

**Thomas Jefferson, December 8, 1801, Annual Message,  
from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve  
Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul  
Leicester Ford.**

**FIRST ANNUAL MESSAGE<sup>1</sup> J. MSS.**

1 Sent to the Senate and House, with the following letter:

“December 8, 1801.

“ Sir: The circumstances under which we find ourselves placed rendering inconvenient the mode heretofore practiced of making by personal address the first communication between the legislative and executive branches, I have adopted that by message, as used on all subsequent occasions through the session. In doing this, I have had principal regard to the convenience of the legislature, to the economy of their time, to their relief from the embarrassment of immediate answers on subjects not yet fully before them, and to the benefits thence resulting to the public affairs. Trusting that a procedure founded in these motives will meet their approbation, I beg leave, through you, sir, to communicate the enclosed message, with the documents accompanying it, to the honorable the senate, and pray you to accept, for yourself and them, the homage of my high respect and consideration.”

On the subject of this message, Jefferson wrote to Madison:

“Nov. 12, 1801.

“Will you give this enclosed a serious revisal, not only as to matter, but diction? Where strictness of grammar does not weaken expression, it should be attended to in

## Library of Congress

complaisance to the purists of New England. But where by small grammatical negligences the energy of an idea is condensed, or a word stands for a sentence, I hold grammatical rigor in contempt. I will thank you to expedite it, and to consider as you go along in the documents promised, which of them go from your office, and to have them prepared in duplicates with a press copy of one of the duplicates for me.”

He also wrote to Gallatin:

“November 14, 1801.

“Thomas Jefferson asks the favor of Mr. Gallatin to examine the enclosed rough draft of what is proposed for his first communication to Congress; not merely the part relating to finance, but the whole. Several paragraphs are only provisionally drawn, to be altered or omitted according to further information. The whole respecting finance is predicated on a general view of the subject presented according to what I wish, but subject to the particular consultation which Th. J. wishes to have with Mr. Gallatin, and especially to the calculation proposed to be made as to the adequacy of the impost to the support of government and discharge of the public debt, for which Mr. G. is to furnish correct materials for calculation. The part respecting the navy has not yet been opened to the Secretary of the Navy. What belongs to the Departments of States and War is in unison with the ideas of those gentlemen. Th. J. asks the favor of Mr. Gallatin to devote the first moments he can spare to the enclosed, and to make notes on a separate paper, with pencilled references at the passages noted on. Health and happiness.”

In reply, Gallatin wrote to Jefferson:

“(Received) 16th November, 1801.

“ Dear Sir,—I enclose some hasty remarks on the message.

## Library of Congress

“The incorrectness of the documents of exports of foreign articles compels me, after much labor, to abandon the plan on which I had intended to calculate the impost, and, as the next best, I will prepare one in the following form, which rests on documents on which we may depend, being those of duties and drawbacks actually paid. For each of the ten years ending 31st December, 1800, I will take the quantity of each article paying specific duties, and the value of each class of articles paying distinct duties *ad valorem*, on which duties were secured, deduct from each respective article and class the quantity and value respectively on which drawbacks have been allowed, and take the difference for the quantity and value of each article consumed in the United States. On each of those articles I will calculate the duties at the rate *now* established by law. The result will give the revenue which would have been collected each year on each article had the duties been the same as at present, and the total divided by ten will show the average revenue for the ten years 1791–1800, at the present rate of duties, and adding to this thirty-three and one-third per cent., the rate of increase of population in ten years as given by the census, the result will be assumed as the probable average revenue of the ten succeeding years 1801–1810, or 1802–1809, these being the eight years to which it is eligible that the calculations should apply. This will be but a rough estimate, and yet I cannot perceive any way, from our documents, to render it more correct, unless it be to subtract, from the total amount assumed as the consumption of the ten years 1791–1800, that part of the importations of 1800 not re-exported in the same year, which will, at first view, appear to be above the roughly estimated consumption of that year.

“The great defect of that mode arises from its including the duties on exported articles, which, although not entitled to drawbacks, made no part of our consumption, and these might have been deducted had the returns of actual foreign exports been correct and properly distinguished. A deduction at random might be made, but then it would be as well to guess at the whole. Does any idea strike you which might lead to a better mode of making the calculation? Unless we have something precise, we never can with safety recommend a repeal of existing taxes.

## Library of Congress

“Although I could not solve it, I thought that the problem of the annuity necessary to redeem the debt might be solved, although there were two unknown data, viz., the annuity and the time of redemption of *one of the classes* of debt (the time of the other class being  $8 - t$ ), yet two equations might be formed, one term of each of which being the annuity, left an equation, with only the time not given. At all events, the approximation you have assumed is not sufficiently correct, for the annuity you fixed would, if I am not mistaken, leave about one million and half unpaid at the end of the eight years.

“But the problem is, in fact, more complex than I had stated it, on account of the varieties and peculiar properties of the several kinds of debt, as you will judge by the enclosed statement.

“If we cannot with the probable amount of impost and sale of lands pay the debt at the rate proposed and support the establishments on the proposed plans, one of three things must be done; either to continue the internal taxes, or to reduce the expenditure still more, or to discharge the debt with less rapidity. The last resource to me, is the most objectionable, not only because I am firmly of opinion that, if the present Administration and Congress do not take the most effective measures for that object, the debt will be entailed on us and the ensuing generations, together with all the systems which support it, and which it supports; but also any sinking fund operating in an increased ratio as it progresses, a very small deduction from an appropriation for that object would make a considerable difference in the ultimate term of redemption, which, provided we can, in some shape, manage the three per cents., without redeeming them at their nominal value I think may be paid at fourteen or fifteen years.

“On the other hand, if this Administration shall not reduce taxes, they never will be permanently reduced. To strike at the root of the evil and avert the danger of increasing taxes, encroaching government, temptations to offensive wars, &c., nothing can be more effectual than a repeal of *all* internal taxes, but let them all go, and not one remain on which sister taxes may be hereafter engrafted. I agree most fully with you that pretended

## Library of Congress

tax-preparations, treasury-preparations, and army-preparations against contingent wars tend only to encourage wars. If the United States shall unavoidably be drawn into a war, the people will submit to any necessary tax, and the system of internal taxation which, *then*, shall be thought best adapted to the then situation of the country may be created, instead of engrafted on the old or present plan; if there shall be no real necessity for them, their abolition by this Administration will most powerfully deter any other from reviving them. A repeal now will attach as much unpopularity to them as the late direct tax has done to that mode of taxation. On those grounds, can I ask what, in your opinion, is the minimum of necessary naval and foreign intercourse expenses, including in these last all those which are under the control of the Department of State?

“You will perceive in one of the notes on the message that in giving general results no provision appears for the British treaty, viz., for the £600,000 proposed to be paid in lieu of the 6 Art. This is a temporary demand, which may be met by the four following temporary resources: 1st, the excess of specie in Treasury beyond the necessary sum to be kept there; 2d, the sale of the bank shares belonging to the United States; 3d, the surplus revenue arising from internal taxes beyond the expenses, in case those internal taxes are continued, and, if practicable to discontinue them, one net year of their proceeds which is always due on them and will be due on the day when they may cease; 4th, the balance of the direct tax due payable after the present year.

“You will also see that I lay less stress on savings on the civil list than you do. Some may be made, but the total amount can not be great. The new judiciary, the commissioners of loans, the mint, the accountants of the Navy and War Departments, seem to be the principle, if not the only, objects of reform. Of the clerks I cannot yet say much: those of the Comptroller and Auditor are less numerous and paid less in proportion than those of the Register and two accountants. Transcribing and common ones are easily obtained; good bookkeepers are also everywhere to be found; it is difficult to obtain faithful examining clerks, on whose correctness and fidelity a just settlement of all the accounts depends, and still more difficult to find men of talents. My best clerk next to

## Library of Congress

the principal, and who had twelve hundred dollars, has left me to take one thousand in Philadelphia. Under the present circumstances of this place, we must calculate on paying higher all the inferior officers, principally clerks, than in Philadelphia. Coming all new in the Administration, the heads of Departments must obtain a perfect knowledge of all the details before they can venture on a reform. The number of independent officers attached to the Treasury renders the task still more arduous for me. I assure you that it will take twelve months before I can thoroughly understand every detail of all these several offices. Current business and the more general and important duties of the office do not permit to learn the lesser details but incidentally and by degrees. Until I know them all I dare not touch the machine.

“The most important reform I can suggest is that of specific appropriations, to which it would be desirable to add, by abolishing the accountants, an immediate payment from the Treasury to the individuals who are to apply the money, and an immediate accounting of those individuals to the Treasury; in short to place the War and Navy Departments in relation to the expenditure of money on the same footing on which, at Mr. Madison's request, that of State has been placed. Enclosed is a short paper containing the principles I would propose, in which you will perceive that the discretionary powers of those Departments are intended to be checked by legal provisions, and not by transferring any discretion to another Department. What is called ‘illustration’ on that paper is not correct.

“The disappointment in the export document will necessarily delay some days the proposed result of import; but I think it will be about two million one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

“The importance of correctness there renders it more eligible to wait a week longer for a more accurate estimate than to proceed now with what we have obtained. We have yet three weeks till the meeting of Congress. With sincere respect.”

## Library of Congress

### GALLATIN'S NOTES ON PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

“November, 1801.

“ *Foreign powers friendly*:—Effect. If redress is meant, it seems wrong to raise expectations which probably will be disappointed. *Quere*, whether Mr. King's negotiation should be hinted at.

“ *Indians*:—Should not the attempt to treat be mentioned, stating also the determination not to press upon them any disagreeable demand? This to guard against any blame which the imprudence of the Commissioners might occasion.

“ *Tripoli*:—More stress might be laid on the protection afforded by the frigates to our vessels which had been long blockaded, and on the imminent peril from which our commerce in the Atlantic was preserved by the timely arrival of our squadron at the moment when the Tripolitans had already reached Gibraltar. *This early, &c.*:—It will be said that the specimen had already been given to Truxton.

“ *Finances. In nearly the same ratio, &c.*:—The revenue has increased more than in the same ratio with population: 1st. Because our wealth has increased in a greater ratio than population. 2d. Because the seaports and towns, which consume imported articles much more than the country, have increased in a greater proportion. (See census of New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, and compare their increase with that of the United States.) The greater increase of wealth is due in part to our natural situation, but principally to our *neutrality* during the war; an evident proof of the advantages of peace notwithstanding the depredations of the belligerent powers.

“ *We may safely calculate on a certain augmentation, and war indeed and unfortunate calamities may change, &c.*:—It appears perfectly correct to make our calculations and arrangements without any regard to alterations which might be produced by the possible

## Library of Congress

though improbable event of the United States being involved in a war; but the alteration which may be produced by the restoration of peace in Europe should be taken into consideration. A reduction in the price of our exports would diminish our ability of paying, and therefore of consuming imported articles; and it is perhaps as much as can be hoped for, if, taking an average of six or eight years immediately succeeding the peace, the natural increase of population was sufficient to counterbalance the decrease of consumption arising from that cause. But, supposing these to balance one another, there is still another cause of decrease of *revenue* arising from peace in Europe. Our enormous carrying trade of foreign articles must be diminished by the peace. Having been much disappointed in the correctness of some of the custom-house and Treasury documents on which I depended I cannot ascertain with precision, but do not think far from the truth the following result, viz: that from  $\frac{7}{16}$  to  $\frac{1}{10}$  of our impost revenue is raised on articles not consumed here, but exported without being entitled to drawback, either because they have remained more than one year in the country, or are exported in too small parcels to be entitled or for any other cause not ascertained. This item of revenue is not perhaps less at present than 1,200,000 Dollars, and, as it does not rest on consumption, but on an overgrown and accidental commerce, must be deducted from any calculation grounded on the gradual increase of population and consumption. Could we depend only on a continuance of the present revenue from impost, we might at once dispense with all the internal taxes. For the receipts from that source for the year ending 30 June 1801, were 9,550,500

to which must be added  $\frac{7}{16}$  of the additional duties on sugar, and  $\frac{11}{12}$  of the additional duties of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on merchandise which, prior to 30th June, 1800 paid only 10 per cent.; those additional duties on account of the credit given on duties, operated only in the proportion of  $\frac{9}{16}$  on the sugar duty and  $\frac{1}{12}$  on the additional  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent for the year ending 30 June, 1801. These  $\frac{7}{16}$  and  $\frac{1}{12}$  of the respective additional duties are equal to about 520,000

## Library of Congress

So that the *present* revenue from impost is not less than 10,000,000

But a permanent revenue from impost would be sufficient if amounting to 9,500,000

For, adding to it Dollars 250,000 for lands and 50,000 for postage 300,000

9,800,000

and deducting for interest and payment of the debt a yearly sum of 7,200,000

which will pay off about 38 millions ( *Quere*, I think 150,000 dollars more a year will be necessary) of the principal in eight years, leaves 2,600,000

for the expenses of government, which I estimate in the gross as followeth: civil list 600,000; miscellaneous 200,000; foreign intercourse, 200,000; 1,000,000

Military; the estimate for this year is 1,120,000; # of which, as per proposed reduction, is, say 672,000

Indian Department, 72,000; fortifications, 120,000; arsenals and armories, 66,000; 258,000

1,930,000

leaving for the navy a sum equal to that for the army: 670,000

2,600,000

“But, for causes already assigned, I dare not estimate the impost for the eight years 1802—1809 at more than an average of 9,000,000 to 9,250,000 dollars. It must, however, be observed that our expenditures of navy and foreign intercourse may be diminished when a general peace takes place.

## Library of Congress

“ *Now laid before you:* The statements and report of the Secretary of the Treasury are by resolutions and by law respectively laid before Congress by the Secretary. It would be better to say: ‘which, according to law and the orders of the two Houses, will be laid before you.’

“ *Taxes on stamps, &c., may be immediately suppressed:*—Although the Executive has a right to recommend the suppression of any one tax, yet in ordinary cases it seems more proper to recommend or suggest generally a reduction of taxes without designating particularly some of them. If the recommendation could be general as to a whole class of taxes, such as all internal taxes, it would not have so much the appearance of what may be attacked as an interference with legislative details.

“ *Economies in civil list:*—These may be popular, but I am confident that no Department is less susceptible of reform; it is by far that in which less abuse has been practised; it exceeds but little the original sum set apart for that object; the reason is, that it being the one to which the people are most attentive, it has been most closely watched, and any increase attempted but with caution and repelled with perseverance. At an early period I examined it critically, and the reductions which might be made appeared so trifling, that the whole time I was in Congress, eager as we all were to propose popular measures and to promote economy, I never proposed, nor do I remember to have seen a single reduction proposed. It seems to me that the subject may be mentioned, but less stress laid on it.

“ *Expenses of foreign intercourse:*—The Diplomatic Department forms but a small item of these; the expenses attending the Barbary powers, and principally those which are incurred by *consuls, for ministers and agents*, for prosecution of claims and relief of seamen abroad, deserve particular consideration. If any measure has been taken to check these, it might be mentioned; if the subject has not yet been attended to, I would prefer using the word diplomatic, or foreign ministers, rather than the general words ‘foreign intercourse.’

## Library of Congress

“ *Navy*:—If possible, it would be better to avoid a direct recommendation to continue in actual service a part of it: this subject should, as far as practicable, be treated generally, leaving the Legislature to decide exclusively upon it.

“ *I communicate an account of receipts, &c.; also appropriations*:—All those documents prepared and signed by the Register are transmitted on the first week of the session by the Secretary to Congress. By the law constituting the Treasury Department, it is enacted that the Secretary shall lay before Congress or either House such reports, documents, &c. as he may be directed from time to time. Hence the invariable practice has been to call for financial information directly on the Treasury Department, except in the case of loans, where the authority had been given to the President; and for information respecting Army, Navy, or State Department, the application is always to the President, requesting him to direct &c. The distinction, it is presumable, has been made in order to leave to Congress a direct power, uncontrolled by the Executive, on financial documents and information as connected with money and revenue subjects. It would at present be much more convenient to follow a different course; if instead of six or seven reports called for by the standing orders of one or the other House I could throw them all into one, to be made to you, it would unite the advantages of simplicity and perspicuity to that of connection with the reports made by the other Departments, as all might then be presented to Congress through you and by you; but I fear that it would be attacked as an attempt to dispense with the orders of the House or of Congress if the usual reports were not made in the usual manner to them; and if these are still made, it becomes useless for you to communicate duplicates. But the paragraph may be easily modified by saying, ‘The accounts, &c., will show, &c.’ *Quere*, whether this remarkable distinction, which will be found to pervade all the laws relative to the Treasury Department, was not introduced to that extent in order to give Mr. Hamilton a department independent of every executive control? It may be remembered that he claimed under those laws the right of making reports and proposing reforms, &c., without being called for the same by Congress. This was a Presidential power, for by the Constitution the President is to call on the Departments for

## Library of Congress

information, and has alone the power of recommending. But in the present case, see the Act supplementary to the Act establishing the Treasury Department, passed in 1800.

“ *Navy-yards*:—Too much seems to be said in favor of the navy-yard here. Six appear too many, and the Legislature having heretofore authorized but two, it seems that a stronger recommendation to authorize a reduction of the number might be made, and a suggestion of the propriety of regulating by law to what kind of officers their immediate superintendence should be committed.

“ *Few harbors in the United States offer, &c.*:—Is that fact certain? Portsmouth, Philadelphia and even Boston, are perfectly defensible. But if true, should it be stated in a public speech? Will it not be charged as exposing the nakedness of the land?

“ *Sedition Act*:—The idea contained in the last paragraph had struck me; but to suggest its propriety to the Legislature appears doubtful. Are we sure of a Senatorial majority originally opposed to that law? *Quere*, as to Foster.

“ *Juries*:—A recommendation for a law providing an impartial and uniform mode of summoning juries, and taking the power from marshals and clerks,— from the Judiciary and Executive,—would, if according with the sentiments of the Executive come with propriety from him.

“ *Progress of opinion, &c.*:—Is it perfectly right to touch on that subject? It appears to me more objectionable than the doubtful paragraph relative to compensation to sufferers under Sedition Act.

“There is but one subject not mentioned in the message which I feel extremely anxious to see recommended. It is, generally, that Congress should adopt such measures as will effectually guard against misapplication of public moneys; by making specific appropriations whenever practicable; by providing against the application of moneys drawn from the Treasury under an appropriation to any other object or to any greater

## Library of Congress

amount than that for which they have been drawn; by limiting discretionary powers in the application of that money, whether by heads of Department or by any other agents; and by rendering every person who receives public moneys from the Treasury as immediately, promptly, and effectually accountable to the accounting officer (the Comptroller) as practicable. The great characteristic, the flagrant vice, of the late administration has been total disregard of laws, and application of public moneys by the Departments to objects for which they were not appropriated. Witness Pickering's account; but if you will see a palpable proof and an evidence of the necessity of a remedy, see the Quartermaster General's account for five hundred thousand dollars in the office of the accountant of the War Department."

December 8, 1801.

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

It is a circumstance of sincere gratification to me that on meeting the great council of our nation, I am able to announce to them, on the grounds of reasonable certainty, that the wars and troubles which have 322 for so many years afflicted our sister nations have at length come to an end, and that the communications of peace and commerce are once more opening among them. While we devoutly return thanks to the beneficent Being who has been pleased to breathe into them the spirit of conciliation and forgiveness, 323 we are bound with peculiar gratitude to be thankful to him that our own peace has been preserved through so perilous a season, and ourselves permitted quietly to cultivate the earth and to practice and improve those arts which tend to increase our comforts. The assurances, indeed, of friendly disposition, received 324 from all the powers with whom we have principal relations, had inspired a confidence that our peace with them would not have been disturbed. But a cessation of the irregularities which had effected the commerce of neutral nations, and of the irritations and injuries produced by them, cannot but add 325 to this confidence; and strengthens, at the same time, the hope, that wrongs committed on offending friends, under a pressure of circumstances, will now be reviewed

## Library of Congress

with candor, and will be considered as founding just claims of retribution for the past and new assurances for the future.

326

Among our Indian neighbors, also, a spirit of peace and friendship generally prevails; and I am happy to inform you that the continued efforts to introduce among them the implements and the practice of husbandry, and of the household arts, have not been without success; that they are becoming more and 327 more sensible of the superiority of this dependence for clothing and subsistence over the precarious resources of hunting and fishing; and already we are able to announce, that instead of that constant diminution of their numbers, produced by their wars and their wants, some of them begin to experience an increase of population.

328

To this state of general peace with which we have been blessed, one only exception exists. Tripoli, the least considerable of the Barbary States, had come forward with demands unfounded either in right or in compact, and had permitted itself to denounce 329 war, on our failure to comply before a given day. The style of the demand admitted but one answer. I sent a small squadron of frigates into the Mediterranean, 330 with assurances to that power of our sincere desire to remain in peace, but with orders to protect our commerce against the threatened attack. The 331 measure was seasonable and salutary. The bey had already declared war in form. His cruisers were out. Two had arrived at Gibraltar. Our commerce 332 in the Mediterranean was blockaded, and that of the Atlantic in peril. The arrival of our squadron dispelled the danger. One of the Tripolitan cruisers having fallen in with, and engaged the small schooner *Enterprise*, commanded by Lieutenant Sterret, which had gone as a tender to our larger vessels, was captured, after a heavy slaughter of her men, without the loss of a single one on our part. The bravery exhibited by our citizens on that element, will, I trust, be a testimony to the world that it is not the want of that virtue which makes us seek their peace, but a conscientious desire to direct the energies of our nation to the multiplication of the human race, and not to its

## Library of Congress

destruction. Unauthorized by the constitution, without the sanction of Congress, to go out beyond the line of defence, the vessel being disabled from committing further hostilities, was liberated with its crew. The legislature will doubtless consider whether, by authorizing measures of offence, also, they will place our force on an equal footing with that of its adversaries. I communicate all material information on this subject, that in the exercise of the important function considered by the constitution to the legislature exclusively, their judgment may form itself on a knowledge and consideration of every circumstance of weight.

I wish I could say that our situation with all the other Barbary states was entirely satisfactory. Discovering that some delays had taken place in the performance of certain articles stipulated by us, I thought it my duty, by immediate measures for fulfilling them, to vindicate to ourselves the right of 333 considering the effect of departure from stipulation on their side. From the papers which will be laid before you, you will be enabled to judge whether our treaties are regarded by them as fixing at all the measure of their demands, or as guarding from the exercise of force our vessels within their power; and to consider how far it will be safe and expedient to leave our affairs with them in their present posture.

I lay before you the result of the census lately taken of our inhabitants, to a conformity with which we are to reduce the ensuing rates of representation and taxation. You will perceive that the increase of numbers during the last ten years, proceeding in geometrical ratio, promises a duplication in little more than twenty-two years. We contemplate this rapid growth, and the prospect it holds up to us, not with a view to the injuries it may enable us to do to others in some future day, but to the settlement of the extensive country still remaining vacant within our limits, to the multiplications of men susceptible of happiness, educated in the love of order, habituated to self-government, and value its blessings above all price.

Other circumstances, combined with the increase of numbers, have produced an augmentation of revenue arising from consumption, in a ratio far beyond that of population

## Library of Congress

alone, and though the changes of foreign relations now taking place so desirably for the world, may for a season affect this branch of revenue, yet, weighing all probabilities of expense, as well as of income, there is reasonable ground of confidence that we may now safely dispense with all 334 the internal taxes, comprehending excises, stamps, auctions, licenses, carriages, and refined sugars, to which the postage on newspapers may be added, to facilitate the progress of information, and that the remaining sources of revenue will be sufficient to provide for the support of government to pay the interest on the public debts, and to discharge the principals in shorter periods than the laws or the general expectations had contemplated. War, indeed, and untoward events, may change this prospect of things, and call for expenses which the imposts could not meet; but sound principles will not justify our taxing the industry of our fellow citizens to accumulate treasure for wars to happen we know not when, and which might not perhaps happen but from the temptations offered by that treasure.

These views, however, of reducing our burdens, are formed on the expectation that a sensible, and at the same time a salutary reduction, may take place in our habitual expenditures. For this purpose, those of the civil government, the army, and navy, will need revisal.

When we consider that this government is charged with the external and mutual relations only of these states; that the states themselves have principal care of our persons, our property, and our reputation, constituting the great field of human concerns, we may well doubt whether our organization is not too complicated, too expensive; whether offices or officers have not been multiplied unnecessarily, and sometimes injuriously to the service they were meant to promote. I will cause to be laid before you an 335 essay toward a statement of those who, under public employment of various kinds, draw money from the treasury or from our citizens. Time has not permitted a perfect enumeration, the ramifications of office being too multiplied and remote to be completely traced in a first trial. Among those who are dependent on executive discretion, I have begun the reduction of what was deemed necessary. The expenses of diplomatic agency have been

## Library of Congress

considerably diminished. The inspectors of internal revenue who were found to obstruct the accountability of the institution, have been discontinued. Several agencies created by executive authority, on salaries fixed by that also, have been suppressed, and should suggest the expediency of regulating that power by law, so as to subject its exercises to legislative inspection and sanction. Other reformatations of the same kind will be pursued with that caution which is requisite in removing useless things, not to injure what is retained. But the great mass of public offices is established by law, and, therefore, by law alone can be abolished. Should the legislature think it expedient to pass this roll in review, and try all its parts by the test of public utility, they may be assured of every aid and light which executive information can yield. Considering the general tendency to multiply offices and dependencies, and to increase expense to the ultimate term of burden which the citizen can bear, it behoves us to avail ourselves of every occasion which presents itself for taking off the surcharge; that it may never be seen here that, after leaving to labor the smallest portion of its earnings on which 336 it can subsist, government shall itself consume the residue of what it was instituted to guard.

In our care, too, of the public contributions intrusted to our direction, it would be prudent to multiply barriers against their dissipation, by appropriating specific sums to every specific purpose susceptible of definition; by disallowing applications of money varying from the appropriation in object, or transcending it in amount; by reducing the undefined field of contingencies, and thereby circumscribing discretionary powers over money; and by bringing back to a single department all accountabilities for money where the examination may be prompt, efficacious, and uniform.

An account of the receipts and expenditures of the last year, as prepared by the secretary of the treasury, will as usual be laid before you. The success which has attended the late sales of the public lands, shows that with attention they may be made an important source of receipt. Among the payments, those made in discharge of the principal and interest of the national debt, will show that the public faith has been exactly maintained. To these will be added an estimate of appropriations necessary for the ensuing year. This last will of

## Library of Congress

course be effected by such modifications of the systems of expense, as you shall think proper to adopt.

A statement has been formed by the secretary of war, on mature consideration, of all the posts and stations where garrisons will be expedient, and of the number of men requisite for each garrison. The whole amount is considerably short of the present 337 military establishment. For the surplus no particular use can be pointed out. For defence against invasion, their number is as nothing; nor is it conceived needful or safe that a standing army should be kept up in time of peace for that purpose. Uncertain as we must ever be of the particular point in our circumference where an enemy may choose to invade us, the only force which can be ready at every point and competent to oppose them, is the body of neighboring citizens as formed into a militia. On these, collected from the parts most convenient, in numbers proportioned to the invading foe, it is best to rely, not only to meet the first attack, but if it threatens to be permanent, to maintain the defence until regulars may be engaged to relieve them. These considerations render it important that we should at every session continue to amend the defects which from time to time show themselves in the laws for regulating the militia, until they are sufficiently perfect. Nor should we now or at any time separate, until we can say we have done everything for the militia which we could do were an enemy at our door.

The provisions of military stores on hand will be laid before you, that you may judge of the additions still requisite.

With respect to the extent to which our naval preparations should be carried, some difference of opinion may be expected to appear; but just attention to the circumstances of every part of the Union will doubtless reconcile all. A small force will probably continue to be wanted for actual service in the 338 Mediterranean. Whatever annual sum beyond that you may think proper to appropriate to naval preparations, would perhaps be better employed in providing those articles which may be kept without waste or consumption, and be in readiness when any exigence calls them into use. Progress has been made, as will

## Library of Congress

appear by papers now communicated, in providing materials for seventy-four gun ships as directed by law.

How far the authority given by the legislature for procuring and establishing sites for naval purposes has been perfectly understood and pursued in the execution, admits of some doubt. A statement of the expenses already incurred on that subject, shall be laid before you. I have in certain cases suspended or slackened these expenditures, that the legislature might determine whether so many yards are necessary as have been contemplated. The works at this place are among those permitted to go on; and five of the seven frigates directed to be laid up, have been brought and laid up here, where, besides the safety of their position, they are under the eye of the executive administration, as well as of its agents and where yourselves also will be guided by your own view in the legislative provisions respecting them which may from time to time be necessary. They are preserved in such condition, as well the vessels as whatever belongs to them, as to be at all times ready for sea on a short warning. Two others are yet to be laid up so soon as they shall have received the repairs requisite to put them also into sound condition. As a superintending 339 officer will be necessary at each yard, his duties and emoluments, hitherto fixed by the executive, will be a more proper subject for legislation. A communication will also be made of our progress in the execution of the law respecting the vessels directed to be sold.

The fortifications of our harbors, more or less advanced, present considerations of great difficulty. While some of them are on a scale sufficiently proportioned to the advantages of their position, to the efficacy of their protection, and the importance of the points within it, others are so extensive, will cost so much in their first erection, so much in their maintenance, and require such a force to garrison them, as to make it questionable what is best now to be done. A statement of those commenced or projected, of the expenses already incurred, and estimates of their future cost, so far as can be foreseen, shall be laid

## Library of Congress

before you, that you may be enabled to judge whether any attention is necessary in the laws respecting this subject.

Agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and navigation, the four pillars of our prosperity, are the most thriving when left most free to individual enterprise. Protection from casual embarrassments, however, may sometimes be seasonably interposed. If in the course of your observations or inquiries they should appear to need any aid within the limits of our constitutional powers, your sense of their importance is a sufficient assurance they will occupy your attention. We cannot, indeed, but all feel an anxious solicitude for the difficulties under which our carrying 340 trade will soon be placed. How far it can be relieved, otherwise than by time, is a subject of important consideration.

The judiciary system of the United States, and especially that portion of it recently erected, will of course present itself to the contemplation of Congress; and that they may be able to judge of the proportion which the institution bears to the business it has to perform, I have caused to be procured from the several States, and now lay before Congress, an exact statement of all the causes decided since the first establishment of the courts, and of those which were depending when additional courts and judges were brought in to their aid.

And while on the judiciary organization, it will be worthy your consideration, whether the protection of the inestimable institution of juries has been extended to all the cases involving the security of our persons and property. Their impartial selection also being essential to their value, we ought further to consider whether that is sufficiently secured in those States where they are named by a marshal depending on executive will, or designated by the court or by officers dependent on them.

I cannot omit recommending a revisal of the laws on the subject of naturalization. Considering the ordinary chances of human life, a denial of citizenship under a residence of fourteen years is a denial to a great proportion of those who ask it, and controls a policy pursued from their first settlement by many of these States, and still believed of

## Library of Congress

consequence to their prosperity. And shall we refuse the 341 unhappy fugitives from distress that hospitality which the savages of the wilderness extended to our fathers arriving in this land? Shall oppressed humanity find no asylum on this globe? The constitution, indeed, has wisely provided that, for admission to certain offices of important trust, a residence shall be required sufficient to develop character and design. But might not the general character and capabilities of a citizen be safely communicated to every one manifesting a *bona fide* purpose of embarking his life and fortunes permanently with us? with restrictions, perhaps, to guard against the fraudulent usurpation of our flag; an abuse which brings so much embarrassment and loss on the genuine citizen, and so much danger to the nation of being involved in war, that no endeavor should be spared to detect and suppress it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Jefferson MSS. is the following note, evidently a rough basis of this clause:

“recommend a revisal of the law respecting citizens.

“every man has a right to live some where on the earth, and if some where, no one society has a greater right than another to exclude him. Becoming indeed a member of any society, he is bound to conform to the rules formed by the Majority, but has the Majority a right to subject him to unequal rules, to rules from which they exempt themselves. I hazard these suggestions for the consid'n of Congress. “the only rightful line is between transient persons & bona fide citizens.”

These, fellow citizens, are the matters respecting the state of the nation, which I have thought of importance to be submitted to your consideration at this time. Some others of less moment, or not yet ready for communication, will be the subject of separate messages. I am happy in this opportunity of committing the arduous affairs of our government 342 to the collected wisdom of the Union. Nothing shall be wanting on my part to inform, as far as in my power, the legislative judgment, nor to carry that judgment into faithful execution. The prudence and temperance of your discussions will promote, within

## Library of Congress

your own walls, that conciliation which so much befriends national conclusion; and by its example will encourage among our constituents that progress of opinion which is tending to unite them in object and in will. That all should be satisfied with any one order of things is not to be expected, but I indulge the pleasing persuasion that the great body of our citizens will cordially concur in honest and disinterested efforts, which have for their object to preserve the general and State governments in their constitutional form and equilibrium; to maintain peace abroad, and order and obedience to the laws at home; to establish principles and practices of administration favorable to the security of liberty and prosperity, and to reduce expenses to what is necessary for the useful purposes of government.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of this message, Jefferson wrote to Dupont de Nemours:

“ Washington, Jan. 18, 1802.

“ Dear Sir,—It is rare I can indulge myself in the luxury of philosophy. Your letters give me a few of those delicious moments. Placed as you are in a great commercial town, with little opportunity of discovering the dispositions of the country portions of our citizens, I do not wonder at your doubts whether they will generally and sincerely concur in the sentiments and measures developed in my message of the 7th Jany [ sic]. But from 40. years of intimate conversation with the agricultural inhabitants of my country, I can pronounce them as different from those of the cities, as those of any two nations known. The sentiments of the former can in no degree be inferred from those of the latter. You have spoken a profound truth in these words, ‘Il y a dans les etats unis un bon sens silencieux, un esprit de justice froide, qui lorsqu’il est question d’emettre un vote comme les bavardages de ceux qui font les habiles.’ A plain country farmer has written lately a pamphlet on our public affairs. His testimony of the sense of the country is the best which can be produced of the justness of your observation. His words are ‘The tongue of man is not his whole body. So, in this case, the noisy part of the community was not all the body politic. During the career of fury and contention (in 1800) the sedate, grave part of the people were still; hearing all, and judging for themselves, what method to take, when the constitutional time

## Library of Congress

of action should come, the exercise of the right of suffrage.' The majority of the present legislature are in unison with the agricultural part of our citizens, and you will see that there is nothing in the message, to which they do not accord. Some things may perhaps be left undone from motives of compromise for a time, and not to alarm by too sudden a reformation, but with a view to be resumed at another time. I am perfectly satisfied the effect of the proceedings of this session of congress will be to consolidate the great body of well meaning citizens together, whether federal or republican, heretofore called. I do not mean to include royalists or priests. Their opposition is immovable. But they will be *vox et preterea nihil*, leaders without followers. I am satisfied that within one year from this time were an election to take place between two candidates merely republican and federal, where no personal opposition existed against either, the federal candidate would not get the vote of a single elector in the U. S. I must here again appeal to the testimony of my farmer, who says The great body of the people are one in sentiment. If the federal party and the republican party, should each of them choose a convention to frame a constitution of government or a code of laws, there would be no radical difference in the results of the two conventions. This is most true. The body of our people, tho' divided for a short time by an artificial panic, and called by different names, have ever had the same object in view, to wit, the maintenance of a federal, republican government, and have never ceased to be all federalists, all republicans: still excepting the noisy band of royalists inhabiting cities chiefly, and priests both of city and country. When I say that in an election between a republican and federal candidate, free from personal objection, the former would probably get every vote, I must not be understood as placing myself in that view. It was my destiny to come to the government when it had for several years been committed to a particular political sect, to the absolute and entire exclusion of those who were in sentiment with the body of the nation. I found the country entirely in the enemies hands. It was necessary to dislodge some of them. Out of many thousands of officers in the U. S. 9. only have been removed for political principle, and 12. for delinquencies chiefly pecuniary. The whole herd have squealed out, as if all their throats were cut. These acts of justice few as they have been, have raised great personal objections to me, of which a new character would

## Library of Congress

be [ *faded*]. When this government was first established, it was possible to have kept it going on true principles, but the contracted, English, half-lettered ideas of Hamilton, destroyed that hope in the bud. We can pay off his debt in 15. years: but we can never get rid of his financial system. It mortifies me to be strengthening principles which I deem radically vicious, but this vice is entailed on us by the first error. In other parts of our government I hope we shall be able by degrees to introduce sound principles and make them habitual. What is practicable must often controul what is pure theory: and the habits of the governed determine in a great degree what is practicable. Hence the same original principles, modified in practice according to the different habits of different nations, present governments of very different aspects. The same principles reduced to forms of practice accommodated to our habits, and put into forms accommodated to the habits of the French nation would present governments very unlike each other. I have no doubt but that a great man, thoroughly knowing the habits of France, might so accommodate to them the principles of free government as to enable them to live free. But in the hands of those who have not this *coup d'œil*, many unsuccessful experiments I fear are yet to be tried before they will settle down in freedom and tranquility. I applaud therefore your determination to remain here, tho' for yourself and the adults of your family the dissimilitude of our manners and the difference of tongue will be sources of real unhappiness. Yet less so than the horrors and dangers which France would present to you, and as to those of your family still in infancy, they will be formed to the circumstances of the country, and will, I doubt not, be happier here than they could have been in Europe under any circumstances. Be so good as to make my respectful salutations acceptable to Made. Dupont, and all of your family and to be assured yourself of my constant and affectionate esteem."

343