

REPORT
OF
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
December 5, 1835.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES :

SIR: In presenting to your consideration the condition of our navy for the past year, it affords me great satisfaction to state that all the available means for its improvement have been successfully applied, and that its operations in protecting our commerce, although inadequate to the exigencies of that great and growing interest, have been highly honorable to the officers serving upon our naval stations at home and abroad.

Since my report of the 29th November, 1834, the ship of the line North Carolina has been thoroughly repaired in her hull, has been lately taken out of dock, and may be fitted for sea in eighty days.

The repairs of the ship of the line Independence, now in dock at Boston, have been commenced, and are progressing with great despatch. The frigates Constitution and Constellation have been equipped and sent to sea. The frigate United States has been prepared, and is ready for the reception of a crew. The hull of the frigate Columbia, at Washington, has been so nearly completed under the law for the gradual improvement of the navy, that she may be launched in the course of this month. The sloops of war Peacock and Vandalia have been equipped and sent to sea. The sloop of war Warren is taking in her crew, and will sail in a few days. The sloops of war Concord and Boston have been prepared, and are ready for the reception of their crews; and the Lexington will be equally prepared in a few weeks.

The repairs of the sloops of war Falmouth and Natchez, and of the schooner Grampus, have been recently commenced, and it is believed that in a few weeks they may be ready for the reception of their crews.

The building of a store-ship, authorized by a law of the 30th of June, 1834, has been commenced at Philadelphia, and a steam vessel has been commenced at New York, but will not be ready for service until some time in the summer of 1836.

The ships of the line Alabama, Vermont, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, and the frigates Santee, Cumberland, Sabine, Savannah, Raritan, and St. Lawrence, are on the stocks, well protected from the weather, and as nearly completed as it is proper they should be, until it is determined to launch them.

For a more detailed statement of the condition of those vessels, as well as that of the ships of the line Franklin, Washington, Columbus, and Ohio, and their means of repair, I beg leave to refer to a report of the Commis-

sioners of the Navy Board, herewith submitted, marked K; and for the amount of timber, iron, and other materials procured for the gradual improvement of the navy, I refer to their report, marked L.

The ship of the line Delaware, the frigate Potomac, the sloop John Adams and the schooner Shark, have been employed in the Mediterranean during the last year. The frigate Constitution sailed for that station on the 19th of August last from New York. The frigate United States returned from the Mediterranean on the 10th of December last. The Delaware is ordered to the United States, and is daily expected.

On the West India station the sloops of war Vandalia, St. Louis, and Falmouth, and the schooners Grampus and Experiment, have been employed. The Vandalia, after undergoing considerable repairs, sailed from Norfolk on the 14th of January last, to resume her station in the West Indies. The Falmouth returned from that station on the 1st of August last, and is now at Norfolk; the schooner Experiment, also returned from that station in April last, and has been employed on the survey of the coast. The Grampus returned to Norfolk on the 23d of September last, is undergoing repairs, and will soon resume her station in the West India squadron. The frigate Constellation sailed for the West Indies on the 8th of October last from Norfolk.

The sloops of war Natchez, Erie, and Ontario, and the schooner Enterprise, composed the squadron on the Brazil station. The Natchez has lately returned to the United States, having arrived at New York on the 3d of October. The schooner Enterprise has been detached from that station, and ordered on a cruise to the East Indies; she sailed in company with the sloop Peacock from Rio on the 12th of July last, the Peacock having sailed from New York for that station on the 23d of April; in June last, the Ontario was ordered to the coast of Africa, with instructions to visit the island of St. Thomas, Bassa Cove, Cape Palmas, and Mesurado.

The vessels which have been employed in the Pacific are, the frigate Brandywine, sloops Fairfield and Vincennes, and the schooners Dolphin and Boxer. The Vincennes has been ordered home by the way of the East Indies, and the Fairfield has lately arrived at Norfolk.

The events of the last year furnish much additional evidence that our naval force in commission is not adequate to the protection of our rapidly increasing commerce. The frequent insurrections and revolutions in the Governments of South America and of Mexico endanger our merchant vessels upon the Atlantic as well as Pacific ocean, and in the Gulf of Mexico, and even upon our own coast.

Influenced by a knowledge of these circumstances, and in accordance with your suggestions, I have asked and obtained from the Board of Navy Commissioners an estimate of the increased annual expense of adding two frigates, three sloops of war, and four steam vessels to our force now in commission, to be employed upon foreign stations as well as upon our own coast.

By their report it appears that such an addition to our vessels in commission would require annually an appropriation of four hundred and seventy eight thousand dollars; but as not more than one steam vessel can be finished in the next year, the appropriation wanted for 1836 for this purpose need not exceed four hundred and thirty-four thousand dollars. The sum is small compared with the benefits that may be fairly calculated to result from its expenditure in affording protection to our commerce, independent-

ly of the advantage to the efficiency and discipline of our navy, by calling into active service a large number of officers now unemployed.

A large portion of the entire expediture for the additional force proposed must be incurred, even if it should not be called into service.

The vessels necessary for such increase of force (except the steam vessels) will, if not so employed, remain at our wharves, affording no benefit to the country, and suffering more from decay than they would do if at sea; and a large portion of the officers necessary for their command, although earnestly asking for service, will remain on shore, receiving pay, but performing no duty; adding nothing to their professional skill, but losing their habits of discipline, which can only be preserved by constant exercise.

Should the proposed increase of force be sanctioned by Congress, we shall have in commission, in the year 1836, one ship of the line, six frigates, fourteen sloops of war, five schooners, and one steam vessel, with an addition of three steam vessels in succeeding years, as soon as the same can be prepared, the estimated expense of which appears by the report of the commissioners, marked D 1.

Appropriations for the gradual improvement of our navy yards are next in importance to the like appropriations for the gradual improvement of our navy. The necessity of more ample means for protecting our shipping, as well as the immense amount of public property in the different yards, must be apparent to every one who is acquainted with the subject; and the expediency of increasing the facilities for constructing and repairing our ships is not less apparent. Moderate appropriations, in addition to those that are usual, for three or four years, would accomplish these important objects. In accordance with this view of the subject, I submit a letter of the Board of Navy Commissioners, marked No. 2, together with an estimate, marked E 1. of the probable cost of the proposed improvements, which amounts to three millions five hundred thousand dollars, including that of the dry dock at New York, amounting to nine hundred thousand dollars.

A national foundry for the purpose of casting cannon, shot, and shells, as well for the army as the navy, was a subject of discussion before the two Houses of Congress at their late session, but was postponed in consequence of the shortness of the session and the pressure of more urgent business. No doubt can be entertained of the importance of such an establishment, when we consider the great improvements made in the fabrication of small arms at the different armories of the United States.

In our future wars, especially on the ocean, we must rely much upon the excellence of our cannon. The bursting of a single gun may cause, as it often has done, the loss of a battle. The disasters from this cause, that occurred during the revolutionary as well as the late war, admonish us to guard against like disasters in future, which, it is believed, may be avoided by the means proposed.

It is only by a long series of experiments, and those attended with great expense, that we can hope to discover the best material for making cannon which our country affords, and the art of fabricating them with the most perfect accuracy and efficiency. Believing that such discoveries and improvements are attainable, and that they would be highly important in the army, and still more so in the navy, I must be permitted to express a hope that the subject will be revived at the approaching session of Congress, and that a plan of a national foundry will be adopted.

The importance of rearing a body of seamen by enlisting into the service of our navy, boys over the age of thirteen and under the age of eighteen, until they should arrive at the age of twenty-one years, has already attracted the attention of Congress. At the last session a bill for this purpose was introduced into the Senate. Every year the importance of this measure becomes more apparent. Able seamen are much wanted, while there are boys enough in our cities leading lives of idleness and vice, for want of employment, who, if thus enlisted, under judicious regulations, would, in a few years, afford us a sufficient corps of able seamen to man our navy, and, in the mean time, render services to their country worth their pay.

The compensation to be given, by the late pay bill, to professors of mathematics, is such as to command the services of those who are every way competent to perform the duties of this station. A regulation is adopted to appoint none to this station who shall not receive a certificate of competency, after submitting to a rigid examination by scientific gentlemen who shall be appointed for that purpose. This will be of great advantage to the young officers of the navy; and if a large portion of them should be called into active service, by employing an additional naval force for the protection of our commerce, they will be enabled to perfect themselves in seamanship, the most important part of their education, and which can be acquired only at sea; but to make them accomplished officers, something more is required than can probably be derived from those sources. A knowledge of military tactics, of engineering, and drawing, is deemed indispensable in the education of an officer of the army, and which ought to be deemed equally so in the education of a naval officer. So much of chemistry, mineralogy, geology, and natural history, as is taught at the Military Academy, although not absolutely essential to the military or naval officer, yet is decidedly more important to the latter than to the former.

If provision should be made for the admission of a class of one hundred midshipmen at a time at the academy at West Point, to pursue such studies as should be prescribed by the Navy Department, and to be succeeded at the end of one or two years by another class, all, in their turn, might receive the advantage of this course of studies, highly necessary to their education as accomplished officers of the navy, and at a small expense; as the midshipmen, while at the academy, would receive no more pay than if attending the schools at the navy yards, or if waiting orders.

A national observatory, although not immediately necessary to the defence of our country, is remotely so; and, considered with reference to the bearing it would have upon our navy, our commerce, and scientific pursuits, it assumes an importance worthy the consideration of Congress.

It is hardly to be doubted that we shall at some future period make such an establishment, and I will venture to express an opinion that no time can be more propitious for such an undertaking than the present. It would not be attended with any great expense. It is necessary now to employ an officer of science to keep our maps and charts, to regulate our chronometers, and to preserve all mathematical and philosophical instruments required for the naval service, and buildings are necessary for these purposes.

These duties would properly devolve upon the superintendent of an observatory, and the buildings necessary to such an establishment would be amply sufficient for the preservation of our maps, charts, and instruments.

Under the act concerning naval pensions and the navy pension fund,

eighteen invalid pensions have been granted since my last report, making the number on the roll three hundred and five, and the annual amount required to pay them \$24,944; and forty-one widows' pensions have been granted, making the number on the roll one hundred and fifty, and the annual amount necessary to pay them \$32,594.

The annual charge, therefore, according to the present roll, will amount to \$57,538.

It is not probable that all on the list will claim; but as the death of a pensioner is not officially known except when the account is settled by his or her representative, the number is made out from the rolls in this department. Some have not claimed for two, three, four, and five years, but, as they are not known to be dead, their names are still continued on the rolls. The receipts and expenditures on account of the fund, to the 30th September last, will be seen in the statement marked M, and the amount and description of stocks belonging to the fund in the statement marked M 1.

Under the act of the 19th June, 1834, respecting pensions chargeable to the privateer pension fund, since my last report, six widows have received five years' pension each, amounting to \$2,400; more than five years having elapsed since the date to which they were last paid. Two invalid pensions have also been granted, making the number on the roll thirty-six, and the annual amount required to pay them \$3,184.

The account of stock, and of receipts and expenditures, will be seen in statement N.

The condition of the navy hospital fund, including receipts and expenditures, will appear in statement O. The annual receipts are much greater than the disbursements; and, as they will probably continue to be greater for several years, I respectfully repeat the suggestion in my last report, that authority be given to vest the surplus in some well secured stock for the benefit of the fund.

Under the act of the 30th of June, 1834, the widows of all officers, seamen, and marines, who have died in the naval service since the first day of January, 1824, or who may die in said service, by reason of disease contracted, or of casualties by drowning or otherwise, or of injuries received while in the line of duty, are entitled to pensions equal to half the amount of the pay to which their husbands respectively were entitled at the time of their deaths.

The act of the 3d of March last, "to regulate the pay of the navy of the United States," and which increased the pay of many officers, is silent as to pensions. A difficulty arises in ascertaining the proper amount of pension to be allowed to widows of naval officers whose pay has been increased by this act. The pay of a captain in command of a squadron was increased to four thousand dollars a year; when on other duty, to three thousand five hundred dollars; and when off duty, to two thousand five hundred dollars. A corresponding increase of pay is made to other officers.

In the case of a captain dying when in command of a squadron on a foreign station, a question arises whether his widow should receive a pension to the amount of six hundred dollars a year, to which she would have been entitled if this act had not passed, or whether she shall receive the half of the amount of pay to which her husband was entitled at the time of his death, as a captain commanding a squadron, as a captain on other duty, or as a captain off duty.

After much deliberation, it has been decided to allow a pension in such cases of \$1,135 62 a year, being the half pay of a captain commanding a

squadron, reduced by the amount of \$1,728 75, equal to his allowance before this act. The salary of four thousand dollars a year to a captain in command of a squadron is in lieu of former pay and emoluments. Those emoluments, excepting one ration a day, amounted to \$1,728 75, which sum, deducted from \$4,000, leaves \$2,271 25, the half of which, \$1,135 62, is considered as the proper amount of the widow's annual pension.

Questions on pensions more complicated than this may arise under this act, especially in the case of the deaths of surgeons and assistant surgeons, whose grades of pay are more numerous than those of captains.

The necessity of an explanatory act, to obviate these difficulties, is respectfully suggested. By the act of Congress of the 10th July, 1832, it is required that any surplus money belonging to the navy pension fund shall be vested in the stock of the Bank of the United States. The amount so vested is \$619,000, and this Department has no authority to make a different investment of money without the further action of Congress.

Previously to the passing of the act of the 30th of June, 1834, for the better organization of the United States marine corps, double rations had been allowed to the commandant of that corps, and to the officers of the same, commanding at the navy yards at Portsmouth, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Norfolk, and Pensacola; and to the senior marine officers in the squadrons in the Mediterranean, the West Indies, the Brazilian coast, and the Pacific ocean, all receiving the sanction of Congress by their appropriations. By this act, the officers of the marine corps are to receive the same pay, emoluments, and allowances as are given to officers of similar grades in the infantry of the army.

The act of the 16th of March, 1802, fixing the military peace establishment of the United States, authorizes allowances to the commanding officers of each separate post of such additional number of rations as the President of the United States shall from time to time direct.

These provisions of this last act were continued by an act of the 3d of March, 1815, fixing the military peace establishment.

The paymaster of the marine corps made payments for double rations to officers heretofore receiving the same, from the 1st of July to the 30th of September, 1834; but the accounting officers of the Treasury did not think proper to allow the same, inasmuch as the commands of these officers had never been designated as separate stations, agreeably to the rule prescribed for the army. This is a case of difficulty which, it is respectfully suggested, requires the interposition of Congress.

Being still of the opinion expressed in my last report, that the public interests would be promoted by having the marine barracks placed without the navy yards to which they are attached as early as may be practicable, estimates are submitted for purchasing sites and erecting barracks at places where they are deemed most necessary.

In performance of my duty under the act of the 3d of March last, authorizing the construction of a dry dock for the naval service in the harbor of New York, or its adjacent waters, I proceeded in May last to the city of New York, where I was met by an able engineer, Loami Balwin, Esq. whom I had previously engaged to make the soundings and other examinations necessary to a proper selection of a suitable site. After a long and laborious examination, Mr. Baldwin made his report, which has been submitted to your consideration, by which it appears that the proposed dry dock may be advantageously constructed in the navy yard at Brooklyn. A

selection of this place for this purpose is recommended by the consideration that the land occupied as the navy yard belongs to the United States, and that the public buildings upon it, which are of great value, cannot be abandoned without serious loss.

One difficulty presented itself, which created some delay in making this selection; a building for the purpose of distilling turpentine, had been erected so near to the navy yard as greatly to endanger the public property; other buildings for similar purposes, or for purposes equally dangerous, might be erected near the yard if not prevented by some act of legislation. I am happy to state that the common council of Brooklyn, when the case was laid before them, promptly passed an ordinance, which, it is believed, will effectually secure the property in the navy yard from the danger of this nuisance and all similar ones; and it cannot be doubted that the common council of Brooklyn will grant all reasonable protection and accommodation to this navy yard, and that the State of New York will protect and promote the interests of the same by any legislative acts that may be found to be necessary and proper.

I shall therefore proceed under your direction, with as much despatch as present and future appropriations will permit, to cause the dry dock thus authorized by law to be constructed in the navy yard at Brooklyn.

Under the act of the 30th June, 1834, "authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to make experiments for the safety of the steam engine," and appropriating \$5,000 for that purpose, many proposed improvements have been submitted for the purpose of being tested by experiments. Some of these were so easily tested by those having steam engines in operation, that the aid of Government was not needed. Others were attended with greater difficulty, and could not be tested without the expense of constructing boilers and other machinery for the purpose. These proposed improvements have not been such as, in my opinion, to warrant a large expenditure of money, and no experiments have been made upon them. Such experiments, however, would have been made, if they could have been so made without the expense of constructing engines.

The act seemed particularly to require that the steam engine devised by Benjamin Phillips, of Philadelphia, should be examined and tested, and that Mr. Phillips should be employed in making the experiments. Mr. Phillips was, therefore, employed to construct a model engine, with boilers and other machinery which he deemed necessary for the purpose of testing his improvements, which he brought to this District, where he remained several weeks, making his experiments before many members of the two Houses of Congress, before the officers of the different departments, and others.

I attended very carefully to these experiments, but have not been able to perceive in them any improvement increasing the safety of the steam engine.

The money paid for Mr. Phillips's machinery, preparations and experiments, amounts to \$519 75; the residue of the appropriation remains unexpended.

The fourth report of Mr. Hassler, superintendent of the coast survey, upon the operations performed in that work between the months of May and December, 1835, together with his detailed estimate of the appropriations required for the same for the next year, are herewith submitted, marked T.

Much work appears to have been done on the secondary triangulations, on the topographical operations, and by the sounding parties. That more has not been done in the primary triangulations is explained in the report.

Of the appropriations heretofore made for this survey, there remained, on the 1st day of this month, an unexpended balance of \$8,823.

The duties of the sounding parties are performed by the officers and seamen of the navy, and the chief part of the expense is charged to the navy appropriations. As, however, there are some expenses which cannot be charged to these appropriations, they must necessarily be charged to the appropriations for the coast survey. In September, 1834, the schooner *Jersey*, not wanted for any purposes of the navy, was purchased for the sounding party under the command of Lieutenant Gedney. The price of this vessel, (\$3,350) therefore, could not be charged to the naval appropriations; it was properly charged to the appropriation for the coast survey. For the same reason, the boats, equipments, and other expenses for the schooner, amounting to \$1,888 60, were charged to the same appropriation, as was also the charge for extra pay to the officers, amounting to \$650, in all, for the year 1834, to \$5,888 60.

During the present season the expense of this schooner, chargeable to the coast survey, has amounted to \$1,399, making the whole expense of this schooner for the years 1834 and 1835, chargeable to the coast survey, amount to \$7,287 60.

It is not probable that the expense of this schooner, chargeable to the coast survey appropriation, will, for the next year, exceed \$1,500.

The schooner *Experiment*, employed by the sounding party under Lieutenant Blake, belongs to the navy. The coast survey appropriation has, therefore, been charged only for equipments, which were not necessary for the purposes of the navy. These, with other expenses attending the operations of the sounding party on board this schooner, from the 1st of July last, when she was sent upon the survey, to the 30th of September last, amounted to \$2,517 73.

As most of the equipments of these schooners will last for several years, with but little expense for repairs and supply of articles which may be lost by accident, it is believed that the expense of both schooners and the sounding parties on board of them, for the next year, chargeable to the coast survey, will not exceed \$4,000.

It will be seen that this differs widely from the statement of Mr. Hassler, which may be explained by the circumstance that he did not derive his information from the books of the Treasury Department.

By a statement hereunto annexed, marked P, it appears that of the appropriations heretofore made for the suppression of the slave trade, there remains in the treasury a balance of \$13,489 55.

In my last report I took the liberty of stating that some of the clerks in my Department did not receive salaries proportioned to their services, or adequate to the decent support of themselves and families; and I respectfully solicited that the salaries, particularly of the chief clerk of the Navy Board, the warrant clerk, and the clerk keeping the register of correspondence of this Department, whose duties are arduous, requiring both talent and experience, should be increased, so that the first might receive \$1,700 per annum, and the others \$1,400 each. I repeat the solicitation, from a thorough conviction that their faithful services fully merit this increase of compensation.

The superintendent of the southwest executive building receives but \$250 per annum for his services, which, it is believed, is a compensation too small to command the services of one competent to perform the duties of the station. The sergeants acting as clerks to the commandant and staff officers of the marine corps are paid at the rate of less than \$700 a year for all their services, which, it is respectfully suggested, is not an adequate compensation.

The necessary references to papers and documents connected with this report will be found in a schedule hereunto annexed.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

MAHLON DICKERSON.