

such a case, and as the effort must in some degree be experimental, I recommend that any appropriation for the purpose be so limited in annual amount, and as to the time over which it is to extend as well, on the one hand to give local school authorities an opportunity to make the best use of the first year's allowance and, on the other, to deliver them from temptation to unduly postpone the assumption of the whole burden themselves.

#### RIGHTS OF THE COLORED PEOPLE.

The colored people did not intrude themselves upon us; they were brought here in chains and held in the communities where they are now chiefly found by a cruel slave code. Happily for both races, they are now free; they have, from a standpoint of ignorance and poverty, which was our shame, not theirs, made remarkable advances in education and in the acquisition of property. They have, as a people, shown themselves to be friendly and faithful towards the white race under temptations of tremendous strength. They love their representatives in the national cemeteries, where a grateful government has gathered the ashes of those who died in its defense. They have furnished to our regular army regiments that have won high praise for the commanding officers for courage and soldierly qualities, and for fidelity to the enlistment oath. In civil life they are the toilers of their communities, making their full contribution to the widening streams of prosperity which the communities are receiving. Their sudden withdrawal would stop production and bring disorder in the household, and generally they do not desire to quit their homes, and their employers resent the interference of the emigration agent who seeks to stimulate such a desire. But, notwithstanding all this, in many parts of the country, where the colored population is large, the people of that race are, by various devices, deprived of any effective exercise of their political rights. The wrong does not expend itself upon those whose votes are suppressed. Every constituency in the Union is wronged. It has been the hope of every patriot that a sense of justice and of respect for the law would work a gradual cure of these flagrant evils. Surely no one supposes that the present can be accepted as a permanent condition.

If it is said that these communities must work out this problem for themselves, we have a right to ask whether they are at work upon it. Do they suggest any solution? When and under what conditions is the black man to have a free ballot? When is he, in fact, to have those full civil rights which have so long been his in law? When is that equality of suffrage which our form of government intended to secure to the electors to be restored? This generation should courageously solve these grave questions and not leave them as a heritage of woe to the next. The consultation should proceed with candor, calmness and

great patience, upon the lines of justice and humanity, not of prejudice and cruelty. No question in our country can be at rest except upon the firm case of justice and of the law.

I earnestly invoke the attention of Congress to the consideration of such measures, with its well defined Constitutional powers, as will secure to all our people the free exercise of the right of suffrage, and every other civil right under the Constitution and laws of the United States. No evil, however deplorable, can justify the assumption, either on the part of the executive or of Congress, of powers not granted, but both will be highly blameable if all the powers granted are not wisely but firmly used to correct these evils. The power to take the whole direction and control of the election of members of the House of Representatives is clearly given to the general government. A partial and qualified supervision of these elections is now provided for by law, and in my opinion this law may be strengthened and extended to secure on the whole better results than can be attained by a law letting all the processes of such elections into Federal control. The colored man should be protected in all of his relations to the Federal government, whether as a legitimate juror or witness in our courts, as an elector of members of Congress, or as a peaceful traveler on our inter-state railways.

#### MERCHANT MARINE.

There is nothing more justly humiliating to the national pride, and nothing more hurtful to the national prosperity, than the inferiority of our merchant marine, compared with that of other nations whose general resources of wealth and sea-coast lines do not suggest any reason for supremacy on the sea. It was not always so, and our people are agreed, I think, that it shall not continue to be so. It is not possible in this communication to discuss the causes of the decay of our shipping interests, or the different methods by which it is proposed to restore them. The statement of a few well authenticated facts and some general suggestions as to legislation, is all that is practicable.

The great steamship lines sailing under the flags of England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, and engaged in foreign commerce, were promoted, and have since been and now are liberally aided by grants of public money in one form or another. It is generally known that the American lines of steamship have been abandoned to an unequal contest with the aided lines of other nations, until they have been withdrawn, or in the few cases where they are still maintained, are subject to serious disadvantage. The present situation is not the result of the fact that travelers and merchandise find Liverpool a necessary intermediate point between New York and some of the South American capitals. The fact that some of the delegates from the South American States to the conference of American nations now in session at Washington, reached our shores by reversing that line of travel is very

conclusive of the need of such a conference, and very suggestive as to the first and most necessary step in the direction of fuller and more beneficial intercourse with nations that are now our neighbors, not upon the lines of latitude, but upon the lines of established commercial intercourse.

#### OCEAN MAIL SERVICE AND NAVAL RESERVE.

I recommend that such appropriations be made for the ocean mail service in American steamships between our ports and those of Central and South America, China, Japan, and the important islands in both of the great oceans, as will be liberally remunerative for the service rendered and will encourage the establishment, and in some fair degree equalize the chances of American steamship lines in the competition which they must meet. That the American states lying south of us will cordially co-operate in establishing and maintaining such lines of steamships to their principal ports I do not doubt.

We should also make provision for a naval reserve, to consist of such merchant ships of American construction and of specified tonnage and speed, as the owners will consent to place at the disposal of the government in case of need, as armed cruisers. England has adopted this policy, and as a result can now, upon necessity, at once place upon her naval list some of the fastest steamships in the world. Proper vessels would make their concessions into effective ships of war very easily. I am an advocate of economy in our national expenditures, but it is a mistake of the term to make this word describe a policy that withholds expenditure for the purpose of extending our foreign commerce. The enlargement and improvement of our merchant marine, the development of a sufficient body of trained American seamen, the promotion of rapid and regular mail communication between the ports of other countries and our own, and the adaptation of large and swift American merchant steamships to naval uses in time of war are public purposes of the highest concern. The enlarged participation of our people in carrying trade, the new and increased markets that will be opened for the products of our farms and factories, the fuller and better employment of our mechanics, which will result from a liberal promotion of our foreign commerce, insure the widest possible diffusion of benefits to all the States and to all our people.

Everything is most propitious for the present inauguration of a liberal and progressive policy upon this subject, and we should enter upon it with promptness and decision. The legislation which I have suggested, it is sincerely believed, will promote the peace and honor of our country and the prosperity and security of the people. I invoke the diligent and serious attention of Congress to the consideration of these and such other measures as may be presented having the same great end in view.

BENJAMIN HARRISON.