PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives:

The interest, with which the people of the Republic anticipate the assembling of Congress, and the fulfilment, on that occasion, of the duty imposed upon a new President, is one of the best evidences of their capacity to realize the hopes of the founders of a political system, at once complex and symmetrical. While the different branches of the government are, to a certain extent, independent of each other, the duties of all, alike have direct reference to the source of power. Fortunately under this system, no man is so high, and none so humble, in the scale of public station, as to escape from the scrutiny, or to be exempt from the responsibility, which all official functions imply.

Upon the justice and intelligence of the masses, in a government thus organized, is the sole reliance of the confederacy, and the only security for honest and earnest devotion to its interests, against the usurpations and encroachments of power on the one hand, and the assaults of personal ambition on the other.

The interest of which I have spoken is inseparable from an inquiring, self-governing community, but stimulated, doubtless, at the present time, by the unsettled condition of our relations with several foreign powers; by the new obligations resulting from a sudden extension of the field of enterprise; by the spirit with which that field has been entered, and the amazing energy with which its resources for meeting the demands of humanity have been developed.

Although disease, assuming at one time the characteristics of a wide-spread and devastating pestilence, has left its sad traces upon some portions of our country, we still have the most abundant cause for reverent thankfulness to God for an accumulation of signal mercies showered upon us as a nation. It is well that a consciousness of rapid advancement and increasing strength be habitually associated with an abiding sense of dependence upon Him who holds in his hands the destiny of men and of nations.

Recognizing the wisdom of the broad principle of absolute religious toleration proclaimed in our fundamental law, and rejoicing in the benign influence which it has exerted upon our social and political condition, I should shrink from a clear duty, did I fail to express my deepest conviction that we can place no secure reliance upon any apparent progress if it be not sustained by national integrity, resting upon the great truths affirmed and illustrated by divine revelation. In the midst of our sorrow for the afflicted and suffering, it has been consoling to see how promptly disaster made true neighbors of districts and cities separated widely from each other, and cheering to watch the strength of that common bond of brotherhood which unites all hearts, in all parts of the Union, when danger threatens from abroad, or calamity impends over us at home.

Our diplomatic relations with foreign powers have undergone no essential change since the adjournment of the last Congress. With some of them questions of a disturbing character are still pending, but there are good reasons to believe that these may all be amicably adjusted.

For some years past Great Britain has so construed the first article of the convention of the 20th of April, 1818, in regard to the fisheries on the northeastern coast, as to exclude our citizens from some of the fishing grounds to which they freely resorted for nearly a quarter of a century subsequent to the date of that treaty. The United States have never acquiesced in this construction, but have always claimed for their fishermen all the rights which they had so long enjoyed without molestation. With a view to remove all difficulties on the subject, to extend the rights of our fishermen beyond the limits fixed by the convention of 1818, and to regulate trade between the United States and the British North American provinces, a negotiation has been opened with a fair prospect of a favorable result. To protect our fishermen in the enjoyment of their rights, and prevent collision between them and British fishermen, I deemed it expedient to station a naval force in that quarter during the fishing season.

Embarrassing questions have also arisen between the two governments in regard to Central America. Great Britain has proposed to settle them by an amicable arrangement, and our minister at London is instructed to enter into negotiations on that subject.

A commission for adjusting the claims of our citizens against Great Britain, and those of British subjects against the United States, organized under the convention of the 8th of February last, is now sitting in London for the transaction of business.

It is in many respects desirable that the boundary line between the United States and the British provinces in the northwest, as designated in the convention of 15th of June 1846, and especially that part which separates the Territory of Washington from the British possessions on the north, should be traced and marked. I therefore present the subject to your notice.

With France our relations continue on the most friendly footing. The extensive commerce between the United States and that country might, it is conceived, be released from some unnecessary restrictions, to the mutual advantage of both parties. With a view to this object, some progress has been made in negotiating a treaty of commerce and navigation.

Independently of our valuable trade with Spain we have important political relations with her, growing out of our neighborhood to the Islands of Cuba and Porto Rico. I am happy to announce that, since the last Congress, no attempts have been made, by unauthorized expeditions within the United States, against either of those colonies. Should any movement be manifested within our limits, all the means at my command will be vigorously exerted to repress it. Several annoying occurrences have taken place at Havana, or in the vicinity of the island of Cuba, between our citizens and the Spanish authorities. Considering the proximity of that island to our shores, lying as it does, in the track of trade between some of our principal cities, and the suspicious vigilance with which foreign intercourse, particularly with the United States, is there guarded, a repetition of such occurrences may well be apprehended. As no diplomatic intercourse is allowed between our consul at Havana and the Captain General of Cuba, ready explanations cannot be made, or prompt redress afforded, where injury has resulted. All complaint on the part of our citizens, under the present arrangement, must be, in the first place, presented to this government and then referred to Spain. Spain again refers it to her local authorities in Cuba for investigation, and postpones an answer till she has heard from those authorities. To avoid these irritating and vexatious delays, a proposition has been made to provide for a direct appeal for redress to the Captain General by our consul in behalf of our injured fellow citizens. Hitherto the government of Spain has declined to enter into any such arrangement. This course on her part is deeply regretted, for without some arrangement of this kind, the good understanding between the two countries may be exposed to occasional interruption. Our minister at Madrid is instructed to renew the proposition, and to press it again upon the consideration of her Catholic Majesty's government.

For several years Spain has been calling the attention of this government to a claim for losses, by some of her subjects, in the case of the schooner Amistad. This claim is believed to rest on the obligations imposed by our existing treaty with that country. Its justice was admitted in our diplomatic correspondence with the Spanish government as early as March, 1847, and one of my predecessors, in his annual message of that year, recommended that provision should be made for its payment. In January last it was again submitted to Congress by the Executive. It has received a favorable consideration by committees of both branches, but as yet there has been no final action upon it. I conceive that good faith requires its prompt adjustment, and I present it to your early and favorable consideration.

Martin Koszta, a Hungarian by birth, came to this country in 1850, and declared his intention, in due form of law, to become a citizen of the United States. After remaining here nearly two years, he visited Turkey. While at Smyrna he was forcibly seized, taken on board an Austrian brig of war, then lying in the harbor of that place, and there confined in irons, with the avowed design to take him into the dominions of Austria. Our consul at Smyrna and legation at Constantinople interposed for his release, but their efforts were ineffectual. While thus imprisoned, Commander Ingraham, with the U. S. ship of war St. Louis arrived at Smyrna, and, after inquiring into the circumstances of the case, came to the conclusion that Koszta was entitled to the protection of this government, and took energetic and prompt measures for his release. Under an arrangement between the agents of the United States and of Austria, he was transferred to the custody of the French consul general at Smyrna, there to remain until he should be disposed of by the mutual agreement of the consuls of the respective governments at that place. Pursuant to that agreement he has been released, and is now in the United States. The Emperor of Austria has made the conduct of our officers who took part in this transaction a subject of grave complaint. Regarding Koszta as still his subject, and claiming a right to seize him within the limits of the Turkish empire, he has demanded of this government its consent to the surrender of the prisoner, a disavowal of the acts of its agents, and satisfaction for the alleged outrage. After a careful consideration of the case, I came to the conclusion that Koszta was seized without legal authority at Smyrna; that he was wrongfully detained on board of the Austrian brig of war; that at the time of his seizure, he was clothed with the nationality of the United States, and that the acts of our officers, under the circumstances of the case, were justifiable, and their conduct has been fully approved by me, and a compliance with the several demands of the Emperor of Austria has been declined.

For a more full account of this transaction and my views in regard to it, I refer to the correspondence between the charge d'affaires of Austria and the Secretary of State, which is herewith transmitted.—The principles and policy, therein maintained on the part of the United States, will, whenever a proper occasion occurs, be applied and enforced.

The condition of China, at this time, renders it probable that some important changes will occur in that vast empire, which will lead to a more unrestricted intercourse with it. The commissioner to that country, who has been recently appointed, is instructed to avail himself of all occasions to open and extend our commercial relations, not only with the empire of China, but with other Asiatic nations.

In 1852, an expedition was sent to Japan, under the command of Commodore Perry, for the purpose of opening commercial intercourse with that island. Intelligence has been received of his arrival there, and of his having made known to the Emperor of Japan the object of his visit; but it is not yet ascertained how far the Emperor will be disposed to abandon his restrictive policy, and open that populous country to a commercial intercourse with the United States.

It has been my earnest desire to maintain friendly intercourse with the governments upon this continent, and to aid them in preserving a good understanding among themselves. With Mexico a dispute has arisen as to the true boundary line between our territory of New Mexico and the Mexican State of Chihuahua. A former commissioner of the United States, employed in running that line pursuant to the treaty of [illegible], made a serious mistake in determining the initial point [illegible]; but inasmuch as his decision was clearly a departure from the directions for tracing the boundary contained in that treaty, and was not concurred in by the surveyor appointed on the part of the United States, whose concurrence was necessary to give validity to that decision, this government is not concluded thereby; but that of Mexico takes a different view of the subject.

There are also other subjects of considerable magnitude pending between the two republics. Our minister in Mexico has ample instructions to adjust them. Negotiations have been opened, but sufficient progress has not been made therein to enable me to speak of the probable result. Impressed with the importance of maintaining amicable relations with that republic, and of yielding with liberality to all her just claims, it is reasonable to expect that an arrangement mutually satisfactory to both countries may be concluded, and a lasting friendship between them confirmed and perpetuated.

Congress having provided for a full mission to the states of Central America, a minister was sent thither in July last. As yet he has had time to visit only one of those States (Nicaragua) where he was received in the most friendly manner. It is hoped that his presence and good offices will have a benign effect in composing the dissensions which prevail among them, and in establishing still more intimate and friendly relations between them respectively, and between each of them and the United States.

We are thus not only at peace with all foreign countries, but, in regard to political affairs, are exempt from any cause of serious disquietude in our domestic relations.

The controversies which have agitated the country heretofore are passing away with the causes which produced them and the passions which they had awakened; or if any trace of them remains, it may be reasonably hoped that it will only be perceived in the zealous rivalry of all good citizens to testify their respect for the rights of the States, its institutions, its welfare and its domestic peace shall be held alike secure under the sacred aegis of the constitution.

This new league of amity and of mutual confidence and support into which the people of the republic have entered happily affords inducement and opportunity for the adoption of a more comprehensive and unembarrassed line of policy and action, as to the great material interests of the country, whether regarded in themselves or in connection with the powers of the civilized world.

The United States have continued gradually and steadily to expand through the acquisition of territory, which, how much soever some of them may have been questioned, are now universally seen and admitted to have been wise in policy, just in character and a great element in the advancement of our country and, with it, of the human race in freedom, in prosperity, and in happiness. The thirteen States have grown to be thirty one, with relations reaching to Europe on the one side and on the other to the distant realms of Asia.

Considering the vast regions of this continent and the number of States which would be made accessible by the free navigation of the river Amazon particular attention has been given to this subject.—Brazil, through whose territories it passes into the ocean, has hitherto persisted in a policy so restrictive in regard to the use of this river, as to obstruct, and nearly exclude foreign commercial intercourse with the States which lie upon its tributaries and upper branches. Our minister to that country is instructed to obtain a relaxation of that policy, and to use his efforts to induce the Brazilian government to open to common use, under proper safeguards, this great natural highway for international trade. Several of the South American States are deeply interested in this attempt to secure the free navigation of the Amazon, and it is reasonable to expect their co-operation in the measure. As the advantages of free commercial intercourse among nations are better understood, more liberal views are generally entertained as to the common rights of all to the free use of those means which nature has provided for international communication. To these more liberal and enlightened views, it is hoped that Brazil will conform her policy, and remove all unnecessary restrictions upon the free use of a river, which traverses so many States and so large a part of the continent. I am happy to inform you that the republic of Paraguay and the Argentine Confederation have yielded to the liberal policy still resisted by Brazil in regard to the navigable rivers within their respective territories. Treaties embracing this subject, among others have been negotiated with those governments, which will be submitted to the Senate at the present session.

A new branch of commerce important to the agricultural interests of the U. S., has, within a few years past been opened with Peru. Notwithstanding the inexhaustible deposits of guano upon the islands of that country, considerable difficulties are experienced in obtaining the requisite supply. Measures have been taken to remove these difficulties, and to secure a more abundant importation of the article. Unfortunately, there has been a serious collision between our citizens who have resorted to the Chincha Islands for it, and the Peruvian authorities stationed there. Redress for the outrages committed by the latter was promptly demanded by our minister at Lima. This subject is now under consideration, and there is reason to believe that Peru is disposed to offer adequate indemnity to the aggrieved parties.

I am deeply sensible of the immense responsibility which the present magnitude of the republic, and the diversity and multiplicity of its interests, devolves upon me, the alleviation of which, so far as relates to the immediate conduct of the public business, is, first, in my reliance on the wisdom and patriotism of the two Houses of Congress, and, secondly, in the directions afforded me by the principles of public polity, affirmed by our fathers of the epoch of 1798, sanctioned by long experience, and consecrated anew by the overwhelming voice of the people of the Union.

[illegible] are the functions [illegible] the duties of the federal government, confided in, or entrusted to, its three great departments, the legislative, executive and judicial, yet the substantive power, the popular force, and the large capacities for social and material development, exist in the respective States, which, all being of themselves well constituted republics, as they preceded so they alone are capable of maintaining and perpetuating the American Union. The federal government has its appropriate line of action in the specific and limited powers conferred on it by the constitution, chiefly as to those things in which the States have a common interest in their relations to one another, and to foreign governments, while the great mass of interests which belong to cultivated men, the ordinary business of life, the springs of industry, all the diversified personal and domestic affairs of society, rest securely upon the general reserved powers of the people of the several States.— There is the effective democracy of the nation, and there the vital essence of its being and its greatness.

Of the practical consequences which flow from the nature of the federal government, the primary one is the duty of administering with integrity and fidelity the high trust reposed in it by the constitution, especially in the application of the public funds as drawn by taxation from the people, and appropriated to specific objects by Congress.

Happily I have no occasion to suggest any radical changes in the financial policy of the government. Ours is almost, if not absolutely, the solitary power of Christendom having a surplus revenue, drawn immediately from imposts on commerce, and therefore measured by the spontaneous enterprise and national prosperity of the country, with such indirect relation to agriculture, manufactures, and the products of the earth and sea as to violate no constitutional doctrine and yet vigorously promote the general welfare. Neither as to the sources of the public treasure, nor as to the manner of keeping and managing it, does any grave controversy now prevail; there being a general acquiescence in the wisdom of the present system.

The Report of the Secretary of the Treasury will exhibit, in detail, the state of the public finances and the condition of the various branches of the public service administered by that department of the government.

The revenue of the country, levied almost insensibly to the tax payer, goes on from year to year increasing beyond either the interests or the prospective wants of the government.

At the close of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1852, there remained in the treasury a balance of $14,632,136. The public revenue for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1853, amounted to $58,931,865 from customs, and to $2,405,708 from public lands and other miscellaneous sources, amounting together to $61,337,574, while the public expenditures for the same period, exclusive of payments on account of the public debt, amounted to $43,554,262, leaving a balance of $32,425,447 of receipts above expenditures.

This fact, of increasing surplus in the treasury, became the subject of anxious consideration at a very early period of my administration, and the path of duty in regard to it seemed to me obvious and clear, namely: first, to apply the surplus revenue to the discharge of the public debt, so far as it could judiciously be done; and secondly, to devise means for the gradual reduction of the revenue to the standard of the public exigencies.

Of these objects the first has been in the course of accomplishment, in a manner and in a degree highly satisfactory. The amount of the public debt, of all classes, was, on the 4th of March, 1853, $69,190,037, payments on account of which have been made, since that period, to the amount of $12,703,329, leaving unpaid, and in the continuous course of liquidation, the sum of $56,486,708. These payments, although made at the market price of the respective classes of stocks, have been effected readily, and to the general advantage of the treasury, and have at the same time proved of signal utility in the relief they have incidentally afforded to the money market and to the industrial and commercial pursuits of the country.

The second of the above mentioned objects, that of the reduction of the tariff, is of great importance, and the plan suggested by the Secretary of the Treasury, which is to reduce the duties on certain articles, and to add to the free list many articles now taxed, and especially such as enter into manufactures, and are not largely, or at all, produced in the country, is commended to your candid and careful consideration.

You will find in the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, also, abundant proof of the entire adequacy of the present fiscal system to meet all the requirements of the public service, and that, while properly administered, it operates to the advantage of the community in ordinary business relations.

I respectfully ask your attention to sundry suggestions of improvements in the settlement of accounts, especially as regards the large sums of outstanding arrears due to the government, and of other reforms in the administrative action of his department, indicated by the Secretary; as also to the progress made in the construction of marine hospitals, custom houses, and of a new mint in California, and assay office in the city of N. Y., heretofore provided for by Congress; and also to the eminently successful progress of the Coast Survey, and of the Light-house Board.

Among the objects meriting your attention [illegible] the Army and Navy.— [illegible] by the Secretary of the Navy. I respectfully submit that the army, which, under our system, must always be regarded with the highest interest, as a nucleus around which the volunteer forces of the nation gather in the hour of danger, requires augmentation, or modification, to adapt it to the present extended limits and frontier relations of the country, and the condition of the Indian tribes in the interior of the continent; the necessity of which will appear in the communications of the Secretaries of War and the Interior.

In the administration of the Post Office Department for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1853, the gross expenditure was $7,982,756; and the gross receipts, during the same period, $5,942,734; showing that the current revenue failed to meet the current expenses of the department by the sum of $2,042,032. The causes which, under the present postal system and laws, led inevitably to this result, are fully explained by the report of the Postmaster General, one great cause being the enormous rates the department has been compelled to pay for mail service rendered by railroad companies.

The exhibit in the report of the Postmaster General of the income and expenditures by mail steamers will be found peculiarly interesting, and of a character to demand the immediate action of Congress.

Numerous and flagrant frauds upon the Pension Bureau have been brought to light within the last year, and, in some instances, merited punishments inflicted; but, unfortunately in others, guilty parties have escaped, not through the want of sufficient evidence to warrant a conviction, but in consequence of the provisions of limitations in the existing laws.

From the nature of these claims, the remoteness of the tribunals to pass upon them, and the mode in which the proof is, of necessity, furnished, temptations to crime have been greatly stimulated by the obvious difficulties of detection. The defects in the law upon this subject are so apparent, and so fatal to the ends of justice, that your early action relating to it is most desirable.

During the last fiscal year, 9,819,411 acres of the public lands have been surveyed, and 10,363,891 acres brought into market. Within the same period, the sales by public purchase and private entry amounted to 1,083,495 acres; located under military bounty land warrants, 6,142,360 acres; located under other certificates, 9,427 acres; ceded to the States as swamp lands, 16,684,253 acres; selected for railroad and other objects, under acts of Congress, 1,427,457 acres. Total amount of lands disposed of within the fiscal year, 25,346,992 acres; which is an increase in quantity sold and located under land warrants and grants, of 12,231,818 acres over the fiscal year immediately preceding.

The quantity of land sold during the second and third quarters of 1852 was 334,451 acres. The amount received therefor was $623,687. The quantity sold the second and third quarters of the year 1853 was 1,609,919 acres; and the amount received therefor, $2,226,876.

The whole number of land warrants issued under existing laws prior to the 30th September last, was 266,042; of which there were outstanding at that date, 66,947. The quantity of land required to satisfy these outstanding warrants is 4,778,120 acres. Warrants have been issued to 30th of September last, under the act of 11th of February, 1847, calling for 12,879,280 acres; under acts of September 28, 1850, and March 22, 1852, calling for 12,505,360 acres; making a total of 25,384,640 acres.

It is believed that experience has verified the wisdom and justice of the present system with regard to the public domain, in most essential particulars.

You will perceive, from the report of the Secretary of the Interior, that opinions which have often been expressed in relation to the operation of the land system as not being a source of revenue to the federal treasury, were erroneous. The net profits from the sale of the public lands to June 30, 1853, amounted to the sum of $53,289,465.

I recommend the extension of the land system over the territories of Utah and New Mexico, with such modifications as their peculiarities may require.

Regarding our public domain as chiefly valuable to provide homes for the industrious and enterprising, I am not prepared to recommend any essential change in the land system, except by modifications in favor of the actual settler and an extension of the pre-emption principle in certain cases, for reasons and on grounds which will be fully developed in the reports to be laid before you.

Congress, representing the proprietors of the territorial domain, and charged especially with power to dispose of territory belonging to the U. S. has, for a long course of years, beginning with the administration of Mr. Jefferson, exercised the power to construct roads within the territories; and there are so many and obvious distinctions between this exercise of power and that of making roads within the States, that the former has never been considered subject to such objections as apply to the latter, and such may now be considered the settled construction of the power of the federal government upon the subject.

Numerous applications have been, and no doubt will continue to be, made for grants of land in aid of the construction of railways. It is not believed to be within the intent and meaning of the constitution, that the power to dispose of the public domain should be used otherwise than might be expected from a prudent proprietor, and therefore, that grants of land to aid in the construction of roads should be restricted to cases where it would be for the interest of a proprietor, under like circumstances, thus to contribute to the construction of these works. For a practical operation of such grants thus far, in advancing the interests of the States in which the works are located, and at the same time the substantial interests of all the other States, by enhancing the value and promoting the rapid sale of the public domain, I refer you to the report of the Secretary of the Interior. A careful examination, however, will show that this experience is the result of a just discrimination, and will be far from affording encouragement to a reckless or indiscriminate extension of the principle.

I commend to your favorable consideration the men of genius of our country, who by their inventions and discoveries in science and arts have contributed largely to the improvements of the age without, in many instances, securing for themselves anything like an adequate reward. For many interesting details upon this subject, I refer you to the appropriate reports, and especially urge upon your early attention the apparently slight, but really important modifications of existing laws therein suggested.

The liberal spirit which has so long marked the action of Congress in relation to the District of Columbia, will, I have no doubt, continue to be manifested.

The erection of an asylum for the insane of the District of Columbia, and of the army and navy of the United States, has been somewhat retarded by the great demand for materials and labor during the past summer, but full preparation for the reception of patients, before the return of another winter, is anticipated; and there is the best reason to believe, from the plan and contemplated arrangements which have been devised, with the large experience furnished within the last few years in relation to the nature and treatment of the disease, that it will prove an asylum indeed to this most helpless and afflicted class of sufferers, and stand as a noble monument of wisdom and mercy.

Under the acts of Congress of August 31, 1852, and of March 3, 1853, designed to secure for the cities of Washington and Georgetown an abundant supply of good and wholesome water, it became my duty to examine the report and plans of the engineer who had charge of the surveys under the act first named. The best, if not the only plan calculated to secure permanently the supply sought, was that which contemplated taking the water from the Great Falls of the Potomac, and, consequently, I gave to it my approval.

For the progress and present condition of this important work, and for its demands so far as appropriations are concerned, I refer you to the report of the Secretary of War.

The present judicial system of the United States has now been in operation for so long a period of time, and has, in its general theory and much of its details, become so familiar to the country, and acquired so entirely the public confidence, that if modified in any respect it should be only in those particulars which may adapt it to the increased extent, population and legal business of the United States. In this relation, the organization of the courts is now confessedly inadequate to the duties to be performed by them, in consequence of which the States of Florida, Wisconsin, Iowa, Texas and California, and districts of other States, are in effect excluded from the benefits of the general system, by the functions of the circuit court being devolved on the district judges in all those States, or parts of States.

The spirit of the Constitution, and a due regard to justice require that all the States of the Union should be placed on the same footing in regard to the judicial tribunals. I therefore commend to your consideration this important subject, which, in my judgment, demands the speedy action of Congress. I will present you, if deemed desirable, a plan, which I am prepared to recommend, for the enlargement and modification of the present judicial system.

The act of Congress establishing the Smithsonian Institution provided that the President of the United States, and other persons therein designated should constitute an "establishment" by that name, and that the members should hold stated and special meetings for the supervision of the affairs of the Institution. The organization having not yet taken place, it seemed to me proper that it should be effected without delay. This has been done; and an occasion was thereby presented for inspecting the condition of the Institution, and appreciating its successful progress thus far, and its high promise of great and general usefulness.

I have omitted to ask your favorable consideration for the estimates of works of a local character in twenty-seven of the thirty-one States, amounting to one million seven hundred and fifty-four thousand five hundred dollars, because, independently of the grounds which have so often been urged against the application of the federal revenue for works of this character, inequality with consequent injustice, is inherent in the nature of the proposition, and because the plan has proved entirely inadequate to the accomplishment of the objects sought.

The subject of internal improvements, claiming alike the interest and good will of all, has, nevertheless, been the basis of much political discussion, and has stood as a deep graven line of division between statesmen of eminent ability and patriotism. The rule of strict construction of all powers delegated by the States to the general government, has arrayed itself, from time to time, against the rapid progress of expenditures from the national treasury on works of a local character within the States. Memorable as an epoch in the history of this subject is the message of President Jackson, of the 27th of May, 1830, which met the system of internal improvements in its comparative infancy; but so rapid had been its growth that the projected appropriations in that year for works of this character had risen to the alarming amount of more than one hundred millions of dollars.

In that message the President admitted the difficulty of bringing back the operations of the government to the construction of the constitution set up in 1798, and marked it as an admonitory proof of the necessity of guarding that instrument with sleepless vigilance against the authority of precedents which had not the sanction of its most plainly defined powers.

Our government exists under a written compact between sovereign States, uniting for specific objects, and with specific grants to their general agent. If, then, in the progress of its administration there have been departures from the ter