

PRESIDENT'S LAST MESSAGE
(Continued from Page 1.)

Postal Savings Banks.

I again renew my recommendation for postal savings banks, for depositing savings with the security of the government behind them. In fourteen states the deposits in savings banks as reported to the comptroller of the currency amount to \$2,539,245,461, or 98.4 per cent of the entire deposits, while in the remaining 22 states there are only \$76,296,562, or 1.6 per cent, showing conclusively that there are many localities in the United States where sufficient opportunity is not given to the people to deposit their savings. The result is that money is kept in hiding and unemployed.

Parcel Post.

In my last annual message I recommended the postmaster general's recommendation for an extension of the parcel post on the rural routes. The establishment of a local parcel post on rural routes would be to the mutual benefit of the farmer and the country storekeeper, and it is desirable that the routes, serving more than 15,000,000 people, should be utilized to the fullest practicable extent.

Education.

The share that the national government should take in the broad work of education has not received the attention and the care it rightly deserves. The immediate responsibility for the support and improvement of our educational systems and institutions rests and should always rest with the people of the several states acting through their state and local governments, but the nation has an opportunity in educational work which must not be lost and a duty which should no longer be neglected.

The national bureau of education was established more than forty years ago. Its purpose is to collect and diffuse such information "as shall aid the people of the United States in the establishment and maintenance of efficient school systems and otherwise promote the cause of education throughout the country." This purpose in no way conflicts with the educational work of the states, but may be made of great advantage to the states by giving them the fullest, most accurate, and hence the most helpful information and suggestion regarding the best educational system.

With the limited means hitherto provided, the bureau of education has rendered efficient service, but the congress has neglected to adequately supply the bureau with means to meet the educational growth of the country. The appropriations for the general work of the bureau, outside education in Alaska, for the year 1909, are but \$87,596—an amount less than they were ten years ago, and some of the important items in these appropriations are less than they were thirty years ago. I earnestly recommend that this unfortunate state of affairs as regards the national educational office be remedied by adequate appropriations.

Census.

I strongly urge that the request of the director of the census in connection with the decennial work so soon to be begun, be complied with and that the appointments to the census force be placed under the civil service law, waiving the geographical requirements as requested by the director of the census.

Redistribution of Bureaus.

It is highly advisable that there should be intelligent action on the part of the nation on the question of preserving the health of the country. Through the practical extermination in San Francisco of disease bearing rodents our country has thus far escaped the bubonic plague. This is but one of the many achievements of American health officers, and it shows what can be accomplished with a better organization than at present exists.

The dangers to public health from food adulteration and from many other sources, such as the menace to the physical, mental and moral development of children from child labor, should be met and overcome.

Government Printing Office.

I recommend that legislation be enacted placing under the jurisdiction of the department of commerce and labor the government printing office.

Advocates Statehood.

I advocate the immediate admission of New Mexico and Arizona as states. This should be done at the present session of the congress. The people of the two territories have made it evident by their votes that they will not come in as one state. The only alternative is to admit them as two, and I trust that this will be done without delay.

Interstate Fisheries.

I call the attention of the congress to the importance of the problem of the fisheries of the interstate waters.

On the Great Lakes we are now, under the very wise treaty of April 11 of this year, endeavoring to come to an international agreement for the preservation and satisfactory use of the fisheries of these waters which cannot otherwise be achieved.

Columbia Fisheries.

But the problem is quite as pressing in the interstate waters of the United States. The salmon fisheries of the Columbia river are now but a fraction of what they were twenty-five years ago, and what they would be now if the United States government had taken complete charge of them by intervening between Oregon and Washington. During these twenty-five years the fishermen of each state have naturally tried to take all they could get, and the two legislatures have never been able to agree on joint action of any kind adequate in degree for the protection of the fisheries. At the moment the fishing on the Oregon side is practically closed, while there is no limit on the Washington side of any kind, and no one can tell what the courts will decide as to the very statutes under which this action and non-action result. Meanwhile very

few salmon reach the spawning grounds, and probably four years hence the fisheries will amount to nothing; and this comes from a struggle between the associated, or gill net, fishermen on the one hand, and the owners of the fishing wheels up the river.

Foreign Affairs.

This nation's foreign policy is based on the theory that right must be done between nations precisely as between individuals, and in our actions for the last ten years we have in this matter proven our faith by our deeds. We have behaved, and are behaving, towards other nations, as in private life, as honorable men would behave toward his fellows.

Latin-American Republics.

The commercial and material progress of the twenty Latin-American republics is worthy of the careful attention of the congress. No other section of the world has shown a greater proportionate development of its foreign trade during the last ten years and none other has more special claims on the interest of the United States. It offers today probably larger opportunities for the legitimate expansion of our commerce than any other group of countries.

Panama Canal.

The work on the Panama canal is being done with a speed, efficiency and entire devotion to duty which make it a model for all work of the kind. No task of such magnitude has ever before been undertaken by any nation; and no task of the kind has ever been better performed. The men on the isthmus, from Colonel Goethals and his fellow commissioners through the entire list of employes who are faithfully doing their duty, have won their right to the ungrudging respect and gratitude of the American people.

Hawaii.

I call particular attention to the territory of Hawaii. The importance of those islands is apparent, and the need of improving their condition and developing their resources is urgent. In recent years industrial conditions upon the islands have radically changed. The importance of coolie labor has practically ceased, and there is now developing such a diversity in agricultural products as to make possible a change in the land conditions of the territory, so that an opportunity may be given to the small land owner similar to that on the mainland. To aid these changes the national government must provide the necessary harbor improvements on each island, so that the agricultural products can be carried to the markets of the world.

The Philippines.

Real progress toward self-government is being made in the Philippine Islands. The gathering of a Philippine legislative body and Philippines assembly marks a process absolutely new in Asia, not only as regards Asiatic colonies of European powers but as regards Asiatic possessions of other Asiatic powers; and, indeed, always excepting the striking and wonderful example afforded by the great empire of Japan, it opens an entirely new departure when compared with anything which has happened among Asiatic powers which are their own masters. Hitherto this Philippine legislature has acted with moderation and self-restraint, and has seemed in practical fashion to realize the eternal truth that there must always be government, and that the only way in which any body of individuals can escape the necessity of being governed by outsiders is to show that they are able to restrain themselves, to keep down wrong-doing and disorder.

Our people in the Philippines have achieved what may legitimately be called a marvelous success in giving to them a government which marks in the part of those in authority both the necessary understanding of the people and the necessary purpose to serve them disinterestedly and in good faith. I trust that within a generation the time will arrive when the Philippines can decide for themselves whether it is well for them to become independent, or to continue under the protection of a strong and disinterested power, able to guarantee to the islands order at home and protection from foreign invasion.

Porto Rico and Cuba.

I again recommend that American citizenship be conferred upon the people of Porto Rico.

In Cuba our occupancy will cease in about two months' time; the Cubans have in orderly manner elected their own governmental authorities, and the island will be turned over to them. Our occupation on this occasion has lasted a little over two years, and Cuba has thriven and prospered under it. Our earnest hope and one desire is that the people of the island shall now govern themselves with justice, so that peace and order may be secure.

Japanese Exposition.

The Japanese government has postponed until 1917 the date of the great international exposition, the action being taken so as to insure ample time in which to prepare to make the exposition all that it should be made. The American commissioners have visited Japan and the postponement will merely give ample opportunity for America to be represented at the exposition. Not since the first international exposition has there been one of greater importance than this will be, marking, as it does, the fiftieth anniversary of the ascension to the throne of the emperor of Japan. The extraordinary leap to a foremost place among the nations of the world made by Japan during this half century is something unparalleled in all previous history.

I take this opportunity publicly to state my appreciation of the way in which Japan, in Australia, in New Zealand, and in all the states of South America, the battleship fleet has been received on its practice voyage around the world. The American people have cause for profound gratification, both in view of the excellent condition of the fleet as shown by this cruise, and in view of the improvement the cruise has worked in this already

The Army.

As regards the army, I call attention to the fact that while our junior officers and enlisted men stand very high, the present system of promotion to seniority results in bringing into the higher grades many men of mediocre capacity who have but a short time to serve. No man should regard it as his vested right to rise to the highest rank in the army any more than in any other profession. The higher places should be given to the most deserving men without regard to seniority; at least seniority should be treated as only one consideration. In the stress of modern industrial competition no business firm could succeed if those responsible for its management were chosen simply on the ground that they were the oldest people in its employment; yet this is the course advocated as regards the army, and required by law for all grades except those of general officer.

The cavalry arm should be reorganized upon modern lines. This is an arm in which it is peculiarly necessary that the field officers should not be old. The cavalry is much more difficult to form than infantry, and it should be kept up to the maximum both in efficiency and in hurry. At present both infantry and artillery are too few in number for our needs. Special attention should be paid to development of the machine gun. A general service corps should be established. As things are now the average soldier has far too much labor of a non-military character to perform.

National Guard.

No what the organized militia, the national guard, has been incorporated with the army as a part of the national forces, it behoves the government to do every reasonable thing in its power to perfect its efficiency. It should be assisted in its instruction and otherwise aided more liberally than heretofore. The continuous services of many well trained regular officers will be essential in this connection. Such officers must be specially trained at service schools best to qualify the mass instructors of the national guard. But the detailing of officers for training at the service schools and for duty with the national guard entails detaching them from their regiments which are already greatly depleted by detachment of officers for assignment to duties prescribed by acts of the congress.

A bill is now pending before the congress creating a number of extra officers in the army, which if passed, as it ought to be, will enable more officers to be trained as instructors of national guard and assigned to that duty. In case of war it will be of the utmost importance to have a large number of trained officers to use for turning raw levies into good troops.

There should be legislation to provide a complete plan for organizing the great body of volunteers behind the regular army and national guard when war has come. Congressional assistance should be given those who are endeavoring to promote rifle practice so that our men, in the service or out of them, may know how to use the rifle. While teams representing the United States won the rifle and revolver championships of the world against all comers in England this year, it is unfortunately true that the great body of our citizens shoot less and less as time goes on. To meet this we should encourage rifle practice among school boys, and indeed among all classes, as well as in the military services, by every means in our power. Thus, and not otherwise, may we be able to assist in preserving the peace of the world. Fit to hold our own against the strong nations of the earth, our voice for peace will carry to the ends of the earth. Unprepared, and therefore unfit, we must sit dumb and helpless to defend ourselves, protect others, or preserve peace. The first step—in the direction of preparation to avert war if possible, and to be fit for war if it should come—is to teach our men to shoot.

The Navy.

I approve the recommendations of the general board for the increase of the navy, calling especial attention to the need of additional destroyers and colliers, and above all, of the four battleships. It is desirable to complete as soon as possible a squadron of eight battleships of the best existing type. The North Dakota, Delaware, Florida, and Utah will form the first division of this squadron. The four vessels proposed will form the second division. It will be an improvement on the first, the ships being of the heavy, single caliber, all big gun type. All the vessels should have the same tactical qualities, that is, speed and turning circle, and as near as possible these tactical qualities should be the same as in the four vessels before named now being built.

Two hospital ships should be provided. The actual experience of the hospital ship with the fleet in the Pacific has shown the invaluable work which such a ship does, and has also proved that it is well to have it kept under the command of a medical officer. As was to be expected, all of the anticipations of trouble from such a command have proved completely baseless. It is as absurd to put a hospital ship under a line officer as it would be to put a hospital on shore under such a command. This ought to have been realized before, and there is no excuse for failure to realize it now.

Nothing better for the navy than the cruise of the battle fleet around the world. The improvement of the ships in every way has been extraordinary, and they have gained far more experience in battle tactics than they would have gained if they had stayed in the Atlantic waters. The American people have cause for profound gratification, both in view of the excellent condition of the fleet as shown by this cruise, and in view of the improvement the cruise has worked in this already

high condition. I do not believe that there is any other service in the world in which the average of character and efficiency in the enlisted men is as high as is now the case in our own. I believe that the same statement can be made as to our officers, taken as a whole; but there must be a reservation made in regard to those in the highest ranks as to which I have already spoken—and in regard to those who have just entered the service, because we do not now get full benefit from our excellent naval school at Annapolis. It is absurd not to graduate the midshipmen as ensigns; to keep them for two years in such an anomalous position as at present the law requires is detrimental to them and to the service. In the academy itself, every first class man should be required in turn to serve as petty officer and officer; his ability to discharge his duties as such should be a prerequisite to his going into the Navy, and his success in commanding should largely determine his standing at graduation. The board of visitors should be appointed in January, and each member should be required to give at least six days' service, only from one to three days to be performed during June week, which is the least desirable time for the board to be at Annapolis so far as benefiting the navy by their observations is concerned.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.
The White House, Tuesday, December 8, 1908.

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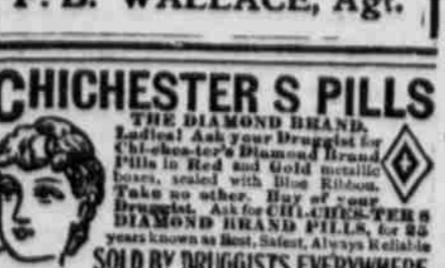
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