions for many years, from the effects of which, it is hoped, she is destined speedily to recover, when, under a more liberal system of commercial policy on her part, our trade with her may again fill its old and, so far as her continental possessions are concerned, its almost forsaken channels, thereby adding to the mutual prosperity of the two countries.



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The Germanic Association of Customs and Commerce, which since its establishment in 1833 has been steadily growing in power and importance, and consists at this time of more than twenty German States, and embraces a population of 27,000,000 people united for all fire purposes of commercial intercourse with each other and with foreign states, offers to the latter the most valuable exchanges on principles more liberal than are offered in the fiscal system of any other European power. From its origin the importance of the German union has never been lost sight of by the United States. The industry, morality, and other valuable qualities of the German nation have always been well known and appreciated. On this subject I invite the attention of Congress to the report of the Secretary of State, from which it will be seen that while our cotton is admitted free of duty and the duty on rice has been much reduced (which has already led to a greatly increased consumption), a strong disposition has been recently evinced by that great body to reduce, upon certain conditions, their present duty upon tobacco. This being the first intimation of a concession on this interesting subject ever made by any European power, I can not but regard it as well calculated to remove the only impediment which has so far existed to the most liberal commercial intercourse between us and them. In this view our minister at Berlin, who has heretofore industriously pursued the subject, has been instructed to enter upon the negotiation of a commercial treaty, which, while it will open new advantages to the agricultural interests of the United States and a more free and expanded field for commercial operations, will affect injuriously no existing interest of the Union. Should the negotiation be crowned with success, its results will be communicated to both Houses of Congress.

I communicate herewith certain dispatches received from our minister at Mexico, and also a correspondence which has recently occurred between the envoy from that Republic and the Secretary of State. It must but be regarded as not a little extraordinary that the Government of Mexico, in anticipation of a public discussion (which it has been pleased to infer from newspaper publications as likely to take place in Congress, relating to the annexation of Texas to the United States), should have so far anticipated the result of such discussion as to have announced its determination to visit any such anticipated decision by a formal declaration of war against the United States. If designed to prevent Congress from introducing that question as a fit subject for its calm deliberation and final judgment, the Executive has no reason to doubt that it will entirely fail of its object. The representatives of a brave and patriotic people will suffer no apprehension of future consequences to embarrass them in the course of their proposed deliberations, nor will the executive department of the Government fail for any such cause to discharge its whole duty to the country.



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The war which has existed for so long a time between Mexico and Texas has since the battle of San Jacinto consisted for the most part of predatory incursions, which, while they have been attended with much of suffering to individuals and have kept the borders of the two countries in a state of constant alarm, have failed to approach to any definitive result. Mexico has fitted out no formidable armament by land or by sea for the subjugation of Texas. Eight years have now elapsed since Texas declared her independence of Mexico, and during that time she has been recognized as a sovereign power by several of the principal civilized states. Mexico, nevertheless, perseveres in her plans of reconquest, and refuses to recognize her independence. The predatory incursions to which I have alluded have been attended in one instance with the breaking up of the courts of justice, by the seizing upon the persons of the judges, jury, and officers of the court and dragging them along with unarmed, and therefore noncombatant, citizens into a cruel and oppressive bondage, thus leaving crime to go unpunished and immorality to pass unreprieved. A border warfare is evermore to be deprecated, and over such a war as has existed for so many years between these two States humanity has had great cause to lament. Nor is such a condition of things to be deplored only because of the individual suffering attendant upon it. The effects are far more extensive. The Creator of the Universe has given man the earth for his resting place and its fruits for his subsistence. Whatever, therefore, shall make the first or any part of it a scene of desolation affects injuriously his heritage and may be regarded as a general calamity. Wars may sometimes be necessary, but all nations have a common interest in bringing them speedily to a close. The United States have an immediate interest in seeing an end put to the state of hostilities existing between Mexico and Texas. They are our neighbors, of the same continent, with whom we are not only desirous of cultivating the relations of amity, but of the most extended commercial intercourse, and to practice all the rites of a neighborhood hospitality. Our own interests are involved in the matter, since, however neutral may be our course of policy, we can not hope to escape the effects of a spirit of jealousy on the part of both of the powers. Nor can this Government be indifferent to the fact that a warfare such as is waged between those two nations is calculated to weaken both powers and finally to render them—and especially the weaker of the two—the subjects of interference on the part of stronger and more powerful nations, who, intent only on advancing their own peculiar views, may sooner or later attempt to bring about a compliance with terms as the condition of their interposition alike derogatory to the nation granting them and detrimental to the interests of the United States. We could not be expected quietly to permit any such interference



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to our disadvantage. Considering that Texas is separated from the United States by a mere geographical line; that her territory, in the opinion of many, down to a late period formed a portion of the territory of the United States; that it is homogeneous in its population and pursuits with adjoining States, makes contributions to the commerce of the world in the same articles with them, and that most of her inhabitants have been citizens of the United States, speak the same language, and live under similar political institutions with ourselves, this Government is bound by every consideration of interest as well as of sympathy to see that she shall be left free to act, especially in regard to her domestic affairs, unawed by force and unrestrained by the policy or views of other countries. In full view of all these considerations, the Executive has not hesitated to express to the Government of Mexico how deeply it deprecated a continuance of the war and how anxiously it desired to witness its termination. I can not but think that it becomes the United States, as the oldest of the American Republics, to hold a language to Mexico upon this subject of an unambiguous character. It is time that this war had ceased. There must be a limit to all wars, and if the parent state after an eight years' struggle has failed to reduce to submission a portion of its subjects standing out in revolt against it, and who have not only proclaimed themselves to be independent, but have been recognized as such by other powers, she ought not to expect that other nations will quietly look on, to their obvious injury, upon a protraction of hostilities. These United States threw off their colonial dependence and established independent governments, and Great Britain, after having wasted her energies in the attempt to subdue them for a less period than Mexico has attempted to subjugate Texas, had the wisdom and justice to acknowledge their independence, thereby recognizing the obligation which rested on her as one of the family of nations. An example thus set by one of the proudest as well as most powerful nations of the earth it could in no way disparage Mexico to imitate. While, therefore, the Executive would deplore any collision with Mexico or any disturbance of the friendly relations which exist between the two countries, it can not permit that Government to control its policy, whatever it may be, toward Texas, but will treat her—as by the recognition of her independence the United States have long since declared they would do—as entirely independent of Mexico. The high obligations of public duty may enforce from the constituted authorities of the United States a policy which the course persevered in by Mexico will have mainly contributed to produce, and the Executive in such a touting they will with confidence throw itself upon the patriotism of the people to sustain the Government in its course of action.

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Measures of an unusual character have recently been adopted by the Mexican Government, calculated in no small degree to affect the trade of other nations with Mexico and to operate injuriously to the United States. All foreigners, by a decree of the 23d day of September, and after six months from the day of its promulgation, are forbidden to carry on the business of selling by retail any goods within the confines of Mexico. Against this decree our minister has not failed to remonstrate.

The trade heretofore carried on by our citizens with Santa Fe, in which much capital was already invested and which was becoming of daily increasing importance, has suddenly been arrested by a decree of virtual prohibition on the part of the Mexican Government. Whatever may be the right of Mexico to prohibit any particular course of trade to the citizens or subjects of foreign powers, this late procedure, to say the least of it, wears a harsh and unfriendly aspect.

The installments on the claims recently settled by the convention with Mexico have been punctually paid as they have fallen due, and our minister is engaged in urging the establishment of a new commission in pursuance of the convention for the settlement of unadjusted claims.

With the other American States our relations of amity and good will have remained uninterrupted. Our minister near the Republic of New Granada has succeeded in effecting an adjustment of the claim upon that Government for the schooner *By Chance*, which had been pending for many years. The claim for the brig *Morris*, which had its origin during the existence of the Republic of Colombia, and indemnification for which since the dissolution of that Republic has devolved upon its several members, will be urged with renewed zeal.

I have much pleasure in saying that the Government of Brazil has adjusted the claim upon that Government in the case of the schooner *John S. Bryan*, and that sanguine hopes are entertained that the same spirit of justice will influence its councils in arriving at an early decision upon the remaining claims, thereby removing all cause of dissension between two powers whose interests are to some extent interwoven with each other.

Our minister at Chili has succeeded in inducing a recognition by that Government of the adjustment effected by his predecessor of the first claim in the case of the *Macedonian*. The first installment has been received by the claimants in the United States.

Notice of the exchange of ratifications of the treaty with Peru, which will take place at Lima, has not yet reached this country, but is shortly expected to be received, when the claims upon that Republic will doubtless be liquidated and paid.

In consequence of a misunderstanding between this Government and that of Buenos Ayres, occurring several years ago, this Government has remained unrepresented at



that Court, while a minister from it has been constantly resident here. The causes of irritation have in a great measure passed away, and it is in contemplation, in view of important interests which have grown up in that country, at some early period during the present session of Congress, with the concurrence of the Senate, to restore diplomatic relations between the two countries.

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Under the provisions of an act of Congress of the last session a minister was dispatched from the United States to China in August of the present year, who, from the latest accounts we have from him, was at Suez, in Egypt, on the 25th of September last, on his route to China.

In regard to the Indian tribes residing within our jurisdictional limits, the greatest vigilance of the Government has been exerted to preserve them at peace among themselves and to inspire them with feelings of confidence in the justice of this Government and to cultivate friendship with the border inhabitants. This has happily succeeded to a great extent, but it is a subject of regret that they suffer themselves in some instances to be imposed upon by artful and designing men and this notwithstanding all efforts of the Government to prevent it.

The receipts into the Treasury for the calendar year 1843, exclusive of loans, were little more than \$ 18,000,000, and the expenditures, exclusive of the payments on the public debt, will have been about \$23,000,000. By the act of 1842 a new arrangement of the fiscal year was made, so that it should commence on the 1st day of July in each year. The accounts and estimates for the current fiscal year will show that the loans and Treasury notes made and issued before the close of the last Congress to meet the anticipated deficiency have not been entirely adequate. Although on the 1st of October last there was a balance in the Treasury, in consequence of the provisions thus made, of \$3,914,082.77, yet the appropriations already made by Congress will absorb that balance and leave a probable deficiency of \$2,000,000 at the close of the present fiscal year. There are outstanding Treasury notes to about the amount of \$4,600,000, and should they be returned upon the Treasury during the fiscal year they will require provision for their redemption. I do not, however, regard this as probable, since they have obviously entered into the currency of the country and will continue to form a portion of it if the system now adopted be continued. The loan of 1841, amounting to \$5,672,976.88, falls due on the 1st day of January, 1845, and must be provided for or postponed by a new loan; and unless the resources of revenue should be materially increased by you there will be a probable deficiency for the service of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1845, of upward of \$4,000,000.

The delusion incident to an enormously excessive paper circulation, which gave a fictitious value to everything and stimulated adventure and speculation to an extravagant extent, has been happily succeeded by the substitution of the precious metals and paper promptly redeemable in specie; and thus false values have disappeared and a sounder condition of things has been introduced. This transition, although intimately connected with the prosperity of the country, has nevertheless been attended with much embarrassment to the Government in its financial concerns. So long as the foreign

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importers could receive payment for their cargoes in a currency of greatly less value than that in Europe, but fully available here in the purchase of our agricultural productions (their profits being immeasurably augmented by the operation), the shipments were large and the revenues of the Government became superabundant. But the change in the character of the circulation from a nominal and apparently real value in the first stage of its existence to an obviously depreciated value in its second, so that it no longer answered the purposes of exchange or barter, and its ultimate substitution by a sound metallic and paper circulation combined, has been attended by diminished importations and a consequent falling off in the revenue. This has induced Congress, from 1837, to resort to the expedient of issuing Treasury notes, and finally of funding them, in order to supply deficiencies. I can not, however, withhold the remark that it is in no way compatible with the dignity of the Government that a public debt should be created in time of peace to meet the current expenses of the Government, or that temporary expedients should be resorted to an hour longer than it is possible to avoid them. The Executive can do no more than apply the means which Congress places in its hands for the support of Government, and, happily for the good of the country and for the preservation of its liberties, it possesses no power to levy exactions on the people or to force from them contributions to the public revenue in any form. It can only recommend such measures as may in its opinion be called for by the wants of the public service to Congress, with whom alone rests the power to "lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises." This duty has upon several occasions heretofore been performed. The present condition of things gives flattering promise that trade and commerce are rapidly reviving, and, fortunately for the country, the sources of revenue have only to be opened in order to prove abundant.

While we can anticipate no considerable increase in the proceeds of the sales of the public lands, for reasons perfectly obvious to all, for several years to come, yet the public lands can not otherwise than be regarded as the foundation of the public credit. With so large a body of the most fertile lands in the world under the control and at the disposal of this Government, no one can reasonably doubt the entire ability to meet its engagements under every emergency. In seasons of trial and difficulty similar to those through which we are passing the capitalist makes his investments in the Government cut stocks with the most assured confidence of ultimate reimbursement; and whatever may be said of a period of great financial prosperity, such as existed for some years after 1833, I should regard it as suicidal in a season of financial embarrassment either to alienate the lands themselves or the proceeds arising from their sales. The first and paramount duty of those to whom may be intrusted



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the administration of public affairs is to guard the public credit. In reestablishing the credit of this central Government the readiest and most obvious mode is taken to restore the credit of the States. The extremities can only be made sound by producing a healthy action in the central Government, and the history of the present day fully establishes the fact that an increase in the value of the stocks of this Government will in a great majority of instances be attended by an increase in the value of the stocks of the States. It should therefore be a matter of general congratulation that amidst all the embarrassments arising from surrounding circumstances the credit of the Government should have been so fully restored that it has been enabled to effect a loan of \$7,000,000 to redeem that amount of Treasury notes on terms more favorable than any that have been offered for many years. And the 6 per cent stock which was created in 1842 has advanced in the hands of the holders nearly 20 per cent above its par value. The confidence of the people in the integrity of their Government has thus been signally manifested. These opinions relative to the public lands do not in any manner conflict with the observance of the most liberal policy toward those of our fellow-citizens who press forward into the wilderness and are the pioneers in the work of its reclamation. In securing to all such their rights of preemption the Government performs but an act of retributive justice for sufferings encountered and hardships endured, and finds ample remuneration in the comforts which its policy insures and the happiness which it imparts.

Should a revision of the tariff with a view to revenue become necessary in the estimation of Congress, I doubt not you will approach the subject with a just and enlightened regard to the interests of the whole Union. The principles and views which I have heretofore had occasion to submit remain unchanged. It can, however, never be too often repeated that the prominent interest of every important pursuit of life requires for success permanency and stability in legislation. These can only be attained by adopting as the basis of action moderation in all things, which is as indispensably necessary to secure the harmonious action of the political as of the animal system. In our political organization no one section of the country should desire to have its supposed interests advanced at the sacrifice of all others, but union, being the great interest, equally precious to all, should be fostered and sustained by mutual concessions and the cultivation of that spirit of compromise from which the Constitution itself proceeded.

You will be informed by the report from the Treasury Department of the measures taken under the act of the last session authorizing the reissue of Treasury notes in lieu of those then outstanding. The system adopted in pursuance of existing laws seems well calculated to save the country a large amount of interest, while it affords conveniences and obviates dangers and expense in the transmission of funds to disbursing agents. I refer you also to that report for the means proposed by the Secretary to increase the revenue, and particularly to that portion of it which relates to the subject of the

warehousing system, which I earnestly urged upon Congress at its last session and as to the importance of which my opinion has undergone no change.



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In view of the disordered condition of the currency at the time and the high rates of exchange between different parts of the country, I felt it to be incumbent on me to present to the consideration of your predecessors a proposition conflicting in no degree with the Constitution or with the rights of the States and having the sanction (not in detail, but in principle) of some of the eminent men who have preceded me in the Executive office. That proposition contemplated the issuing of Treasury notes of denominations of not less than \$5 nor more than \$100, to be employed in the payment of the obligations of the Government in lieu of gold and silver at the option of the public creditor, and to an amount not exceeding \$15,000,000. It was proposed to make them receivable everywhere and to establish at various points depositories of gold and silver to be held in trust for the redemption of such notes, so as to insure their convertibility into specie. No doubt was entertained that such notes would have maintained a par value with gold and silver, thus furnishing a paper currency of equal value over the Union, thereby meeting the just expectations of the people and fulfilling the duties of a parental government. Whether the depositories should be permitted to sell or purchase bills under very limited restrictions, together with all its other details, was submitted to the wisdom of Congress and was regarded as of secondary importance. I thought then and think now that such an arrangement would have been attended with the happiest results. The whole matter of the currency would have been placed where by the Constitution it was designed to be placed—under the immediate supervision and control of Congress. The action of the Government would have been independent of all corporations, and the same eye which rests unceasingly on the specie currency and guards it against adulteration would also have rested on the paper currency, to control and regulate its issues and protect it against depreciation. The same reasons which would forbid Congress from parting with the power over the coinage would seem to operate with nearly equal force in regard to any substitution for the precious metals in the form of a circulating medium. Paper when substituted for specie constitutes a standard of value by which the operations of society are regulated, and whatsoever causes its depreciation affects society to an extent nearly, if not quite, equal to the adulteration of the coin. Nor can I withhold the remark that its advantages contrasted with a bank of the United States, apart from the fact that a bank was esteemed as obnoxious to the public sentiment as well on the score of expediency as of constitutionality, appeared to me to be striking and obvious. The relief which a bank would afford by an issue of \$15,000,000 of its notes, judging from the experience of the late United States Bank, would not have occurred in less than fifteen years, whereas under the proposed arrangement

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the relief arising from the issue of \$15,000,000 of Treasury notes would have been consummated in one year, thus furnishing in one-fifteenth part of the time in which a bank could have accomplished it a paper medium of exchange equal in amount to the real wants of the country at par value with gold and silver. The saving to the Government would have been equal to all the interest which it has had to pay on Treasury notes of previous as well as subsequent issues, thereby relieving the Government and at the same time affording relief to the people. Under all the responsibilities attached to the station which I occupy, and in redemption of a pledge given to the last Congress at the close of its first session, I submitted the suggestion to its consideration at two consecutive sessions. The recommendation, however, met with no favor at its hands. While I am free to admit that the necessities of the times have since become greatly ameliorated and that there is good reason to hope that the country is safely and rapidly emerging from the difficulties and embarrassments which everywhere surrounded it in 1841, yet I can not but think that its restoration to a sound and healthy condition would be greatly expedited by a resort to the expedient in a modified form.

The operations of the Treasury now rest upon the act of 1789 and the resolution of 1816, and those laws have been so administered as to produce as great a quantum of good to the country as their provisions are capable of yielding. If there had been any distinct expression of opinion going to show that public sentiment is averse to the plan, either as heretofore recommended to Congress or in a modified form, while my own opinion in regard to it would remain unchanged I should be very far from again presenting it to your consideration. The Government has originated with the States and the people, for their own benefit and advantage, and it would be subversive of the foundation principles of the political edifice which they have reared to persevere in a measure which in their mature judgments they had either repudiated or condemned. The will of our constituents clearly expressed should be regarded as the light to guide our footsteps, the true difference between a monarchical or aristocratical government and a republic being that in the first the will of the few prevails over the will of the many, while in the last the will of the many should be alone consulted.

The report of the Secretary of War will bring you acquainted with the condition of that important branch of the public service. The Army may be regarded, in consequence of the small number of the rank and file in each company and regiment, as little more than a nucleus around which to rally the military force of the country in case of war, and yet its services in preserving the peace of the frontiers are of a most important nature. In all cases of emergency the reliance of the country is properly placed in the militia of the several States, and it may well deserve the consideration of Congress whether a new and more perfect organization might not be introduced, looking mainly to the volunteer companies of the Union for the present and of easy application to the great body of the militia in time of war.



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The expenditures of the War Department have been considerably reduced in the last two years. Contingencies, however, may arise which would call for the filling up of the regiments with a full complement of men and make it very desirable to remount the corps of dragoons, which by an act of the last Congress was directed to be dissolved.

I refer you to the accompanying report of the Secretary for information in relation to the Navy of the United States. While every effort has been and will continue to be made to retrench all superfluities and lop off all excrescences which from time to time may have grown up, yet it has not been regarded as wise or prudent to recommend any material change in the annual appropriations. The interests which are involved are of too important a character to lead to the recommendation of any other than a liberal policy. Adequate appropriations ought to be made to enable the Executive to fit out all the ships that are now in a course of building or that require repairs for active service in the shortest possible time should any emergency arise which may require it. An efficient navy, while it is the cheapest means of public defense, enlists in its support the feelings of pride and confidence which brilliant deeds and heroic valor have heretofore served to strengthen and confirm.

I refer you particularly to that part of the Secretary's report which has reference to recent experiments in the application of steam and in the construction of our war steamers, made under the superintendence of distinguished officers of the Navy. In addition to other manifest improvements in the construction of the steam engine and application of the motive power which has rendered them more appropriate to the uses of ships of war, one of those officers has brought into use a power which makes the steamship most formidable either for attack or defense. I can not too strongly recommend this subject to your consideration and do not hesitate to express my entire conviction of its great importance.

I call your particular attention also to that portion of the Secretary's report which has reference to the act of the late session of Congress which prohibited the transfer of any balance of appropriation from other heads of appropriation to that for building, equipment, and repair. The repeal of that prohibition will enable the Department to give renewed employment to a large class of workmen who have been necessarily discharged in consequence of the want of means to pay them—a circumstance attended, especially at this season of the year, with much privation and suffering.

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It gives me great pain to announce to you the loss of the steamship the Missouri by fire in the Bay of Gibraltar, where she had stopped to renew her supplies of coal on her voyage to Alexandria, with Mr. Cushing, the American minister to China, on board. There is ground for high commendation of the officers and men for the coolness and intrepidity and perfect submission to discipline evinced under the most trying circumstances. Surrounded by a raging fire, which the utmost exertions could not subdue, and which threatened momentarily the explosion of her well-supplied magazines, the officers exhibited no signs of fear and the men obeyed every order with alacrity. Nor was she abandoned until the last gleam of hope of saving her had expired. It is well worthy of your consideration whether the losses sustained by the officers and crew in this unfortunate affair should not be reimbursed to them.

I can not take leave of this painful subject without adverting to the aid rendered upon the occasion by the British authorities at Gibraltar and the commander, officers, and crew of the British ship of the line the Malabar, which was lying at the time in the bay. Everything that generosity or humanity could dictate was promptly performed. It is by such acts of good will by one to another of the family of nations that fraternal feelings are nourished and the blessings of permanent peace secured.

The report of the Postmaster-General will bring you acquainted with the operations of that Department during the past year, and will suggest to you such modifications of the existing laws as in your opinion the exigencies of the public service may require. The change which the country has undergone of late years in the mode of travel and transportation has afforded so many facilities for the transmission of mail matter out of the regular mail as to require the greatest vigilance and circumspection in order to enable the officer at the head of the Department to restrain the expenditures within the income. There is also too much reason to fear that the franking privilege has run into great abuse. The Department, nevertheless, has been conducted with the greatest vigor, and has attained at the least possible expense all the useful objects for which it was established.

In regard to all the Departments, I am quite happy in the belief that nothing has been left undone which was called for by a true spirit of economy or by a system of accountability rigidly enforced. This is in some degree apparent from the fact that the Government has sustained no loss by the default of any of its agents. In the complex, but at the same time beautiful, machinery of our system of government, it is not a matter of surprise that some remote agency may have failed for an instant to fulfill its desired office; but I feel confident in the assertion that nothing has occurred to interrupt the harmonious action of the Government itself, and that, while the laws have been executed with efficiency and vigor, the rights neither of States nor individuals have been trampled on or disregarded.

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In the meantime the country has been steadily advancing in all that contributes to national greatness. The tide of population continues unbrokenly to flow into the new States and Territories, where a refuge is found not only for our native-born fellow-citizens, but for emigrants from all parts of the civilized world, who come among us to partake of the blessings of our free institutions and to aid by their labor to swell the current of our wealth and power.

It is due to every consideration of public policy that the lakes and rivers of the West should receive all such attention at the hands of Congress as the Constitution will enable it to bestow. Works in favorable and proper situations on the Lakes would be found to be as indispensably necessary, in case of war, to carry on safe and successful naval operations as fortifications on the Atlantic seaboard. The appropriation made by the last Congress for the improvement of the navigation of the Mississippi River has been diligently and efficiently applied.

I can not close this communication, gentlemen, without recommending to your most favorable consideration the interests of this District. Appointed by the Constitution its exclusive legislators, and forming in this particular the only anomaly in our system of government—of the legislative body being elected by others than those for whose advantage they are to legislate—you will feel a superadded obligation to look well into their condition and to leave no cause for complaint or regret. The seat of Government of our associated republics can not but be regarded as worthy of your parental care.

In connection with its other interests, as well as those of the whole country, I recommend that at your present session you adopt such measures in order to carry into effect the Smithsonian bequest as in your judgment will be best calculated to consummate the liberal intent of the testator.

When, under a dispensation of Divine Providence, I succeeded to the presidential office, the state of public affairs was embarrassing and critical. To add to the irritation consequent upon a long-standing controversy with one of the most powerful nations of modern times, involving not only questions of boundary (which under the most favorable circumstances are always embarrassing), but at the same time important and high principles of maritime law, border controversies between the citizens and subjects of the two countries had engendered a state of feeling and of conduct which threatened the most calamitous consequences. The hazards incident to this state of things were greatly heightened by the arrest and imprisonment of a subject of Great Britain, who, acting (as it was alleged) as a part of a military force, had aided in the commission of an act violative of the territorial jurisdiction of the United States and involving the murder of a citizen, of the State of New York. A large amount of claims against the Government of Mexico remained



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unadjusted and a war of several years' continuance with the savage tribes of Florida still prevailed, attended with the desolation of a large portion of that beautiful Territory and with the sacrifice of many valuable lives. To increase the embarrassments of the Government, individual and State credit had been nearly stricken down and confidence in the General Government was so much impaired that-loans of a small amount could only be negotiated at a considerable sacrifice. As a necessary consequence of the blight which had fallen on commerce and mechanical industry, the ships of the one were thrown out of employment and the operations of the other had been greatly diminished. Owing to the condition of the currency, exchanges between different parts of the country had become ruinously high and trade had to depend on a depreciated paper currency in conducting its transactions. I shall be permitted to congratulate the country that under an overruling Providence peace was preserved without a sacrifice of the national honor; the war in Florida was brought to a speedy termination; a large portion of the claims on Mexico have been fully adjudicated and are in a course of payment, while justice has been rendered to us in other matters by other nations; confidence between man and man is in a great measure restored and the credit of this Government fully and perfectly reestablished; commerce is becoming more and more extended in its operations and manufacturing and mechanical industry once more reap the rewards of skill and labor honestly applied; the operations of trade rest on a sound currency and the rates of exchange are reduced to their lowest amount.

In this condition of things I have felt it to be my duty to bring to your favorable consideration matters of great interest in their present and ultimate results; and the only desire which I feel in connection with the future is and will continue to be to leave the country prosperous and its institutions unimpaired.

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State of the Union Address  
John Tyler  
December 3, 1844

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

We have continued cause for expressing our gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for the benefits and blessings which our country, under His kind providence, has enjoyed during the past year. Notwithstanding the exciting scenes through which we have passed, nothing has occurred to disturb the general peace or to derange the harmony of our political system. The great moral spectacle has been exhibited of a nation approximating in number to 20,000,000 people having performed the high and important function of electing their Chief Magistrate for the term of four years without the commission of any acts of violence or the manifestation of a spirit of insubordination to

the laws. The great and inestimable right of suffrage has been exercised by all who were invested with it under the laws of the different States in a spirit



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dictated alone by a desire, in the selection of the agent, to advance the interests of the country and to place beyond jeopardy the institutions under which it is our happiness to live. That the deepest interest has been manifested by all our countrymen in the result of the election is not less true than highly creditable to them. Vast multitudes have assembled from time to time at various places for the purpose of canvassing the merits and pretensions of those who were presented for their suffrages, but no armed soldiery has been necessary to restrain within proper limits the popular zeal or to prevent violent outbreaks. A principle much more controlling was found in the love of order and obedience to the laws, which, with mere individual exceptions, everywhere possesses the American mind, and controls with an influence far more powerful than hosts of armed men. We can not dwell upon this picture without recognizing in it that deep and devoted attachment on the part of the people to the institutions under which we live which proclaims their perpetuity. The great objection which has always prevailed against the election by the people of their chief executive officer has been the apprehension of tumults and disorders which might involve in ruin the entire Government. A security against this is found not only in the fact before alluded to, but in the additional fact that we live under a Confederacy embracing already twenty-six States, no one of which has power to control the election. The popular vote in each State is taken at the time appointed by the laws, and such vote is announced by the electoral college without reference to the decision of other States. The right of suffrage and the mode of conducting the election are regulated by the laws of each State, and the election is distinctly federative in all its prominent features. Thus it is that, unlike what might be the results under a consolidated system, riotous proceedings, should they prevail, could only affect the elections in single States without disturbing to any dangerous extent the tranquillity of others. The great experiment of a political confederation each member of which is supreme as to all matters appertaining to its local interests and its internal peace and happiness, while by a voluntary compact with others it confides to the united power of all the protection of its citizens in matters not domestic has been so far crowned with complete success. The world has witnessed its rapid growth in wealth and population, and under the guide and direction of a superintending Providence the developments of the past may be regarded but as the shadowing forth of the mighty future. In the bright prospects of that future we shall find, as patriots and philanthropists, the highest inducements to cultivate and cherish a love of union and to frown down every measure or effort which may be made to alienate the States or the people of the States in sentiment and feeling from each other. A rigid

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and close adherence to the terms of our political compact and, above all, a sacred observance of the guaranties of the Constitution will preserve union on a foundation which can not be shaken, while personal liberty is placed beyond hazard or jeopardy. The guaranty of religious freedom, of the freedom of the press, of the liberty of speech, of the trial by jury, of the habeas corpus, and of the domestic institutions of each of the States, leaving the private citizen in the full exercise of the high and ennobling attributes of his nature and to each State the privilege (which can only be judiciously exerted by itself) of consulting the means best calculated to advance its own happiness—these are the great and important guaranties of the Constitution which the lovers of liberty must cherish and the advocates of union must ever cultivate. Preserving these and avoiding all interpolations by forced construction under the guise of an imagined expediency upon the Constitution, the influence of our political system is destined to be as actively and as beneficially felt on the distant shores of the Pacific as it is now on those of the Atlantic Ocean. The only formidable impediments in the way of its successful expansion (time and space) are so far in the progress of modification by the improvements of the age as to render no longer speculative the ability of representatives from that remote region to come up to the Capitol, so that their constituents shall participate in all the benefits of Federal legislation. Thus it is that in the progress of time the inestimable principles of civil liberty will be enjoyed by millions yet unborn and the great benefits of our system of government be extended to now distant and uninhabited regions. In view of the vast wilderness yet to be reclaimed, we may well invite the lover of freedom of every land to take up his abode among us and assist us in the great work of advancing the standard of civilization and giving a wider spread to the arts and refinements of cultivated life. Our prayers should evermore be offered up to the Father of the Universe for His wisdom to direct us in the path of our duty so as to enable us to consummate these high purposes.

One of the strongest objections which has been urged against confederacies by writers on government is the liability of the members to be tampered with by foreign governments or the people of foreign states, either in their local affairs or in such as affected the peace of others or endangered the safety of the whole confederacy. We can not hope to be entirely exempt from such attempts on our peace and safety. The United States are becoming too important in population and resources not to attract the observation of other nations. It therefore may in the progress of time occur that opinions entirely abstract in the States which they may prevail and in no degree affecting their domestic institutions may be artfully but secretly encouraged with a view to undermine the Union.

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Such opinions may become the foundation of political parties, until at last the conflict of opinion, producing an alienation of friendly feeling among the people of the different States, may involve in general destruction the happy institutions under which we live. It should ever be borne in mind that what is true in regard to individuals is equally so in regard to states. An interference of one in the affairs of another is the fruitful cause of family dissensions and neighborhood disputes, and the same cause affects the peace, happiness, and prosperity of states. It may be most devoutly hoped that the good sense of the American people will ever be ready to repel all such attempts should they ever be made.

There has been no material change in our foreign relations since my last annual message to Congress. With all the powers of Europe we continue on the most friendly terms. Indeed, it affords me much satisfaction to state that at no former period has the peace of that enlightened and important quarter of the globe ever been, apparently, more firmly established. The conviction that peace is the true policy of nations would seem to be growing and becoming deeper amongst the enlightened everywhere, and there is no people who have a stronger interest in cherishing the sentiments and adopting the means of preserving and giving it permanence than those of the United States. Amongst these, the first and most effective are, no doubt, the strict observance of justice and the honest and punctual fulfillment of all engagements. But it is not to be forgotten that in the present state of the world it is no less necessary to be ready to enforce their observance and fulfillment in reference to ourselves than to observe and fulfill them on our part in regard to others.

Since the close of your last session a negotiation has been formally entered upon between the Secretary of State and Her Britannic Majesty's minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary residing at Washington relative to the rights of their respective nations in and over the Oregon Territory. That negotiation is still pending. Should it during your session be brought to a definitive conclusion, the result will be promptly communicated to Congress. I would, however, again call your attention to the recommendations contained in previous messages designed to protect and facilitate emigration to that Territory. The establishment of military posts at suitable points upon the extended line of land travel would enable our citizens to emigrate in comparative safety to the fertile regions below the Falls of the Columbia, and make the provision of the existing convention for the joint occupation of the territory by subjects of Great Britain and the citizens of the United States more available than heretofore to the latter. These posts would constitute places of rest for the weary emigrant, where he would be sheltered securely against the danger of attack from the Indians and



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be enabled to recover from the exhaustion of a long line of travel. Legislative enactments should also be made which should spread over him the aegis of our laws, so as to afford protection to his person and property when he shall have reached his distant home. In this latter respect the British Government has been much more careful of the interests of such of her people as are to be found in that country than the United States. She has made necessary provision for their security and protection against the acts of the viciously disposed and lawless, and her emigrant reposes in safety under the panoply of her laws. Whatever may be the result of the pending negotiation, such measures are necessary. It will afford me the greatest pleasure to witness a happy and favorable termination to the existing negotiation upon terms compatible with the public honor, and the best efforts of the Government will continue to be directed to this end.

It would have given me the highest gratification in this my last annual communication to Congress to have been able to announce to you the complete and entire settlement and adjustment of other matters in difference between the United States and the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, which were adverted to in a previous message. It is so obviously the interest of both countries, in respect to the large and valuable commerce which exists between them, that all causes of complaint, however inconsiderable, should be with the greatest promptitude removed that it must be regarded as cause of regret that any unnecessary delays should be permitted to intervene. It is true that in a pecuniary point of view the matters alluded to are altogether insignificant in amount when compared with the ample resources of that great nation, but they nevertheless, more particularly that limited class which arise under seizures and detentions of American ships on the coast of Africa upon the mistaken supposition indulged in at the time the wrong was committed of their being engaged in the slave trade, deeply affect the sensibilities of this Government and people. Great Britain, having recognized her responsibility to repair all such wrongs by her action in other cases, leaves nothing to be regretted upon the subject as to all cases arising prior to the treaty of Washington than the delay in making suitable reparation in such of them as fall plainly within the principle of others which she has long since adjusted. The injury inflicted by delays in the settlement of these claims falls with severity upon the individual claimants and makes a strong appeal to her magnanimity and sense of justice for a speedy settlement. Other matters arising out of the construction of existing treaties also remain unadjusted, and will continue to be urged upon her attention.

The labors of the joint commission appointed by the two Governments to run the dividing line established by the treaty of Washington were, unfortunately, much delayed in the commencement of the season by the failure of Congress at its last session to make a timely appropriation of funds to meet the expenses of the American party, and by other causes. The United States commissioner, however, expresses his expectation that by increased diligence and energy the party will be able to make up for lost time.

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We continue to receive assurances of the most friendly feelings on the part of all the other European powers, with each and all of whom it is so obviously our interest to cultivate the most amicable relations; nor can I anticipate the occurrence of any event which would be likely in any degree to disturb those relations. Russia, the great northern power, under the judicious sway of her Emperor, is constantly advancing in the road of science and improvement, while France, guided by the counsels of her wise Sovereign, pursues a course calculated to consolidate the general peace. Spain has obtained a breathing spell of some duration from the internal convulsions which have through so many years marred her prosperity, while Austria, the Netherlands, Prussia, Belgium, and the other powers of Europe reap a rich harvest of blessings from the prevailing peace.

I informed the two Houses of Congress in my message of December last that instructions had been given to Mr. Wheaton, our minister at Berlin, to negotiate a treaty with the Germanic States composing the Zollverein if it could be done, stipulating, as far as it was practicable to accomplish it, for a reduction of the heavy and onerous duties levied on our tobacco and other leading articles of agricultural production, and yielding in return on our part a reduction of duties on such articles the product of their industry as should not come into competition, or but a limited one, with articles the product of our manufacturing industry. The Executive in giving such instructions considered itself as acting in strict conformity with the wishes of Congress as made known through several measures which it had adopted, all directed to the accomplishment of this important result. The treaty was therefore negotiated, by which essential reductions were secured in the duties levied by the Zollverein on tobacco, rice, and lard, accompanied by a stipulation for the admission of raw cotton free of duty; in exchange for which highly important concessions a reduction of duties imposed by the laws of the United States on a variety of articles, most of which were admitted free of all duty under the act of Congress commonly known as the compromise law, and but few of which were produced in the United States, was stipulated for on our part. This treaty was communicated to the Senate at an early day of its last session, but not acted upon until near its close, when, for the want (as I am bound to presume) of full time to consider it, it was laid upon the table. This procedure had the effect of virtually rejecting it, in consequence of a stipulation contained in the treaty that its ratifications should be exchanged on or before a day which has already passed. The Executive, acting upon the fair inference that the Senate did not intend its absolute rejection, gave instructions to our minister at Berlin to reopen the negotiation so far as to obtain an extension of time for the exchange of ratifications. I regret, however, to say that his efforts in this respect have been unsuccessful. I am nevertheless not without hope that the great advantages which were intended to be secured by the treaty may yet be realized.

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I am happy to inform you that Belgium has, by an "arrete royale" issued in July last, assimilated the flag of the United States to her own, so far as the direct trade between the two countries is concerned. This measure will prove of great service to our shipping interest, the trade having heretofore been carried on chiefly in foreign bottoms. I flatter myself that she will speedily resort to a modification of her system relating to the tobacco trade, which would decidedly benefit the agriculture of the United States and operate to the mutual advantage of both countries.

No definitive intelligence has yet been received from our minister of the conclusion of a treaty with the Chinese Empire, but enough is known to induce the strongest hopes that the mission will be crowned with success.

With Brazil our relations continue on the most friendly footing. The commercial intercourse between that growing Empire and the United States is becoming daily of greater importance to both, and it is to the interest of both that the firmest relations of amity and good will should continue to be cultivated between them.

The Republic of New Granada still withholds, notwithstanding the most persevering efforts have been employed by our charge d'affaires, Mr. Blackford, to produce a different result, indemnity in the case of the brig Morris; and the Congress of Venezuela, although an arrangement has been effected between our minister and the minister of foreign affairs of that Government for the payment of \$18,000 in discharge of its liabilities in the same case, has altogether neglected to make provision for its payment. It is to be hoped that a sense of justice will soon induce a settlement of these claims.

Our late minister to Chili, Mr. Pendleton, has returned to the United States without having effected an adjustment in the second claim of the Macedonian, which is delayed on grounds altogether frivolous and untenable. Mr. Pendleton's successor has been directed to urge the claim in the strongest terms, and, in the event of a failure to obtain a prompt adjustment, to report the fact to the Executive at as early a day as possible, so that the whole matter may be communicated to Congress.

At your last session I submitted to the attention of Congress the convention with the Republic of Peru of the 17th March, 1841, providing for the adjustment of the claims of citizens of the United States against that Republic, but no definitive action was taken upon the subject. I again invite to it your attention and prompt action.

In my last annual message I felt it to be my duty to make known to Congress, in terms both plain and emphatic, my opinion in regard to the war which has so long existed between Mexico and Texas which since the battle of San Jacinto has consisted altogether of predatory incursions, attended by circumstances revolting to humanity. I repeat now what I then said, that after eight years of feeble and ineffectual

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efforts to reconquer Texas it was time that the war should have ceased. The United States have a direct interest in the question. The contiguity of the two nations to our territory was but too well calculated to involve our peace. Unjust suspicions were engendered in the mind of one or the other of the belligerents against us, and as a necessary consequence American interests were made to suffer and our peace became daily endangered; in addition to which it must have been obvious to all that the exhaustion produced by the war subjected both Mexico and Texas to the interference of other powers, which, without the interposition of this Government, might eventuate in the most serious injury to the United States. This Government from time to time exerted its friendly offices to bring about a termination of hostilities upon terms honorable alike to both the belligerents. Its efforts in this behalf proved unavailing. Mexico seemed almost without an object to persevere in the war, and no other alternative was left the Executive but to take advantage of the well-known dispositions of Texas and to invite her to enter into a treaty for annexing her territory to that of the United States.

Since your last session Mexico has threatened to renew the war, and has either made or proposes to make formidable preparations for invading Texas. She has issued decrees and proclamations, preparatory to the commencement of hostilities, full of threats revolting to humanity, and which if carried into effect would arouse the attention of all Christendom. This new demonstration of feeling, there is too much reason to believe, has been produced in consequence of the negotiation of the late treaty of annexation with Texas. The Executive, therefore, could not be indifferent to such proceedings, and it felt it to be due as well to itself as to the honor of the country that a strong representation should be made to the Mexican Government upon the subject. This was accordingly done, as will be seen by the copy of the accompanying dispatch from the Secretary of State to the United States envoy at Mexico. Mexico has no right to jeopard the peace of the world by urging any longer a useless and fruitless contest. Such a condition of things would not be tolerated on the European continent. Why should it be on this? A war of desolation, such as is now threatened by Mexico, can not be waged without involving our peace and tranquillity. It is idle to believe that such a war could be looked upon with indifference by our own citizens inhabiting adjoining States; and our neutrality would be violated in despite of all efforts on the part of the Government to prevent it. The country is settled by emigrants from the United States under invitations held out to them by Spain and Mexico. Those emigrants have left behind them friends and relatives, who would not fail to sympathize with them in their difficulties, and who would be led by those sympathies to participate in their struggles, however energetic the action of

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the Government to prevent it. Nor would the numerous and formidable bands of Indians—the most warlike to be found in any land—which occupy the extensive regions contiguous to the States of Arkansas and Missouri, and who are in possession of large tracts of country within the limits of Texas, be likely to remain passive. The inclinations of those numerous tribes lead them invariably to war whenever pretexts exist.

Mexico had no just ground of displeasure against this Government or people for negotiating the treaty. What interest of hers was affected by the treaty? She was despoiled of nothing, since Texas was forever lost to her. The independence of Texas was recognized by several of the leading powers of the earth. She was free to treat, free to adopt her own line of policy, free to take the course which she believed was best calculated to secure her happiness.

Her Government and people decided on annexation to the United States, and the Executive saw in the acquisition of such a territory the means of advancing their permanent happiness and glory. What principle of good faith, then, was violated? What rule of political morals trampled under foot? So far as Mexico herself was concerned, the measure should have been regarded by her as highly beneficial. Her inability to reconquer Texas had been exhibited, I repeat, by eight (now nine) years of fruitless and ruinous contest. In the meantime Texas has been growing in population and resources. Emigration has flowed into her territory from all parts of the world in a current which continues to increase in strength. Mexico requires a permanent boundary between that young Republic and herself. Texas at no distant day, if she continues separate and detached from the United States, will inevitably seek to consolidate her strength by adding to her domain the contiguous Provinces of Mexico. The spirit of revolt from the control of the central Government has heretofore manifested itself in some of those Provinces, and it is fair to infer that they would be inclined to take the first favorable opportunity to proclaim their independence and to form close alliances with Texas. The war would thus be endless, or if cessations of hostilities should occur they would only endure for a season. The interests of Mexico, therefore, could in nothing be better consulted than in a peace with her neighbors which would result in the establishment of a permanent boundary. Upon the ratification of the treaty the Executive was prepared to treat with her on the most liberal basis. Hence the boundaries of Texas were left undefined by the treaty. The Executive proposed to settle these upon terms that all the world should have pronounced just and reasonable. No negotiation upon that point could have been undertaken between the United States and Mexico in advance of the ratification of the treaty. We should have had no right, no power, no authority, to have conducted such a negotiation,



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and to have undertaken it would have been an assumption equally revolting to the pride of Mexico and Texas and subjecting us to the charge of arrogance, while to have proposed in advance of annexation to satisfy Mexico for any contingent interest she might have in Texas would have been to have treated Texas not as an independent power, but as a mere dependency of Mexico. This assumption could not have been acted on by the Executive without setting at defiance your own solemn declaration that that Republic was an independent State. Mexico had, it is true, threatened war against the United States in the event the treaty of annexation was ratified. The Executive could not permit itself to be influenced by this threat. It represented in this the spirit of our people, who are ready to sacrifice much for peace, but nothing to intimidation. A war under any circumstances is greatly to be deplored, and the United States is the last nation to desire it; but if, as the condition of peace, it be required of us to forego the unquestionable right of treating with an independent power of our own continent upon matters highly interesting to both, and that upon a naked and unsustained pretension of claim by a third power to control the free will of the power with whom we treat, devoted as we may be to peace and anxious to cultivate friendly relations with the whole world, the Executive does not hesitate to say that the people of the United States would be ready to brave all consequences sooner than submit to such condition. But no apprehension of war was entertained by the Executive, and I must express frankly the opinion that had the treaty been ratified by the Senate it would have been followed by a prompt settlement, to the entire satisfaction of Mexico, of every matter in difference between the two countries. Seeing, then, that new preparations for hostile invasion of Texas were about to be adopted by Mexico, and that these were brought about because Texas had adopted the suggestions of the Executive upon the subject of annexation, it could not passively have folded its arms and permitted a war, threatened to be accompanied by every act that could mark a barbarous age, to be waged against her because she had done so.

Other considerations of a controlling character influenced the course of the Executive. The treaty which had thus been negotiated had failed to receive the ratification of the Senate. One of the chief objections which was urged against it was found to consist in the fact that the question of annexation had not been submitted to the ordeal of public opinion in the United States. However untenable such an objection was esteemed to be, in view of the unquestionable power of the Executive to negotiate the treaty and the great and lasting interests involved in the question, I felt it to be my duty to submit the whole subject to Congress as the best expounders of popular sentiment. No definitive action having been taken on the subject

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by Congress, the question referred itself directly to the decision of the States and people. The great popular election which has just terminated afforded the best opportunity of ascertaining the will of the States and the people upon it. Pending that issue it became the imperative duty of the Executive to inform Mexico that the question of annexation was still before the American people, and that until their decision was pronounced any serious invasion of Texas would be regarded as an attempt to forestall their judgment and could not be looked upon with indifference. I am most happy to inform you that no such invasion has taken place; and I trust that whatever your action may be upon it Mexico will see the importance of deciding the matter by a resort to peaceful expedients in preference to those of arms. The decision of the people and the States on this great and interesting subject has been decisively manifested. The question of annexation has been presented nakedly to their consideration. By the treaty itself all collateral and incidental issues which were calculated to divide and distract the public councils were carefully avoided. These were left to the wisdom of the future to determine. It presented, I repeat, the isolated question of annexation, and in that form it has been submitted to the ordeal of public sentiment. A controlling majority of the people and a large majority of the States have declared in favor of immediate annexation. Instructions have thus come up to both branches of Congress from their respective constituents in terms the most emphatic. It is the will of both the people and the States that Texas shall be annexed to the Union promptly and immediately. It may be hoped that in carrying into execution the public will thus declared all collateral issues may be avoided. Future Legislatures can best decide as to the number of States which should be formed out of the territory when the time has arrived for deciding that question. So with all others. By the treaty the United States assumed the payment of the debts of Texas to an amount not exceeding \$10,000,000, to be paid, with the exception of a sum falling short of \$400,000, exclusively out of the proceeds of the sales of her public lands. We could not with honor take the lands without assuming the full payment of all incumbencies upon them.

Nothing has occurred since your last session to induce a doubt that the dispositions of Texas remain unaltered. No intimation of an altered determination on the part of her Government and people has been furnished to the Executive. She still desires to throw herself under the protection of our laws and to partake of the blessings of our federative system, while every American interest would seem to require it. The extension of our coastwise and foreign trade to an amount almost incalculable, the enlargement of the market for our manufactures, a constantly growing market for our agricultural productions, safety to our frontiers,



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and additional strength and stability to the Union—these are the results which would rapidly develop themselves upon the consummation of the measure of annexation. In such event I will not doubt but that Mexico would find her true interest to consist in meeting the advances of this Government in a spirit of amity. Nor do I apprehend any serious complaint from any other quarter; no sufficient ground exists for such complaint. We should interfere in no respect with the rights of any other nation. There can not be gathered from the act any design on our part to do so with their possessions on this continent. We have interposed no impediments in the way of such acquisitions of territory, large and extensive as many of them are, as the leading powers of Europe have made from time to time in every part of the world. We seek no conquest made by war. No intrigue will have been resorted to or acts of diplomacy essayed to accomplish the annexation of Texas. Free and independent herself, she asks to be received into our Union. It is a question for our own decision whether she shall be received or not.

The two Governments having already agreed through their respective organs on the terms of annexation, I would recommend their adoption by Congress in the form of a joint resolution or act to be perfected and made binding on the two countries when adopted in like manner by the Government of Texas.

In order that the subject may be fully presented in all its bearings, the correspondence which has taken place in reference to it since the adjournment of Congress between the United States, Texas, and Mexico is herewith transmitted.

The amendments proposed by the Senate to the convention concluded between the United States and Mexico on the 20th of November, 1843, have been transmitted through our minister for the concurrence of the Mexican Government, but, although urged thereto, no action has yet been had on the subject, nor has any answer been given which would authorize a favorable conclusion in the future.

The decree of September, 1843, in relation to the retail trade, the order for the expulsion of foreigners, and that of a more recent date in regard to passports—all which are considered as in violation of the treaty of amity and commerce between the two countries—have led to a correspondence of considerable length between the minister for foreign relations and our representatives at Mexico, but without any satisfactory result. They remain still unadjusted, and many and serious inconveniences have already resulted to our citizens in consequence of them.

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Questions growing out of the act of disarming a body of Texan troops under the command of Major Snively by an officer in the service of the United States, acting under the orders of our Government, and the forcible entry into the custom-house at Bryarly Landing, on Red River, by certain citizens of the United States, and taking away therefrom the goods seized by the collector of the customs as forfeited under the laws of Texas, have been adjusted so far as the powers of the Executive extend. The correspondence between the two Governments in reference to both subjects will be found amongst the accompanying documents. It contains a full statement of all the facts and circumstances, with the views taken on both sides and the principles on which the questions have been adjusted. It remains for Congress to make the necessary appropriation to carry the arrangement into effect, which I respectfully recommend.

The greatly improved condition of the Treasury affords a subject for general congratulation. The paralysis which had fallen on trade and commerce, and which subjected the Government to the necessity of resorting to loans and the issue of Treasury notes to a large amount, has passed away, and after the payment of upward of \$7,000,000 on account of the interest, and in redemption of more than \$5,000,000 of the public debt which falls due on the 1st of January next, and setting apart upward of \$2,000,000 for the payment of outstanding Treasury notes and meeting an installment of the debts of the corporate cities of the District of Columbia, an estimated surplus of upward of \$7,000,000 over and above the existing appropriations will remain in the Treasury at the close of the fiscal year. Should the Treasury notes continue outstanding as heretofore, that surplus will be considerably augmented. Although all interest has ceased upon them and the Government has invited their return to the Treasury, yet they remain outstanding, affording great facilities to commerce, and establishing the fact that under a well-regulated system of finance the Government has resources within itself which render it independent in time of need, not only of private loans, but also of bank facilities.

The only remaining subject of regret is that the remaining stocks of the Government do not fall due at an earlier day, since their redemption would be entirely within its control. As it is, it may be well worthy the consideration of Congress whether the law establishing the sinking fund (under the operation of which the debts of the Revolution and last war with Great Britain were to a great extent extinguished) should not, with proper modifications, so as to prevent an accumulation of surpluses, and limited in amount to a specific sum, be reenacted. Such provision, which would authorize the Government to go into the market for a purchase of its own stock on fair terms, would serve to maintain its credit at the highest point and prevent to a great extent those fluctuations in the price of

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its securities which might under other circumstances affect its credit. No apprehension of this sort is at this moment entertained, since the stocks of the Government, which but two years ago were offered for sale to capitalists at home and abroad at a depreciation, and could find no purchasers, are now greatly above par in the hands of the holders; but a wise and prudent forecast admonishes us to place beyond the reach of contingency the public credit.

It must also be a matter of unmingled gratification that under the existing financial system (resting upon the act of 1789 and the resolution of 1816) the currency of the country has attained a state of perfect soundness; and the rates of exchange between different parts of the Union, which in 1841 denoted by their enormous amount the great depreciation and, in fact, worthlessness of the currency in most of the States, are now reduced to little more than the mere expense of transporting specie from place to place and the risk incident to the operation. In a new country like that of the United States, where so many inducements are held out for speculation, the depositories of the surplus revenue, consisting of banks of any description, when it reaches any considerable amount, require the closest vigilance on the part of the Government. All banking institutions, under whatever denomination they may pass, are governed by an almost exclusive regard to the interest of the stockholders. That interest consists in the augmentation of profits in the form of dividends, and a large surplus revenue intrusted to their custody is but too apt to lead to excessive loans and to extravagantly large issues of paper. As a necessary consequence prices are nominally increased and the speculative mania very soon seizes upon the public mind. A fictitious state of prosperity for a season exists, and, in the language of the day, money becomes plenty. Contracts are entered into by individuals resting on this unsubstantial state of things, but the delusion speedily passes away and the country is overrun with an indebtedness so weighty as to overwhelm many and to visit every department of industry with great and ruinous embarrassment. The greatest vigilance becomes necessary on the part of Government to guard against this state of things. The depositories must be given distinctly to understand that the favors of the Government will be altogether withdrawn, or substantially diminished, if its revenues shall be regarded as additions to their banking capital or as the foundation of an enlarged circulation.

The Government, through its revenue, has at all times an important part to perform in connection with the currency, and it greatly depends upon its vigilance and care whether the country be involved in embarrassments similar to those which it has had recently to encounter, or, aided by the action of the Treasury, shall be preserved in a sound and healthy condition.

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The dangers to be guarded against are greatly augmented by too large a surplus of revenue. When that surplus greatly exceeds in amount what shall be required by a wise and prudent forecast to meet unforeseen contingencies, the Legislature itself may come to be seized with a disposition to indulge in extravagant appropriations to objects many of which may, and most probably would, be found to conflict with the Constitution. A fancied expediency is elevated above constitutional authority, and a reckless and wasteful extravagance but too certainly follows.

The important power of taxation, which when exercised in its most restricted form is a burthen on labor and production, is resorted to under various pretexts for purposes having no affinity to the motives which dictated its grant, and the extravagance of Government stimulates individual extravagance until the spirit of a wild and ill-regulated speculation involves one and all in its unfortunate results. In view of such fatal consequences, it may be laid down as an axiom rounded in moral and political truth that no greater taxes should be imposed than are necessary for an economical administration of the Government, and that whatever exists beyond should be reduced or modified. This doctrine does in no way conflict with the exercise of a sound discrimination in the selection of the articles to be taxed, which a due regard to the public weal would at all times suggest to the legislative mind. It leaves the range of selection undefined; and such selection should always be made with an eye to the great interests of the country. Composed as is the Union of separate and independent States, a patriotic Legislature will not fail in consulting the interests of the parts to adopt such course as will be best calculated to advance the harmony of the whole, and thus insure that permanency in the policy of the Government without which all efforts to advance the public prosperity are vain and fruitless.

This great and vitally important task rests with Congress, and the Executive can do no more than recommend the general principles which should govern in its execution.

I refer you to the report of the Secretary of War for an exhibition of the condition of the Army, and recommend to you as well worthy your best consideration many of the suggestions it contains. The Secretary in no degree exaggerates the great importance of pressing forward without delay in the work of erecting and finishing the fortifications to which he particularly alludes. Much has been done toward placing our cities and roadsteads in a state of security against the hazards of hostile attack within the last four years; but considering the new elements which have been of late years employed in the propelling of ships and the formidable implements of destruction which have been brought into service, we can not be too active or vigilant in preparing and perfecting the means of defense. I refer you also to his report

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for a full statement of the condition of the Indian tribes within our jurisdiction. The Executive has abated no effort in carrying into effect the well-established policy of the Government which contemplates a removal of all the tribes residing within the limits of the several States beyond those limits, and it is now enabled to congratulate the country at the prospect of an early consummation of this object. Many of the tribes have already made great progress in the arts of civilized life, and through the operation of the schools established among them, aided by the efforts of the pious men of various religious denominations who devote themselves to the task of their improvement, we may fondly hope that the remains of the formidable tribes which were once masters of this country will in their transition from the savage state to a condition of refinement and cultivation add another bright trophy to adorn the labors of a well-directed philanthropy.

The accompanying report of the Secretary of the Navy will explain to you the situation of that branch of the service. The present organization of the Department imparts to its operations great efficiency, but I concur fully in the propriety of a division of the Bureau of Construction, Equipment, Increase, and Repairs into two bureaus. The subjects as now arranged are incongruous, and require to a certain extent information and qualifications altogether dissimilar.

The operations of the squadron on the coast of Africa have been conducted with all due attention to the object which led to its origination, and I am happy to say that the officers and crews have enjoyed the best possible health under the system adopted by the officer in command. It is believed that the United States is the only nation which has by its laws subjected to the punishment of death as pirates those who may be engaged in the slave trade. A similar enactment on the part of other nations would not fail to be attended by beneficial results.

In consequence of the difficulties which have existed in the way of securing titles for the necessary grounds, operations have not yet been commenced toward the establishment of the navy-yard at Memphis. So soon as the title is perfected no further delay will be permitted to intervene. It is well worthy of your consideration whether Congress should not direct the establishment of a ropewalk in connection with the contemplated navy-yard, as a measure not only of economy, but as highly useful and necessary. The only establishment of the sort now connected with the service is located at Boston, and the advantages of a similar establishment convenient to the hemp-growing region must be apparent to all.

The report of the Secretary presents other matters to your consideration of an important character in connection with the service.



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In referring you to the accompanying report of the Postmaster-General it affords me continued cause of gratification to be able to advert to the fact that the affairs of the Department for the last four years have been so conducted as from its unaided resources to meet its large expenditures. On my coming into office a debt of nearly \$500,000 existed against the Department, which Congress discharged by an appropriation from the Treasury. The Department on the 4th of March next will be found, under the management of its present efficient head, free of debt or embarrassment, which could only have been done by the observance and practice of the greatest vigilance and economy. The laws have contemplated throughout that the Department should be self-sustained, but it may become necessary, with the wisest regard to the public interests, to introduce amendments and alterations in the system.

There is a strong desire manifested in many quarters so to alter the tariff of letter postage as to reduce the amount of tax at present imposed. Should such a measure be carried into effect to the full extent desired, it can not well be doubted but that for the first years of its operation a diminished revenue would be collected, the supply of which would necessarily constitute a charge upon the Treasury. Whether such a result would be desirable it will be for Congress in its wisdom to determine. It may in general be asserted as true that radical alterations in any system should rather be brought about gradually than by sudden changes and by pursuing this prudent policy in the reduction of letter postage the Department might still sustain itself through the revenue which would accrue by the increase of letters. The state and condition of the public Treasury has heretofore been such as to have precluded the recommendation of any material change. The difficulties upon this head have, however, ceased, and a larger discretion is now left to the Government.

I can not too strongly urge the policy of authorizing the establishment of a line of steamships regularly to ply between this country and foreign ports and upon our own waters for the transportation of the mail. The example of the British Government is well worthy of imitation in this respect. The belief is strongly entertained that the emoluments arising from the transportation of mail matter to foreign countries would operate of itself as an inducement to cause individual enterprise to undertake that branch of the task, and the remuneration of the Government would consist in the addition readily made to our steam navy in case of emergency by the ships so employed. Should this suggestion meet your approval, the propriety of placing such ships under the command of experienced officers of the Navy will not escape your observation. The application of steam to the purposes of naval warfare cogently recommends an extensive steam marine as important in estimating the defenses of the country. Fortunately

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this may be obtained by us to a great extent without incurring any large amount of expenditure. Steam vessels to be engaged in the transportation of the mails on our principal water courses, lakes, and ports of our coast could also be so constructed as to be efficient as war vessels when needed, and would of themselves constitute a formidable force in order to repel attacks from abroad.. We can not be blind to the fact that other nations have already added large numbers of steamships to their naval armaments and that this new and powerful agent is destined to revolutionize the condition of the world. It becomes the United States, therefore, looking to their security, to adopt a similar policy, and the plan suggested will enable them to do so at a small comparative cost.

I take the greatest pleasure in bearing testimony to the zeal and untiring industry which has characterized the conduct of the members of the Executive Cabinet. Each in his appropriate sphere has rendered me the most efficient aid in carrying on the Government, and it will not, I trust, appear out of place for me to bear this public testimony. The cardinal objects which should ever be held in view by those intrusted with the administration of public affairs are rigidly, and without favor or affection, so to interpret the national will expressed in the laws as that injustice should be done to none, justice to all. This has been the rule upon which they have acted, and thus it is believed that few cases, if any, exist wherein our fellow-citizens, who from time to time have been drawn to the seat of Government for the settlement of their transactions with the Government, have gone away dissatisfied. Where the testimony has been perfected and was esteemed satisfactory their claims have been promptly audited, and this in the absence of all favoritism or partiality. The Government which is not just to its own people can neither claim their affection nor the respect of the world. At the same time, the Closest attention has been paid to those matters which relate more immediately to the great concerns of the country. Order and efficiency in each branch of the public service have prevailed, accompanied by a system of the most rigid responsibility on the part of the receiving and disbursing agents. The fact, in illustration of the truth of this remark, deserves to be noticed that the revenues of the Government, amounting in the last four years to upward of \$120,000,000, have been collected and disbursed through the numerous governmental agents without the loss by default of any amount worthy of serious commentary.

The appropriations made by Congress for the improvement of the rivers of the West and of the harbors on the Lakes are in a course of judicious expenditure under suitable agents, and are destined, it is to be hoped, to realize all the benefits designed to be accomplished by Congress. I can not, however, sufficiently impress upon Congress the great importance of withholding appropriations from improvements which are not ascertained by previous examination and survey to be necessary for the shelter and protection of trade from the dangers of stores and tempests. Without this precaution the expenditures are but too apt to inure to the benefit of individuals, without reference to

the only consideration which can render them constitutional—the public interests and the general good.

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I can not too earnestly urge upon you the interests of this District, over which by the Constitution Congress has exclusive jurisdiction. It would be deeply to be regretted should there be at any time ground to complain of neglect on the part of a community which, detached as it is from the parental care of the States of Virginia and Maryland, can only expect aid from Congress as its local legislature. Amongst the subjects which claim your attention is the prompt organization of an asylum for the insane who may be found from time to time sojourning within the District. Such course is also demanded by considerations which apply to branches of the public service. For the necessities in this behalf I invite your particular attention to the report of the Secretary of the Navy.

I have thus, gentlemen of the two Houses of Congress, presented you a true and faithful picture of the condition of public affairs, both foreign and domestic. The wants of the public service are made known to you, and matters of no ordinary importance are urged upon your consideration. Shall I not be permitted to congratulate you on the happy auspices under which you have assembled and at the important change in the condition of things which has occurred in the last three years? During that period questions with foreign powers of vital importance to the peace of our country have been settled and adjusted. A desolating and wasting war with savage tribes has been brought to a close. The internal tranquillity of the country, threatened by agitating questions, has been preserved. The credit of the Government, which had experienced a temporary embarrassment, has been thoroughly restored. Its coffers, which for a season were empty, have been replenished. A currency nearly uniform in its value has taken the place of one depreciated and almost worthless. Commerce and manufactures, which had suffered in common with every other interest, have once more revived, and the whole country exhibits an aspect of prosperity and happiness. Trade and barter, no longer governed by a wild and speculative mania, rest upon a solid and substantial footing, and the rapid growth of our cities in every direction bespeaks most strongly the favorable circumstances by which we are surrounded. My happiness in the retirement which shortly awaits me is the ardent hope which I experience that this state of prosperity is neither deceptive nor destined to be short lived, and that measures which have not yet received its sanction, but which I can not but regard as closely connected with the honor, the glory, and still more enlarged prosperity of the country, are destined at an early day to receive the approval of Congress. Under these circumstances and with these anticipations I shall most gladly leave to others more able than myself the noble and pleasing task of sustaining the public prosperity. I shall carry with me into retirement the gratifying reflection that as my sole object throughout has been to advance the public good I may not entirely have failed in accomplishing it; and this gratification is heightened in no small degree by the fact that when under a deep and abiding sense of duty I have found myself constrained to resort to the qualified veto it has neither been followed by disapproval on the part of the people nor weakened in any degree their attachment to that great conservative feature of our Government.

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