

that domestic letters constitute the only class of mail matter which has never been favored by a substantial reduction of rates. I am convinced that the burden of maintaining the service falls more unequally upon that class, and that more than any other it is entitled to present relief. That such relief may be extended without detriment to other public interests, will be discovered upon reviewing the results of former reductions. Immediately prior to the act of 1845, the postage upon a letter composed of a single sheet, was as follows: Conveyed thirty miles or less, 6c.; between thirty and eighty miles, 10c.; between eighty and 150 miles, 12c.; between 150 and 400 miles, 18c.; over 400 miles, 25c. By the act of 1845, the postage on a single letter, conveyed for any distance under thirty miles, was fixed at 5c. and for any greater distance at 10c. By the act of 1857 it was provided that a single letter, if prepaid, should be carried any distance not exceeding 3,000 miles, for 3 cents, and any greater distance 6 cents. It will be noticed that both of these reductions were of a radical character, and relatively quite as important as that which is now proposed. In each case there ensued a temporary loss of revenue, but a sudden and large influx of business which substantially repaid that loss within three years. Unless the experience of past legislation in this country and elsewhere goes for naught, it may be safely predicted that the stimulus of a reduction of fifty per cent. in the tax for postage would at once increase the letters consigned to the mail and the advantage of secrecy would lead to a very general substitution of sealed packages for postal cards and open circulars, and divers other ways the volume of first-class matter would be enormously augmented. Such increase amounted in England, in the first year after the adoption of a penny postage to more than 125 per cent. After a careful estimate, the details of which cannot be here set forth I am convinced that the deficiency for the first year after the proposed reduction would not exceed 7 per cent. of the expenditure on \$3,000,000, while the deficiency after the reduction of 1845 was more than 14 per cent., and after that of 1854, was 27 per cent. Another interesting comparison is afforded by statistics furnished me by the postoffice department. The act of 1845 was passed in the face of the fact that there existed a deficiency of more than \$20,000; that of 1851 was encouraged by the slight surplus of \$1,832,000. The excess of revenue in the next fiscal year is likely to be \$3,500,000. If Congress should approve of these suggestions, it may be deemed desirable to supply, to some extent, the deficiency which must for a time result by increasing the charge of carrying merchandize, which is now only 16 cents per pound, but even without such an increase I am confident that the receipts under the diminished rates would equal the expenditures after a lapse of three or four years.

THE JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT.

The report of the Department of Justice brings anew to your notice the necessity of enlarging the present system of Federal Jurisprudence, so as effectually to answer the requirements of the ever-increasing litigation, with which it is called upon to deal. The Attorney-General renews the suggestions of his predecessor, that in the interests of justice better provisions that the existing laws afford should be made in certain judicial districts, for granting the fees of witnesses and jurors. In the message of December last, I referred to the pending criminal proceedings, grown out of the fraud known as the "Star route service," of the Postoffice Department, and advised you that I had enjoined upon the Attorney-General and associate counsel, to whom the interests of the government were intrusted, the duty of prosecuting with the utmost rigor of the law, all persons who might be found chargeable with those offenses. A trial of one of these cases has since occurred. It occupied for many weeks the attention of the Supreme Court, with great deliberation, and was conducted with great ability. It resulted in a verdict of guilty. It required, but the case has again been placed upon the calendar and will shortly be retried. If any guilty persons shall finally escape punishment for their offences, it will not be for lack of the diligent and urgent efforts of the prosecution.

BANKRUPT LAW.

I trust some agreement may be

reached speedily, and Congress, with the concurrence of the executive, afford the commercial community the benefits of a national bankrupt law.

THE RAILROADS.

The points in the Secretary's report which will doubtless furnish occasion for congressional action, may be the neglect of the railroad companies, to which large grants of land were made by the acts of 1862 and 1863, to take title thereto, and their consequently inequitable exception from local taxation. The survey of the more material conditions cannot fail to excite inquiry into the moral and intellectual progress of the people.

EDUCATION.

The census returns disclose an alarming state of illiteracy in certain portions of the country where the provisions for free schools is most inadequate. It is a momentous question for the decision of Congress, whether immediate substantial aid should be extended by the general government for supplementary efforts of private beneficence, and of State and Territorial Legislatures in behalf of education.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

The report of the secretary of the interior, with its accompanying documents, presents a full statement of the varied operations of that department. In respect to Indian affairs, nothing has occurred which has changed or seriously modified the views to which I devoted much space in a former communication to Congress. I renew the recommendations therein contained as to extending to the Indians the protection of the law. Allotting land in severalty to such as desire it, and making suitable provision for the education of such as desire it. The provision will prove unavailing unless it is broad enough to include all those who are able and willing to make use of it, and should not solely relate to intellectual training, but also to instruction in such manual labor in the simple and useful arts as can be practically useful.

Among the important subjects which are included in the secretary's report and which will doubtless furnish occasion for congressional action, may be mentioned the regulation of inter-state commerce which has been the subject of your deliberations. One of the incidents of the marvelous extensions of the railway systems of the country, has been the adoption of such measures by the corporations which own or control the roads, as has tended to impair the advantages of healthful competition, and make hurtful discrimination in the adjustment of freightage. These inequalities have been corrected in several of the states by appropriate legislation, the effect of which is in their own territory. So far as such mischief affects commerce between the states, or between any one of the states, and a foreign country, the subject is of national concern, and Congress alone can afford relief.

POLYGAMY.

The results which have thus far attended the enforcement of the recent statute for the suppression of polygamy in the territories, are reported by the Secretary of the Interior. It is not probable that any additional legislation in this regard will be deemed desirable, until the effect of existing laws shall be more closely observed and studied. I congratulate you that the commissioners under whose supervision these laws have been put into operation, are encouraged to believe that the evil at which they are aimed, may be suppressed without resort to such radical measures, as in some quarters have been thought indispensable for success.

THE TERRITORIES.

The close relation of the general government to the territories preparing to be great states may well engage your special attention. It is there that the Indian disturbances occur, and that polygamy has found room for its growth. I cannot doubt that a careful survey of the territorial question would be of the highest utility, and that life and property would be more secure. The liability of an out break between Indians and whites would be lessened, the public domain would be more securely guarded, and better progress be made in the instruction of the young.

ALASKA.

Alaska is still without any form of civil government. If means were provided for the protection of

life and property, the immense resources of that country would invite permanent settlements and open new fields for industry and enterprise.

AGRICULTURE.

The report of the Commissioner of Agriculture presents an account of the labors of that department during the past year, and includes information of much interest to the general public. The condition of the forests of the country and the wasteful manner in which their destruction is taking place, give great cause for apprehension. Their action in protecting the earth's surface, in modifying the extremes of climate, and in producing and sustaining the flow of springs and streams, is not well understood, and their importance in relation to the growth of the country cannot be safely disregarded. They are fast disappearing before destructive fires, and the legitimate requirements of increasing population, and their total extinction cannot be long delayed, unless better methods than now prevail shall be adopted for their protection and cultivation. The attention of Congress is invited to the necessity of additional legislation to secure the preservation of the valuable forests still remaining on the public domain.

CIVIL SERVICE.

I am in favor of a system of civil service modelled upon the system which obtains in Great Britain, but which avoids certain of the prominent features whereby that system is distinguished. I felt bound to intimate this whether their laws or any of them would afford adequate remedy for the evils which they aim to correct. I declared, nevertheless, that if the proposed measures should prove acceptable to Congress, they would receive the unhesitating support of the executive. Since the suggestions were submitted for your consideration there has been no legislation upon the subject to which they relate, but there has, meanwhile, been an increase in public interest on that subject, and the people of the country, apparently without distinction of party, have in various ways and upon frequent occasions, given expression to their earnest wish for prompt and definite action. In my judgment such action should no longer be postponed. I may add that my own sense of its pressing importance has been quickened by observation in the practical phases of the matter to which attention has more than once been called by my predecessors. The civil list now comprises about 100,000 persons, the larger part of whom, must, under the terms of the Constitution, be selected by the President or his appointees. In the early years of the administration of the government, the personal direction of appointments to civil service may not have been an irksome task for the executive, but now that the burden has increased fully a hundredfold, it has become greater than he ought to bear, and it necessarily diverts his time and attention from the proper discharge of other duties no less delicate and responsible, and which in the very nature of things, cannot be delegated to other hands. In the judgment of not a few who have given study and reflection to this matter, the nation has outgrown the provisions which the Constitution has established for filling the minor offices in the public service, but whatever may be thought of the wisdom or expediency of changing the fundamental law in this regard, it is certain that much relief may be afforded not only the President and the heads of the departments, but to senators and representatives in Congress by discreet legislation. They would be protected in a great measure by the bill now pending before the Senate or by any other which should embody its important features, from the pressure of personal importunity, and some of the labor of examining conflicting claims and pretensions of candidates. I trust that before the close of the present session some decisive action may be taken for the correction of the evils which affect the present methods of appointment; and I assure you of my hearty co-operation in any measures which are likely to conduce to that end as the most appropriate to define the terms and tenor of the official life of subordinate employees of the government. It seems to be generally agreed that whatever the extent or character, the one should be definite and the other stable, and that nei-

ther should be regulated by zeal in the office for party, or fidelity to the fortunes of an individual. It matters little to the people at large what competent person is at the head of this department or of that bureau, if they feel assured the removal of one and the accession of another will not involve the retirement of honest and faithful subordinates, whose duties are purely administrative, and have no legitimate connection with the triumph of any political principles or the success of any political party or faction. It is to this latter class of officers that the Senate bill, to which I have already referred, exclusively applies. While neither that bill nor any other prominent scheme for improving the civil service concerns the higher grade of officials who are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, I feel bound to correct a prevalent misapprehension as to the frequency with which the present executive has deposed the incumbent of an office and appointed another in his stead. It has been repeatedly alleged that he has, in this particular, signally departed from the course which has been pursued under recent administrations of the government. The facts are as follows: The whole number of executive appointments during the four years immediately preceding Mr. Garfield's accession was 2,696; of this number 244, or 9 per cent. involved the removal of previous incumbents. The ratio of removals to the whole number of appointments was not the same during each of those four years. In the first year, with over 780 appointments, there were 74 removals or 9.3 per cent.; in the second, with 917 appointments, there were 85 removals, or 8.5 per cent.; in the third, with 450 appointments, there were forty-eight removals, or 10 per cent. In the fourth, with 429 appointments, there were thirty-seven removals, or 8.6 per cent. In the four months of President Garfield's administration there were 390 appointments and eighty-nine removals, or 22 per cent., precisely the same number of removals have taken place in the fourteen months which have since elapsed, but they constitute only 7.8 per cent. of the whole number of appointments; one and one eighth within that period and less than two sixths of the entire list of officials, 8,459, exclusive of the army and navy, which is filled by Presidential appointment. I declare my approval of such legislation as may be found necessary for supplanting the existing provisions of law in relation to political assessments. In July last I authorized a public announcement that employees of the government should regard themselves as at liberty to exercise their pleasure in helping to make political contributions, or refusing to make contributions, as to their action in that regard, would in no manner affect their official status. In this announcement I acted on the view which I had always maintained, and still maintain, that public officers should be absolutely free to give or withhold a contribution for the aid of a political party of his choice. It has, however, been urged, and doubtless not without foundation, that by solicitation of superiors, and by other modes, such contributions have at times been obtained from those whose only motive for giving has been the fear of what might befall them if they refused. It goes without saying, that such contributions are not voluntarily. In my judgment their collection should be prohibited by law. A bill which will effectually suppress them will receive my cordial approval.

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

I hope that, however numerous and urgent may be the demands on your attention, the interests of the district will not be forgotten. The denial to its residents of the great right of suffrage in its national, state and municipal actions, imposes on congress the duty of affording the best administration which its wisdom can devise.

The report of the district commissioners indicates certain measures, whose adoption would seem to be very desirable, I instance in particular those which relate to arrears of tax, to steam railroad and to the assessment of real property. Among the questions which have been the topics of recent debate in the halls of Congress, one is of the ascertainment of the vote for presidential elections, and the intentment of the Constitution in its provisions for devolving the executive functions upon the Vice-President, when the President suffers from inability

to discharge the powers and duties of his office. I trust that no embarrassment may result from a failure to determine these questions before another national election.

BENEDICTION.

The closing year has been replete with blessings, which we owe to the Giver of all good, in our reverent acknowledgement, for the uninterrupted harmony of our foreign relations, for the dearth of sectional animosities, for the exuberance of our harvests, and the triumphs of our mining and manufacturing interests, for the prevalence of health, for the spread of intelligence, and for the conservation of the public interest; for the growth of the country in all the elements of national greatness; for this and countless other blessings, we should rejoice and be glad. I trust that under the inspiration of this great prosperity four councils may be harmonious and that the dictates of prudence, patriotism, justice and economy may result in the adoption of measures in which Congress and the Executive may heartily unite.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR.
Washington, D. C.,
December 4, 1882.

BY TELEGRAPH

PER WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH LINE.

AMERICAN.

WASHINGTON, 7.—The district attorney in the criminal court, this morning, announced the government was ready in the Star route trials. Ingersoll moved to continue the cases, S. W. Dorsey being sick. Judge Wylie overruled the motion. Ingersoll executed. A recess was taken to allow him to go to Dorsey's room to get his signature.

Wilson read a long affidavit signed by all the defendants that they cannot safely go to trial at the present time, because of the acts of government officers endeavoring to influence opinion against them and intimidate witnesses and officers of the court, reciting the recent removals for sympathy with defendants, and expressing the belief that defendants will be discriminated against in the selection of talesmen; that the arrest of Dickson and the appointment of McMichael was part of the scheme; that Judge Wylie is prejudiced and can't fairly try the cases, and requests a continuance to the next term.

Wylie said the paper was an insult to the Court.

Bliss compared it with the Tweed trial.

Ingersoll disclaimed any intention of insult.

Judge Wylie said: "Well, you may file the paper, but I shall hear no more about it."

A motion for continuance on account of Dorsey's illness was refused.

The House election committee will to-morrow consider the petition of Caine, the newly-elected delegate from Utah, who was a volunteer candidate at the late election, to be seated in the present House. The petition sets forth that both the Governor of Utah and the Commissioners declined to call an election to fill the vacancy caused by the action of the House at the last session unseating Cannon. A convention was held, however, and he was nominated, and he alleges he received 14,940 votes which the Utah Commissioners declined to canvass, the Edmunds bill being silent on the subject.

Haskell, of Kansas, presented in the House a memorial endorsed by the Gentile citizens of Utah, which sets forth that the Edmunds law, though a step in the right direction, does not go far enough, and has not effected and will not effect the desired result. Although it disfranchises 16,000 persons who otherwise would be voters, yet the action of the remainder suits the disfranchised. The disfranchised portion dictates the course of those who are not disfranchised as completely as before. In support of this the memorialists present tables showing the elections for Delegate since 1870, when the Mormons cast 21,616 votes and the Liberals 619. The largest Mormon vote cast was in 1874, being 24,861, the Liberals casting the same year 4,598. The next highest vote both parties cast last month, when the Mormon vote was 23,330 and the Liberal 4,884.

The democrats will have a majority of sixty over the combined green-backers, independents and republicans.

Ben Holliday's postal service claim