

one who shall represent the government in the inquiry. Those who are the enemies of social order, or who come to our shores to swell the injurious influence and to extend the evil practices of any association that defies our laws, should not only be denied citizenship but a domicile.

#### THE NATIONAL BANKRUPT LAW.

The enactment of a national bankrupt law of a character to be a permanent part of our general legislation is desirable. It should be simple in its methods and inexpensive in its administration.

#### POSTAL MATTERS.

The report of the Postmaster-General not only exhibits the operation of the department for the fiscal year, but contains many valuable suggestions for improvement and extension of service which are commended to your attention. No other branch of the government has so close a contact with the daily life of the people. Almost everyone uses the service it offers, and every hour gained in the transmission of the great commercial mails is an actual and possible value that only those engaged in trade can understand. The saving of one day in the transmission of the mails between San Francisco and New York, which has recently been accomplished, is an incident worthy of mention. The plans suggested of a suspension of the post offices in separate districts involve instruction and suggestion, and a rating of efficiency of the postmasters, would, I have no doubt, greatly improve the service.

A pressing necessity exists for the erection of a building for the joint use of the department of the city post-office. The department was partially relieved by renting outside quarters for part of its force; but it is again overcrowded. The building used by the city office was never fit for the purpose, and is now inadequate and unwholesome. The unsatisfactory condition of the law relating to transmission through the mail of lottery advertisements and remittances is clearly stated by the Postmaster General, and his suggestion as to its amendment should have your favorable consideration.

#### THE NAVY.

The report of the Secretary of the Navy shows a re-organization of the bureaus of the department which, we do not doubt, will promote the efficiency of each. In general, satisfactory progress has been made in the construction of new ships of war authorized by Congress. The first vessel of the new navy, the *Dolphin*, was subjected to very severe trial tests and to very much criticism; but it is gratifying to be able to state that a cruise around the world, from which she has recently returned, has demonstrated that she is a first-class vessel of her rate. The reports of the secretary show that while the effective force of the navy is rapidly increasing by reason of the improved build and armament of the new ships, the number of our ships on sea duty grows very slowly. We had, on the 4th of

March last thirty-seven serviceable ships, and though four have since been added to the list, the total have not been increased, because in the meantime four have been lost or condemned. Twenty-six additional vessels have been authorized and appropriated for, but it is probable that, when completed, our list will be increased to forty-two again. The old wooden ships are disappearing almost as fast as the new vessels are added. One of the new ships may, in fighting strength, be equal to two of the old, but it cannot do cruising duties too. It is important, therefore, that we should have a more rapid increase in the number of serviceable ships. I concur in the recommendation of the Secretary that the construction of eight armored ships, three gunboats and five torpedo boats be authorized.

#### THE SAMOAN WRECK.

An appalling calamity befel three of our naval vessels on duty at the Samoan Islands, in the harbor of Apia, in March last, involving the loss of four officers and forty-seven seamen of two vessels, the *Trenton* and *Vandalia*, and the disabling of the third, the *Nipsic*. Three vessels of the German navy were also in the harbor, shared with our ships the force of the hurricane, and suffered even more heavily. While mourning the brave officers and men who died, facing with high resolve perils greater than those of battle, it is most gratifying to state that the credit of the American navy for seamanship, courage and generosity was magnificently sustained in the storm-beaten harbor of Apia.

#### INDIAN AFFAIRS.

The report of the Secretary of the Interior exhibits the transactions of the government with the Indian tribes. Substantial progress has been made in the education of the children of school age, and in the allotment of lands to adult Indians. It is to be regretted that the policy of breaking up the tribal relation and of dealing with the Indian as an individual did not appear earlier in our legislation. Large reservations are held in command and the maintenance of authority of the chiefs and head men have deprived the individual of every incentive to exercise, thrift and energy, and the annuity has contributed an affirmative impulse toward a state of confirmed pauperism.

Our treaty stipulations should be observed with fidelity, and our legislation should be highly considerate of the best interests of an ignorant and a helpless people. The reservations are now generally surrounded by white settlements. We can no longer push the Indian back into the wilderness, and it only remains, by every suitable agency, to push him upwards toward a self-supporting and responsible situation. For the adult, the first step is to locate him on a farm, and for the child, to place him in a school. School attendance should be promoted by every moral agency, and those failing should be compelled. The national schools for Indians

have been very successful and should be multiplied, and as far as possible, should be so organized and conducted as to facilitate the transfer of the schools to the States or Territories in which they are located, when the Indians in a neighborhood have accepted citizens and have been otherwise fitted for such a transfer. This condition of things will be attained slowly, but it will be hastened by keeping it in mind, and in the meantime, that co-operation between the government and the mission schools which has wrought much good should be cordially and impartially sustained. The last Congress enacted two distinct laws relating to negotiations with the Sioux Indians of Dakota for a relinquishment of a portion of their lands to the United States, and for dividing the remainder into separate reservations. Both were approved on the same day, March 2. The one submitted to the Indians a specific proposition, the other (section 3 of the Indian appropriation act) authorized the President to appoint three commissioners to negotiate with the Indians for the accomplishment of the same general purpose, and required that any agreement made should be submitted to Congress for ratification.

On the 16th day of April last I appointed Hon. Chas. Foster, Hon. Wm. Warner, of Mo., and Major-General Geo. Crook, U. S. A., commissioners under the last named. They were, however, authorized and directed first to submit to the Indians the definite proposition by the act first mentioned, and in the event of failure to secure the consent of the requisite number.

The negotiations were long and arduous, but the consent of the requisite number of the Indians was finally obtained to the proposition made by Congress, although the report of the commission has not yet been submitted. In view of these facts, I shall not, as at present advised, deem it necessary to submit the agreement to Congress for ratification, but it will in due course of time be submitted for information. This agreement releases to the United States about 9,000,000 acres of land.

The commission provided for by section 14 of the Indian appropriation bill to negotiate with the Cherokee Indians and all other Indians owning or claiming lands west of the ninety-sixth degree of longitude, for the cession to the United States of all such lands, was constituted by the appointment of Hon. Lucius Fairchild, of Wisconsin, Hon. Jno. F. Hartnuff, of Pennsylvania, and Hon. Alfred M. Wilson, of Arkansas, and organized on June 29th last. Their first conference with the representatives of the Cherokees was held at Tahlequah July 29th with no definite result. General John F. Hartnuff, of Pennsylvania, was prevented by ill health from taking part in the conference, and his death, which occurred recently, is justly and generally lamented by a people who had served with conspicuous gallantry in war and with