

REPORT
OF
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
December 2, 1837.

SIR: In the performance of my duty to lay before you at this time the condition of our navy, I beg leave to submit the following report

Within the year past, the repairs of the Columbus, Ohio, and Delaware ships of the line, have been completed. The ship of the line Pennsylvania has been launched, and her equipments so far advanced as to be nearly ready to proceed to Norfolk, where they will be completed. The Erie, John Adams, and Ontario sloops of war, have been repaired. The steamer Fulton, with her engines and machinery, is nearly fit for service. Two sloops of war, to be called the Cyane and Levant, have been commenced under the appropriations of last year, and are nearly ready for launching, the one at Boston and the other at New York.

For a particular statement of the condition of our vessels on the stocks, as well as those afloat at our navy yards, I beg leave to refer to the report of the Commissioners of the Navy Board, herewith submitted, (marked I;) and for the amount of timber, iron, and other materials, procured for the gradual improvement of the navy, to their report, (marked L.)

The squadron in the Mediterranean consists of the frigates Constitution and the United States, and the schooner Shark. This is less than the usual force upon that station, but is deemed adequate to the present exigencies of our commerce in that sea; and as vessels were much wanted for other stations, none have been sent to that since the return of the Potomac and John Adams.

The frigate Constitution must be recalled in the early part of the coming year, when an addition can be conveniently made to this squadron, and the ship of the line Pennsylvania sent to that station, should it be deemed expedient.

Our force in the Pacific at the time of my last annual report, was composed of the frigate Brandywine and the schooners Dolphin and Boxer; since which, the Brandywine, Commodore Wadsworth, has returned to the United States, and the Dolphin has been condemned and sold. The squadron now consists of the ship of the line North Carolina, Commodore Ballard, and the sloops of war Falmouth and Lexington, and the schooners Enterprise and Boxer.

This is a considerable addition to our force on that station, but not greater than a due regard for our commerce in the Pacific at this time seemed to require.

The sloop of war Erie, Commodore Renshaw, returned from the coast of Brazil on the 15th of September last; and our squadron on that station now consists of the razee Independence, Commodore John B. Nicholson,

the sloop of war *Fairfield*, and the brig *Dolphin*. The *Independence* sailed from Boston on the 20th of May last, having on board our Minister to Russia, Mr. Dallas, whom Commodore Nicholson landed at Cronstadt on the 25th of July, and then proceeded to his station on the coast of Brazil.

In the West Indies, the frigate *Constellation*, the sloops of war *Boston*, *Concord*, *Natchez*, *St. Louis*, and *Vandalia*, and the schooner *Grampus*, composed the squadron under Commodore Dallas. To this large force has been added the sloop of war *Ontario*, which sailed from New York on the 19th of August last, carrying out, in addition to her own crew, an extra number of seamen and marines.

The revenue cutters *Dexter* and *Jefferson*, which, by consent of the Secretary of the Treasury, were transferred to Commodore Dallas, after having performed the duties required of them, have been returned to the revenue service; and the steamers *American* and *Major Dade*, also under his command, have been transferred to the army, at the request of the Secretary of War.

The employment of these revenue cutters and steamboats, under the command of Commodore Dallas, has subjected the Navy Department to heavy charges, not provided for in the appropriations for the year 1837.

The West India squadron has been most actively and efficiently employed in the complicated duties of protecting the persons and property of our merchants and other citizens, in the West Indies and the Gulf of Mexico; of co-operating with our land forces in the Florida war, and of preventing the importation of slaves.

The sloop of war *Peacock*, Commodore Kennedy, which, with the schooner *Enterprise*, sailed from New York in April, 1835, on a cruise in the East Indies, and along the coast of Asia, with a view to the protection and extension of our commerce in that quarter, returned to the United States on the 26th of October last, having successfully accomplished the objects for which the cruise was undertaken. The *Enterprise* was detained by Commodore Ballard on the Pacific station, where her services were required.

Commodore Read, with the frigate *Columbia* and the sloop of war *John Adams*, is ordered to perform a cruise in the East Indies, and is expected to sail in a few days. A part of his crews are detained a short time, to assist in taking the ship of the line *Pennsylvania* from Philadelphia to Norfolk.

For the purpose of protecting our commerce and suppressing the slave trade on the coast of Africa, our ships of war have been occasionally ordered to touch at the settlements on that coast. The most recent visits to these have been made by the brig *Dolphin*, on her passage out to the coast of Brazil, and by the frigate *Potomac*, on her return from the Mediterranean to the United States. These visits have given the highest satisfaction to the colonists on the coast, and will no doubt be attended with beneficial results.

Lieutenant Commandant Gedney, in the schooner *Jersey*, and Lieutenant Commandant Blake, in the schooner *Experiment*, with their officers and crews, as sounding parties, attached to the coast survey, have been actively and very advantageously employed in the harbor of New York and waters adjacent. The discovery, by Lieutenant Commandant Gedney, of a new channel into the harbor of New York, through which the heaviest ships may pass without danger, must add greatly to the commercial advantages of that harbor, and to its value as a naval station.

The survey of the harbors south of the Chesapeake, made by Commodore M. T. Woolsey, Captain Alexander Claxton, and Commander E. R. Shubrick, who were sent out for that purpose in the brig Porpoise, under the command of Lieutenant Commandant William Ramsay, being finished, that brig has since been employed, under the command of Lieutenant Commandant Wilkes, in the survey and examination of George's shoals, off the coast of Massachusetts.

This survey has, after much labor, been finished in the most satisfactory manner, and will add much to the safety of a navigation hitherto considered dangerous. Lieutenant Commandant Wilkes is now ordered to take command of the brig Porpoise, and make an examination and survey of the harbors of Beaufort and Wilmington, in North Carolina, and a survey of May river, from Tybec bar to the Hunting island, which surveys are required by the act of the 3d of March last, making appropriations for the naval service.

Upon the application of the Board of Navy Commissioners, seventeen officers of the navy were placed under their orders for the purpose of making examinations required by the second section of an act of Congress of the 3d of March last, in relation to a selection of sites for light-houses. These officers have completed the duties assigned to them in a satisfactory manner, as the Commissioners have reported to the Secretary of the Treasury. The travelling expenses and increased pay consequent upon the employment of these officers on this duty, have been borne by the Navy Department, and have to that extent increased the naval expenditures beyond what was contemplated in the estimates for the year.

The vessels enumerated in commission on foreign stations, or about to sail, including the five vessels of the South sea exploring expedition, compose a larger naval force than we have had in commission at any time since the late war with Great Britain.

The satisfactory condition of our force abroad affords us the opportunity of providing for a home squadron for the protection of commerce on our extensive coast. Estimates for such a squadron are submitted with those for the general naval service for the year 1838.

Within the past year the number of captains of the navy has been increased from forty to fifty; of commanders, from forty-one to fifty; of lieutenants, from two hundred and sixty to two hundred and eighty; of surgeons, from forty-four to fifty; and of assistant surgeons, from fifty to sixty.

This increase of officers was deemed necessary, from the increased number of ships to be put in commission, to meet the exigencies of our growing commerce.

The numbers of surgeons and assistant surgeons have not been increased in a just proportion with those of the captains, commanders, and lieutenants, and the wants of the service require a further addition to their numbers.

As the appropriations for the South sea exploring expedition, in the law authorizing the same, amounting to three hundred thousand dollars, were inadequate to the expense of its outfit, it became necessary to submit estimates for further appropriations for this object, which was done at the last stated session of Congress.

With my letter to the President of the United States of the 6th of February last, and by him submitted to the House of Representatives, were statements of the Board of Navy Commissioners, by which it appears, that

there had been expended upon the *Macedonian*, from those appropriations, about \$62,000; upon the ship *Relief*, barks *Pioneer* and *Consort*, and schooner *Pilot*, to be taken from the same appropriations, the sum of \$158,000; and that to complete the equipments of these vessels, exclusively of provisions, instruments, and contingencies, with the preparation of which the board was not charged, it was estimated that \$70,000 more would be required; making in all \$300,500, exceeding by \$500 the amount of the appropriations.

The estimate submitted for the annual expenses of these vessels was \$346,431 60; amounting, for the three years, during which time it was intended the exploring squadron should be absent, to \$1,039,293 60. In this estimate is included the sum of \$43,842 50 for the annual expense of the scientific corps of the expedition, amounting, with their assistants, to the number of eighteen.

As this statement of facts could leave no doubt that the exploring expedition would cost nearly, if not quite, a million and a half of dollars, and as it greatly exceeded in number of vessels and men the most successful expeditions of a like character heretofore sent out by the maritime powers of Europe, it was believed that its amount would have been reduced by withholding a part of the appropriations asked for by the estimates. This, however, was not deemed expedient, and the full appropriations were made by the act of the 3d of March last.

Before this time, Lieutenant Commandant Tatnall, who had performed a cruise to the coast of Mexico in the *Pioneer*, reported so unfavorably of her sailing, that it was deemed proper to examine into her condition, as well as that of the bark *Consort* and schooner *Pilot*, which, with the *Pioneer*, had been built expressly for this expedition, and which, in point of sailing, were not considered equal to the *Pioneer*.

On the 10th of April, Commodore Jones was informed that the Commissioner of the Navy had made arrangements to have a thorough examination of the barks *Pioneer* and *Consort*, and the schooner *Pilot*, with a view to ascertain their sufficiency for the service contemplated; that the chief constructor, Col. Humphries, and Mr. Grice, naval architect, were ordered on this duty, and Commodore Jones was requested to join them, which he did.

On the 26th of April, at his own suggestion, he was instructed, with the vessels of his squadron, except the *Macedonian*, to proceed to sea, and make a full trial of their sailing qualities; and was directed to return to Norfolk within twenty days after sailing.

Commodore Jones, on his return from his experimental cruise, reported favorably of the sailing qualities of the vessels; but recommended that they should be put into dry dock, for the purpose of the examination which had been proposed, and for such repairs and alterations as might be deemed necessary. Measures were taken for doing this as soon as the ship of the line *Delaware*, then under a course of repairs, could be taken out of the dock.

On the 30th of May, Commodore Warrington was directed to prepare the *Pioneer*, *Consort*, and *Pilot*, for going into dock. As Commodore Jones had required that another schooner should be added to his squadron, without which he should not consider the expedition complete or efficient, it seemed the more proper that the condition of these vessels should be thoroughly examined.

On the 8th of June, a board of five officers, Commodores Chauncey, Morris, Warrington, Patterson, and Wadsworth, was ordered to make such examination, and to inquire whether the expedition might not be reduced in number of vessels and men, with advantage to the country, and without prejudice to the success of the expedition. This inquiry I wished made, from the consideration that the difficulty of procuring the necessary funds for fitting out this squadron was greatly increased by the suspension of specie payments by the banks, which had then taken place, which difficulty had not been foreseen by Congress when the large appropriations for the expedition were granted, and which made it the duty of the different departments of Government to limit the usual and authorized expenditures, as far as the same could be done without injury to the public service; and from the consideration that, should a part of the vessels of the squadron be found unfit for the service required, it would be better that the squadron should sail with a reduced force, than wait until other vessels could be substituted.

On the 13th of July, the board reported that the occupation of the dock at Gosport, and the employment of some of the members of the board, prevented a meeting until the 30th of June. That the barks and schooner were put into dock and examined; certain alterations recommended, which could soon be completed, by which the vessels "might be made to answer the purposes proposed sufficiently well to justify their employment."

The board state that, had they "been called upon before any preparations had been made, to state the number and character of the vessels which, in their opinion, would be best calculated to secure the attainment of these proposed objects, they certainly would not have recommended those which have been prepared." They were of opinion that a smaller number would have answered the purposes; yet, from a consideration of the expense incurred, the time spent in preparing the force, and other circumstances which they enumerate, and as the officer selected to command the expedition was satisfied with the vessels, they came to the conclusion, that no reduction could be made in their amount at this late period, without prejudice to the success of the expedition. They, however, recommended a reduction of the number of officers and men to about five hundred, exclusive of the scientific corps. To this reduction, although, in my opinion, a very proper one, Commodore Jones made such decided objections, that I thought proper to yield to his wishes, and so informed him; and his force was continued at six hundred and three officers and men, exclusive of the scientific corps.

Before the proposed alterations could be completed, Commodore Jones discovered that the cooking galleys, originally ordered at his request, made upon a new plan for burning anthracite coal, would not answer the purpose proposed; and on the 1st of August he requested they might be replaced by others. The galleys wanted have been made with all possible despatch, at the navy yard at this place, and the last of them was sent to Norfolk on the 6th October.

On the 25th of September, I issued orders to Commodore Jones to proceed with the vessels of his squadron from Norfolk to New York, as soon as they could be prepared for removal. He was not able to sail from Norfolk before the 12th of October, and arrived at the harbor of New York on the 16th of that month.

As I believed the schooner Pilot, notwithstanding the alterations made in

ber, was not well fitted for service in the expedition, I gave to Commodore Jones the privilege of purchasing such a fast sailing schooner as he might select, to be substituted for the Pilot. In consequence of which, on the 8th of September, he purchased the schooner Clara, now called the Active, for eight thousand dollars; upon which he was authorized to put such repairs and improvements as he might think necessary, at the navy yard, New York.

Although the vessels had not heretofore been in a situation to receive the scientific corps, and I could not, with propriety, order them to report to the commodore for duty, yet, I thought it proper to put them upon pay; which was done on the 4th day of July last. And I requested Commodore Jones, if his convenience would permit, to meet a large portion of them at Philadelphia, for the purpose of having a perfect understanding with them, as to their accommodation, with their books, instruments, &c., on board the vessels of his squadron. This meeting took place in July, and such arrangements, I understood, were made, as were perfectly satisfactory to the commodore and to the gentlemen of the scientific corps.

As it was necessary to procure a great variety of articles for the gentlemen of the scientific corps, for which requisitions could not conveniently be made without a consumption of much time, I found it necessary to place funds in the hands of one gentleman of the corps in Philadelphia, and one in New York. I also placed five thousand dollars in the hands of Commodore Jones, on the 29th of August last, for the purpose of purchasing such articles for the expedition as it was inconvenient to make requisitions for; and on the 12th of October placed twelve thousand dollars, subject to his drafts, for like purposes, in the hands of his purser. This unusual course was adopted that there might be no delay in the sailing of the expedition.

The objects of removing the squadron from Norfolk to New York, as stated by Commodore Jones, were to complete the stores, and to introduce some proper apparatus for heating the vessels in cold latitudes. These, I took it for granted, would not require more than two or three weeks for their completion; and from the general order of Commodore Jones at Norfolk, I felt a confidence the expedition would leave the United States in the month of November. I, therefore, as soon as I knew of the arrival of the squadron in New York, directed the gentlemen of the scientific corps to report to Commodore Jones for duty.

On the 3d of November, I wrote to Commodore Jones that the chronometers for his squadron were ready at the depot, in this place, and requested him to send two competent officers to take charge of them. On the 10th of the month I sent him sailing instructions, to be carried into effect as soon as his vessels were, in all respects, ready for sea, and on the 16th of the month, twenty-five chronometers, in good order, were delivered to the officers sent for them.

Had I known the extent of work required for the vessels of the squadron, after their arrival at New York, I should not so soon have directed the scientific corps to report, or have issued my sailing instructions.

By a letter from Commodore Ridgely of the 21st of November, I find that the work upon the vessels of this squadron, after their arrival at New York, up to the 15th of the month, amounted to four thousand six hundred and thirty-one dollars; and that there remained to be done, after that day,

to the amount of two thousand three hundred and thirty-three dollars, all of which requires much more time than I had anticipated.

All this work, I believe, however, is necessary, and would not have been ordered by Commodore Jones if the health and comfort of his crews, and the safety of the expedition, had not depended upon it; and, impatient as the public is that the expedition should sail immediately, it is better that there should still be some days' or weeks' delay, than that it should sail before the vessels are fully prepared.

The Commissioners of the Navy hold no correspondence with the commanders of vessels in commission, except in relation to their supplies of provisions and stores. The steps, therefore, taken by Commodore Jones, under his discretionary powers, to have the vessels of his squadron fitted out as he should deem most expedient, were not under the control of the commissioners, nor subjected to the strict regulations generally observed in fitting out vessels for foreign stations.

It was believed, however, that but little work remained to be done on the vessels after their sailing from Norfolk, and that but a small advance would be required for completing the stores. Yet it appears, from the letter of Commodore Ridgely, before cited, that the expenditures required at New York for these vessels amount to the sum of \$6,932 89, and for the schooner Active, including sea stores, the sum of \$14,700 96; in all, \$21,633 85. To these must be added purchases, made by authority of Commodore Jones, of articles, for which requisitions have not been required, the amount of which is not known.

In my last report to the House of Representatives, of the 13th of October last, I expressed an opinion that no further appropriation would be wanted for the expedition for the present year; but in ascertaining all the expenditures for the vessels since they left Norfolk, and what is still required for their equipment, it may be found that a further appropriation will be wanted for the present year, the amount of which cannot now be stated.

In obedience to a law of the 3d of March, 1835, authorizing the construction of a dry dock for the naval service in the harbor of New York, or in its adjacent waters, I caused soundings and other examinations to be made by an able engineer, Loammi Baldwin, Esq., for the purpose of selecting a proper site for such dry dock. The report of Mr. Baldwin was decidedly in favor of the present navy yard at Brooklyn, as this site; which was accordingly recommended in my report to the House of Representatives. This it appears, however, was not satisfactory; and on the 3d of June, 1836, the House of Representatives, by their resolution, directed this department to ascertain, as far as practicable, the practicability of establishing a navy yard at or near Barn island, in the straits called the East river, which connects Long Island sound with New York bay; also at Perth Amboy and Jersey City, in the State of New Jersey; the comparative advantages and disadvantages of those sites, and the site of the navy yard at the Wallabout, on Long island, for the purposes of a navy yard; the expense of erecting the works recommended by Colonel Baldwin at the Wallabout, according to the plan prescribed by that engineer; the expense of a dry dock at each of the above positions; the expense of purchasing the necessary quantity of land, and erecting buildings of equal convenience with those now owned by the United States at the Wallabout, and the probable amount for which the lands, buildings, and other property of the United States at the Wallabout might be disposed of, if offered for sale.

Under this resolution, I employed Mr. Baldwin to make the necessary examinations and inquiries, and on the 10th of December last, submitted to the House Mr. Baldwin's very elaborate report, by which it would appear that the navy yard at Brooklyn, according to his former report, should be selected as the site of the proposed dry dock.

On the 22d of February last, the House of Representatives resolved, that the Secretary of the Navy be directed to cause an examination to be made of the various positions not heretofore examined within the waters of the New York bay and its vicinity, which are adapted to the establishment and construction of dry docks, and to report their comparative advantages and disadvantages to the House of Representatives at the opening of the next session of Congress.

Under this resolution, I employed Professor James Renwick, of New York, to make the necessary examinations. He surveyed, with great labor and care, a bay at Constable's Point, in New Jersey, called Kill Van Kull, which, in his opinion, presents many advantages as a station for a dry dock and navy yard; which will be communicated to the House of Representatives in a separate report.

It is greatly to be regretted that so much time has been lost in making the proper selection for the site of this dry dock, the completion of which would be of the greatest advantage to the naval service.

In my last annual report, I stated that previously to the passing of the act of the 30th of June, 1834, for the better organization of the United States marine corps, double rations had been allowed to the commandant of the corps, and to the officers of the same, commanding at the navy yards at Portsmouth, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Norfolk, and at Pensacola; to the senior marine officers in the squadrons in the Mediterranean, the West Indies, on the Brazilian coast, and in the Pacific ocean; all receiving the sanction of Congress, by their appropriations. By this act, the officers of the marine corps are to receive the same pay, emoluments, and allowances, as are given to officers of similar grades in the infantry of the army.

The act of the 16th of March, 1802, fixing the peace establishment of the United States, authorizes allowances to the commanding officers of each separate post, of such additional number of rations as the President of the United States shall, from time to time, direct. These provisions of the last act were continued by an act of the 3d of March, 1815, fixing the military peace establishment.

The paymaster of the marine corps made payments for double rations to officers heretofore receiving the same, from the 1st of July to the 30th of September, 1831: but the accounting officers of the Treasury did not think proper to allow the same, inasmuch as the commands of these officers had never been designated as separate stations, agreeably to the rule prescribed for the army.

This was a case of difficulty which, it was respectfully suggested, required legislative interference; which suggestion I beg leave to repeat.

The rule for allowing double or increased rations should be fixed by law. This subject has received the attention, but not the final action of Congress.

The report of Commodores Stewart and Dallas, and Captain Bolton, who were appointed a board to prepare plans for the improvement of the navy yard at Pensacola, contains no estimates of the expense of carrying the proposed improvements into effect: and as that expense must be necessarily

very great, it was deemed proper to employ an able engineer to make the necessary estimates.

Col. Loammi Baldwin, under whose superintendence our two dry docks were constructed, was applied to for this purpose, and an arrangement made with him to perform this service, if the professional business he had engaged to perform in the State of Georgia would permit, of which there would have been but little doubt; but his loss of health on this previous duty was such as to leave no hope that he could, during the proper season, make the examinations and estimates required.

An arrangement has since been made with Col. Totten, of the army, with the assent of the Secretary of War, to make these examinations and estimates, and he is now on his way to Pensacola for this purpose. It is hoped that, in the course of this and the next month, this important duty may be performed in a satisfactory manner by the officer to whom it is intrusted.

NAVY PENSION FUND.

The number of invalid pensioners payable out of this fund is	-	-	-	356
And the annual sum required to pay them is	-	-	\$28,895 70	
The number of widow pensioners is	-	-	-	238
And the annual sum required to pay them is	-	-	47,820 00	
The number of minor children pensioners is	-	-	-	81
And the annual sum required to pay them is	-	-	11,052 00	
				<hr/>
The whole number of pensioners is	-	-	-	678
				<hr/>
And the present annual charge is	-	-	\$87,767 70	
This statement is complete to the 1st of October, 1837.				
The amount of arrears to invalids under the act of the 3d of March, 1837, is	-	-	-	\$117,949 85 ³ / ₄
The amount of arrears to widows is	-	-	-	270,125 37 ¹ / ₂
The amount of arrears to children is	-	-	-	190,341 89
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Total of arrears as ascertained to the 1st of October, 1837, and paid to 1st of July, 1837, under the same act, is	-	-	-	\$578,417 12
				<hr/>
The amount of stocks owned by the navy pension fund on the 1st of October, 1837, was	-	-	-	\$1,049,272 25
On the 8th of November, 1837, there was sold Pennsylvania stock belonging to the fund, to the nominal amount of	-	-	\$55,000 00	
And United States Bank stock paid for by the Secretary of the Treasury	-	-	641,600 00	
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				\$696,600 00
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Therefore, the present amount of stocks will be only	-	-	-	\$352,632 25
But of the proceeds of the United States Bank stock, about	-	-	-	200,000 00
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may be invested in stock, and the capital of the fund for the next year may be stated at	-	-	-	\$552,632 25
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PRIVATEER PENSION FUND.

It was mentioned in my last annual report, that this fund would probably be exhausted previously to January, 1838; accordingly the last stock was sold in May last, and the proceeds applied to pensions.

The number of pensioners payable out of this fund is	-	36
And the annual amount required to pay them	-	<u>\$2,920</u>

Pensions to invalids were, according to law, granted to be paid during life, or continuance of disability; it is therefore recommended, as in my last report, that provision be made to pay these pensioners.

It is estimated that the annual sum of \$1,000 00 will be sufficient, not only for this purpose, but also to pay the debts of the fund, and satisfy any claims that may be allowed under existing laws.

On the 1st of January next, six months' pay will be due, and should a law not be made early enough to authorize the payment at that time, most of the pensioners will, in all probability, be much distressed and disappointed.

NAVY HOSPITAL FUND.

The balance in the Treasury to the credit of this fund on the

1st of October, 1836, was	-	-	-	-	\$75,717 36
And the receipts to the 1st of October, 1837	-	-	-	-	<u>19,293 00</u>
					\$95,010 36
Expenditures to 1st October, 1837	-	-	-	-	<u>808 00</u>
Balance 1st October, 1837	-	-	-	-	<u>\$94,202 36</u>

The particulars from which the above statements are made will be seen in the documents accompanying this report, marked from N 1 to N 11.

A separate report, in obedience to a resolution of the Senate of the 13th of October last, will be made, of the state, condition, and amount, of the navy pension fund, the operation and effect upon the fund by the act of the 3d of March last, for the more equitable administration of the navy pension fund, and the number and names of persons placed on the pension list, the times when pensions were granted to them, and the amount of money paid to each under said act.

The duties imposed upon this department by the operation of this act are extremely onerous; and require, as I would most respectfully suggest, the aid of a separate bureau, under a proper head as Commissioner of Navy Pensions, with powers and duties similar to those of the Commissioner of Pensions of the War Department.

In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 3d of March, 1836, a board of officers was appointed to ascertain the efficiency, and test the safety, of the medium or light guns of the navy, and to compare their effects with those of the guns for which they were proposed to be substituted. The necessary preparations and other causes prevented a completion of these duties until the 28th of September last.

From the report made by the board on that day, it appears that, after subjecting the medium or light guns to severe tests, they were all satisfied with their safety when used with proper charges.

They were also unanimously of opinion that the medium thirty-two pounders were to be preferred to the heavy twenty-four pounders for the upper gun decks of ships of the line; and three of the five commissioners would prefer the medium thirty-two pounders to twenty-four pounders, for the gun decks of heavy frigates.

The comparative advantages between the light twenty four pounders and the forty-two pound carronades, seem to leave the question of relative efficiency to depend upon the circumstances of space in our own vessels, and the distance of an enemy in case of action; which, being variable in themselves, their relative efficiency would probably be estimated differently by different individuals.

A copy of the report of the board is hereto annexed, marked V.

Commodore T. ap Gagesby Jones having presented to the board his individual views in a letter, an extract of such parts of the same as relates to the subject of the resolution, is also annexed, marked W.

Upon a late report that an atrocious piracy had been committed near our coast upon the packet *Susquehanna*, our officers and seamen, with great alacrity, volunteered their services to go in pursuit of the supposed pirate. In performing this duty they encountered unusual hardships and privations, for which their usual pay and emoluments form no adequate compensation. I would respectfully suggest the propriety of making provision by law for giving suitable rewards in this case, as well as in like cases, which may hereafter occur.

In my annual report of December, 1835, I took the liberty of suggesting the necessity of establishing a national foundry for the purpose of casting cannon, shot, and shells, as well for the army as navy. This subject I beg leave to bring to your notice as one of great importance.

An establishment for the manufacture of powder for the army and navy is one of nearly equal importance. It is believed that under a joint board of officers of the army and navy, these objects may be effected with great advantage to the country.

It is my duty to state that the building occupied as offices of the Navy Department is not such as to afford the proper and convenient accommodations to the officers and clerks employed. The want of rooms for the documents and vouchers of the department has made it necessary to crowd the halls and passages of the building with wooden boxes filled with papers. This adds much to the danger from fire, to which the building, with its valuable contents, is daily exposed. It is hoped measures may be adopted for extending the building, and for the safe keeping of the valuable records and papers it contains.

By the statement marked U, hereto annexed, it will appear that of the appropriations heretofore made for the suppression of the slave-trade, there remained in the Treasury, on the 23d of November last, \$10,763 74.

The necessary references to papers and documents connected with this report will be found in a schedule hereunto annexed.

All which is respectfully submitted.

MAHLON DICKERSON,

To the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.