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Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, relative to the times of rendering accounts by disbursing officers of the government.

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

RELATIVE

To the times of rendering accounts by disbursing officers of the Government.

AUGUST 4, 1890.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, August 2, 1890.

SIR: The Secretary of the Treasury, under date of May 27, 1890, issued a circular letter to the disbursing officers and others of the United States Government, requiring them to render, on and after July 1, 1890, monthly instead of quarterly accounts. This circular letter, copy inclosed, was issued in accordance with an opinion rendered by the Attorney-General of the United States, being his construction of section 3622, Revised Statutes.

From the date of the creation of this Department to the present time, I am informed that the accounts of the disbursing officer of the same have been rendered to and adjusted by the accounting officers of the Treasury quarterly. To change this system now would be to create a very large amount of additional labor in both Departments, presuming, of course, that when said accounts are so rendered they will receive a monthly adjustment, and such monthly settlements will necessarily require additional clerical assistance in both Departments.

The disbursing clerk of this Department now disburses annually a sum averaging \$5,500,000, a sum greater, I believe, than any two disbursing officers of the Government combined. These disbursements are made under the several heads of appropriation, averaging quarterly one hundred in number, and to each of said accounts there is an average of one hundred vouchers. He has a force of employés in the several bureaus and offices of the Department to pay semi-monthly, numbering about thirty-five hundred. Independent of his duties as disbursing officer he is the financial officer of the Department, and keeps the ledgers of all the appropriations expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, prepares all requisitions for funds payable from same, and compiles the annual estimates. In view of the facts herein stated, I have the honor to recommend that similar provision be made by Congress for the disbursing clerk of this Department as is contemplated in the sundry civil bill, page 120, section 4, now before Congress, wherein it provides that all officers of the Navy, in the Indian service, and the Secretary of the Senate, will be allowed to render their accounts quarterly as has always been the custom.

Very respectfully,

The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

JOHN W. NOBLE,
Secretary.