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Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1853

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REPORT
OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

DECEMBER 5, 1853.

REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

DECEMBER 4, 1882.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

December 5, 1853.

SIR: From the accompanying report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, it will be seen that the surveys of the public lands have been steadily prosecuted, and large bodies of new lands, during the past year, brought into market; that the wants of the emigrant have been fully met, and choice selections offered to the hardy pioneer.

The land system is founded in correct principles, and needs but little modification or change. The pre-emption feature might possibly be advantageously enlarged and made more liberal. Sound policy requires that every encouragement should be held out for actual settlement and cultivation.

Nothing retards the growth and prosperity of the country more, nor inflicts greater injury upon the resident, than the possession, by individuals or companies, of extensive uncultivated tracts of the public lands. To correct this evil, facilities should be liberally extended to the actual settler, and withheld from the mere speculator.

During the last fiscal year 9,819,411 acres have been surveyed, and 10,363,891 acres brought into market. In the same period there were—

Sold.....	1,083,495 acres.
Located with military bounty land warrants.....	6,142,360 “
Located with other certificates.....	9,427 “
Selected for the States, as swamp lands.....	16,684,253 “
Donated for railroads, &c.....	1,427,457 “
Making a total of.....	<u>25,346,992 “</u>

Showing an increase in quantity sold and located with land warrants, and under grants, of 12,231,818 acres over the previous fiscal year.

The quantity of land sold during the second and third quarters of 1852, was 334,451 acres; amount received therefor \$623,687 59.

Quantity sold second and third quarters of 1853, 1,609,919 acres; amount received therefor \$2,226,876 36.

The whole number of land warrants issued, under existing laws, up to the 30th September last, was 266,042, of which there were then outstanding 66,947. The quantity of land required to satisfy the latter is 4,778,120 acres.

Warrants have been issued to the 30th September last, under the act of 11th February, 1847, calling for.....	12,879,280 acres.
Under the acts of September 28, 1850, and March 22, 1852, for.....	12,505,360 “
Making a total of.....	<u>25,384,640 “</u>

There have been issued, under the act of the 31st August, 1852, for the satisfaction of Virginia land warrants, 1,657 pieces of land scrip, embracing 129,669 acres. It is supposed the scrip yet to be issued under this act will require 870,000 acres.

It may be several years before the land warrants and scrip will be exhausted, and, until then, the amount of land sold for cash will be comparatively small.

The entire area of the public domain is estimated at about 1,584,000,000 acres. That within the States (exclusive of California) is 471,892,439 acres.

Its purchase was effected at the rate of 14.41 cents per acre, amounting to	\$67,999,700
To this should be added the Indian reservations, which enter into the original cost, amounting to 3,400,725 acres, which, valued at \$1 25 per acre, would make	4,250,906
Up to the 30th June, 1853, 334,256,810 acres had been sold, at an expense of 2.07 cents per acre, making	6,919,116
And 184,667,135 acres sold at an additional expense for selling, at 5.32 cents per acre, making	9,824,291
	<hr/>
The entire cost (including surveying and selling) being	88,994,013
	<hr/>
The whole amount accruing from sales up to 30th June, 1853, was	142,283,478
Being \$53,289,465 more than the cost of the whole, thus far, inclusive of survey and sale.	

Of the surveyed lands there have been granted—

For educational purposes	11,199,973 acres.
For military bounties	24,841,980 “
And for internal improvements	16,607,013 “

Making

There yet remain of the surveyed lands 96,940,709 acres, worth (after deducting the cost of selling yet to be borne)	\$116,018,641
And 137,635,629 acres, worth (after deducting the expense of surveying and selling)	161,973,263
	<hr/>
Making	277,891,904

To which add the net profits received for lands actually sold	53,289,465
	<hr/>

And we find that, while the purchase, survey, and sale of the public lands will, in the end, have cost \$88,994,013, the net amount which will have been realized therefor is the enormous sum of

331,181,369

It is thus shown that the general government, instead of being a loser, as many have supposed, by its connexion with the public lands, has found them not only a source of revenue, but a ready means of promoting the cause of general education, and of bestowing well-earned rewards for military service.

In the Territories and new States, where many of the public lands remain for a long period unsold, liberal grants should be made for those great highways which, to a certain extent, may be considered local in their character, though general in their influence, and not conflicting with the interests of the old States. In this way, without any expenditure of money, the general government can greatly increase the value of the public domain. It has never made such a donation without being fully repaid. The principle of granting alternate sections, and selling those reserved at double the ordinary price, has been found, by experience, to be most salutary. By reason of the improvements made with such grants, large tracts of land, that had long lain waste, have been brought into market and found a ready sale; the surrounding country has been peopled; the revenue has been augmented by the increased consumption of foreign merchandise; and the State in which the improvements have been thus made, and not unfrequently the adjacent States, have been largely benefited. Without these donations, and consequent improvements, some of the finest portions of the new States would have continued a wilderness; lands that had been for fifteen or twenty years in the market, might have remained as much longer unsold, and thus the prosperity and advancement of the whole country greatly retarded. The loss to the government would have been serious, without any corresponding benefit. The true policy is, to bring the lands into market, and, by all legitimate means, dispose of them as speedily as possible: justice to those who have been induced to settle in the new States and Territories, and the interests of the government, alike demand it. The strongest political and economical considerations, therefore, dictate this course.

On the 20th of September, 1850, a grant of lands was made to the States of Illinois, Mississippi and Alabama, to aid in the construction of the great Central railroad from Chicago to Mobile. To afford these States an opportunity of making their selections, the lands along the supposed route of the road were, for a short period, withdrawn from market, most of them being of little value to the States in which they were, or to the general government, until the grants were made and it was ascertained the road would be constructed; but then they were bought up with avidity, and are now considered as most choice and valuable.

The Illinois Central Railroad Company was incorporated, and the route of the road, and its branches, within that State, designated by an act of the legislature, in February, 1851. During the half year ending 31st December, 1850, the quantity of land sold and located with bounty land warrants, in the district traversed by the road, was 342,487 $\frac{8}{10}$ acres. The alternate sections reserved to the United States were released from reservation and brought into market, in July, August and September, 1852, and during that and the next succeeding quarter the sales and locations amounted to 1,274,522 $\frac{2}{10}$ acres; showing an in-

crease over the corresponding half year next preceding the location of the road, of 932,034 $\frac{4}{100}$ acres.

The unselected lands in the Augusta and Columbus districts, in the State of Mississippi, were restored to market in the month of September last; and notwithstanding the sales in those districts had for many years been very limited, the lands thus restored met with ready sales, at enhanced prices. The quantity sold at Augusta in the month of September, 1849, was only 424 acres; and in the same month in the years 1850, 1851 and 1852, much less; and yet in five days in September last, after the route of the road had been established, and the alternate sections designated by the State, 19,530 acres were sold for \$34,056, being \$9,643 more than their aggregate value at the minimum price. In the Columbus district, in the short space of twelve days, in the month of September last, 22,504 acres were disposed of; whereas, in all the month of September, 1849, the quantity sold was only 2,358 acres.

The lands withdrawn from market in June, 1852, to enable the State of Missouri to locate the routes and select the lands granted to her, by the act approved the 10th of that month, for the construction of certain railroads, were restored to market on the 5th of July last, and between that day and the 30th of September following, 318,839 acres were sold, being nearly 150,000 acres more than were sold in the corresponding quarters in 1850, 1851, and 1852 combined.

A like effect has been produced upon the sales of the alternate sections reserved to the United States, wherever similar grants have been made.

Previous to the grant for the construction of the Sault Ste. Marie canal, the sales of lands in the Lake Superior region were not large, amounting, in the second and third quarters of 1852, to only 40,689 acres; whereas, during the corresponding quarters in 1853, after the canal was commenced, the sales increased to 89,073 acres; and this, when the work is in progress of construction. Doubtless, the increase will be far greater when the canal is completed.

There can be as little doubt of the constitutionality of such grants, as of their propriety. The right to donate a part for the enhancement of the value of the residue, can no longer be justly questioned. The principle has been adopted and acted upon for nearly thirty years; and since experience has shown it to be productive of so much good, no sound reason is perceived why it should now be abandoned. It has been of incalculable importance to the great West, and, either directly or indirectly, to all the States.

As many projects have been, and many others probably will be, presented to Congress by interested parties, it may be difficult, practically, to discriminate between those that are worthy and those that are not. Congress will have all the facts in each case before it, and, in its wisdom, will decide as in similar cases of legislation. By making every grant specific, and throwing proper guards, restrictions, and limitations around it, the object to be attained may be secured, and plans and combinations for mere speculation frustrated and defeated.

Something is manifestly due to the hardy pioneer, without whose labor, industry, and enterprise the West would now be of little moment. No one who has not been an eye-witness can appreciate the hardships

and privations endured by him, and government should certainly not hesitate to aid him, especially when it can be done without detriment to the other States, or to any other interests.

Attention is particularly invited to the importance of extending the present land system over the Territories of Utah and New Mexico, with such modifications as the peculiar features of the country require.

The report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office contains some recommendations on this subject, which are commended to your consideration.

The disposition of the mineral lands in California has widely engaged public attention. The various projects heretofore suggested, some of which experience has tested, are open to many objections.

To guard against their becoming a dangerous source of speculation and monopoly, seems the most important point of consideration. The vast results already realized from unrestricted individual industry and enterprise have been so manifest, that whether any further restriction than that above indicated, with the addition of confining the working of the mines to our own citizens, and those who may declare their intention to become such, requires mature deliberation.

The commission to ascertain and settle the private land claims in the State of California expires by limitation on the 4th of March next. From reliable information, I have no doubt many cases of great importance will have remained undecided; the public interests, therefore, require that the law creating the commission be so amended as to fulfil the object for which it was enacted.

Officers connected with the sale and survey of the public lands are frequently purchasers, and owing to their facilities of dealing unfairly with bona fide applicants, often excite grave and perhaps well founded suspicions.

They can now with impunity commit many acts which should be discountenanced. To prevent such mischief they should be prohibited, under severe penalties, from purchasing or being interested in the purchase of the public lands.

The business of the Pension Office has been conducted with great promptness, energy, and ability. In none of its branches is it now in arrear, everything having been brought up to the present date.

The labor performed within the last six months has been very great, and the number of cases daily disposed of is far more than usual.

The act of 3d February, 1853, extended the benefits of the pension laws to the widows of officers and soldiers of the revolutionary army, who were married subsequent to January, in the year 1800. It was supposed there were but few cases that could properly come within its provisions, and the estimate, and the appropriation based thereon, for the present fiscal year, to meet its requirements, was only \$24,000, which has proved totally inadequate, the deficiency being upwards of \$200,000. The number examined, admitted, and placed upon the pension list to the 1st October, 1853, was 1,115, and it is now estimated that it will reach 3,000, and require an annual appropriation of \$240,000.

The widows of the officers, non-commissioned officers, marines, and mariners who served in the navy during the same period, are not em-

braced by the act; but why such discrimination should be made cannot be well conceived.

Numerous frauds have been committed under the pension laws. In perpetrating them, perjury and forgery have been frequently resorted to. Several prosecutions have been successfully instituted: the criminals have been convicted, and are now expiating their offences. Some, whose guilt was palpable, have escaped in consequence of the act of Congress limiting prosecutions of this character to two years from the commission of the offence. These offences are committed in secret. Every expedient is adopted to avoid detection; and it is seldom that, with the greatest vigilance, they are discovered within the time limited by law for their prosecution. A change is therefore earnestly recommended; and if any limit is fixed, of which the propriety is doubted, it should be much extended.

From recent examinations, it has been discovered that invalid pensions have been obtained by persons who do not come within the provisions of the laws; and many, since the issue of the pension certificates, have been found without any disability whatever. To prevent this in future, and to detect such impositions, the Commissioner of Pensions recommends the enactment of a law similar to that of 1819, requiring an immediate examination of the invalid pensioners, and a biennial examination thereafter, by two approved surgeons. In this I most heartily concur, believing that it would afford an effective remedy against the abuse of the laws, and save to the government large sums fraudulently obtained from the treasury.

The laws relating to pensions have become so numerous and complicated, so many various and conflicting constructions have been given to them, and they are involved in so much doubt and uncertainty, that a revision and codification seems necessary. If judiciously and carefully executed, it would conduce greatly to the despatch of business; relieve, by its simplicity, the applicants and beneficiaries from large expenses and gross impositions, and prove very advantageous to the government. It might involve some labor, and yet but little expense.

Some of the most important questions that arise in this branch of business are those relating to the commencement and arrears of pensions. Hence the necessity, in draughting pension laws or amendments, of using language that cannot be readily misunderstood.

The time when the pension is to commence should be fixed with positive certainty, and arrears of pension explicitly allowed or disallowed.

To secure a more direct and frequent accountability of the agents for paying pensions, and to enable the Commissioner to prepare proper estimates and requisitions, he has introduced a system which will enable him, at any time, to show the condition of each agency; prevent overdrawings, and an unnecessary accumulation of money in the hands of any agent. To make it more efficient, the agents should be required by law to make quarterly returns to, and settle their accounts with, that office.

The Commissioner of Patents, who communicates directly to Con-

gress, will, at an early day, report the operations of his bureau. By his indefatigable and unremitting exertions, system has been restored, and the business of his office is now conducted with much order and regularity.

The number of applications is constantly increasing, and the force, though augmented by the act of 1853, is still insufficient to bring up the old, and despatch with promptitude the new business. As the public is so deeply interested in the speedy examinations of the applications for patents, and the fund for this purpose is so ample, every facility for despatch should be afforded.

No complaint is heard against the integrity, skill, or competency of those discharging the important duties of the bureau; but the delays incident to the smallness of the operative force in the office are vexatious and embarrassing.

Since the present Commissioner took charge of the bureau, the number of applications examined and patents issued have greatly increased. Still, from four to six months, and in many cases a longer period, unavoidably elapses, after the application is presented, before final action can be obtained. This is a severe trial to the patience of the inventor, and often a serious loss to him as well as the public.

The law requires the models and specimens of unpatented inventions to be preserved and arranged in suitable cases. Some of these are useful, as well to the inventors, desirous of ascertaining whether their inventions have been anticipated, as to the examiners, in the discharge of their duties. But there are many that are wholly worthless and unfit for any purpose. In some instances they represent contrivances altogether unpatentable; in others they are merely duplicates of models previously deposited. Where application is made for a patent for a design merely, the practice, under existing laws, has been to allow the applicant to deposit, as his model, a specimen of the article on which his design has been placed, in its full size. Accordingly a vast number of stoves, and other cumbersome articles, have accumulated to such an extent as to render it impossible to comply with the law requiring them to be arranged in cases.

As space is of so much value and importance to this bureau, these defects in the law should be remedied, and a more enlarged discretion given to the Commissioner, there being no danger of its abuse.

Appeals from the decision of the Commissioner may be taken to the chief justice, or either of the assistant judges, of the circuit court of the District of Columbia. It is optional with the applicant, to which of them he will take his appeal, and the adverse party cannot have it decided by any of the others, although the judge to whom the appeal was made may be unable, from absence, age, or other infirmity, to hear the case.

The object of the appellant may be delay, to enable him to infringe, with impunity, upon the rights of the appellee; and the law, as it now stands, affords him this opportunity. As such cases have occurred, and may again arise, the evil should be remedied.

During the past year the Indians have been more pacific than was expected; few outbreaks have occurred, and the depredations com-

mitted by those in the new Territories, and along the routes to Oregon and California, have been comparatively small.

By kind, humane, and just treatment, their condition may be improved, and the hostile feeling so often manifested by them, and so frequently engendered by a mischievous course of conduct on the part of the whites, and the dereliction of duty of public officers, may be subdued. If they cannot be conciliated, soothed, and civilized in this way, they surely will not be by coercion, oppression, and injustice.

Their attention should be diverted from a wild, predatory life, and, if possible, directed to agricultural pursuits. To give the Indian stability of character—make him an independent, responsible, moral being, should be the study of those who are intrusted with his guardianship.

The time is rapidly approaching when this must be the fixed policy of the government, since their roaming disposition cannot be gratified or tolerated much longer. Their territorial limits are daily becoming more circumscribed, and, unless they learn the arts of husbandry, their condition, in a few short years, will be destitute and degraded, and their utter extermination must soon follow.

Their number, within the limits of the United States, is estimated at 400,000, of whom about 18,000 are east of the Mississippi river; principally in New York, Michigan, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Mississippi, and Florida. About 110,000 are in Minnesota, and along our inner frontier to Texas; those of the plains and Rocky mountains are estimated at 63,000, and those in Texas at 29,000; California at 100,000; Washington and Oregon at 23,000; New Mexico at 45,000, and Utah at 12,000; a formidable number of savages to control and properly direct.

By the act of March 3, 1853, fifty thousand dollars were appropriated to enable the President to enter into negotiations with the Indian tribes west of the States of Missouri and Iowa, for the purpose of securing their assent to the settlement of the citizens of the United States upon the lands claimed by them, and for the purpose of extinguishing their titles, in whole or in part, to these lands. This duty was committed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who undertook it at the earliest practicable period, and has made every effort to discharge it faithfully, and to accomplish the object for which the appropriation was made.

His journey through the section of country in question, and his interviews with the Indians, cannot fail to be of great value to him in the future discharge of his duties.

It is believed that his presence made a most favorable impression, and that the results of his visit will prove beneficial to them and to the government. Little doubt is entertained that early in the season, and in time for Congress to act upon the subjects connected with this Territory, and to consummate the design of the appropriation, treaties will be made with the Indians, and such arrangements entered into as will satisfy them and gratify the people. No effort will be spared to accomplish the object, as the bureau and the department fully appreciate its value and importance.

Some of the Creek Indians were indicted in the federal court in Arkansas for introducing or vending spirituous liquors in the Indian

country. The marshal of the western district of that State arrested them under process of that court, and they were rescued from his custody. Many of the Indians have banded together, and are determined to resist the execution of the writs, on the ground that by their own laws the same Indians have been already tried and punished, and that it is unjust, and contrary to the spirit of our own institutions, to put them upon trial a second time for the same offence. The excitement and exasperation of the Indians was so great and alarming that the superintendent of Indian affairs for that district appealed to the officer, and requested him to suspend proceedings until he could consult and advise with this department. This has been done, and, after declaring that it had neither the legal authority nor the disposition to interfere with the action of the judicial tribunals, nor to prevent the service or execution of any writ which had been lawfully issued, the Department suggested to the marshal and the district attorney having charge of the indictments, the propriety of co-operating, as far as was compatible with their sense of duty, with the superintendent and other Indian agents, in their efforts to calm the troubles which existed, and to restore quiet and contentment among the disaffected.

The laws of most of the Indian tribes are severe upon this subject, and enforced and executed with great rigor. It would therefore be far better to permit them to control it, than to introduce a conflict of jurisdiction, which might lead to disastrous consequences.

Although it is doubted whether the federal courts have cognizance of such offences when committed by Indians, yet Congress should interpose and relieve the question from all doubt.

The issue of warrants to Indians under the bounty land laws has been suspended; and, unless Congress expressly authorizes it, they will hereafter be disallowed. It is questionable whether the Indians engaged in the service of the government, in any of our wars, severed, or intended to sever, their connexion with the tribes to which they belonged. So long as they continue members of a tribe, their individual appears to be merged in their tribal character; and whatever is due from the government for their service belongs to the tribe. They are, moreover, in a state of pupilage; the government is their guardian, and bound to protect them against the superior intelligence and sagacity of the white man. Although many warrants were issued previous to the question being brought to my notice, it may be safely assumed that, with the exception of a few of the Stockbridges, scarcely a solitary entry has been made by an Indian under the scrip, or warrant, issued to him. There is no positive proof of the fact; but it is the belief of those who have diligently inquired into it, that wherever scrip or warrants have been issued to individual Indians, they have been defrauded of them. If they are entitled to any such gratuity, sound morality, as well as justice to them, requires that some legal and different provision be made.

It was estimated that there were upwards of seven thousand Indians, whose military service might entitle them to bounty lands. Supposing their claims to average eighty acres each, the aggregate amount would exceed 560,000 acres.

The effort to remove the remnant of the Seminole Indians from Flo-

rida, through the instrumentality of a special agent, proved abortive, notwithstanding it is alleged that some \$50,000 were expended in the attempt. As it was supposed a military force would be necessary to effect their removal, the duty was transferred to the War Department.

I concur with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the recommendation that the Indians be colonized in suitable locations, of limited extent, and distant from white settlements. In connexion with it, a system of education, commensurate with their position and wants, should be introduced and efficiently prosecuted.

The agents in Texas are desirous of providing suitable places for the Indians in that State. Many of the Indians themselves are anxious for the adoption of this system, and all would probably soon submit to it. Although the agents have selected locations, they cannot be fixed without the consent of, and a cession by that State, with which arrangements should be made as soon as practicable.

The plan for removing the Indians in California to five military reservations of not more than twenty-five thousand acres each, and subsisting them there, having been approved, instructions for carrying it into effect were promptly given to the superintendent of Indian affairs for that State. His success has not been such as was expected; difficulties presented themselves which were not anticipated. It appears that suitable locations cannot be made in the northern part of California for the Indians in that region. Sufficient territory for the purpose, belonging to the general government, cannot be found; and in order to accomplish the object designed, it will be necessary to make extensive purchases of lands from private individuals, at great expense. It is also questionable whether, before the reservations are permanently made, the State should not grant to the general government the right to exercise jurisdiction over them. If the plan adopted is to be pursued, it should be enlarged, greater powers given for its execution, and more ample means provided for its successful operation.

It is a subject which deserves the prompt attention and speedy action of Congress.

Immediately after taking charge of this department, I caused instructions to be issued to the superintendent and agents of the Indians to pay the annuities to them *per capita*, unless contrary to treaty stipulations, and in no case to pay any portion to other claimants or attorneys. Experience has taught the wisdom of this measure; and I am persuaded it has prevented much fraud and unfair dealing. If continued, it will tend to banish that feeling of asperity so often exhibited by the Indian towards the white man, arising from the deceptions practised upon him.

If the Indians have just claims against the government, it is the duty of the Indian bureau, and those under its control, to examine into them, and, when ascertained, to press their speedy adjustment. Congress will do them justice, when the facts are properly brought to their notice and consideration.

The system of cash annuity payments, except to a few of the semi-civilized or colonized tribes, should, as far as practicable, be abolished. Goods, provisions, implements of husbandry, should be substituted, and education and the arts of civilization more generally encouraged.

They know not, especially the hunter tribes, the proper use or value of money. The mere drawing together of large bodies of men, women and children, to receive their annuities, is detrimental to their habits, health and morals, and the money may be viewed as an actual bonus for their destruction.

One of the most prominent characteristics of the Indian, especially in the hunter state, is improvidence; a surfeit to-day is followed by a famine to-morrow: hence, notwithstanding the vast amount of goods and money annually distributed among them, they are often reduced to the greatest extremity, and, it is feared, sometimes actually perish for want of food and clothing. The quantity furnished is believed to be ample, but the mode of distribution fails to accomplish the object intended. To obviate the difficulty and remedy this great evil, it has been suggested that, with the assent of the Indians, storehouses might be established at suitable points in their midst, from which the agents of the government could distribute goods and provisions equivalent to the amount stipulated in the treaties, in quantities and to individuals as needed, with such arms and ammunition as might be judicious. There is much force in the suggestion, and the cost of the experiment would be trifling. The comfort and preservation of the Indian requires that a different method from that heretofore pursued should be adopted. The only obstacle in the way of immediately testing the plan proposed is the existing treaties, and the difficulty of obtaining the consent of the Indians, so long as they are influenced by those having an adverse interest.

It is folly to attempt to conceal the fact that under the present system the Indian has not, for many years past, advanced in morality, integrity, or intelligence. The pictures drawn, in many of the reports, of his exalted condition, superior intelligence, and increasing knowledge, have been too highly colored. Much of the philanthropy and charity manifested for them has been wrongly directed. Their condition is truly deplorable.

In the act for the organization of the Territory of Washington, no provision was made for the appointment of Indian agents to reside therein. I advert to the fact, to the end that the omission may be supplied.

The operations of the Census Office have been conformed to the provisions of the joint resolution of the last session of Congress. The present Superintendent has exhibited a most commendable spirit; entering upon the discharge of his duties with a laudable zeal, in which he has been emulated by most of the clerks, and by their combined industry, skill, and intelligence, the work has been nearly concluded; and there yet remains unexpended of the last appropriation for census purposes upwards of sixteen thousand dollars.

The census volume, it is now hoped, will be completed so that copies may be laid on the tables of the members on the assembling of Congress. The Superintendent proposes to make a further report, which, I have no doubt, will contain suggestions of interest and importance.

Nothing further has been done with that part of the Mexican boundary survey which is west of the (so-termed) initial point on the Rio

Grande. The appropriation did not apply to it, nor was any portion of it intended to be so expended.

The question of the southern boundary of New Mexico having become a subject of negotiation between the two governments, has been transferred to the State Department.

The work, in the field, on the undisputed portion of the boundary, has been completed, and nothing remains to be done but the office work. Much progress has been made in this, and with an adequate appropriation it can be finished in the course of the next eighteen months, if the data necessary to compare and reduce the observations for longitude, made by the surveyor and his assistants, can be obtained.

The maps, after they are completed, are to be compared with the Mexican maps, and signed by the commissioner and surveyor. As the Mexican commission has progressed less rapidly, and it is uncertain when its work will be finished, our commission should not expire before the maps are fully completed and signed, agreeably to the stipulations of the treaty. The act of 1853 should be modified accordingly.

It is understood that an agreement was entered into between the former commissioner (Mr. Bartlett) and the Mexican commissioner, by which the joint commission was to meet on the first day of April next, in the city of Mexico. The department does not know the object of this arrangement, but presumes it was to perfect the survey. As the city of Mexico is far remote from the boundary itself, and possesses few or none of the facilities for prosecuting or expediting the work, even if the Mexican commission could be prepared, it would cause great delay, and cost our government a large and useless expenditure of money. The surveyor, however, was not present, nor did he approve the agreement. Had he done so, it would still have been without authority, as our commission was, by law, to expire on the first day of January, 1853. Even under the present law the proposed meeting cannot take place on the first day of April, 1854, inasmuch as our commission expires, by law, on that very day.

There yet remains unpaid a number of debts of the last commission on this survey, which are of a most pressing character, and should be paid. The amount required to liquidate them cannot, at present, be ascertained. When the necessary information is received, an appropriation will be asked for.

Great credit is due to the present commissioner and surveyor, and the employés under them. They have acted harmoniously and discharged their duties faithfully. By their zeal, energy, and endurance, they have accomplished in some seven months what it was supposed would require a much longer time, and have also kept within the limit of the appropriation.

I have inspected the progress of the maps and drawings of the survey, and being satisfied that their publication will impart valuable information and illustrate the physical geography of an extensive region of country now little known, I recommend that Congress make provision for the commencement of the engravings for the work, under the supervision of this department.

Under the appropriation of \$30,000, the construction of a bridge

across the Potomac, at the Little Falls, was placed under the management and supervision of an officer of the corps of topographical engineers. The plan of an iron suspension truss-bridge was adopted, as the most suitable for the locality and the permanent wants of the public. Two spans of one hundred and sixty feet each, with stone piers, will be completed, so as to permit the passage of vehicles, early the coming winter.

The engineer recommends that this structure be extended across to the main shore, in the District, in order to make the whole permanent, and estimates the additional amount required at \$75,000.

This is more than it was supposed the work would cost; but the extraordinary rise of labor and materials, and the unexpected difficulties that constantly existed in its progress, have convinced the superintending engineer that it cannot be constructed for less.

The District of Columbia requires and merits the fostering care of the general government. It is true, much has been expended upon public improvements within its limits; but they are invaluable to the different departments of the government. There are few who know their character, extent and utility, that can regret the expenditure.

There never was a more auspicious period for erecting the additional public edifices so much needed. Fire-proof buildings are required for the State, the War, and the Navy Departments. All of these, together with one for this department, can be constructed, in connexion with each other, at an expense not exceeding three millions of dollars. The present buildings are not fire-proof, and the destruction of either of them by fire, to which they are constantly exposed, and from which there is little to protect them, would be a far greater loss to the government, even in a pecuniary point of view.

Much inconvenience and embarrassment are experienced by this department, as well as most of the bureaus under its charge, in consequence of their distance from it. That freedom of intercourse which is essentially necessary to the proper discharge of the duties incumbent on each, cannot exist. Questions of moment are constantly arising, that might be considered and decided promptly, and without consuming much time, if the head of the department and the chief of the bureau having charge of the matter could readily and conveniently consult together. This, however, is not the most serious objection to the present position of these bureaus. The Indian Office is in the War Department, and occupies rooms which are not fire-proof. They are also needed and have been demanded by that department, and should be surrendered.

The General Land Office remains in the treasury building, notwithstanding the Secretary of the Treasury requires the rooms, and has made a pressing application for them.

These rooms are too small, and too limited in number. The Commissioner has been compelled, in several instances, to crowd eight or nine clerks, besides the desks, paper-cases, and ordinary furniture, into a single room, where more than two clerks cannot conveniently be accommodated. In consequence of this, and the want of proper ventilation, the health of the clerks is impaired, and their ability to labor much diminished. The files and papers have increased so rapidly

that, for want of space, many cases of valuable papers are placed in the passages, where there is not that security from fire which is requisite.

The Pension Office is in a better situation, but it occupies inconvenient and uncomfortable quarters belonging to the War Department.

The Indian and Land bureaus must be removed, and the only question appears to be, whether the west wing of the Patent Office building shall be fitted up for the temporary accommodation of these bureaus, or they be placed in *rented* buildings, not fire-proof, thus exposing to imminent peril, papers of immense value to the general government, the States, and private individuals.

This building may be so finished within a year; and, until a suitable structure can be erected for this department, it will not be required by the Patent Office. Some opposition has been made, heretofore, to a somewhat similar proposition; but this, it is presumed, was based on the erroneous supposition that the cost of the entire structure had been defrayed out of the patent fund.

The amount thus far expended and appropriated is \$1,367,750; of which \$1,048,750 has been paid out of the treasury, and only \$319,000 out of the patent fund. Such being the fact, there is no reason why a portion of it should not be temporarily used, as proposed, until needed by the Patent Office. If this should even somewhat incommode that office, it would be of small moment in comparison with the evils that might result from withholding the use of it from the bureaus. Skilful artisans are of opinion that the necessary improvements can be easily made without interfering with or injuring the original design. Unless, therefore, Congress by express enactment otherwise determines, I intend to direct the completion of the west wing so as to accommodate these bureaus and secure the public archives.

Within a few years, the Patent Office will need the main building and the two wings for its exclusive use. In the mean time a structure should be erected for this department; and, as it consumes much time to complete such a building, sound policy should induce its immediate commencement. One sufficiently large and commodious, and entirely separated from the other departments, can be constructed in a plain, substantial manner for \$250,000; and in the most approved style, with all the modern improvements, for less than half a million. Surely, at this time there can be no more proper or profitable application of the public money. The considerations urging it are strong and apparent, and, it seems to me, cannot fail to convince every one, who reflects upon the subject, of its absolute necessity.

Applications are made at almost every session of Congress for repairing the bridges crossing the Potomac from Washington city. Although in the aggregate a large amount has been expended on them, they are in a most unsafe and insecure condition. Permanent and substantial structures are required, and ought to be erected. In the end it will prove a saving to the government, and in the mean time conduce greatly to its interests and the benefit of all who are in anywise connected with this District.

The plan adopted for improving and ornamenting the public grounds should be vigorously prosecuted. It will conduce to the health, as well as greatly add to the beauty, of the city.

These, and other improvements that might be suggested, are required. They are not merely for the use and benefit of the people of the District, but minister to the pleasure, comfort, and health of every one who visits it. This is the metropolis of the Union, and the pride and ambition of its representatives should induce them to make it worthy of a great nation. In regard to all such objects a liberal policy should be pursued; at least, all improvements should be made which the public service imperatively demands.

The supervisory power possessed by this department over the accounts of the marshals, clerks, and other officers of the courts of the United States, should be transferred to and be exercised by the Attorney General. It is of the same character of the powers already intrusted to him, and seems appropriately to appertain to his office.

The commissions of officers connected with this department are issued by the State and Treasury Departments. The laws should be so modified as to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to make out and seal the commissions, to be signed by the President, of all officers under the control of this department. It is proper in itself, would be far more convenient, and obviate delays necessarily incident to the issuing of such commissions by the other departments.

In an act of Congress approved 31st August, 1852, provision was made to enable the Secretary of the Interior, under the direction of the President, to purchase a site in the neighborhood of Washington for the erection, furnishing, and fitting up of an asylum for the insane of the District of Columbia and of the army and navy of the United States. The site was purchased, and the plan of the building adopted, prior to my taking charge of the department. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining suitable mechanics and materials, the work has not progressed rapidly. It is hoped, however, that the building will be completed and prepared for the reception of patients by the first of August next. Thus far, the work has been well and faithfully executed.

Accompanying this report is a general exhibit of the estimates of the appropriations required for the service of this department for the next fiscal year.

I would respectfully suggest the expediency of a revision of the salaries of the judges of the district courts of the United States, which are now unequal, and in some cases wholly inadequate to the amount and importance of the duties to be performed, and the professional knowledge and ability required.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,
R. McCLELLAND, *Secretary.*

To the PRESIDENT.

General exhibit of the estimate of the appropriation for the service of the Department of the Interior for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1855.

For what objects.	Amount.
Whole amount of estimate required as follows, to wit :	
For salaries and incidental expenses in the office of the Secretary of the Interior.....	\$39,250 00
For fulfilling treaties with the Indian tribes, including salaries and contingent expenses of the Indian office, Indian agents, &c., &c.....	1,032,775 00
For salaries and incidental expenses in the general and district land offices and expenses of the surveying department, including salaries of the surveyors general and their clerks, and the compensation of the deputy surveyors employed in executing the public surveys preparatory to the lands being brought into the market.....	765,835 00
For paying pensions under various acts of Congress, including the amount required for salaries and incidental expenses in the Pension Office.....	958,800 00
For defraying the expenses of the Supreme, circuit, and district courts of the United States, &c.....	700,000 00
For public buildings and grounds, including salary of Commissioner of Public Buildings, &c., &c.....	375,061 00
For expenses of Mexican boundary commission.....	38,100 00
For the support of the penitentiary of the District of Columbia.....	11,785 00
For support, medical treatment, &c., of insane paupers of the District of Columbia.....	10,000 00
For amount due Jos. S. Wilson, and J. M. Cutts, under decision of late Secretary of the Interior, for services rendered on account of the Chickasaw business.....	6,187 50
Total.....	3,937,793 50