

municipal or general, its people must look to Congress for the regulation of those concerns that are the subject of local control. Our people have interests that the National Capital should be made attractive and beautiful and above all that its social order should be maintained.

The law regarding the sale of intoxicating drinks within the District should be revised with a view of bringing the traffic under stringent limitations and control.

In execution of the power conferred upon me by the act making an appropriation for the expenses of the District of Columbia for the year ending June 30th, 1889, I on the 17th day of August last appointed Rudolph Hering, of New York, Samuel W. Gray, of Rhode Island, and Frederick P. Steams, of Massachusetts, three eminent sanitary engineers, to examine and report upon the system of sewerage existing in the District of Columbia. Their report, which is not yet completed, will be in due course submitted to Congress. The report of the commissioners of the District is herewith transmitted, and the attention of Congress is herewith called to the suggestions to Congress contained therein.

WORLD'S FAIR.

The proposition to observe the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by the opening of a world's fair or exposition in one of the great cities will be presented for the consideration of Congress. The value and interest of such an exposition may have a claim for promotion by the general government.

CIVIL SERVICE

On the 4th day of March last, the Civil Service Commission had but a single member. The vacancies were filled on the 7th day of May, and since then the Commission have been industriously going through with an adequate force executing the law. They were assured that a cordial support would be given them in a faithful and impartial enforcement of the statute and of the rules and regulations adopted in aid of it. Heretofore the book of eligibles has been closed to everyone except as certifications were made on the requisition of the appointing officers. This secrecy was the source of much suspicion and many charges of favoritism in the administration of the law. What is secret is always suspected, and what is open can be judged. The commission, with the full approval of its members, has now opened the list of eligibles to the public. The eligibles for the classified list of post offices and custom houses are now publicly posted in the respective offices, as are also the certification for appointments. The purpose of the civil service law was to absolutely exclude all others from a consideration in connection with it than that of merit as tested by examinations. The business proceeds upon the theory that both the examining boards and the appointing officers are absolutely ignorant as to the political views and associations of

all persons on the civil service list. It is not too much to say, however, that some of the recent congressional investigations have somewhat shaken the public confidence in the impartiality of some of the selections for appointment. The reform of the civil service will make no safe or satisfactory evidence until the present law and its equal administration are well established in the confidence of the people. It will be my pleasure, as it is my duty, to see that the law is executed with fairness and impartiality. If some of its provisions have been fraudulently evaded by appointing officers, our resentment should not suggest the repeal of the law, but reform in its administration. We should have one view of the matter and hold it with a sincerity that is not affected by the consideration that the party to which we belong is for the time in power.

FAST MAIL SERVICE.

My predecessor, on the fourth day of January, 1889, by an executive order to take effect March 15th, brought the railway mail service under the operation of the civil service law. Provision was made that the order should not take effect any sooner in any State where an eligible list is sooner obtained. On the 11th day of March, Mr. Lyman, then the only member of the commission, reported to me in writing that it would not be possible to have a list of eligibles before May 1st, and requested that the taking effect of the order be postponed until that time, which was done subject to the same provision contained in the original order as to States in which an eligible list is sooner obtained. As a result of the revision of rules, and the new classification and inclusion of the railway mail service, the work of the commission has been greatly increased, and the present clerical force found to be inadequate. I recommend that the additional clerks asked for by the commission be appropriated for the duty.

The growth of the country, and the consequent increase of the civil list, have magnified this question of the executive disproportionately. It cannot be denied, however, that the labor connected with this necessary work is increased often to the point of actual distress by the sudden and excessive demands that are made upon the incoming administration for removals and appointments, but, on the other hand, that incumbency is a conclusive argument for a continuance in office of impartiality, moderate fidelity to public duty, and a good attainment in the discharge of it must be added before the arguments is complete; and when those holding the administrations of office so conduct themselves as to convince just political opponents that no party consideration or bias affects in any way the discharge of their public duties, we can more easily see the demand for removals. I am satisfied that in both in and out classified services great benefit would accrue from the adoption of some system by which the officer would receive the distinction and benefit

that in all private employments come from the exception of all faithfulness and efficiency in the performance of duty. I have suggested to the heads of executive departments that they consider whether a record might not be kept in each bureau of all those elements that are covered by the terms faithfulness and efficiency, and a rating made showing the relative merits of clerks of each class; this rating to be regarded as a test of merit in making the promotion.

I have also suggested to the Postmaster General that he can, upon the basis of the reports to the department and of frequent inspections, indicate the relative merit of postmasters of each class. They will be appropriately indicated in the official register and report of the department. That a great stimulus would thus be given to the whole service I do not doubt, and such a record would be the best defense against removals from office.

EDUCATION.

The interest of the general government in the education of the people found an early expression not only in the thoughtful and sometimes warning utterances of our ablest statesmen, but in liberal appropriations from the common resources for the support of education in the new States. No one will deny that it is of the gravest national concern that those who hold the ultimate control of all public affairs should have the necessary intelligence wisely to direct and determine them. National aid to education has heretofore taken the form of land grants, and that from the constitutional power of Congress to promote the education of the people is not seriously questioned. I do not think it can be successfully questioned when the form is changed to that of a direct grant of money from the public treasury that such aid should be, as it always has been, suggested by some exceptional conditions. The sudden emancipation of the slaves the bestowal of the suffrage which soon followed, and the impairment of the ability of the States where those new citizens were chiefly to be found, adequately provided with educational facilities, presented not only exceptional but unexampled conditions. That the situation has been much ameliorated there is no doubt. The ability and interest of the States have happily increased, but a great work remains to be done, and I think the general government should lend its aid. As the suggestion of a national grant in aid of education grows chiefly out of the conditions and needs of the emancipated slaves and their descendants, the relief should, as far as possible, while necessarily proceeding upon some general lines, be applied to the need that suggested it. It is essential, if much good is to be accomplished, that the sympathy and active interest of the people of the States should be enlisted, and that the methods adopted should be such as to stimulate and not to supplant local taxation for school purposes. As one Congress cannot bind a succeeding one in