

DE GRUYTER

*D. Elwood Dunn (Ed.)*

# THE ANNUAL MESSAGES OF THE PRESIDENTS OF LIBERIA 1848–2010

STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESSES TO  
THE NATIONAL LEGISLATURE



The Annual Messages of the Presidents of  
Liberia 1848–2010



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Liberia 1848–2010  
State of the Nation Addresses to the National  
Legislature

From Joseph Jenkins Roberts to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Edited and compiled by  
D. Elwood Dunn

Volume 1

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Photograph on the cover:  
The Capitol in Monrovia, home of the National Legislature of Liberia.

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IN MEMORIAM

Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman (1926–2004)

and

George Flamma Sherman (1913–1999)

Mentors and Colleagues



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## Preface

My interest in the annual messages of the Presidents of Liberia to the Legislature was first sparked in 1994 during a visit to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in Washington, D.C. Though I had gone in search of material on Liberia-United States relations, I was fascinated by the scope, and in some instances, depth of historical content as I perused a large number of presidential addresses of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In time I would move on to examine a variety of other sources in my quest to compile as complete a set as possible of these important state papers. What follows, then, are verbatim reproductions, with light corrections, as acquired from NARA (American National Archives), the Center for National Documents and Records Agency (Liberian National Archives), the Library of Congress, and a variety of other sources.<sup>1</sup>

Several persons contributed time and effort to the collection of these messages. I gratefully acknowledge all of them for the assistance rendered. I must, however, make special mention of the following individuals whose help was crucial to the project. Angel Batiste of the Library of Congress located a number of the messages. Verlon Stone and his staff at The Liberian Collections Project at Indiana University reproduced from their collections, especially the Svend Holsoe sub-collection, a number of the messages.

Sewanee: the University of the South provided significant support through its interlibrary loan system. Sewanee's Print Services, led by Minnie Smith Tate and Tammy Elliott, scanned and typed, sorted and organized at early stages, while Tracey Williams Omohundro handled the concluding crucial phase of proofreading and related work. Kevin Reynolds and Sewanee's Dupont Library literally led the charge in locating what was first a good number of missing messages and may very well be responsible for the number dwindling down to nine missing messages. Laverne Page of the Library of Congress was also helpful with tracking down missing messages. I regret exceedingly my inability to locate all of the messages, though I am gratified that 147 annual and special presidential messages – a couple of them message summaries – were in fact located. Perhaps a future compiler will succeed in uncovering what I failed to locate as this effort is carried forward.

D. Elwood Dunn  
Sewanee, Tennessee  
July 2010

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1 American Colonization Society Papers (African Repository and Colonial Journal)  
Liberian Collections Project (various sub-collections)  
Collection of C. Abayomi Cassell Private Papers (African Imprint Library);  
Collection of the Louis Arthur Grimes Papers (African Imprint Library);  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library  
Willie Givens, editor, *Liberia: The Road To Democracy Under the Leadership of Samuel Kanyon Doe: The policies and public statements of Dr. Samuel Kanyon Doe*, Kensal Press, 1986; Jonathan Taylor, editor, *Towards Unity and Progress: Collected Speeches, Pronouncements and Declarations by Dr. Samuel K. Doe, President of the Republic of Liberia*, Kensal Press, 1990; E.Reginald Townsend, editor, *President William V.S. Tubman of Liberia Speaks: Major Addresses, Messages, Speeches and Statements, 1944–1959*, Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, 1969; E. Reginald Townsend & Abeodu Bowen Jones, editors, *The Official Papers of William V.S. Tubman, President of the Republic of Liberia, Covering Addresses, Messages, Speeches & Statements 1960–1967; Presidential Papers, Documents, Diary & Record of Activities of the Chief Executive, 1972–1977*, 4 volumes, Press Division, The Executive Mansion; Republic of Liberia, *Presidential Papers: policies, speeches, statements and record of activities of the Chief Executive ... His Excellency Dahkpannah Dr. Charles Ghankay Taylor, August 2, 1997 – December 31, 1998*, vol. 1, edited by Reginald B. Goodridge, Sr., Public Affairs at the Executive Mansion.



## Introduction

*To me, any attempt to mobilize the masses in revolutionary Liberia for a better society must begin with a clear definition of the mission of the nation, its purpose, and its hopes for the future being clearly formulated. Such clarification can only be meaningful when the history of the nation is heard with objectivity. Each tomorrow implies a today and each today a yesterday.*<sup>1</sup>

Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman  
First Woman President of the University of Liberia (1978–1984)

Annual Messages of the Presidents of Liberia to the National Legislature were originally mandated by Article III, Section I of the founding Constitution of 1847 which states: “[The President] shall inform the Legislature from time to time, of the condition of the Republic, and recommend any public measures for their adoption, which he may think expedient.” Annual Messages have since 1986 been mandated by Chapter VI, Article 58 of the Constitution in force of 1986 which reads: “The President shall, on the fourth working Monday in January of each year, present the administration’s legislative program for the ensuing session, and shall once a year report to the Legislature on the state of the Republic. In presenting the economic condition of the republic the report shall cover expenditure as well as income.”

President Arthur Barclay offered in his 1909 message this interpretation of the constitutional mandate: “It was not without direct intention that the framers of our Constitution arranged that the coordinate branches of Government assemble at the end of each year at the National Capital. The design of the Constitution is to ensure on the one hand, a statement of the year’s happenings, and of work done, and on the other, conferences upon, and agreements with respect to the policy to be followed and the efforts to be put forth during the ensuing year. For, every act of a Government is tentative, and is subject to constant modification and change as the varying circumstances of the times make necessary.”

Former University of Liberia President Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman admonished in the euphoria of the April 1980 coup d’etat that history not be jettisoned, for no people can minimize the impact of the past on the present and future. The renowned African scholar, Professor Ali Mazrui has written much about the triple heritage of Africans or their experiences with their own traditional, the Islamic and the Western worlds.<sup>2</sup> Liberia cannot be an exception. The inspiration for compiling these messages draws much from these perspectives and sentiments. In the long and often tortuous challenge of forging a nation, presidents responded to the experiences gleaned as much from pre-Liberia circumstances as from those associated with the early colonial settlement that initiated the modern Liberian state.

Since the 1848 meeting of the first session of the first Legislature, through many permutations, to the sixth session of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, annual messages have been regularly delivered at approximately a year’s interval. Out of a total of 154 messages delivered by twenty-four presidents since the first in January 1848, we have located 141 that are included

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1 “Mobilizing the Masses in Revolutionary Liberia For a Better society” by Dr. Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, National Workshop As Part of The National Redemption Day Celebration Sponsored by the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism, Monrovia City Hall, April 1–4, 1981. 12pp. (editor’s file).

2 Ali A. Mazrui, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, Little Brown & Co. 1986

in this compilation. President Roberts delivered eight in his first term, and President Benson delivered eight. Warner delivered four, and Payne delivered two in his first term. Roye and Smith each delivered one message. Roberts delivered four in his second presidency, and Payne delivered two in his own second presidency. Gardner delivered five, and Russell delivered a single message. Johnson delivered eight, and Cheeseman four. Coleman delivered five, while Gibson delivered three. Arthur Barclay delivered eight, as did Howard. King delivered 11 and Edwin Barclay delivered 14. Tubman delivered 27, and Tolbert 10. Doe delivered four, and Taylor delivered six. President Blah delivered no message. President Sirleaf has so far delivered five messages.

Included in the collection are five non-annual or special messages to the Legislature, another six located but not included because of space limitations. These are more samples, as special messages constitute a pattern of presidential communication with the Legislature. Each special message has an important bearing on the state of the nation during the concerned presidential or leadership term. Benson was perhaps the first president to address a message to an extra session of the Legislature. On April 6, 1857, he reported on the implementation of a Legislative Act titled "An Act providing for the relief of the State of Maryland in Liberia." This was in reference to civil conflict within the independent colonial settlement of Maryland, the role Liberia played in addressing that conflict, and the subsequent decision that resulted in Maryland joining the Liberian state. President Benson sent a second special message to the Legislature pursuant to House of Representative Resolution of January 3, 1859—"Resolved, that the President of Liberia, be requested, and he is hereby requested, if not incompatible with the public interest, to furnish for the information of the House, a detailed statement of the facts in connection with the mutiny on board of the French emigration Ship 'Regina Coeli,' together with all and every other information, relating to the French system of emigration as prosecuted on the Liberian Coast."

President Howard called a special session of the Legislature on March 10, 1915 to report on extraordinary financial matters occasioned by World War I and its impact on Liberian commerce, including the merchant marine services of Britain and Germany. President Edwin Barclay addressed to an extraordinary session of the Legislature on July 18, 1932 a message in reaction to the following bearing on the welfare of the state: granting special powers to the president to maintain public order; considering League of Nations Plan of Assistance; considering budgetary and financial matters; and approving measures for economic and financial welfare of the population.

One of Tubman's messages to extraordinary sessions of the Legislature is included, the second located but not included. The first of June 13, 1955 was a detailed response to a "Bill of Exceptions" addressed to the Legislature by former President Edwin Barclay challenging the results of the presidential election that year. The second message of July 11, 1955, reported on an attempted assassination of the President by alleged plotters associated with the opposition party that Barclay led. Included as well are two special messages that Tolbert addressed to the Legislature, the first of April 17, 1979 reported on the civil unrest of April 14, 1979, and the second on March 10, 1980 titled "Attempt made by the Progressive People's Party to overthrow the Government of the Republic of Liberia." The Tolbert government was itself overthrown about a month later, on April 12, 1980.

Doe's own first "special message", not included, was addressed to the nation. It was to announce that he and his military associates had overthrown the Liberian government and installed themselves as a Peoples' Redemption Council (PRC) government. His second "special message" was addressed to an interim legislature, the Interim National Assembly (INA) that sat before the formally established Legislature in January 1986. Doe was reporting in November 1985 on a major attempt by former junta colleague, General Thomas Qui-

wonkpa, to topple his military government in the aftermath of controversial elections in October 1985. Likewise, Taylor communicated a special message on February 14, 2002 reporting on gathering insurgencies that contributed importantly in forcing his resignation from the presidency the following year.

Though a few messages were delivered to legislatures during the four interregnums in the constitutional order – October 26–November 4, 1871 (civilian executive rule), 1980–1986 (military rule), 1990–1997 (civil war), and 2003–2006 (interim between war’s end and democratic elections) – most of those messages are not included in this compilation because the leaders delivering them did not come to power through constitutional means. The first interim was made necessary by the first coup d’etat of 1871 when President Roye was overthrown in a civilian revolt against the government. An executive committee of three conducted the affairs of state until the vice president was located and installed in constitutional succession.

The second interregnum came with the overthrow in April 1980 of President Tolbert by a military junta, the PRC. The Council was succeeded in 1983 by a junta-created INA. Elections were held in 1985 under a new Constitution. Samuel K. Doe, declared winner of the election, was inaugurated president in January 1986.

The third interregnum was occasioned by the initiation in 1989/90 of an insurgency, led by Charles M.G. Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), which resulted in 14 years of civil war. Doe was killed in September 1990, and various political players installed a series of interim arrangements. Among those who led these arrangements were Amos C. Sawyer (1990–1994), Charles M.G. Taylor (1990–1994 concurrently), David Dower Kpormakpor (1994–1995), Wilton Sengbe Sankawulo (1995–1996), and Ruth Sondo Perry (1996–1997).

A fourth interregnum came about when President Taylor was pressured in August 2003 by internal and external (largely American) forces to relinquish power. He inducted into office his vice president, Moses Z. Blah, before being escorted into exile in Nigeria by a phalanx of African presidents that included Obasanjo of Nigeria, Kufour of Ghana, Mbeki of South Africa, and Chissano of Mozambique. Blah briefly then succeeded to the presidency pending the implementation of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) brokered in Ghana by Liberian stakeholders and international partners. The CPA enabled Charles Gyude Bryant to assume a two-year interim chairmanship of the state, 2003–2006. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who won the presidential election of 2005 was installed as President of Liberia on January 16, 2006.

The significance or usefulness of the annual messages is their value for historical research. Since emergence from a quarter century of instability and war, scholars have dwelt on Liberia’s commonalities with countries that have experienced civil war. The notion of historical and societal uniqueness of post-conflict countries is gaining currency to complement the commonalities. The annual messages of the presidents represent raw material available to historians and other social scientists interested in capturing a more complete picture and deeper understanding of the Liberian experience, or at least the antecedents to civil war.

Given the peculiarities of Liberian history, the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century presidential messages tended to monopolize perspectives on the state of the nation since consistent political opposition and serious scholarly accounts were few. Even so, it is possible to compare presidential accounts with those of such early thinkers and writers as Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832–1912), Alexander Crummell (1819–1898), T. McCants Stewart (1854–1923), Benjamin J.K. Anderson (1834–1910), George Seymour (1819–1860), Varney J. Fahnbulleh (1892–1975), Gregory T. Bedell (1832–1897), Edwin Gyude Hodge (1897–1980?), Plenyoy-

no Gbe Wolo (1883–1940), Raymond Leslie Buell (1896–1946), Abayomi W. Karna (1883–1951), Monday B. Abasiatti (University of Uyo, Nigeria), Albert Porte (1906–1986) and J. Gus Liebenow (1925–1993), among a host of others. There were as well challenges to presidential perspectives by an independent media that Carl Patrick Burrowes has well documented in his book, *Power and Press Freedom in Liberia, 1830–1970* (Africa World Press, 2004).

President Johnson noted approvingly the publication in 1885 of the Belgian Henri Emmanuel Wanwermans' *Liberia: histoire de la fondation d'un etat negre libre* ("Liberia: history of the founding of a free negro state"), Brussels: Institut National De Geographie. Not so with President King who contested the account of Maurice Delafosse's *Un etat negre: la Republique de Liberia* ("A black state: the Republic of Liberia"). Delafosse was a former French consular officer in Monrovia. President King equally disagreed with the perspective of Raymond Leslie Buell in the American author's account of the arrangements that led to the beginnings of the Firestone business in Liberia. But King was in agreement with Buell as the American writer pointed out a forced labor practice in African colonies of the epoch. President Edwin Barclay was broadly dismissive of his foreign and domestic critics, as was President Tubman in the notable case of *Growth Without Development: An Economic Survey of Liberia*, the book written by a team of Northwestern University professors in the 1960s and banned from circulation in Liberia.<sup>3</sup>

There was a marked increase in the tempo of competing perspectives on the state of the state with the rise of nationalism and decolonization in Africa. And while several Liberian and foreign scholars were clearly in evidence to contest the presidential perspective, this did not remove the need for the perspective of the official office holder, privy to things confidential of both a domestic and foreign character. Though such perspectives may have at times been circumscribed, they nevertheless provide an important vantage point. They remain relevant even in a post-civil war political climate of heightened political contestations with a multiplicity of formal and informal dissenting voices.

The usefulness of the messages may be noted as follows:

1. A significant body of state papers, they represent Liberian political literature that illuminates the past;
2. They reveal presidential character, and perhaps point to the need for serious biographies of all the presidents, to hopefully complement those done already by A. Doris Banks Henries ("The Life of Joseph Jenkins Roberts, 1809–1876") and Svend Holsoe (an unpublished manuscript on the life of Edward James Roye), as well as pending biographies of "African-American Presidents" of Liberia currently being researched by David Smith, Jr. of Georgia State University.
3. They reveal as well presidential characteristics as they point to the need for a serious study of the Liberian presidency, its origins, its evolution, and its future prospects.
4. They aid in contextualizing the history of Liberia as the environments of the delivery of the messages speak to the tenor of the times.

---

3 Authors are Robert W. Clower, George Dalton, Mitchell Harowitz and A.A. Walters (with the assistance of Robert P. Armstrong, Johnette Cole, Robert Cole and George Lamson). Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1966. 385 pp. There is a full account of the saga involving the Liberian president, U.S. government officials, officials of Northwestern, and officials of the American Association of University Professors. See my *Liberia and the United States During the Cold War: Limits of Reciprocity*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009

Though the annual messages represent political literature from a single African country, it bears repeating Liberia's uniqueness, even as the commonalities with other African countries remain evident. Liberia was for long one of perhaps only four independent states in Africa, and the only African state whose independence was never interrupted. The presidential messages speak to how Liberia addressed the lingering transatlantic slave trade in the 1820s and the decades that followed, how Liberia interacted with European legitimate traders and subsequent colonial neighbors, how Liberia addressed its own internal challenge of nation building, and also how the country related to the rise and consolidation of nationalism and decolonization in Africa and elsewhere. Liberia is also like Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, the states emerging from the former Yugoslavia in that they are all countries recovering from civil wars. And for a variety of reasons they are all objects of scholarly inquiry. The government and non-governmental organizations that are currently engaged in Liberia, and are likely to remain engaged for many years into the future, should be interested in knowing the historic roots of conflict as efforts are made to address their contemporary manifestations. The past weighs heavily here. The presidential messages help illuminate that past.

The messages reveal presidential character. Through them one acquires at least a glimpse, perhaps more, of the 23 males and sole female who have held the office of president of Liberia. Founding Father Roberts exudes pioneering leadership qualities, as do a few others of the early presidents. Many came to the presidency from Christian religious careers. Roye, perhaps the first formally college educated, and former Chief Justice of Liberia's Supreme Court, was an independently successful businessman before he sought the presidency. The vice president who succeeded him was a practicing physician.

Noted West Indian immigrants who arrived in Liberia in 1865 produced two highly educated presidents – Arthur Barclay who earned a bachelor's degree from Liberia College in 1873 and became president barely two decades after reaching Liberia, and Edwin Barclay, a Liberian-born nephew, who also received a B.A. degree in 1903 from Liberia College. The senior Barclay is architect of state policy of expansion from the coast to the interior of what became Liberia, while the junior Barclay's policies addressed the difficult aftermath of the forced labor scandal that brought down his predecessor, President King.

William V.S. Tubman's 27-year tenure is the longest so far in the history of Liberia. Though an able administrator, he was a crafty politician who governed autocratically. He left a legacy that still appears to be engrained in the national political culture. More recent presidents have had to address the challenge of change toward democratization. The challenge is ongoing. Taylor and Sirleaf are the first two presidents who, as born Liberians, acquired higher educations abroad in the U.S. They each are culturally hybrid Liberians, Taylor a blend of American immigrant and Gola ancestry, and Sirleaf a more complex blending of Kru, Gola and German ancestries.

Among presidential characteristics are the following: Roberts was the first "African American" president of Liberia. Russell was the first former slave president. Roye was the first Liberian president to meet with his American counterpart. He visited with U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant at the Executive Mansion in Washington DC on September 8, 1870. Roye was also the first opposition figure to defeat an incumbent, and was as well the first overthrown president. Tolbert and Doe met a similar fate. Payne was the first president to be impeached (1877) though not removed from office. Gardner was the first president to resign his office, as was Coleman who resigned under pressure. King and Taylor would each later suffer a similar fate. Cheeseman was the first president to die in office (November 12, 1896). Tubman, Tolbert, and Doe also died as sitting presidents.

James S. Smith was the first vice president to succeed to the presidency. The existence of his sole annual message in which he details the circumstances of his predecessor's overthrow and his succession to the presidency establishes with finality that he was the sixth president of Liberia.<sup>4</sup>

Gibson was the first secretary of state to succeed to the presidency. King was the next president after Roye to meet with his American counterpart as he visited with U.S. President Warren G. Harding at the White House on April 15, 1921. Edwin Barclay again met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the White House in May 1943 following their first meeting in Liberia when Roosevelt visited in connection with the prosecution of World War II. Having earlier accompanied Barclay to Washington as president-elect, Tubman when president in his own right, visited at the White House with U.S. Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower (1954), John F. Kennedy (1961), and Lyndon B. Johnson (1968). Doe was the first president from the ranks of the indigenous majority population, and he met at the White House with U.S. President Ronald Reagan (1982). Only Taylor in recent times never met with his American counterpart.

Blah is the only president who did not deliver an annual message or some similar address to the Legislature or the nation. This was not because of duration but circumstances, as Smith's time in office was shorter than Blah's, yet Smith delivered an annual message to the Legislature. Sirleaf is the lone woman president so far in the history of Liberia.

The final of the noted usefulness of the messages is that they contribute to contextualizing the history of governance in Liberia. The presidencies of Roberts through H.R.W. Johnson set the pace of governing enclave settlements in the midst of multiple indigenous polities. Two dissimilar worldviews soon confronted and struggled for pre-eminence. European colonization and the concomitant continued resistance of indigenous polities ensued as the Liberian state sought to forge ahead. The period covered goes from Johnson through Edwin Barclay. Then followed Liberia's reaction to the emergence and consolidation of African nationalism, the independence movement, and the challenge of a Liberian internal renaissance. Tubman, Tolbert, and Doe faced these challenges. The global context of the Cold War is relevant here. As the global conflict ebbed, Liberia was plunged into civil war, and the violence soon engulfed the West African sub region. Though begun under Doe, it was Taylor who was at center stage at this time of massive upheavals. Post-civil war reconstruction and unfinished past challenges bring us to the Sirleaf administration, and her messages reflect these challenges and political contestations.

The annual messages were delivered to a variety of venues including the Hall of Representatives (notably in 1861, 1895, and 1910), the Senate Chamber (1894), and the Executive Pavilion (1951). With the Legislature meeting for the first time in 1957 in the current Capitol Building, that year's message was the first delivered in the building. The E.J. Roye headquarters of the former ruling True Whig Party became the venue for the delivery of all of Tolbert's messages until January 1977 when he for the first time addressed legislators in a re-modeled Capitol Building.

There was irregularity in delivery time – some at start of, others at end of the calendar year, yet others in middle of the year. These are not in reference to the special messages as by their nature they came in response to special circumstances. The 1910 message was misdated as December 13, 1911 when it should have been Dec. 12, 1910. The 1954 message was delivered January 21, 1955 and carries the printing date of January 25, 1955. So too was

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4 See William E. Allen and D. Elwood Dunn, "Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is The Twenty Fourth, NOT Twenty Third President of Liberia: A New Interpretative History."... *Liberian Studies Journal*, vol. 33, No. 1, 2008, pp64–68

the message of 1961 which was erroneously dated January 9, 1961 when it should have been December 9, 1961. The message of 1917 was misprinted as 1918, thus rendering the latter a missing message.

Tolbert made an attempt to regularize message delivery schedule. He refers in his 1972 message, delivered January 1973, to the need for "Legislation authorizing the restructuring of our annual reporting period to conform to the fiscal year so as to provide a more accurate and comprehensive picture of the activities of government. It is in this context that the present message includes the period January 1 to December 31, 1972."

Yet deviations followed even if one allows for the shift from the 1847 to the 1986 Constitution, as when Doe delivered in Feb. 1990 his annual message covering the year 1989.

The messages as well reveal some little known but important facts. For example, that there was a law department at Liberia College, and that a class of lawyers was graduated in 1903 (Gibson's 1903 Message). Howard points out in his 1917 Message that until 1908 the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was the only lawyer on the highest court of the land. And Tubman relates in his 1969 Message the following which should be understood in light of the so-called "rice riots" of April 14, 1979 that marked the beginning of serious social unrest and political instability, culminating in civil war: "The Secretary [of Agriculture] recommended that a certain small amount be added to the ceiling price of rice to encourage the farmers to produce more rice. I rejected this proposal instantly because for more than one reason it would be unfair and inappropriate to place a tax on the principal article of food of the people of the country among whom are some of the poorest, even poorer than the farmers, to benefit the relatively few farmers. I therefore told the Secretary of Agriculture that funds for the expansion of agriculture must be found elsewhere."

### Problem of History in Liberia and Problem of Liberian History:

Though older than most African countries, Liberia is in many respects a microcosm of contemporary Africa, reflecting its indigenous and exogenous experiences. An understudied country, it has of late attracted international attention since joining the ranks of post-civil war societies. In the quest at rebuilding such countries, scholars are increasingly stressing both issues common to all post-war reconstruction as well as the need to appreciate the unique complexities of each national society. The annual state of the nation addresses of the presidents of Liberia, as we have suggested, constitute an important corpus of raw material useful for understanding the country's past.

Inevitably this raises at least two issues – nation-building trajectories since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the more recent challenge of "collapsed states" or "failed states" status.

As regards nation building trajectories, it may be useful to briefly highlight a few of the approaches so far noted in the writing or understanding of Liberian history.

- History informed by the civilizing and christianizing mission. The works of such writers as A. Doris Banks Henries, C. Abayomi Cassell, Ernest J. Yancy and Nathaniel Richardson follow this perspective.
- History as 'Black Colonialism' or "Americo-Liberian repression of indigenous Liberians" is a paradigm largely of foreign historians. Perhaps the Nigerian historian Monday Benson Akpan's (Abasiattai now replaces Akpan) pioneering dissertation ("The African policy of the Liberian settlers, 1842–1932" PhD dissertation, Ibadan Univ., 1968) set the stage for this perspective. The approach posits as evidence indigenous peoples' resistance to Christian mission influence (a worldview) and central state au-

thority. See also Raymond Leslie Buell's *The Native Problem in Africa*. (London, Frank Cass, 1965, vol. I, 1045 pp; vol. II, 1101 pp) which was first published in 1928.

- History as the authentic narrative of each indigenous community including the critical role of oral tradition in historical reconstruction. This is also in reference to a multiplicity of narratives reflecting the nature of indigenous societies, as well as the lived experiences of the Liberian people, severally and individually. Some have suggested this approach especially for societies in conflict or emerging from conflict. A number of general and specific ethnographic studies of Liberia's various indigenous communities reflect well this approach. For the general one might consider Robin Horton's "Stateless societies in the history of West Africa" In *History of West Africa*, edited by J.F.A. Ayayi and Michael Crowder (1976). For highlights of historical work on the indigenous peoples, see the studies of the following researchers: Warren L. d'Azevedo, George E. Brooks, Svend E. Holsoe, Jane J. Martin, Martin J. Ford, Jo Mary Sullivan, S. Jangaba M. Johnson, Joseph M.N. Gbadyu, Paul D. Korvah, Augustine V. Konneh, and Syrulwa Somah. Two sets of bibliographies by Svend Holsoe and this writer, as well as issues of the *Liberian Studies Journal* contain a record of research conducted so far on the ethnic groups of Liberia. Linguists have played a role in the classification of such groups, pointing out that Liberia's indigenous languages fall under the Niger-Congo family of languages. Liberia's Niger-Congo family consists of the *Mande* (Mano, Dan, Vai, Kpelle, Lorma, Bandi, and Mandingo), the *Atlantic* (Gola, Kisi), and the *Kru* (Belle, Bassa-Gbii, Dey-Dewoin, Grebo complex, Krahn, Klao).<sup>5</sup> Other narratives would include the American immigrant group (much work done here but often from narrow perspectives), the Congo-Recaptive immigrant group, the Caribbean immigrant Group, as well as an important hybrid group (varying combinations of existing groups) which has so far received scant, if any, attention in the scholarly and popular literature.
- History as inclusive of pre-Liberian historical experience, and accounting for interaction between native institutions and those of an evolving state. Abayomi Karnga's *The Republic of Liberia*, Liverpool, D.H. Tytre & Co., 1926 establishes this genre.

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5 A sampling of these path-breaking studies include: Joseph M.N Gbadyu, "The Bassaman and the Expansion of the Liberian State: 1847-1912" In: *Anthology of Liberian Literature*, Monrovia: Society of Liberian Authors, 1974, p.135-157; Warren L. d'Azevedo, "Continuity and Integration in Gola Society", PhD thesis, Northwestern University, 1962. 302pp; Jane J. Martin, "The Dual Legacy: Government Authority and Mission Influence Among the Glebo of Eastern Liberia, 1834-1910", PhD thesis, Boston Univ., 1968, 477pp; Svend E. Holsoe, "The Cassava-Leaf People: An Ethnohistorical study of the Vai People with a particular emphasis on the Tewa Chiefdom", PhD thesis, Boston Univ., 1967, 298pp; Richard M. Fulton, "The Kpelle of Liberia: A Study of Political Change in the Liberian Interior", PhD thesis, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, 1969, 285pp; George E. Brooks, Jr. "The Kru Mariner in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: An Historical Compendium", Newark, Delaware: Institute for Liberian Studies, 1972, 121pp (Liberian Studies Monograph Series No. 1); Martin J. Ford, "Ethnic Relations and the Transformation of Leadership among the Dan of Nimba, Liberia", PhD thesis, State Univ. of New York at Binghamton, 1991, 337pp; S. Jangaba M. Johnson, "The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe of Liberia" (Monrovia: Bureau of Folklore, Department of Interior, 1961, 2 vols), "The Traditional History and Folklore of the Glebo Tribe of Liberia (Monrovia: Bureau of Folklore, Interior Department, 1955)", "The Traditional History and Folklore of the Belle Tribe" (*Liberian Studies Journal*, vol 1, no. 2, 1969, p.45-73); Bai T. Moore, *The Senkolo Story: A history (of the Monrovia area) based on Oral Traditions*, Monrovia, Liberia, March 17, 1989, 68+ pp; Augustine V. Konneh, *Religion, Commerce, and the Integration of the Mandingo in Liberia*, Univ. Press of America, 1996; Paul D. Korvah, *The History of the Loma People*, Oakland, CA: OBooks, 1995; and Syrulwa Somah, Nyanyan Gohn-Manan: History, Migration and Government of Bassa, First Book-rev 1/30/03.

- History a product of historiographical analysis of the Liberian past that sees the “nucleating agency” (“emigrant ethnicity”) of the Liberian state as a fluid and changing institution destined to become progressively inclusive. C.E.Zamba Liberty’s 1977 dissertation (Stanford University), and the 1961 Memoir of C.L. Simpson, a former vice president, highlights this perspective.
- History as regime or first republic (1847–1980) experience, pervaded by the civilizing and Christianizing founding myth, and now in need of significant adjustment or redressing. See Joseph Saye Guannu’s series of texts for primary and high schools that take this approach to Liberian history.<sup>6</sup> There also seems to be developing a new genre that focuses interpreting Liberian history in light of the civil war.<sup>7</sup>

There is merit to each of the foregoing approaches to understanding Liberia’s past. They could no doubt be joined fruitfully to a host of other perspectives in the unending quest for overcoming the problem of history in Liberia, or how one might objectively come to understand the country; and the problem of Liberian history, or how to overcome the circumscribed perception or single narrative of Liberian history as a morality tale.

As I have observed elsewhere, the Liberian experiment with nation building might benefit from comparative perspectives, for nation-state building everywhere since the genesis of the modern nation-state in the aftermath of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, has been associated with warfare. This was the experience of European states and subsequently the United States of America. This makes Liberia a part of the wars and nation-making nexus, for like “The War That Made America,” the Liberian experience has been “a tale with many facets ... anger bred retaliation, retaliation bred ambition ... No one was immune ... The results were ... morally ambiguous.”<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the Sokoto Caliphate of West Africa resulted from Usman Dan Fodio’s Jihad of the 1700s in much of what today is Northern Nigeria. Even President Roberts invoked the war and history linkage in his 1850 annual message as he wrote: “Did not the cottages of shepherds rise into imperial Rome, the nursery of heroes – through the invigorating operation of unceasing wars? Trace back, if you please, the history of the United States of America, and see how those States flourished and grew strong under

6 Joseph Saye Guannu, *Liberian History Before 1857* (Exposition Press, 1977), *Liberian History Since 1857* (Exposition Press, 1977), and *An Introduction to Liberian Government: The First Republic and the Peoples Redemption Council* (Exposition Press, 1982). Issue of the number of Liberian republican experiences has not been established beyond passing references as follows: 1847–1980 (first republic), 1986–1990 (second republic), 1997–2003 (third republic), and 2006 to present (fourth republic).

7 For initiating insights into the approaches to the study of Liberian history, see D. Elwood Dunn, compiler, *Liberia*, World Bibliographical Series, Volume 157, CLIO Press, 1995, 207pp. For a compendium of Liberian historical facts, see D. Elwood Dunn, Amos J. Beyan, and Carl Patrick Burrowes, *Historical Dictionary of Liberia*, second edition, African Historical Dictionaries, No. 83, The Scarecrow Press, 2001.

Useful as well to note Liberian historian Abeodu Bowen Jones’ suggested “approaches to the study of Liberian history” in volume I, number I of *The Liberian Historical Review*, 1964, pp 24–30. Labeled what she calls the “monographic approach to the understanding and writing of Liberian history with heavy emphasis on political development and interpretations,” Jones briefly outlines four approaches as follows: the humanitarian, the economic, the diplomatic, and the biographical.

For work on the civil war, see Werner Korte, “Liberia: A Bibliography (1988–1998), with special references to the Civil War,” University of Leipzig Papers on Africa, Politics & Economics 23, 1999, 76pp.

8 See footnote to Jay Winik’s review of Fred Anderson’s “The War That Made America: A Short History of the French and Indian War,” *New York Times Book Review*, January 8, 2008, p 23), and my collective book review of Amos Sawyer’s *Beyond Plunder: Toward Democratic Governance in Liberia* (2005), and Jeremy Levitt’s *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia* (2005) in *The African Studies Review*, volume 49, number 3, December 2006, pp 151–154.

the difficulties that surrounded, and more than once, threatened the annihilation of some of them. But these very difficulties produced an exceedingly enterprising people, and hardy legions that have subsequently proved themselves equal to any emergency.”

I. William Zartman’s edited book *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Lynne Reinner, 1995) includes a chapter on Liberia. Though he is guarded in his definition of collapse and does not suggest total collapse or failure, the failed states discourse has incorporated the Liberian experience. It needs underscoring that in spite of numerous “deadly conflicts” (one source lists 14, another 47)<sup>9</sup> as well as 14 years of full-blown civil war, the center held, the state endured. In the midst of the earlier “Americo-Liberian scramble for the hinterland”, and the more contemporary specters of rival governments, of warlordism, there is no record of secessionist attempt. All aspirants for power targeted the centralized state. All invoked even the problematic national symbols such as the National Flag and ceremonially sang with gusto the National Anthem. All spoke what John Victor Singler has called “Liberian Englishes” (Singler, “On the classification of Liberian Languages”, paper at Liberian Studies Association 42, Temple University, 2010: Author’s file) or, Standard English with a common Liberian accent, the various indigenous languages, notwithstanding.

The foregoing suggests that historical verdict on the state of the Liberian experiment is still pending as a serious comprehensive history of Liberia has yet to be written. When such a history is in fact written, the historians, social scientists and other scholars who must undertake the task may find the presidential messages useful in the manner we have earlier indicated.

In the end, the admonition of the late Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman best encapsulates the practical utility of the annual messages, that the Liberian past is integral to shaping a Liberian present and future. From the presidential reports on the state of the nation can be gleaned vital information about and insights into not only the “what” and “how” of the past of the Liberian state and society, but the “why” as well. Inevitably, a host of other critical perspectives will be required to complete the story of Liberia. For the researcher and policymaker, however, the significance of these primary state papers cannot be overemphasized. They are the critical vantage points of the 23 men and one woman who have placed on history their imprimaturs as they individually and collectively chronicle more than 163 years of the socio-political evolution of a people.

It is hoped that the publication and therefore one-stop availability of these presidential messages to the National Legislature will occasion for researchers and policymakers alike the need to approach an understanding of Liberia from two fundamental perspectives – (1) the contemporary preoccupation with reconstruction following the devastating civil war of 1989–2003, and (2) foundational issues, including the history problematic (unresolved issues of national purpose and identity), indispensable for appreciating what eventuated in the civil war. These two perspectives could contribute immeasurably to pointing the way to a desirable inclusive set of requirements for national renewal that translates into sustainable peace. Such requirements may as well point to the need for re-negotiating protocols between the Liberian state and the society or societies within which it is embedded.

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9 Anthony J. Nimley lists 47, while Jeremy Levitt references 14 “deadly conflicts” in Liberian history. For Nimley, see his multiple volumes *Government and Politics in Liberia*, Nashville, TN: Academic Publishers International, Incorporated, 1991, 3,000 + pp. For Levitt, see his *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, Carolina Academic Press, 2005.

## Brief Biographical Information on the Presidents of Liberia

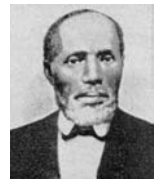
Joseph Jenkins Roberts (1809–1876). First and seventh president of Liberia (1848–1856 & 1872–1876), and last governor of the Commonwealth of Liberia (1843–1848). Freeborn March 15, 1809 in Norfolk, Virginia (USA), he received a liberal education in Virginia and immigrated to Liberia in 1829. Considered the nation's Founding Father, Roberts was also the first President of Liberia College (1862–1875), the country's first higher education institution that was founded in collaboration with the Boston-based Trustees of Donations for Education in Liberia.



Stephen Allen Benson (1816–1865). Second president of Liberia (1856–1864). Freeborn in Baltimore, Maryland (USA) May 21, 1816, he immigrated with parents to Liberia 1822; educated in schools supported by the American Colonization Society (ACS), he joined his family's successful business (sale of coffee and palm oil), and was a Methodist preacher. His political career before his presidency included service as vice president in the 1850s. During his presidency the United States in 1862 formally accorded diplomatic recognition to Liberia, fifteen years after the 1847 declaration of independence.



Daniel Bashiel Warner (1815–1880). Third president of Liberia (1864–1868). Freeborn in Baltimore, Maryland (USA) April 19, 1815; immigrated to Liberia with parents in 1823. Home schooled by his father; became elder in the Presbyterian Church; prior to presidency, was first Speaker of the House of Representatives, twice secretary of state, and the first mayor of Monrovia; elected vice president 1861.



James Spriggs Payne (1819–1882). Fourth and eighth president of Liberia (1868–1870; 1876–1878). Born in Richmond, Virginia (USA) October 15, 1819, he immigrated to Liberia with his parents in 1829. Educated in Monrovia, he was also trained as a Methodist minister and was formally ordained in the USA in 1840. Author of "A Prize Essay on Political Economy, As Adapted to the Republic of Liberia," Monrovia: G. Killian, Printer – Liberia Herald office, 1860, 86pp). Impeached December 1877 by the House of Representatives, though not removed from office. He returned to his Church work following his presidency.



Edward James Roye (1815–1872). Fifth president of Liberia (1870–1871). Freeborn in Newark, Ohio (USA) February 3, 1815. Educated in Newark schools and at Ohio University, he became successful businessman before immigrating to Liberia in 1844 where he continued his business activities before entering politics. He was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court prior to his presidency. He was overthrown in a civilian coup d'état on October 26, 1871.



James Skivring Smith (1825–1892). Sixth president of Liberia (Nov. 1871–January 1872), he succeeded the overthrown Roye following a brief interregnum. Born in Charleston, South Carolina (USA) February 26, 1825. Immigrated to Liberia with his parents in 1832. Studied medicine initially under Dr. James Lugenbeel, a white physician hired by the ACS, and subsequently at the Berkshire Medical Institute in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, graduating 1848. He practiced medicine in Grand Bassa County, serving briefly as Roye’s vice president and subsequently as president for an even briefer period.



Anthony William Gardiner (1820–1885). Ninth president of Liberia (1878–1883). Born in Southampton County, Virginia (USA) January 24, 1820; immigrated to Liberia with his parents in 1830, settling in Grand Bassa County where he studied law under famous Grand Bassa County lawyer, Louis Sheridan. A representative to the 1847 Constitutional Convention, he was Liberia’s first Attorney General, and served as Roberts’ vice-president 1872–1876. Gardiner defeated Payne for the presidency in 1877, and he resigned the presidency in 1883.



Alfred Francis Russell (1817–1884). Tenth president of Liberia (1883–1884). Born a slave on August 25, 1817 in Lexington, Kentucky (USA); immigrated with his family to Liberia in 1833. Educated by missionaries of the Methodist Church, Russell subsequently became a priest in the Episcopal Church. He was Gardner’s vice president and succeeded to the presidency on Gardner’s resignation. He died April 4, 1884 only a few months after leaving the presidency.



Hilary Richard Wright Johnson (1837–1901). Eleventh president of Liberia (1884–1892), he was the first president born on Liberian soil. Born in Monrovia June 1, 1837, he was educated at Alexander High School and Liberia College. He taught at the college upon graduation. Johnson became private secretary to President Benson, and subsequently served as Secretary of State and Secretary of the Interior, before his election to the presidency.



Joseph James Cheeseman (1843–1896). Twelfth president of Liberia (1892–1896). Born in Edina, Grand Bassa County on March 7, 1843, he was educated at Liberia College, and ordained a Baptist minister in 1868, serving the denomination for much of the time thereafter. Prior to his election to the presidency, he was a member of the House of Representatives in the 1870s and Judge of the Superior Court of Grand Bassa County beginning 1884. He died in office as president of Liberia on November 12, 1896.



William David Coleman (1842–1908). Thirteenth president of Liberia (1896–1900). Born a slave in Fayette County, Kentucky (USA), he immigrated to Liberia with his parents in 1853, settling in Clay-Ashland, Montserrado County. Educated at a Presbyterian mission school in Clay-Ashland, he began his career as a carpenter, later becoming a farmer and a merchant, before his entry into politics. He was a member of the House of Representatives for six years, and of the Senate for eight years. He also served as vice president to Cheeseman, succeeding the latter upon his death in office.



Garretson Wilmot Gibson (1832–1910). Fourteenth president of Liberia (1900–1904). Born Talbot County, Maryland (USA), he immigrated to Liberia with his parents in 1835, and the family settled in “Maryland in Africa” (later Maryland County) in 1835. Gibson’s early education was with the mission of the Episcopal Church in Cape Palmas. He subsequently returned to the States where he was a theological student at Virginia Theological Seminary from 1851–1853. A seasoned prelate (and subsequent diplomat), he was ordained to the priesthood of the Episcopal Church, serving as rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Monrovia, and president of Liberia College (1892–1896). Upon the resignation of President Coleman, and due to a vacancy in the vice presidency, Gibson as Secretary of State, became the constitutional successor to the presidency.



Arthur Barclay (1854–1938). Fifteenth president of Liberia (1904–1912). Born Bridgetown, Barbados July 31, 1854, Barclay immigrated with his father to Liberia in 1865. He was educated at Liberia College (B.A., 1873), becoming there a professor, and subsequently studying law at the college. He partnered with Henry W. Grimes a fellow Liberian of West Indian background in establishing what became a famous law firm in Monrovia. His distinguished public career included such cabinet portfolios as postmaster general, secretary of state and secretary of the treasury. Even after leaving the presidency he was often called upon to render public service. Barclay served on the League of Nations commission that investigated charges of improprieties in the government of President King.



Daniel Edward Howard (1861–1935). Sixteenth president of Liberia 1912–1920). Born in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County August 4, 1861, he was educated in Monrovia, eventually enrolling in Liberia College. Before the presidency he was private secretary to President Johnson, superintendent of Montserrado County, and secretary of the treasury (1904–1912).



Charles Dunbar Burgess King (1875–1961). Seventeenth president of Liberia (1920–1930). Born in Monrovia March 12, 1875 of Sierra Leonean parents, he was educated in Monrovia and Freetown, and studied law under Chief Justice F.E.R. Johnson. He practiced law and served in senior government positions before his election to the presidency. During his administration the 1926 Firestone Concession agreement was concluded and the American rubber business installed in Liberia. King was forced to resign his office following internationally determined evidence of serious violations of human rights in which his government was complicit.



Edwin James Barclay (1882–1955). Eighteenth president of Liberia (1930–1944). Born Brewerville, Montserrado County, on January 5, 1882, of West Indian parents, he was educated at Liberia College (B.A., 1903). Barclay served as a judge and attorney general before being named secretary of state. Barclay succeeded to the presidency following the forced resignation of President King. The circumstances of Barclay’s succession remain historically unclear, given that he appeared not to be in the line of constitutional succession. The U.S. Embassy in Monrovia raised the issue in a series of diplomatic correspondence in the 1930s, and President Tubman raised it in political exchanges during the 1955 presidential election.



William Vacanarat Shadrach Tubman (1895–1971). Nineteenth president of Liberia (1944–1971). Born Harper, Maryland County on November 29, 1895, he was educated at the Methodist Cape Palmas Seminary, and studied law under renowned Attorney Monroe Cummings. He served in the Senate prior to his appointment in 1937 as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia. He left the Bench to seek the presidency, which he won in 1943. Tubman was the longest-serving president.



William Richard Tolbert, Jr. (1913–1980). Twentieth president of Liberia (1971–1980). Born in Bensonville, Montserrado County May 13, 1913, he was educated at Crummell Memorial Hall High School and at Liberia College (B.A., 1934). He entered a public career early with his election to the House of Representatives in 1943. It was from the House that he was invited to serve as Tubman's running mate in the election of 1951. First elected vice president that year, he successively served in that position for almost 20 years, succeeding to the presidency on Tubman's death in office in July 1971. In April 1980 Tolbert was assassinated and his government overthrown in a bloody military coup d'état.



Samuel Kanyon Doe (1950–1990). Twenty-first president of Liberia (1980–1990). Born in Tuzon, Grand Gedeh County on May 6, 1950, he was the first Liberian of indigenous ethnic (Krahn) background to become president. Doe was initially trained as a military officer, but availed himself of opportunities to further his education while serving as president. Doe initially led the military junta, which seized power in 1980, and then ran for the presidency in 1985, winning under highly controversial circumstances. He was installed as the first president of the Second Republic in January 1986. An insurgency some four years later led to his assassination and the overthrow of his government.



Charles Mcarthur Gankhay Taylor (1948–). Twenty-second president of Liberia (1997–2003). Born Arthington, Montserrado County on January 28, 1948, he was educated at Ricks Institute, the University of Liberia, and Bentley College in Massachusetts, USA (B.A., 1970). His route to the presidency was through a bloody insurgency and civil war, which he initiated and dominated for 14 years. It was during a respite in the war that an election was held which brought him to the presidency. The continuing conflict eventually caused him his office, and he was forced to resign and go into exile. Charged by an international tribunal with war crimes and crimes against humanity, he was standing trial at a hybrid international court in The Hague in 2010.



Moses Zeh Blah (1947–). Twenty-third president of Liberia (August 11–October 14, 2003). Born Toweh Town, Nimba County, his significant training appears to be largely military, having trained with Taylor in insurgency warfare in Libya. When Taylor ascended the presidency in 1997, he named Blah Liberian ambassador to Libya. Upon the death of Vice President Enoch Dogolea in 2000, Blah was appointed in succession. The presidency devolved upon him when Taylor resigned on August 11, 2003. Blah ceded the presidency to Charles Gyude Bryant when the latter was named interim leader by a negotiated peace pact, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

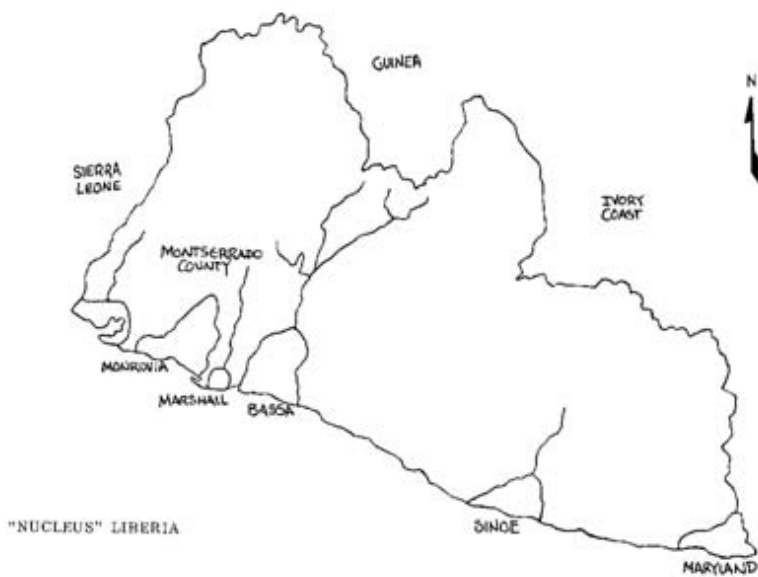
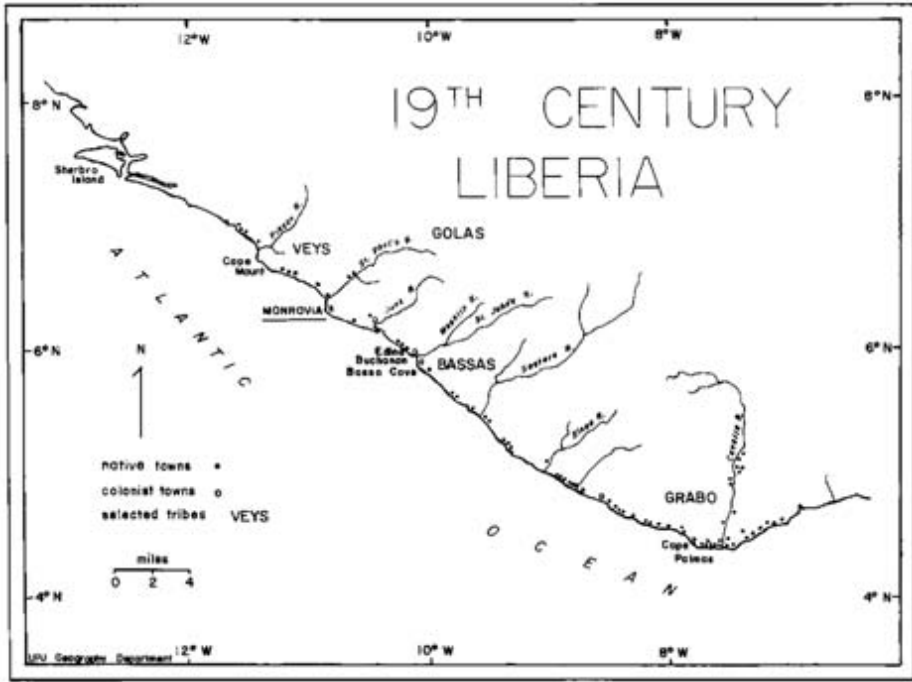


Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (1938–). Twenty-fourth president of Liberia (2006–). Born in Monrovia on October 29, 1938, she was educated at the College of West Africa, Madison Business School, and Harvard University (M.A., public administration, 1971). An economist, banker, and politician, Johnson Sirleaf served in a variety of positions at home (finance minister in 1970s) and abroad before returning home from exile to seek the presidency during the post-war 2005 general elections. She won the presidency in a second round hotly contested election, and in 2010 is nearing the completion of her six-year term.



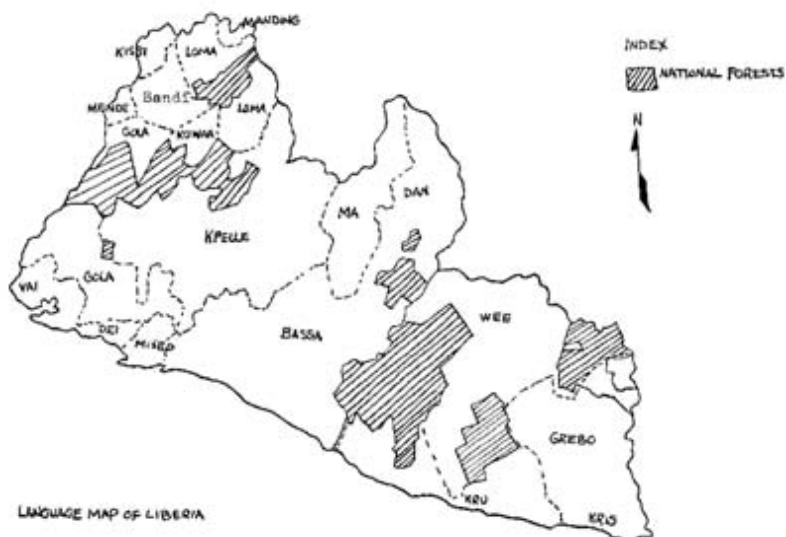


# Maps

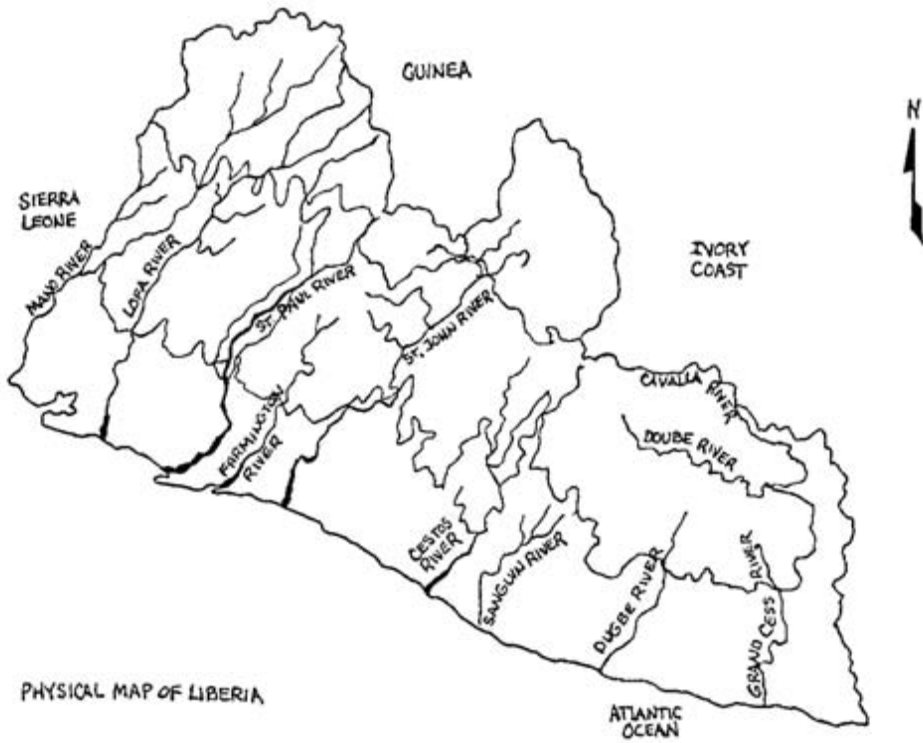




"ORIGINAL" LIBERIA



LANGUAGE MAP OF LIBERIA



PHYSICAL MAP OF LIBERIA





## Photographs



Executive Mansion 19th Century (President Robert's House, Monrovia)



The Legislative Hall late 1920s by M. Dinklage, Jr. (The Hall at Monrovia-Liberia)



Executive Mansion early 20th century (a former Executive Mansion)



Executive Mansion late 20th century (a former Executive Mansion)



Current Executive Mansion (Constructed early 1960s, completed 1964)



Joseph Jenkins Roberts  
I President of Liberia: 1848–1856



Annual Message to the Legislature  
January 5, 1848

Gentlemen: It is with feeling of peculiar satisfaction that I meet the first Legislature of the Republic of Liberia; and it affords me very sensible pleasure to congratulate you on the free, mild, and equal Government, which, in the wisdom of our fellow citizens, has just been established.

The people of Liberia, by their representatives in Convention assembled, on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of July last, solemnly declared the “Commonwealth of Liberia a free, sovereign, and independent State,” – thereby dissolving the political connection hitherto subsisting between them and the American Colonization Society. The decree, therefore, has gone forth, and thus has arisen in the world, and on this barbarous coast, a new empire, and independent Christian State, – styled the “Republic of Liberia.”

While we anticipate the blessings, gentlemen, of a government founded on freedom, having for its object the happiness of the people; it affords the most pleasing reflection that the Constitution framed by the late Convention – although not entirely perfect, for no such thing is found among men – has justly and equitably decided on most of the principal points whereon the happiness of the people of Liberia depends, and therefore has met with general approbation – indeed, it was adopted by nineteen-twentieths of the whole population. Upon so respectable and honorable a bottom the present Legislature is founded.

Gentlemen, it would be a pleasing task, indeed I should be exceedingly gratified to avail myself of the present occasion – to take a minute view of our new Constitution, to investigate its principles, and to remark upon the connection and use of its several parts; to do so, however, would be a work of too great length to be proper at this time. I shall, therefore, confine myself to a few general remarks only respecting it.

In the first place, I would remark, that the reason and understanding of mankind, as well as the experience of all ages, confirm the truth of the proposition – that the benefits resulting to individuals from a free Government, conduce much more to their happiness than the retaining of all their natural rights in a state of nature. And these blessings are greater or less, as the form of Government, and the mode of exercising the supreme power of the State, are more or less conformable to those principles of equal impartial liberty, which is the property of all men from their birth, as the gift of their Creator, – compared with the manners and genius of the people; their occupations, customs, mode of thinking, situation, extent of country, and numbers. If the constitution and form of Government are wholly repugnant to those principles, wretched are the citizens of that state. They have surrendered a portion of their natural rights, the enjoyment of which was, in some degree, a blessing, and the consequence is, they find themselves stripped of the remainder. In such a case, a state of nature is, perhaps, more preferable.

As in a state of nature, however, much happiness cannot be enjoyed by individuals, it has been conformable to the inclinations of almost all men, to enter into a political society,

so constituted as to remove the inconveniences they were obligated to submit to in their former state, and at the same time, to retain all those natural rights, the enjoyment of which would be consistent with the nature of a free government and the necessary subordination of the supreme power of the State.

But to determine what form of government, in any given case, will produce the greatest possible happiness to the citizens, is an arduous task, not to be compassed perhaps by any human powers. Some of the greatest geniuses and most learned philosophers of all ages, impelled by their solicitude to promote the happiness of mankind, have nobly attempted it, and their labors have crowned them with immortality.

A republican form however, is the only one consonant to the feelings of the people of Liberia. A few remarks, therefore, with respect to those principles upon which all republican Government are founded, and which must enter into the spirit of a free republican constitution may not be out of place here, especially as the idea of liberty and republicanism has been held up in such dazzling colors, that some among us may not fully understand it, and may not feel themselves bound to submit to that subordination necessary in the freest State.

Now, it is certain that all men are born equally free, and the rights they possess at their births are equal and of the same kind. Some of those rights, however, are alienable, and may be parted with for an equivalent. Others are unalienable and inherent, and of that importance that no equivalent can be received in exchange for them. Those rights which are unalienable, and of that importance, are called the rights of conscience. We have duties for the discharge of which we are accountable to our Creator and Benefactor, which no human power can control. What those duties are, is determinable by right reason, or a well informed conscience, and what this conscience dictates as our duty, is so, and that power which assumes a control over it, is usurped, for no consent can be pleaded to justify the control, as any consent in this case is void. The alienation of some rights, in themselves alienable, may also be void, if the bargain is of that nature that no equivalent can be received. Thus, if a man surrenders all his alienable rights, without reserving a control over the supreme power, or a right to resume in certain cases, the surrender is void, for he then becomes a slave; and a slave can receive no equivalent for his freedom. Common equity, as has been properly remarked, would set aside such a bargain.

When men form themselves into society, and elect a body politic or state, they are considered as one moral whole, in possession of the supreme power of the State. This supreme power, therefore, is composed of the powers of each individual collected together, and voluntarily parted with by him. No individual, however, in this case parts with his unalienable rights, the supreme power, therefore, cannot control them.

Each individual also surrenders the power of controlling his natural alienable rights only when the good of the whole requires it. The supreme power, therefore, can do nothing but for the good of the whole; and when it goes beyond this line, it is a power usurped. If the individual receives an equivalent for the right of control he has parted with, the surrender of that right is valid; if he receives no equivalent, the surrender is void, and the supreme power as respects him is a usurper. Therefore, if the supreme power in any State is so directed and executed that the citizen does not enjoy political liberty, it is an illegal power, and he is not bound to obey it.

Political liberty is defined by some to be a liberty of doing whatever is not prohibited by law. This definition is thought to be erroneous; and doubtless it is. Others define it thus; political liberty is the right every man in the State has, to do whatever is not prohibited by laws to which he has given his consent. This appears to be the generally received definition of political liberty.

If, then, the fundamental principle on which each individual enters into society, is that he shall be bound by no laws but those to which he has consented; he cannot be considered as consenting to any law enacted by a minority; for he parts with the power of controlling his natural rights, only when the good of the whole requires it; and of this there can be but one absolute judge in the State if the minority can assume the right of judging, there may then be two judges for however large the minority may be, there must be another body still larger, who have the same claim, if not a better, to the right of absolute determination.

If, therefore, the supreme power should be so modeled and exerted – which, indeed, cannot be the case in what free republican government – that a law may be enacted by a minority, the enforcing of a law upon an individual, who is opposed to it, is an act of tyranny. So on the other hand, when a majority of the individuals composing the society – which is the supreme power, acting for the good of the whole – adopts any measure, or enacts any law, not conflicting with the natural unalienable rights of the citizen, it is the imperative duty of each member of that community to conform implicitly thereto.

These, gentlemen, appear to be the fundamental principles upon which all republican Governments are founded. It has, therefore, been properly remarked that “the man who alone undertakes to form a constitution, for a free people, ought to be an impassioned being, one of enlightened mind; biased neither by the lust of power, the allurements of pleasure, nor the glitter of wealth – perfectly acquainted with all the alienable and unalienable rights of mankind – possessed of this grand truth – that all men are born equally free, and that no man ought to surrender any part of his natural rights without receiving the greatest possible equivalent; and influenced by the impartial principles of rectitude and justice, without partiality for, or prejudices against the interest or professions of any individuals or class of Men.

He ought to be master of the histories of all empires and states which are now existing, and all those which have figured in antiquity, and thereby able to collect and blend their respective excellencies, and avoid those defects which experience has pointed out.”

Rousseau, a learned citizen of Genoa, sensible of the importance and difficulty of the subject, thought it impossible for any body of men to form a free government, or frame an equal constitution, for themselves, in which every individual should have equal justice done him, and be permitted to enjoy a share of power in the state equal to what should be enjoyed by others. Each individual, said he, will struggle not only to retain all of his own natural rights, but to acquire a control over those of others. Fraud, circumvention, and an union of interests of some classes of people, combined with an inattention to the rights of posterity, will prevail over the principles of equity, justice, and good policy. The Genevans, perhaps the most virtuous republicans of that age, thought like Rousseau, and called to their assistance the celebrated Calvin. He came, and history says, “by their gratitude they embalmed his memory.”

Our situation, however, for forming a political society, and erecting a free government, is more favorable in many respects, than that of any people who have preceded us. We have the history and experience of all States before us. Mankind have been toiling through all ages for our information; and the philosophers and learned men of antiquity have trimmed their midnight lamps to transmit to us instructions. We live also in an age, when the principles of political liberty, and the foundation of government, have been fully canvassed and fairly settled.

With these lights before them, our Delegates have given us a Constitution, founded not upon party or prejudice – not for today or tomorrow – but for posterity. It is founded in good policy, because, in my humble opinion, it is founded in justice and honesty. All ambitions and interested views seem to have been entirely discarded, and regard had only to the good

of the whole, in which the situation and rights of posterity are considered, and equal justice has been done to every citizen of the Republic.

And the highest respect has been paid to those great and equal rights of human nature, which should for ever remain inviolate in every society. Proper attention has also been given to the separation of three great powers of the State. Indeed, it is essential to liberty, that the legislative, judicial, and executive powers of the government be, as nearly as possible, independent of, and separate from each other, for where they are united in the same persons, there would be wanting that mutual check which is the principal security against the making of arbitrary laws; and a wanton exercise of power in the execution of them. If these three powers are united the government will be absolute, whether they are in the hands of a few, or a great number. The same party will be the legislator, accuser, judge, and executioner. What probability then, as I have heard it remarked, will an accused person have of an acquittal, however innocent he may be, when his judge is also a party.

And if the legislative and judicial powers are united, the maker of the law will also interpret it; and the laws may then speak a language dictated by the whims or the prejudice of the judge, with impunity to himself. It will also be in the breast of the judge, when grasping after his prey, to make a retrospective law, which will bring the unhappy offender within it, – and this also he can do with impunity. And what people, I would ask, are so unhappy as those whose laws are uncertain?

Should the executive and legislative powers be united, great mischief and inconvenience to the citizen would follow. The executive would enact such laws only as it pleased him to enact; the judicial power would be set aside as inconvenient and tardy. The executive power would make itself absolute, and the government, finally, end in tyranny.

Should the executive and judicial powers be united, the citizen would then have no permanent security of his person and property; the executive power would interpret the laws, and bend them to his will; and, as he is judge, he will leap over them by artful instructions, and gratify, with impunity, the most rapacious passions.

Indeed, the dependence of any of these powers upon either of the others, has so often been productive of such calamities, and of the shedding of so much blood, that the page of history where we find them noted, seems to be one continued tale of wretchedness; and warns all people against such union of powers, if they expect to be, and remain free.

With these facts before them such care has been taken by our Delegates, in the disposition of the legislative, executive, and judicial powers of the government as to promise permanence to the Constitution, and give energy and impartiality to the distribution of justice.

The legislative power is employed in making laws, or prescribing such rules of action to every individual in the State, as the good of the whole requires to be conformed to by him in his conduct to the governors and governed, according to the several relations he stands in society. It is the part of the judicial power, which is a court and a jury, to ascertain the member who has broken the law enacted by the legislature; – and every man is to be presumed innocent, until the judicial power has determined him guilty. When that decision is known, the law annexes the punishment, and the offender is turned over to the executive power, by whom it is inflicted on him. The judicial power has also to determine what legal contracts have been broken, and what member has been injured by a violation of the law, to consider the damages that have been sustained, and to ascertain the recompense. The executive power is to take care that this recompense is paid.

The executive power is also divided into external and internal executive; the former comprehends war, peace, the sending and receiving ambassadors, and whatever concerns the transactions of the State, with any other State.

The latter is employed in the peace, security and protection of the citizens and his property, and in defense of the State. The executive power is to martial and command the militia for her defence, to enforce the law, and to carry into execution all the orders of the legislative powers.

These three powers are considered the supreme power of the State, over which the people have a control. And thus our lives, our liberties, and our property are at the disposal only of our Creator and ourselves. We will know no power but such as we will create – no laws but such as acquire all their obligation from our consent.

Adequate security is also given to the rights of conscience and private judgment. They are by nature subject to no control but that of the Deity, and in that free state they are now left. Every man is permitted to consider, to adore, and to worship his Creator in the manner most agreeable to his conscience. No opinions are dictated – no rules of faith prescribed – no preference given to one sect of Christians to the prejudice of others. In a word, the convention were of opinion, that the Gospel of Christ, like the ark of God, would not fall, in Liberia, though unsupported by the arm of flesh; and happy would it be for all mankind, if that opinion prevailed more generally.

But, gentlemen, it is to be remembered that whatever marks of wisdom, experience, and patriotism there may be in our new constitution, like the just propositions and elegant forms of our first parents, before their Maker breathed into them the breath of life, it is yet to be animated; and until then, may indeed excite administration, but will be of no use: – from the people it must receive its spirit, and by them be quickened. Let virtue, honor, the love of liberty and science be, and remain, the soul of our present constitution, and it must, it will become the source of great and extensive happiness to this and future generations.

Vice, ignorance, and the want of vigilance, will be the only enemies able to destroy it. Against this provide.

Every citizen of Liberia ought diligently to read and study the constitution of his country; and teach the rising generations to be free. By knowing their rights, they will sooner perceive when they are violated, and be the better prepared to defend and assert them.

This, gentlemen, is the first Legislature under the authority of our new constitution, and I sincerely hope that its proceedings will be such as to merit the approbation of the friends, and avoid giving cause of censure to the enemies, of our present government.

I will now proceed, gentlemen, according to my constitutional duty, to give you such information respecting the state of the Republic as present circumstances will allow; and at the same time will recommend for your consideration such public measures, as appear to me necessary or expedient for your adoption.

When we assemble together, however, to consider the state of our country, and to adopt such measures as are calculated to advance her interests, and to increase the prosperity and happiness of her citizens, – our just attentions are first drawn to those pleasing circumstances which mark the goodness of the Being from whose favor all our blessings flow; and the large measure of thankfulness we owe for his bounty.

Another year has come around and finds us still in the enjoyment of the blessings of peace and friendship with the native tribes that surround us: and we have great reason to be thankful to our merciful Benefactor, that we have also at our command, and are permitted to enjoy, all the necessaries and comforts, and many of the luxuries of life. During the past year, great success has attended the efforts of our farmers: in no year perhaps since our establishment here, have the crops been more abundant; and it is gratifying to witness the increased interest, on the part of our citizens, to that unfailling source of happiness and independence.

Our commercial prospects are also encouraging. Indeed, I have particular satisfaction in remarking, that every view we take of our country presents us with grateful proofs of its substantial and increasing prosperity.

I have the satisfaction of informing you, gentlemen, that during the last year we have succeeded in extinguishing the native title to five tracts of country, lying between the extreme points of our jurisdiction. In July last, we obtained a title deed, from the rightful owner of the soil, for the north-west half of the Little Cape Mount territory: and in November we negotiated the purchase of four tracts, and obtained title deeds – viz., “Timbo,” “Zepay,” “Hourahzon” and the well known territory of “New Cess.”

No sooner however was it known, by the slavers established at this latter place, that the king and chief had ceded to this government their country, than they set to work to induce the chiefs to disavow the sale, and consent to receive from them, as a present, and for the privilege of continuing their slave establishment, as long as they pleased to remain in the country, – an amount equal to the price agreed on between this government and the chiefs.

Their efforts, however, as far as I am informed, have not been effectual. A few days ago, I received a communication from one Joze – the principal, I am told, of the slave establishment at New Cess – stating that the natives disclaim having sold the country to the Liberians; and demanding proof of our title to the territory. But with him, I conceived we had nothing to do farther than to inform him of the fact that this Government had obtained, for a valuable consideration, a title to the country, and that the inhabitants had incorporated themselves with us, and are new citizens of this Republic, and that the laws of the Republic of Liberia will now extend over all persons and property within that territory; and that the slave trade there must now cease.

This information I have officially given him, and, at the same time, emphatically apprised him that the majesty of the laws, particularly with respect to the slave trade, will be sustained at all hazards. Copies of these communications will be laid before you.

It will, of course, gentlemen, be among your first acts to fix and establish the boundaries of the Republic; and to adopt such measures as are necessary to carry into effect the laws and ordinances of the government, over all the territories within its jurisdiction. For this purpose, a small marine will be necessary; perhaps a single “Guarda costa,” well armed and manned, will be sufficient for the present.

We have extinguished the native title to all the lands lying between Grand Cape Mount, and the northwest boundary line of “Maryland in Liberia,” excepting six small tracts, comprising about forty miles of seacoast; and of these except two – the tribes are under engagements with us, that when they shall be disposed to sell their lands – and we have already commenced negotiations for two of them – they are to be sold only to this Government; and that until such sale the Government will protect them in the quiet enjoyment of their lands against all other persons or tribes. These tribes also acknowledge themselves under the protection of this Government, and no other power whatever. And no maxim of public law – relating to savage tribes occupying territories in the dominions of civilized nations – is more universally established, than that of suffering no interference of foreigners, or of a foreign power in the relations between the acknowledged sovereign of the territory, and the native tribes situated upon it.

I presume, therefore, you will find no difficulty in defining the present boundaries of the Republic; nor do I apprehend that you will find it difficult to adopt such measures as will enable the Government to carry into effect, throughout its jurisdiction, all the laws of the State; and to give security to the native tribes that have placed themselves under its protection. As a means of raising funds for this purpose, I would recommend that a well regulated tariff be established to operate in every part of the State. In doing so we shall probably come

in contact with the imaginary interests of foreign traders: I say imaginary, because I sincerely believe that under proper regulations, established by this Government, the trade of foreigners will not be diminished, but rather increased; and certainly their persons and property more secure than under the present system.

But, whatever may be their opinion in regard to it, we must be just to ourselves, and to the tribes inhabiting those territories, to whom we have promised protection, and among whom we are pledged to introduce the arts, the habits of civilization, and the Christian religion. And how are we to accomplish this, gentlemen, without the aid of money? It is also known that serious disputes frequently arise between neighboring tribes, which can only be settled by an appeal to arms, or by reference to this Government; and that the authorities here have been often called on to appoint and send commissioners among them to arrange and settle these difficulties. And to prevent the shedding of blood, and consequent horrors of African warfare, the Government here has always, when appealed to, and on some occasions at considerable expense, interposed its authority.

And, ought not those tribes that are receiving such benefits, contribute something to the support of the Government that gives them protection? And in what respect ought such regulations to offend foreign traders, especially as they will be placed, so far as the trade is concerned, upon the same footing of our own citizens? And surely no nation will refuse to us the right of regulating commerce within our own ports, or jurisdiction. The propriety of adopting measures to regulate the commercial intercourse of strangers with the citizens of all parts of our dominions, must be obvious to every reflecting mind.

Gentlemen, it is in every point of view of such primary importance to carry the laws into prompt and faithful execution, and to render the administration of justice as convenient to the people as may consist with our present circumstances, that I cannot omit to recommend to your serious consideration the Judiciary system of the Republic. No subject is more interesting than this to the public happiness, and to none can those improvements, which may have been suggested by experience, be more properly and beneficially applied.

It may happen, as heretofore, that numerous questions respecting the interpretation of the laws and the rights and duties of officers and citizens will arise. It is therefore of the first importance, that the laws should be stripped, as far as human sagacity can discern, of all ambiguity; and the rules of legal proceedings so simplified that every citizen can easily comprehend them.

I would also call your attention to our present militia system, which is obviously defective, and which, in my opinion, should be wholly remodeled. As it is the essential property of a free Government to depend on no other soldiery but its own citizens for its defence, so in all such Governments, every man, especially every freeholder, should be a soldier. A freeholder, who is not exempt by law, that is no soldier, manifests but little regard for the security of his freedom, and the protection of his property; for if the same spirit were to become general, there would be no soldiery within the Government, and it must either cease to be defended, and secure in its freedom, or seek its defence in foreign assistance, and so be no longer an independent Government. Every man, therefore, who wishes to secure his own freedom, and thinks it his duty to defend that of his country, should, as he prides himself in being a free citizen, think it an honor to be a soldier citizen. And while it is the right and privilege of a citizen to bear arms in the service of his country, it is inexcusable in him not to be willing to do so. And on the other hand he who affects to bear arms and does not know or will not learn the use of them, is equally culpable.

Every man, therefore, that feels the least spark of virtue or freedom, and feels that it is an honor which he owes himself, and a duty which he owes his country, to bear arms, and who is willing with his life to bear and use them for this country – ought to learn his duty;

and if once he is conscious that he ought to learn, he will soon know it; for there is neither difficulty nor mystery in it. There are many things, to be sure, which a soldier, whose whole life is devoted to that service, may learn and acquire the practice of, that a militia cannot spare the time to learn, nor is it required of them. There are things, however, which a militia must learn to make them effective in the defence of the State. I know that many of our fellow citizens – indeed, they are generally expert in the use of the fire-lock; and many of them plead this in justification of their indifference to militia trainings – which is all well as far as it goes – and if in action every man had to fight as a single person, I should wish every man to load and fire his own way – in that way which he has been accustomed to; and should think him the best soldier who could throw the most balls in the shortest time. But as in service, the whole is to act together as one united body, something more, and something different is required; for whatever method a man has of loading and firing by himself, when he acts in a body of men, it must be such as not to interfere with his neighbor, nor to interrupt his acting, or obstruct him arms, for in that case, the service of both would be lost, and so far as the obstruction of arms reached, so far would the service of all be lost. Every motion, therefore, that a soldier makes with his firelock, must of absolute necessity be right up and down directly before him, or in a direct line from front to rear, and in the space between him and his right hand man. The same is also absolutely necessary to be observed in every motion he makes with his bayonet, either while he is fixing it, or when it is fixed.

But further, when a number of men are acting together in a body, if one falls back to load, while another advances himself to fire, the consequences of such interfering will be, as has always been found to be, that they will wound and destroy more of one another than of the enemy. It is therefore absolutely necessary that the militia learn to load and fire at the same time, or as nearly together as possible; and also to learn to act together, that they may be able to march with different fronts, as the nature of the road or pass will permit; and be able without confusion, to take possession of their ground in different forms, as the nature of the ground requires; and be able to change and vary their form, even in time of action, as the strength, position, or motions of the enemy might make it necessary. Whatever may be the opinion of some of us with respect to frequent militia trainings, one thing is certain, gentlemen, these things must be learned to make a militia effective in actual service. And I regret to find so much indifference manifested by many of our citizens in regard to this subject. Some among us appear to have lost all military ambition, and have not sufficient patriotism to induce them to give proper attention to this arm of public defence.

But as all male citizens, of sound health, from sixteen years of age to sixty, are considered as the component parts of the national defence and legal force of the country, it becomes your duty, gentlemen, to adopt such measures as will compel each citizen to contribute an equal portion of his time to the service of his country, and such as will make the militia of the Republic adequate to the national defence, and efficient in service.

I am happy to inform the Legislature that Fort Norris has been thoroughly and permanently repaired; and a battery of ten long guns mounted on it; – they are at present, however, only temporarily mounted, as the carriages for them, though in a forward state towards completion, are not yet finished. And, if not otherwise directed, I shall proceed to garrison the Fort, under the act of the Legislature of 1845, which provides for that purpose.

Gentlemen, the ways and means of producing a revenue adequate to the wants of the government, without oppressing the citizens, will of course claim your particular attention. I deem it quite unnecessary for me to say much, if any thing here, in the way of recommendation to you, on the subject. A plan, for raising a revenue, has been suggested by a member of your body; which plan has been before the public for several months; and, I believe, its merits have been fully discussed and digested: and it appears to me to be the only feasible

method which can, at present, be adopted, that will produce a revenue equal to our necessities. And, I believe, a general conviction of the expediency of the measure prevails throughout the republic.

It is particularly your province and duty, gentlemen, to fix and establish a currency for the State; and I feel satisfied that you will place it upon such firm and solid bases, that the wants and wishes of the people will be fully met. It has been remarked, that “paper money is the only kind of money which cannot make unto itself wings and fly away.” I am decidedly of opinion, however, that the omission of paper money, unless based on specie, and redeemable, on demand, at the Treasury Department, will operate seriously against the interests of a large number of our fellow citizens. When the currency of a country becomes so impaired as to allow merchants and others to speculate in it, – the government, and a large portion of the inhabitants must be the sufferers. The people of Liberia have already experienced too many inconveniences consequent upon the depreciation of paper currency. And I sincerely hope that the present Legislature will effectually put an end to this fraud upon the public, by placing the currency upon such a footing as to secure it against depreciation.

Gentlemen, a uniform standard of weights and measures is an object of importance, and will, I am persuaded, be attended to. Suitable provisions for the maintenance of public schools, and for the support of the poor, I am sure, will not escape your attention. Nor need I remind you of the provisions necessary to be made, by the Legislature, to enable the executive to carry into effect, the letter and spirit of the 15<sup>th</sup> section of the 5<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution.

To maintain among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature, and of nature’s God, entitle them, the people of Liberia have assumed an independent national character; it therefore becomes your duty, gentlemen, to adopt measures, by which this fact can formally be announced to all civilized nations. And, as it is necessary that nations should treat for mutual advantage of their affairs; and especially to accommodate and terminate differences which may, from time to time, arise between them, I would recommend to the Legislature the propriety of soliciting immediately the acknowledgment of our independence; and of making proposals of friendly arrangements with foreign powers. And, I am fully persuaded, gentlemen, that we have no reason to conclude that our independence will not be acknowledged, or that friendly arrangements will be declined, or that advantage will be taken of our situation and circumstances to demand of us unreasonable terms.

Should the legislature concur in this opinion, it will be necessary to constitute a commission for that purpose.

I would also remind you here, that according to the 16<sup>th</sup> section of the 5<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution, you are required, at this meeting of the legislature “to take measures to arrange the future relations between the American Colonization Society and this Republic.”

Gentlemen, in fixing the pay of officers, and making appropriations for the ensuing year, you will, of course, be mindful of that economy, and plan of strict frugality, now indispensably necessary in every department of the State.

The present crisis, gentlemen, imposes an obligation on all the departments of government to adopt an explicit and decided course: and as it is our indispensable duty, may it be our invariable aim, to exhibit to our constituents the brightest examples of disinterested love for the common weal; and, particularly, be inflexible in our resolutions – to know neither friend nor favorite, whenever his solicitations appear incompatible with the public good. In our public capacities, we ought to rise superior to all private attachment or resentment, and make the intrinsic merit of every candidate for an office our sole rule for his promotion. Let us, both by precept and practice, encourage a spirit of economy, industry, and patriotism; and that public integrity and righteousness which cannot fail to exalt a nation. May the founda-

tion of our State be laid in virtue and the fear of God, and the superstructure will rise gloriously and endure for ages. Then may we humbly expect the blessings of “the Most High, who divides to the nations their inheritance and separates the sons of Adam.” In fine, gentlemen, let us unitedly strive to approve ourselves master builders, by giving beauty, strength, and stability to our new government.

On my part, a most solemn oath has been taken for the faithful discharge of my duty; on yours a solemn assurance has been given to support me therein. Thus a public compact between us stands recorded. And you may rest assured, gentlemen, that I shall keep this oath ever in my mind – the Constitution shall be the invariable rule of my conduct – my ears shall be always opened to the complaints of the injured, justice, in mercy, shall neither be denied, or delayed. Our laws and the liberties of Liberia shall be maintained and defended, to the utmost of my power. I repose the most perfect confidence in your engagement. And, on my part, you may count on a cordial concurrence in every measure for the public good; and on all the information I possess which may enable you to discharge to advantage the high functions with which you are invested by your fellow citizens.

But above all, gentlemen, we have great reasons to rejoice, in view of the confidence we are encouraged to feel in the guardianship and guidance of that Almighty Being, whose power regulates the destiny of nations, and whose blessings have been conspicuously dispensed to this infant Republic, and to whom we are bound to address our devout gratitude for the past, as well as our fervent supplications and best hopes for the future.

J.J. Roberts

Government House,

Monrovia, January 5, 1848

## Annual Message to the Legislature

December 14, 1849

Gentlemen: – It is my first duty, on our present meeting, to invite your attention to the providential favors which our country has experienced during the past year, in the unusual degree of health dispensed to its inhabitants, in the fruitful season with which we have been blessed, and in the plentiful harvests with which Heaven has rewarded the labors of the husbandman.

In truth, so numerous have been the favors of an all-wise Providence; and so encouraging are our present prospects, that we have great cause of thankfulness and praise to God.

With these blessings have been necessarily mingled, the pressures and vicissitude incident to all new countries, and from which, peculiarly situated as we are, we had no reason to expect exemption. Still there is just occasion for our mutual congratulations and thankfulness – especially when we reflect that our difficulties and sufferings in establishing a Christian state on these barbarous shores, and supporting the cause of liberty here, have been few and little, if compared with what others have suffered in search of freedom.

We should also bear in mind that those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must like men, be willing to undergo the fatigue of supporting it. What we obtain too cheaply we are apt to esteem too lightly. It is dearness only that gives all and every thing its value. Heaven knows how to set a proper price upon her goods, and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated. But with respect to Liberia, Heaven has been lavish of her blessings; and I am sure, gentlemen, that you heartily participate with me in the pleasure of tracing that conscious providential agency, which has hither-to

sustained us, and which has, almost in a miraculous manner, frustrated the sanguinary purposes of our enemies, and has led us, as it were – step by step, to the proud position we this day occupy. It is well said: “How wonderful are the providences of God.” But, gentlemen, in the progress of politics, as in the common occurrences of life, we are not only apt to forget the ground we have traveled over, but frequently neglect to gather experience as we go; we expend, if I may so say, the knowledge of every day on the circumstances that produced them, and journey on in search of new matters and new refinements. As it is pleasant, however, and sometimes useful to look back even to the first periods of infancy, and trace the turns and windings through which we have passed, so we may likewise derive many advantages by halting a while in our political career, and taking a view of the wonderful, complicated labyrinths of little more than yesterday, through which we have traveled. Truly may we say never did an infant grow to manhood in so short a time. We have crowded the business of an age into the compass of a few months, and have been driven through such a rapid succession of things, that for the want of leisure to think, we have probably, and perhaps unavoidably, wasted knowledge as we came, and have left nearly as much behind us as we have brought with us; but the road is yet rich with garments, and before we fully lose sight of them, will amply repay us for the trouble of stopping to pick them up.

When we retrospect our own history, gentlemen, we can scarcely realize the fact, that a generation has not passed away since the Pioneers in this great enterprise, inspired by the love of liberty and equal rights, expatriated themselves, and abandoned forever the land of their birth, to seek an asylum on these inhospitable shores to lay here the foundation of a Christian government, to be composed wholly of freedom. Thousands in the United States beheld their determination with wonder and astonishment; and though they could but admire in them that spark of liberty, which panted for equal government and laws; and could not commend the greatness of their spirit, and acknowledge the justice of their cause; still they trembled for the result, believing them unequal to the task. They seemed unable to realize that to such men death had charms compared to slavery, and that those noble spirits were prepared to brave every difficulty and danger in search of freedom; and like men of political sagacity – though reared in a land unfavorable to the development of their political capacities, – they possessed a happy boldness and grandeur, which clearly pointed out to them the point to which their course would safely lead them. They came, gentlemen, and though called to endure hardships and sufferings, and to encounter difficulties and dangers, which tired men’s souls; they never realized their efforts, but by an indefatigable perseverance, and noble exertion, happily, under God, succeeded in laying here the foundation of a free government. Under the auspices of the great Governor of the universe, the superstructure steadily advanced towards completion till the 26<sup>th</sup> of July, 1847, when the last stone was placed upon the building, and the whole firmly cemented together by the adoption of a constitution just in all its parts – and which guarantees the existence of the body politic, and secures to each citizen composing it the power of enjoying, in safety and tranquility, the natural and inalienable rights of liberty, and the blessings of life. And which constitution, constitutes you, gentlemen, the representatives of a free, sovereign and independent people.

Gentlemen, it affords me very sensible pleasure to inform you, that nothing has occurred since your last meeting, to disturb the friendly relation happily subsisting between this government and foreign Powers. Our present relations with the surrounding native tribes are also of the most friendly character.

I have the satisfaction of informing you that the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce, concluded in November 1848, between this Republic and Her Britannic Majesty’s Government, has been duly ratified by Her Britannic Majesty, the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; and the ratifications were exchanged at London on the first day of

August last. The British ratified copy reached here on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, and was immediately made public to the end that the stipulations thereof should be strictly observed by the Government and people of Liberia.

I have the honor to inform you that the Resolutions of the Legislature, ordering the removal, from our territory by force – all other means having failed – of a company of desperate slave leaders located at New Cesters and Tradetown, have been fully acted upon and effectually carried out.

And it is with the greatest pleasure I congratulate the Legislature upon the complete success of the expedition employed on that service.

In compliance with our request to the British Government for the assistance of two or three armed vessels to convey our troops to, and cover their landing at New Cesters, Commodore Sir Charles Hotham Commander in Chief of Her Britannic Majesty's Naval Force on this coast, early in February last, dispatched to this place a small squadron of three vessels of war – a corvette and two steamers, under the command of Captain Alexander Murray of Her Majesty's sloop "Favorite," with instructions to offer to the Liberian authorities the services of these vessels, to accompany an expedition against the slavers at New Cesters. Captain Murray, however, was limited, by the Commodore, to twenty-four hours to receive our troops on board his vessels. Commodore Hotham, with his usual promptness, dispatched those vessels immediately upon the receipt of instructions from his government to that effect, without reflecting that we had no standing army which could be ordered to march at a moments warning, and that the military force of Liberia consisted of a militia scattered through the various towns and villages of the Republic, and that several days notice was necessary to assemble the body of the troops required for such an expedition. Such, however, being the fact, and not having an opportunity, previously, of conferring with Sir Charles Hotham to concert with him respecting the time the expedition would be ready to embark, we of course, could not avail ourselves of the use of his vessels so kindly tendered. I communicated to Commodore Hotham the reasons why we were not able to accept the use of his vessels at so short a notice, and named the 6<sup>th</sup> of March for the embarkation of our troops requesting him, if possible, to furnish us a couple of vessels on that day to accompany the expedition.

Application had also been made to the French Government for the assistance of armed vessels to accompany said expedition; and on the 24<sup>th</sup> of said month, February, Commodore Edward Bouet, Commander in Chief of the French Squadron on this coast, arrived in our harbor, in conformity with orders from his government, placed at our disposal a French frigate for that purpose.

According to arrangements, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March – the British vessels of war not having arrived – the first regiment under Colonel Yates, was embarked on board the French Frigate "Espedon," Captain Villiman, and sailed immediately for Grand Bassa, where she was joined on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> by the Liberia Government schooner "Herald," with the second regiment, under Colonel Weaver, and military stores for the troops on board.

Brigadier General Lewis, who had been appointed to that duty, assumed the command of the expedition and proceeded immediately to New Cesters, where he found the natives collected in great force to dispute his landing. On the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup>, under cover of the "Espedon's" guns, our troops were landed in good order. – The landing, however, was vigorously opposed by large body of natives collected, armed, and commanded by the Spanish slave dealers in the country, by a well directed fire from the guns of the "Espedon" and two of her boats, each mounting a brass 12pdr. And drawn near the beach, our troops were able to drive back the opposing army, and land without serious loss on our side. – General Lewis after landing his men and stores, proceeded with a little delay as possible into the country to attack the principal Barricoon, which was understood to be well fortified, and contained a

garrison capable of resisting our whole force. It only remains for me to say that all the slave Barricoons were effectually annihilated, – the slaves that had been collected for exportation, recovered, – and the traffic in slaves, both at New Cesters and Tradetown, totally extirpated: And I am sanguine in the opinion that, unless our efforts for the suppression of the slave trade are relaxed – it will be impossible to revive the traffic at either of those places, or at any point within our jurisdiction. It is proper that I should remark here, that Commodore Hotham did all in his power to meet our wishes, with respect to furnishing a couple of vessels to accompany the expedition on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March. On the receipt of my letter, however, he was on his way to the Cape De Verds, to meet his relief. He handed my letter to his successor, Commodore Arthur Fanshawe, who immediately determined to comply with our request, and who hoped to reach here in time to furnish the assistance required. In consequence, however, of adverse circumstances the commodore did not arrive here until a few days after the sailing of the expedition. He nevertheless, though there was considerable sickness on board of this vessel, proceeded without delay to New Cesters to tender his services, and supply any assistance in his power.

To Captain Villimain, and his officers, we are under many obligations; they were most gentlemanly and kind to our officers and men during their stay on board the “Espedon,” and aided them to the utmost of their ability in carrying out the objects of the expedition. Their zeal and exertions, particularly the assistance rendered by them at the embarkation and debarkation of our troops, are beyond all praise.

Captain Villimain is an officer well deserving the confidence of his Government, and of this Republic: – and it affords me much pleasure to record here my testimony of his worth.

Gentlemen, it is my duty – indeed, I should be doing injustice to the officers and soldiers who composed the expedition against the slaves at New Cesters and Tradetown, if I was not in the most positive terms to assure the Legislature that they in general, behaved with the greatest gallantry, and strictest subordination during the whole enterprise.

Next to the very signal interposition of Divine Providence, which was powerfully manifested in their favor, – it was undoubtedly owing to that noble intrepidity which discovered itself on the first attack, while landing, and which struck the enemy with such a panic – from which they never recovered – as disabled them from taking pains to direct their fire, that General Lewis had not one man killed, and only five or six slightly wounded. As far as I am informed the officers in general behaved so well that it would be not right to name any particular one for his singular valor. – The General informs me that the officers and soldiers, during the period of their service, displayed a firmness and activity that would have reflected honor on veteran troops of any country: and I must heartily congratulate you, gentlemen, on their heroic behavior. It is an auspicious presage of what may be expected from the valor of our fellow citizens when called to the post of danger; as it also demonstrates that men, animated by an ardent zeal for the sacred cause of liberty and humanity – and trusting in the Divine support, are capable of the most glorious achievements. I cannot too much commend the services of General Lewis, the good judgment and conduct displayed by him during the expedition are additional proofs of his ability to discharge the high and important duties of General Officer with credit to himself and honor to his country, and which entitle him to confidence of his fellow citizens.

As soon as it was known that the government had resolved to maintain the majesty of the laws at all hazards, and use force to compel all persons within its jurisdiction to observe them; and abolish from its territory the Slave Trade, – the Slavers at New Cesters and Tradetown determined to defy the authority of the government, by opposing force to force they, therefore, concerted measures for a vigorous resistance. Indeed, so extensive were their preparations, and so numerous the force it was reported they would be able to employ

against us, that it was doubted, by some foreign traders, who had witnessed their preparations, whether we were able to reduce them, and compel their removal. Such fears were entertained by some of our own citizens, which of course, called for greater exertion of the part of the government, and to be prepared for any emergency, it was thought advisable to employ a much larger force than was at first contemplated. I have therefore to inform the Legislature, that the expense incurred in fitting out the expedition, including their pay – the pay of the officers and soldiers – has exceeded by some \$5000 or \$6000, the amount appropriated by the Legislature for that purpose. This result, however, was not unexpected. The cost had been carefully estimated, and every circumstance connected with the enterprise fully considered; and though it was found that a heavy debt must necessarily be incurred in carrying out the purposes of the Government – still it was the only alternative. The honor of the Government was at stake. It stood pledged, to rescue thousands of our brethren, the victims of a diabolical avarice, from the horrors of slavery, and to drive from its coast forever the ruthless and inhuman slave dealer. The assistance of foreign vessels had also been tendered the government, to enable it to carry out more vigorously its wishes with respect to these intruders, and accomplish the objects contemplated, which assistance was then at hand, and if declined, could not be counted upon with certainty at any future time. Therefore, in view of all these circumstances, it was determined that the expedition should proceed without further delay, and that we would appeal to our friends, and the friends of humanity, in the United States to aid us with funds to meet the liabilities thus incurred. Accordingly in May last, I commissioned Hon. H. Teage to visit the United States for that purpose, and in addition to which, if possible, to raise sufficient funds to enable us to secure the territories on our northwest frontier. I regret to have to inform you that Mr. Teage was wholly unsuccessful, not having been able to collect a single dollar. I have the honor herewith of laying his report before you.

The arrival of the “Lark” in May last, in charge of Captain Hall, R.N., was opportune. She has been kept cruising along our coast, especially in the neighborhood of New Cesters and Tradetown, to intercept any Slavers that might attempt to land there. It appears that attempts have been made to renew the Slave Trade at those points, but the presence of the “Lark” has hitherto foiled their efforts, and will no doubt continue to frustrate all their attempts in that quarter.

The “Lark” is a fine schooner of about one hundred and ten tons burthen, mounting five guns, well found in sails and rigging – a donation to this Republic from Her Britannic Majesty’s Government to be employed as a *Guarda Costa*, particularly for the suppression of the Slave Trade along this coast, and she is in every respect well adapted to the service.

Commodore Bouet, Commander in Chief to the French Squadron, while here in March last, assured me that he would endeavor to procure for our use, as a donation from his government, three or four brass field cannon, five or six hundred uniforms and as many stands of arms. A few days ago, I received intelligence, indirectly, that the application had been made and granted, and that we might expect to receive those articles in a few days.

Gentlemen, I am happy to inform you that an increased interest in our favor is beginning to manifest itself on the part of the Government of the United States. Hitherto we have received but little support from the government of the country, though we are literally the offspring of American benevolence; many of us were born in the highly favored land; and naturally turn our eyes in that direction for assistance, to enable us to carry out the great objects of building up for ourselves and our children a country and a home in this land: and I am sanguine in the opinion that the Government of the United States will not be behind any other government in extending to us the helping hand, and in sustaining us in our new position.

The President has been pleased to appoint the Rev. Mr. Gurley to visit Liberia, for the purpose of collecting statistics and facts, with respect to the extent of our territory; – number of population, – form of government, – public revenue, and how it is raised, – military and naval force of the Republic, – our relations with foreign powers, – amount of commerce with the United States, and susceptibility of that trade to be beneficially increased: Our influence upon the Slave Trade. This information is sought by the President, preparatory to recommending us favorably to the consideration and generosity of the Congress of the United States.

The marks of favor which we have received from foreign powers, since our new organization, open a wide field for consoling and gratifying reflections: and I am sure you will feel much pleasure in expressing to those Governments the thanks of your constituents and fellow citizens, and in assuring them that the people of Liberia entertained a deep sense of the obligation they are under, and they properly appreciate their friendship and liberality.

With respect to the agreement concluded between this government and the American Colonization Society and ratified, conditionally, by the Legislature at its extra session in February last, Mr. McLain writes under date of July 31<sup>st</sup>. “The interpretations which your Legislature put upon the articles of the Treaty, agreed with the understanding of our committee, and will doubtless meet the approval of the Board of Directors at their next meeting.”

Since your last meeting, several important acquisitions of territory have been made. We have secured the whole of Grand Cape Mount, Sugaree, and Manna territories, on the northwest, and Grand Cesters, on the southeast; which gave us, – with the exception of a small intermediate point of about five miles in extent, in the Kroo country, an unbroken line of coast of about three hundred and twenty miles. The aboriginal inhabitants of these recently acquired tracts of country, have incorporated themselves with us, and they increase the population of Liberia Proper to about one hundred and fifty thousand.

Negotiations have been opened with the chiefs of Gallinas, for the purchase of that territory, and funds only are required to secure it. You doubtless agree with me, gentlemen, as to the importance of securing Gallinas as soon as possible – especially in view of the possibility, I may say probability, of the withdrawal of the British blockading squadron from before that territory; in the event of which, efforts will no doubt be made immediately to revive the Slave Trade there as vigorously as ever; which must be prevented if possible. I have still hopes of obtaining funds from abroad to enable us to conclude the purchase, and bring that territory within our jurisdiction. I shall, therefore, not relax my efforts until we shall have accomplished so desirable an object.

I now, gentlemen, enter upon the more immediate concerns which will claim your attention during the present session of the Legislature. The labor which your fellow citizens call upon you to perform is arduous and difficult. But by effecting it with firmness and prudence, you will acquire an indisputable right to the gratitude of those who expect so much from you. I think I have never met the Legislature, at any period, when, more than at the present, the situation of our public affairs demands greater unanimity and disinterested zeal on the part of the great council of the nation,. But I am consoled in the belief that you will, to every question which may claim attention, apply that practical wisdom which the actual state of our affairs requires.

Gentlemen, the subject of commerce and revenue will claim your particular attention. I am aware that this subject is surrounded by many difficulties. But when the foundations of a superstructure are threatened to be undermined, prudence will dictate the means of averting the impending danger. A state supported by its commerce – which is emphatically the case with respect to Liberia, at present – should watch cautiously over every occurrence that can possibly tend to obstruct the channel of its commercial enterprise. The time has now arrived

when the commerce of Liberia should be placed upon a firm and equitable basis. And it is imperatively the duty of the Legislature, on terms compatible with our national rights and honor, to extinguish the causes of discord growing out of present loose maritime regulations; and which have so long menaced our very existence.

Our merchants must be placed upon a footing with other traders visiting the coast, otherwise it will be impossible for them to compete successfully with foreign capitalists, who will continue, as they have hitherto done, to drain the country of its riches – without contributing scarcely a dollar to its support.

Our present revenue system requires material revision; and I cannot forbear recommending to your particular attention the propriety of adopting measures by which smuggling may be prevented, and the duties on imports more readily secured. The impositions practiced upon our revenue laws are indeed alarming; and unless some remedy be speedily applied, we may give up all hopes of conducting the government successfully – as it can only be sustained by a revenue derived from imposts. During the past year not less than one hundred thousand dollars worth of goods have been landed on our coast, upon which tariff duties were not paid. These infractions, gentlemen, are not the result of inattention on the part of the officers engaged in the revenue service, but the consequence of the vagueness of the law regulating “Commerce and Revenue.” I know that this is a question of anxious thought; and has been the subject of frequent legislation. All laws grow out of circumstances, and as the ingenuity of men is constantly employed in the invention of new modes of evading laws, it is difficult to provide against every case which may arise. I have no doubt, however, but that this subject has been revolving – itself – in your minds for some time, and that you are prepared to strip the law of its present vagueness and apply a remedy which will enable the officers in future to do their duty more effectually.

I beg, gentleman, to recommend to your consideration the subject of education. I am aware you have not the pecuniary means at present, of doing much in the way of providing schools and paying teachers, still the subject claims your attention, and what you can do for its promotion. For while we have great reason to congratulate ourselves on the acquisition of a form of government, in all its parts, immediately under the influence and control of the people; we should remember that a government so popular can be supported only by a universal knowledge and virtue in the body of the people, it is therefore the duty of the legislature to promote, – as far as in its power, the means of education for the rising generation, as well as the true virtue, purity of manners, and integrity of life among all classes of our fellow citizens. And especially should we exert ourselves to carry more fully into operation the 15<sup>th</sup> Section of the 5<sup>th</sup> Article of our Constitution, which provides for the improvement of the native tribes, “within our jurisdiction, and their advancement in the arts of agriculture and husbandry.” This is an important work – the work of civilization – and “civilization and religion must go hand in hand;”-the plough and the Bible must go together. Let us therefore beware of the impiety of being backward to act as instrument in the Almighty hand, for the Almighty, has planted us here for great and important ends, now extended to accomplish his purpose and by the completion of which alone, Liberia, in the nature of human affairs, can be secure against the craft and insidious designs of her enemies, who think her prosperity already by far too great. In a word our piety and political safety are so blended that to refuse our labors in this divine work, is to refuse to be a great, a pious, and a happy people. The aboriginal inhabitants of our territory require only education to make them a valuable portion of our citizens; let us then do what we can do to promote education among them, especially among the females. I believe it essential to the success of the great work in which we are engaged that the female character – among our aboriginal inhabitants – be raised from its present degraded state to its proper rank and influence. By educating female children, they

will become prepared in time to educate their own children, and manage their domestic concerns with intelligence and propriety, and in this way they will gradually attain their proper standing and influence in society; examples exist to show that all this is practicable. The work of educating and changing the manners and customs of the natives is acknowledged to be great and arduous. But the difficulties are not insurmountable. The arm of the Lord, in whom we trust, is strong. His power can do all things. On earth, however, all things are full of labor. It is the destiny of man to get his food by "the sweat of his brow;" to labor for the comforts he enjoys, for the riches and honors after which he aspires: and the labor required is usually proportioned to the magnitude of the good to be effected as its reward: calculating therefore, on this principle, we see what will be the probable magnitude of the obstacles to be overcome, and the labor to be performed in attaining our object. The civilization of Africa is a work of time; many a great obstacles, which stand in the way, are to be removed, and which require a vast amount of labor to effect. But even such obstacles and labor, formidable as they are, intimidate and palsy not the heart and arm of the man of real courage in the cause of suffering humanity. It is gratifying to know that our fellow citizens, are awake to their duty and obligation in this respect. I have been frequently pleased to witness the interest manifested by our citizens in the welfare of the heathen around us; and the pains many have taken to instruct the native youth committed to their charge. In this way almost every Liberian has become a teacher. And already a vast amount of good has been accomplished, hundreds of natives are to be found in our towns and villages exhibiting all the marks of civilized life; and in all the native villages, within our influence, are to be seen great improvement in the habits of the people, indeed a very marked advancement towards civilization. The result evidently – including missionary efforts – of their frequent intercourse with us, by which means they have imperceptibly imbibed many of our ideas, manners and customs. It is important to the great amend in view, that the Government interpose, and regulate the intercourse with native, and the manner of conducting native trade – especially to discourage as much as possible, the introduction of West India and New England rum among them.

Let traders of good character, – and of this character only, who are cordially disposed to promote the designs of the Government in regard to the improvement of the condition of the natives – receive from the Government license to trade with the natives and be required to plant themselves in some central spot within the sphere of their trade, and let it be required that all trade be done at that one place. Let there be a reasonable and liberal sum required for the license of these traders to be applied exclusively to the promotion of civilization and education among the natives. From all the information and facts I have received, I believe this plan is agreeable to the natives. It would doubtless be the means of better securing their interests, of promoting their civilization, and more effectually curing two prominent evils. – the Intercourse of corrupt foreigners with the natives, and the introduction of floods of ardent spirits among them – and thus prevent wars, and promote peace among themselves, and their neighbors.

The Judiciary will, of course, claim your attention. The present system is capable of important improvement. I invite your attention to the necessity of enacting a law defining and making the Slave Trade piracy: also regulating the proceedings of courts with respect to the trial of vessels found, and seized upon our coast engaged in Slave Trade, or otherwise, charged with contravening our maritime regulations.

A well digested militia law, founded upon just and equitable principles, has been ever regarded as the best security of the liberties of a people, and the most effective means of drawing forth and exerting the natural strength of the State. A well regulated militia in Libe-

ria, if only to keep up a show of military preparation, is absolutely necessary, especially as it supercedes the necessity of keeping up a standing army.

I have requested the officers to suggest, for the information of the legislature, such alterations as will remedy the evil complained of. Which suggestions I will lay before you in a few days.

I regret to inform you that the act entitled – “An Act to raise a Revenue,” approved January 26, 1848, has not met the anticipations of the legislature, nor the expectations of the people, as will be seen from the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, which will be handed to you. This act will require material modification, to make it in any respect adequate to the objects it contemplates if in your judgment you should not deem it prudent to repeal it.

The condition of our finances requires the greatest care on your part. Means must be provided for the serious necessities of the present; and, at the same time you are called upon to establish a financial system, calculated to maintain the credit of the Government in future. The great expense necessarily incurred in fitting out the expedition against the slavers at New Cesters and Tradetown, and the amount we have been required to disburse for the payment of newly acquired territories, have very much embarrassed our fiscal concerns. The Secretary of the Treasury will lay before you the accounts of the receipts and disbursements of the Treasury Department, during the fiscal year ending the 30<sup>th</sup> of September last. Which amounts show a balance against the Government, including its foreign liabilities, of \$22,000; from this amount, however, may be deducted the available assets of the government, consisting of tobacco and other merchandize, in the public warehouse, amounting at prime costs to about \$14,000 leaving still a balance against the government of \$8,000.

These, gentlemen, are some of the subjects that will claim your attention, others will doubtless arise during the progress of your discussions. And I shall have occasion to communicate to you at some subsequent period, during your present session, other matters, though of minor importance yet proper to be laid before you for consideration.

As the term of many of our civil officers will expire during the present session of the legislature, it will be my duty to nominate for your approval persons to fill such offices as may be vacant. I ask of you, gentlemen of the Senate, not to approve the nomination of any man, in whose qualifications, to discharge the duties of the office to which he may be nominated, you have not the utmost confidence.

Certainly, as public men you are to know neither friend nor favorite; fear nor resentment. I need not remind you, that much depends, especially in the infancy of our Government and civil institutions, upon the selection of proper persons to occupy the various departments of the Government. You are the guardians and protectors of the State, the general good should, therefore, be the sole object of your attention. And in the appointment of officers intrinsic merit should be the sole rule of promotion. No time ever required more economy, industry, patriotism, and true devotion to the public cause than the present.

The experience of the past, and the peculiar circumstances by which we are still surrounded, effectually teach us how essentially necessary it is to the weal of the State to increase these excellent qualifications.

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives, I close this communication under the full conviction that you discharge the important trusts committed to you with firmness and fidelity. And that you will do all in your power to extend the benefits of civilization, by combining the development of political institutions with true social progress. In doing which you will not only fulfill a sacred duty of humanity, but also materially strengthen the basis in which modern civilization, family, and property are founded. I know, gentlemen, that our position is still a delicate one, and that you are surrounded by many difficulties, yet we are

relieved by many hopes. After that which confidence in Providence offers, the greatest is in virtue, love of country, and your wisdom, on which your fellow citizens have perfect confidence. I pray that you may be sustained in your deliberations by that wisdom which comes from above, and when you have finished your labors you can retire under the full conviction that you have conscientiously discharged your duties to the best of your ability.

J.J. Roberts

Government House,

Monrovia, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1849.

## Annual Message to the Legislature December 3, 1850

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives:-

It is with the greatest pleasure that I again meet you in this Session of the Legislature. The great purposes for which you have assembled, are first, for the redress of public grievances, and secondly, for making such laws as the general good may require, – therefore the labors in which you are about to engage are of the most important nature, and lie at the very foundation of the future welfare and happiness of the people of this Republic.

In the various and constantly changing avocations of an industrious and intelligent people, it may often become expedient, either to make new laws, or modify or repeal old ones – and for this the constant recurrence of our election provides, by bringing from all parts of the Republic, legislators, who have learned from the people themselves, the practical operations of old laws, and the necessity of enacting new ones.

You gentlemen, have come thus immediately from the people, and if you consider their demands, and consult their interests, as you doubtless do, with the blessings of Divine Providence – without which no undertaking can prosper – you have little cause to fear either for your own honor or the prosperity of the government.

By our inestimable charter, in you are vested the conservation of the rights and interests of the whole people of this Republic. Whatever alteration in the laws, the urgency of affairs, or the authority of the people can be conceived to justify, or render expedient – that authority is fully delegated to you; and your constituents look to you, as entrusted with their most sacred rights. I have every confidence that in general, they will cheerfully be governed by whatever your wisdom may ordain. And your zeal for the good of your fellow citizens, and your knowledge and experience in the affairs of the government, inspire, in me, the belief that your present meeting will be productive of lasting benefit to the whole people of our infant state.

According to the concise and comprehensive language of the constitution, it is incumbent on the Executive “to inform the Legislature, from time to time, of the condition of the Republic, and recommend any public measures for their adoption, which he may think expedient.” But before I proceed directly to the discharge of this duty, permit me, gentlemen, to remark, that every revolving year brings with it new and just occasions for our mutual congratulations and thankfulness to that beneficent Being, who in his goodness continues to favor us, as a people, with such distinguished mercies, – these should create in us devout feelings of gratitude and praise.

It affords me unspeakable satisfaction to be able to inform you that during the past year, our beloved country has been greatly favored and blessed. An unusual degree of health has been dispensed to its inhabitants; – in no previous year has greater attention been paid to

agriculture; and the earth has rewarded the labors of the husbandman with abundant harvests;-the commercial operations of our merchants have been greatly extended. Indeed, the progress of general improvement, throughout the Republic, was never more encouraging than at the present time. Nothing of a very serious character has occurred to disturb the harmony of our citizens at home; or the friendly relations subsisting between this government and foreign powers, or the native tribes around us.

In the midst of these blessings, however, the government have not been altogether exempted from the perplexing difficulties and embarrassments.

Some of the circumstances connected with these difficulties and embarrassments I shall recur to hereafter.

I would remark here, however, that we have no just reason to expect that our progress in national prosperity is to be uninterrupted by the evils incident to all governments. Nay, such evils are often wholesome and produce good results. The waters that stagnate, you know, corrupt. The storm that works the ocean, sometimes into a rage, renders it salutary. The rose is not without the thorn. Heaven has given us nothing unmixed.

Difficulties and embarrassments, in public affairs, frequently call forth great virtues and efforts, which would otherwise sleep in the gentle bosom of ease and quietness. They open resources which would be concealed under the inactivity of tranquil times. They arouse and enlighten the citizens. They produce a people of animation, energy, adventure, and greatness. If we consult history we shall find this to have been the case in all ages. Did not the Grecian republics prosper even amid continual warfare! Their prosperity, their power, their splendor grew from the all-animating spirit of war.

Did not the cottages of shepherds rise into imperial Rome, the nursery of heroes – through the invigorating operation of unceasing wars? Trace back, if you please, the history of the United States of America, and see how those States flourished and grew strong under the difficulties which surrounded, and more than once, threatened the annihilation of some of them.. But these very difficulties produced an exceedingly enterprising people, and hardy legions that have subsequently proved themselves equal to any emergency.

I do not wish to be understood, gentlemen, as desiring war – I pray God to deliver us, forever, from such calamity – or difficulties or embarrassments of any kind, to incite the citizens of Liberia to greater exertion, and to call forth their latent talents and energy. There are some among us, I know, who tremble at every occurrence that in any degree threatens to interrupt the even course of our political affairs. They fear that it may put an inevitable stop to the further progress of the government, and ruin irretrievably our future happiness, and deprive us of those civil and religious blessings which the early veterans in the cause of freedom here, and ourselves have called forth from this once savage land. We may commend the anxiety of such men, however, without praising their judgment. It is true patriotism, boldly to front every difficulty;-and with a determined purpose overcome every obstacle which may oppose our progress; then we shall defend our natural and national rights, with dignity and success. With a firm trust in the Great Governor of the universe, and right on our side, we have nothing to fear.

Gentlemen, with all our quick perception of the existence of public evils, to which many years enjoyment of prosperity and freedom has made us peculiarly sensitive, it is not easy, in a survey of the condition of the Republic, to point to any thing which justly calls for the exercise of the first of your prescribed duties; nothing, certainly, which in any other age or country would be regarded as a “public grievance.”

Imperfections in our system of government, and its operation, undoubtedly exist; as well as in every other work of human hands; but its guiding and fundamental principles of freedom, justice, and equality, are unchangeably right and true, and are firmly established, not

only in our written codes, but in the universal consent and affections of the people. We can have no further controversy as to the great objects and aim of political organization, or the source of its power. The sovereignty of the people is with us, a familiar, practical truth; and the happiness of the people, the only legitimate end of all civil governments.

Their unlimited and unquestioned power, prompted by an ever active spirit of inquiry and reform; and directed in its exercise by an enlightened perception of their true interest, will be sure to interpose a remedy for public wrongs before they become gross or intolerable.

In a government like ours, peculiarly situated as we are, the necessity and demand for new laws will probably never cease. The advancing tide of civilization and improvement with its attendant complications of interests, and the changes of opinion which result from the lapse of time and the light of exercise, will constantly require modification and amendments of our laws to meet the varying exigencies of our condition.

There rests, therefore, upon us the obligation to see that legislation is kept in practical and harmonious conformity with the broad principles of freedom upon which are based our much cherished institutions.

Gentlemen, I have the honor to inform you that since your last meeting the territorial limits of the government have been considerably extended. On the northwest – excepting about ten miles of sea coast – the political jurisdiction of the Republic extends to the entrance of the River She bar. This jurisdiction – comprehending the notorious Gallinas – has been regularly and formally ceded to this government by the native proprietors. The native title to the soil of several of these tracts have been extinguished – the deeds for which will be laid before you – and negotiations are now pending for the extinction of the native title to the soil of the whole of them. And I apprehend no great difficulty in being able, soon, to bring these negotiations to a favorable termination. The principal difficulty hitherto has been the want of funds to meet the large advances demanded by the chiefs. I am happy to state that this embarrassment has been partially removed. By the Liberia Packet, in September last, the Secretary of the Treasury received, from Rev. Wm. McLain, Secretary and Treasurer of the American Colonization Society, an invoice of merchandise, amounting to three thousand eight hundred and thirty-four dollars, to aid this government in the purchase of territory. This assistance is very opportune, and places us under renewed obligations to the friends of Liberia and of Africa, in the United States. No time shall be lost in applying this amount to the purpose for which it was granted. I beg also, to state here, that I have drawn on our good friends. S. Gurney, Esq., London for 500 of his donation; which bill he writes me, will be honored.

The acquisition of the political jurisdiction over those territories is exceedingly important, in as much as it effectually abolishes the Slave Trade from this part of the African coast, and enables the government to extend a wholesome and beneficial influence over the tribes inhabiting them. And I am happy in being able to inform the Legislature that the influence of the government is already producing salutary results among the aborigines of this district. And not only these – there is evidently a great and important revolution commenced in the condition of our whole native population, which is now rapidly going forward; and only needs, on the part of the government, prompt and encouraging measures for promoting their civilization, to raise them speedily to respectability and usefulness.

This is a subject, in which I know, gentlemen, you are deeply interested and concerned. The citizens of Liberia have kept steadily in view the two great objects of African Colonization – and, I believe, the principal objects which prompted the philanthropists of America in establishing colonies upon this coast, – viz: the closing of the coast of Africa against the ravages of the Slave Trade and the best means of introducing civilization and Christianity among the barbarous tribes of this continent. How far we have succeeded in effecting the

first, I leave the world to judge. Of the second, gentlemen, we have yet much to accomplish; and past success, in this great and important work, should incite the government to renewed exertion.

It is very evident that the natives are improving more rapidly at present than at any previous time. There are more instances of laborious industry among them every returning year. It used to be said the natives can never acquire the habit of labor. But facts abundantly disprove this opinion. There are now numerous instances among them of very laborious industry. Some of them not only provide an abundant supply of food for their families, by the labor of their own hands, but have a surplus of several hundred bushels of rice with which, and sundry articles of commerce they are in the habit of collecting, they procure their supply of foreign manufactures. And there can be no question that the current is setting more strongly in favor of agriculture and other laborious pursuits now, than at any previous period. Notwithstanding these encouraging appearances, however, there is yet much to be accomplished before this people generally can reach the proper standard of rational and immortal beings.

According to the law of nations, this government holds jurisdiction over a territory, comprising at the lowest computation, over two hundred thousand of the aboriginal inhabitants, who are almost in total ignorance of God, his law, and the plan of salvation; and who are also to be taught nearly all the useful branches of human knowledge.

In this view of the subject – may we not ask ourselves, gentlemen, what do we owe them?—and what are our duties in reference to them, in a civil and religious light? This government has assumed the guardianship of these perishing thousands; and they have claims upon us of high importance to them, and to our own character as an enlightened, just, and Christian people. In return for what they have yielded to us, that we will do all in our power to impart to them the blessings of civilization and religion. They are entitled as citizens of this government, for such they are, to justice in all our dealings with them, to education in the useful arts and sciences, and in the principles and duties of the Christian religion. In a word they have a right to expect, and to receive from our civil and religious communities combined, that sort of education and training which will raise them, ultimately, to the enjoyment of all the blessings of civilization; the rights and privileges of freemen; and make them useful citizens of this Republic. This I conceive to be the precise object of the government. And if we fulfill not these duties, which grow naturally out of our connection with, and relation to them, we cannot avoid the imputations – which, by the way, have already, been falsely charged against us – of injustice, unkindness, unfaithfulness to them.

It cannot be denied that the work of civilization is no easy task, and is exceedingly slow in its progress. But when we look back in the pages of history five or six hundred years, and see what was then the state of the Anglo-Saxon race; and whence sprung the most polished and scientific nations of Europe, we find much to encourage using our efforts to extend the blessings of civilization; and sufficient to convince the most skeptical of the practicability of civilizing the barbarous tribes of this continent.

Gentlemen, these people sustain a peculiar relation to us, and must be civilized, and the work is ours. They are not to share the fate of the innumerable tribes of North American Indians, which a few centuries since roamed fearlessly in their native forests; but have been swept into oblivion, and are with the generations before the flood – and of others not a trace remains but in tradition, or in the person of some solitary wanderer – the last of his tribe, who however like a ghost among the sepulchres of his fathers – a spark still faintly glimmering in the ashes of an extinguished race. But happily the circumstances growing out of our relation and connection with, the aborigines of this country, are altogether different, and cannot, possibly, in the nature of things produce such results. They are not only of the same

nature, and of one blood with ourselves – but they are our brethren, our fellow citizens, and of the same race. And must be raised to a condition to partake with us in all the blessings we enjoy; to participate with us in all the affairs of the government; and to be in all respects on an equal footing with other citizens of this Republic. The best informed and more intelligent of our native population are fully sensible of the evils of their present state, and feel that a change in their situation has become necessary, and are strong in the conviction that we sincerely desire their welfare, and they are steadfastly looking to us to relieve them from their present degradation.

The chiefs of several tribes within our jurisdiction have recently expressed to me an earnest wish to have missionaries and schools established among their people, who they say, are anxious to receive instruction. And there is nothing now to prevent the sending of missionaries and the establishment of schools, except what results from the want of pecuniary means. I sincerely hope the time is not distant when this difficulty will be removed, and that the present generation may have lights kindled in all their borders; and that generations to come may be saved from the darkness and wretchedness of their fathers.

This object is truly worthy of the continued labors, and persevering efforts of the government. And I am exceedingly gratified to observe, that there seems to be a most remarkable reciprocity of feeling and union of sentiment on this subject, which plainly indicate that the hand of Heaven is in it – as no power short of this could ever have produced such a state of things. This is for our encouragement, and it is encouragement, enough to induce us to persevere. Indeed, in such circumstances we cannot relax our efforts.

Honor, justice, humanity, and all that make man respectable in the sight of God and men imperiously require us to go forward, in full faith till this work, so auspiciously commenced shall be accomplished.

My enthusiasm, gentlemen, on this subject, and that I am not ashamed to acknowledge that I possess it, does not blind me to the difficulties and obstacles which are to be overcome; past experience impresses this on me. But I hold that these difficulties are not insurmountable, and if the government will persevere in its duty, this thing, which we so earnestly desire, will be accomplished.

The pecuniary embarrassments of the government, I am aware, present a serious obstacle to the carrying forward of the work of civilization as rapidly as we could wish. I am also aware that economy in our public expenditures is “the order of the day”-indeed the fashion of the time. This to a certain extent, and in reference to particular objects, is undoubtedly wise and proper. There is, however, a just and politic economy, the result of extended and liberal views; and there is also a false and spurious economy, the offspring of narrow views and little minds. The one is wholesome to the reputation, and to all the true interests of a nation. The other is hollow-hearted and mean, and disgraceful to a nation’s character. But, gentlemen, I doubt not your discrimination in this matter; and I also feel that you agree with me as to the importance of the subject on which I have been speaking;-I, therefore, scarcely need invite your attention to its serious consideration, or impress upon you the necessity of adopting measures which will so increase the public finances as will enable you to spare an allowance sufficient, for the purposes and plans of the government, for the improvement of our native population.

I must also be permitted to remark, gentlemen, that it is absolutely essential to the success of our efforts, for the civilization of the natives, that the legislature speedily adopt measures to increase and preserve the reputation and influence of the government in the estimation of this part of our community, and secure for it full confidence and respect; without which your best concerted plans must fail.

You are not ignorant, gentlemen, of the attempts which have recently been made by some designing, bad men, to create discord and jealousy among the natives and to incite them to insubordination. And I regret to say, that in one or two instances, they succeeded too well; and at one time created no little concern for the preservation of the authority and influence of the government.

In reference to the natives, this government unquestionably, should be, in its nature kind and mild, but firm and absolute. Laws and regulations must be formed to meet their advancing state, and which would remove the perplexing and provoking differences which so extensively exist between various tribes. Which evil, in itself, if not effectually cured, will hinder for many years, the progress of every effort which may be made for their benefit.

Another evil, perhaps equally necessary to be provided against, by proper laws and regulations is, their intercourse with unprincipled *civilized*, if I may employ the term, men, who visit them for the purposes of trade. Many of the natives complain, and justly too, that the morals of their youth are corrupted by bad foreigners, – of which we have sad proofs, as well also as by some of our people, who trade with them. This is a well known fact, and the cause of incalculable injury to the natives and seriously retards their civilization. As we would hope to promote their welfare, this evil must, in some way, by the wisdom of the Legislature, be removed. It can be done effectually in one way, and in one way only; and that is, as I recommended to the Legislature on a former occasion, “that the government interpose and regulate the manner of conducting trade with the natives.”

I am fully sensible of the delicacy of this subject, in the view I am now taking of it, but its importance in order to the attainment of the object of the government, forbids that I should pass it unnoticed; or that the evil should longer continue. Some people are so sordid in their views and affections, that when you come in contact with their pecuniary interests, they lose sight of every other consideration, however high or important; and such doubtless will raise their voice against any measure, which in their opinion, may in any degree, restrict their trading operations. But I dare not be unfaithful to my trust, to my conscience, nor to my God.

I therefore earnestly recommend, that in future all trading establishments connected with the natives, shall be made in reference to the influence which these establishments are expected to exert over the natives – and that they be made to bear upon every measure which may be put in operation for the civil, moral, and intellectual improvement of the natives.

Gentlemen, I have endeavored faithfully to spread before you, in as concise a manner as I could, the actual condition of a large and very interesting portion of our population.

I have stated, and have aimed to do it faithfully, their just claims upon the government. The plans and measures best adapted to satisfy these claims, have in part been suggested – others, in the course of your deliberations, will doubtless present themselves to you.

The work is now before you, and the scene it presents is certainly adapted to fill and to delight minds bent on doing good.

The view and contemplation of it by such minds, I am sure will never tire. Do good and communicate to all men as ye have opportunity, is a divine command. And every man of real benevolence finds his chief happiness in obeying this command. Therefore to do good and to communicate to those heathen tribes, whom God has placed under our special care, is unquestionably our indispensable duty – a duty than which, I can conceive of none more imperative upon the Christian, the philanthropist and the statesman.

It affords me much pleasure to be able to inform the Legislature that this government has happily succeeded in settling the difficulties which subsisted between Kings Dour-wee and Zio, – and in terminating the cruel war, which, for the last five years has completely cut

off all communication with the interior tribes of that section; and which has produced incalculable sufferings among the inhabitants of a large portion of the Grand and Little Bassa territories.

Kings Dour-wee and Zio have solemnly pledged themselves never again to make war one upon the other, under any circumstance whatever; and in case any dispute or misunderstanding should hereafter arise between them, it shall be referred to this government for adjustment;—whose decision shall be final. I have great pleasure in stating that King Peter Harris, of Grand Bassa, made himself particularly serviceable to the government in bringing about a reconciliation of the above parties. He was, indeed, unremitting in his exertions, and at one time was absent from his home, on a mission to them as an agent of this government, more than six months. We are also indebted to Kings Barguay and Salt-water of Little Bassa, for important services rendered our Commissioners while employed in the above negotiations. Nor can I omit here to record my acknowledgments for valuable assistance rendered the government, in this delicate matter, by Hon. Stephen A. Benson, and Lewis K. Crocker, Esq., — whose indefatigable exertions greatly facilitated the efforts of the government in speedily terminating the war and restoring tranquility to the country. I am gratified in being able to state that the expense incurred by the government, in settling this war, was partly met by the patriotic and liberal minded citizens of Grand Bassa County, by voluntary contributions. The balance was paid from the public Treasury — which amount you will find entered in the Treasurer's accounts.

I regret to have to inform you, gentlemen, that the same success has not attended similar efforts of the government in other quarters. In the latter part of June last at the earnest solicitation of a number of Chiefs, Veys, Golahs and Deys, I appointed a Commission, consisting of three gentlemen, to visit the Vey Country for the purpose of arranging and settling the disputes existing between the several parties occupying that territory, and if possible, put an end to the war, which was then, and is still being vigorously prosecuted between a part of the Vey and Golah tribes. But I am sorry to say, after an absence of several weeks, the Commissioners returned without being able to accomplish all that was desired or anticipated. The causes of their failure you will find fully set forth in their report which will be laid before you. I beg, however, to recommend that further, and immediate efforts be made to settle those disputes and difficulties; and terminate this war.

Knowing as we do, what violent resentment and incurable animosities these discords generally generate, and how they are apt to exasperate and inflame the contending parties, and prompt them to acts of the greatest cruelty, — you are called upon, and required, gentlemen, by indispensable obligations to Almighty God, and to your fellow citizens, to use all the means in your power, for stopping the further effusion of blood, and averting the impending calamities that threaten the inhabitants of those territories.

A messenger is now here from the Chiefs of the Vey country soliciting the interposition of this Government in settling the disputes and wars, which are represented as producing great distress among the people. I beg, gentlemen, that you will give this subject early attention, that the messenger may be dispatched as early as possible, with such communications as you may direct to be transmitted to the chiefs.

I have the honor herewith to lay before you, for your consideration a communication I received a few weeks since from the chiefs of Timbo, asking the protection of this government; and to be received within its jurisdiction by the annexation of the whole of their territory to the Republic, — and requesting that one Will Buckler — who, some years ago settled among them, but has since succeeded in collecting around him a large force, composed principally of strangers, and now threatens the extermination of the original inhabitants, and

who has recently committed, with impunity, several cruel murders in the country – be moved from the territory.

I beg also to submit to your consideration the propriety of adopting measures to relieve the authorities and people of Grand Bassa from the annoyances of Fisherman Grando, who, by some means, has obtained an influence in that country – though himself a Pickaniny Cess man, – which he exerts improperly by creating difficulties and disturbances, sometimes of a very serious character among the people: which greatly interrupt friendly intercourse, and not a little retard the progress of civilization among the inhabitants of that district.

During the past year I had an interview with Grando, at his town, and explained to him the folly of his course, and the pernicious effects of his conduct, not only upon his own people, but upon the happiness and prosperity of the people of the whole country. I assured him that the government could not longer tolerate such conduct; and unless he changed his course, legal proceedings would be instituted against him. To all of which he listened attentively:—and, with seeming penitence, readily admitted the error of his course, and the wrongs he had been guilty of, and promised never again to interrupt the peace and harmony of the people.

I had scarcely left the country, however, before his evil genius got the better of him; and he has since been as mischievous as ever – and has recently been guilty of sundry gross infractions of the law, and of using threats against the local authorities of Grand Bassa County.

The man Grando has given the government more trouble decidedly, than any other headman, or chief within the limits of the Republic. He has never yet been made properly to atone for the murder of Governor Finley, and rather thinks himself above the laws – but the time has fully arrived that he be taught his obligations to the government and convinced of the majesty of the laws.

Gentlemen, in connection with this subject, and as a means of counteracting Grando's baneful influence, and checking his bad practices, I would suggest that the Legislature authorize the establishment of a settlement at the Cove, near his town – which will bring him under the immediate eye and control of the authorities, and which will also have a good effect upon his people by bringing them more closely in contact with civilized habits. There are other considerations, gentlemen, of a commercial nature, which seem to favor the establishment of a settlement at that place. Its commercial advantages, as a convenient landing place especially, are generally admitted; and the idea of forming a settlement there to secure these, is by no means new. And I think no difficulty need be apprehended in carrying out the measure proposed. Indeed many of the citizens of Edina, Bassa Cove, and Bexley, have expressed to me a desire to locate there, and will do so immediately provided the government will make them small grants of land, and extend to them certain assistance specified in a communication addressed to me on this subject – which I have the honor herewith to lay before you – and which I beg to recommend to your favorable consideration.

Gentlemen, during your recess I have used my best endeavors for the preservation of harmony and friendly relations with all nations, by encouraging the intercourse of foreigners – without distinction of country – and by extending to them every facility in my power for conducting trade with the citizens of this republic:—and it would have been a source of much gratification to me, if the conduct of all those traders had been such as to enable me to assure you that, on their part, a similar desire existed to maintain a good understanding with the government. Such, however, in every instance, has not been the case; – and I am pained to have to inform the Legislature that unworthy attempts have been made by one or two of these traders to alienate the affections of certain native tribes within the jurisdiction of this Republic to induce them to disavow their obligations to this government – and to incite them

to insubordination; and indeed, encourage them to actual hostilities. Means were adopted, however, as far as possible, to counteract these pernicious influences – to preserve the attachment of the natives – and to maintain the influence and authority of the government over them. But, gentlemen, to obviate the consequences of a repetition of such practices, the passage of a law providing adequate punishment for such offences may be necessary.

I am also sorry to have to say that some difficulties have arisen in regard to the operation of law of the Republic regulating Navigation, Commerce, and Revenue.

One Mr. David Murray, the agent of Messrs. Laurie Hamilton & Co., London, a few months since landed a quantity of merchandise at certain points, on our coast, in direct violation of said law; at the same time informing the inhabitants that he had received express instructions from his employers not to acknowledge the authority of the Liberian government, or its officers, if they thought proper to assume the responsibility, might seize his vessel and the goods thus landed.

Upon this information from the officers of the revenue – who understanding the policy of the government and anxious themselves to avoid any collision with British merchants by using compulsory measures to compel obedience to the laws, communicated the facts to the Treasury Department, and asked to be instructed as to the course they should pursue – I addressed a note to Captain Murray stating to him my earnest desire to avoid the necessity of seizing his property; and calling his attention to an interview I had had with him, in the early part of the year, on the subject of the jurisdiction of this government, &c.

At which time he assured me that in future he would respect the laws of the Republic, and would give no further cause of complaint. In reply to which, I received from Captain Murray on the 23d of October the following:

“Sir: In answer to your letter of the 3d inst, I beg to say that I am instructed by Messrs. Laurie Hamilton & Co., not to pay any duties on goods to be landed on the Kroo coast, they having laid their claim to exemption therefrom before Viscout Palmerston, and from a copy of a letter received by them bearing the date 2d July, 1850, Commodore Fanshawe had been instructed to institute enquiries into the matter, and he may be expected up in all this month for that purpose.”

It had already been intimated to me that representations had been made to Her Majesty’s Government respecting the exercise of jurisdiction by this government, over certain territories on our leeward coast, and that the Liberian authorities, in said communications, were accused of imposing unreasonable and unjust restrictions upon British commerce; and that Commodore Fanshawe would probably visit Liberia soon to ascertain the facts in relation to these representations. In view of this and other considerations, and especially to convince British merchants of our desire to cultivate and maintain a good understanding with them – I informed Captain Murray that compulsory measures would not be resorted to until I had had the honor of an interview with the Commodore; in the mean time, the government would hold him responsible for the duties accruing on all goods which he might land within its jurisdiction: and that it would not be difficult to prove, in the most convincing manner, to Commodore Fanshawe, as well by solid reasons, as by the authority of the best authors, who have written on the law of nations: and the judgment of civilized states in general – the rights of this government to exercise sovereignty over the territory in question.

Upon what grounds Messrs. Laurie Hamilton & Co., claim exemption from paying duties on goods landed on what they term the Kroo Coast, or at any point within this Republic, I am not fully informed. With respect to the said Kroo Coast, Captain Murray is well aware that that territory is within the jurisdiction of this Republic – that the right of soil and the political jurisdiction over it were obtained for a just and valuable consideration and that it is held by titles as fair and unequivocal as any human property can be held; and that the abori-

ginal inhabitants, of that territory voluntarily recognized their allegiance to this government. I am aware that attempts have been made there, as well as at other points within our jurisdiction, to induce the native chiefs to disavow their formal and solemn conventions with this government – and to accuse the Liberian authorities of misrepresentation and fraud in treating with them for lands.

But I thank God, as far as I know, at our hands, gentlemen, the natives have no just cause of complaint. Would that all with whom they have had to do could say as much. But ah! How solemn the reflection, that on the great day of retribution, what thousands of these poor benighted heathen will appear at the bar of judgment to arraign those, who would attach to the Liberian Authorities frauds, of which they themselves have been guilty. But I entertain the hope and belief that the people of Liberia will then appear in the whiteness of innocence – and that they will not only be free from all accusations of injustice to these their unfortunate, and degraded brethren, but that the testimonials of their acts of justice, kindness, benevolence towards them will plead the cause of their uprightness in all their dealings with them, as it is now authenticated by records upon earth.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> ultimo, I received a dispatch from Commodore Fanshawe, informing me that he had been directed by his government to visit Liberia for the purpose of conferring with the authorities respecting the complaints which have been made by British merchants, who occupy trading establishments on the coast of Liberia; but in consequence of circumstances of considerable importance on the southern part of his command, he could not at an early period visit Monrovia in person – but to avoid delay he had deputed Commander Patten, the senior officer of the Division of Her Majesty's cruisers on the north coast, to confer with this government on these matters.

Under cover, from Commodore Fanshawe, I received the same day a dispatch from the Right Honorable Viscount Palmerston, Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, calling the attention of this government to the said complaints of British merchants engaged in trade to the Coast of Africa, who represent that Regulations have been established by this government, the tendency and effect of which is greatly to obstruct and cripple the commercial operations of British merchants.

His Lordship has been pleased to enumerate in said dispatch the principal complaints, which have been addressed to Her Majesty's Government by British merchants engaged in trade on the Liberian coast. Some of these complaints are founded upon certain provisions of the law of the Republic, regulating Navigation, Commerce, and Revenue – the tendency and effect of which, they say, greatly obstruct and cripple the commercial operations of British subjects.

Others are mere fabrications – vile accusations without the slightest shadow of truth to sustain them – charging the government with adopting measures and restrictions, which I may confidently say never existed, except in the imagination of some of the servants whom these merchants have employed on the Liberian coast, who, doubtless, have been making, from time to time, to their employers, these gross misrepresentations.

1<sup>st</sup>. Of the Navigation, Commerce, and Revenue law, passed December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1849, they complain that no foreign vessel is allowed to unload at any ports except Monrovia, Marshall, Grand Bassa, and Sinoe – that the import duties to be levied under said Act are in many cases excessive, in regard to some articles amounting to 30 per cent.; and that those duties are levied, not on the cost price merely, but on the value realized by the actual sale of the goods; that no goods shall be admitted without the production of a declaration containing minute details not usually required in any other country, as to their origin, their destination, and their nature; and that although the 17<sup>th</sup> section of the 4<sup>th</sup> article of said law authorizes the Collector of Customs to relax the stringent provisions of the 2d section, in regard to the four

ports of entry, by allowing him to grant official permits to land goods at Factories owned by citizens of Liberia on any part of the Liberian coast; this facility is not afforded to British subjects, and that thus an advantage is given to Liberian citizens, which is unjustly and injuriously withheld from British subjects.

These, gentlemen, will of course claim your attention, and I doubt not but that you will give them serious consideration, and will willingly remove every restriction which either unjustly or unnecessarily obstructs the commercial intercourse of British, or the merchants of any other country.

2ndly. It is represented, by these said merchants, to Her Majesty's Government – that the Liberian Government exercises sovereignty over territory fraudulently obtained from the native proprietors – that it designates the aboriginal inhabitants of the coast as aliens, and endeavors to prevent British subjects from transacting business with them, except through the medium of citizens of Liberia – meaning, I suppose, those who immigrated from the United States; – that it is required that a license should be taken for each trading station at a cost of 2701; – That the Liberian authorities monopolize the advantage of whatever demand may happen to exist for Tobacco, Gun-powder, Muskets, Corckery, Salt, Rum and Soap;- that all purchases of land or houses made by foreigners are ordered to be null and void – and that American traders ridicule the regulations and restrictions of the Liberians, and tell them – British traders – plainly, that if they are driven to abandon the trade, they will at once take it up.

Is it not astonishing that men in their senses should make such representations, so totally void of truth to Her Majesty's Government?

Captain Patten, of Her Majesty's Brig Hound, arrived here on the 18<sup>th</sup> ultimo, and entered immediately upon the investigation of the various complaints of Messrs. Laurie Hamilton & Co., London, who appear to be the principal complainants, and who certainly have indulged unjust and unwarrantable charges and accusations against the Liberian Authorities.

It is possible, indeed I will not doubt, that those gentlemen, acting upon statements made to them by their agent, believed that they were making correct and truthful representations to Her Majesty's Government. It is to be regretted, however, that they so readily gave credence to such statements – without, apparently, giving themselves the least trouble to ascertain the real facts of the case.

Full explanations of the several items of complaints were furnished to Captain Patten; and every facility afforded to enable him to examine thoroughly the invidious charges and imputations that have been preferred and insinuated against the Government and People of Liberia. No one could be more particular and minute in the investigation of the charges and complaints referred to, than was Captain Patten. – And I have great satisfaction in being able to inform the Legislature, that he expressed himself fully satisfied and convinced that gross misrepresentations have been made to Her Majesty's Government, in which great injustice has been done the Authorities and people of this Republic; and distinctly condemned the course of Captain Murray in resisting the laws of this Government.

Captain Patten, however without naming any particular provision of the law regulating Navigation, Commerce, and Revenue, intimated a wish that the Legislature would reconsider some of the sections of said law, which he considered rather restrictive, and would extend to British traders every possible facility for conducting business with the citizens of the Republic.

I assured him that the Government and people of Liberia entertained the most friendly feelings towards British subjects; and that the Legislature would not hesitate to rescind or amend any existing regulation – which may be done without seriously prejudicing the interests of the Government – that can in any respect obstruct or cripple British commerce. The

various correspondence on the subject of the complaints referred to above, will be laid before you.

Gentlemen, permit me to remark here, that it is the duty on articles of merchandize specified in an Act entitled “An Act to raise a Revenue,” the sale of which the Government monopolizes, that foreigners consider excessive; I beg, therefore, particularly to recommend that said Act be wholly repealed, and that you adopt other measures for supplying an adequate Revenue.

With respect to trading establishments along our coast, whether owned by citizens or foreigners, I am still of opinion that a license should be obtained from the Government, for which a reasonable and liberal sum shall be paid, to be applied exclusively to the promotion of civilization and education among the aboriginal inhabitants.

I beg also to recommend that the amount realized from the sale of licenses under the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>d</sup> sections of the 8<sup>th</sup> Article of the Navigation, Commerce, and Revenue law, be granted to the several corporations for the improvements of streets, &c., in their respective townships.

Gentlemen, in view of the primary importance of providing every facility for carrying the laws into prompt and faithful execution, and to render the administration of justice as convenient to the people as may consist with their present circumstances – I cannot omit, once more, to recommend to your serious considerations the Judiciary system of the Republic. No branch of our political organization is more interesting than this to the public happiness; and to none can those improvements which have been suggested by experience be more beneficially applied.

The compilation of the laws of the Republic, as authorized at your last session, I regret to say, has not been accomplished to the extent of your wishes. I ask the appointment of a committee of the legislature to examine the work, as far as it is gone, and to report upon its correctness, and the circumstances which have delayed its completion.

The importance of agriculture, as an efficient contributory to the welfare and prosperity of the human family, and especially of the people of Liberia, is so fully recognized and understood, that I deem it quite unnecessary for me to urge upon you, at any length, its claims to all the aid and encouragement it may be in your power to give to every well directed efforts for its improvement. It cannot be doubted that the cultivation of the earth, with other branches of rural economy, supply the vital principle – the very life blood – to every other department of human industry.

Among the most successful of the various measures adopted, in other countries, to give impulse to agricultural improvements, are agricultural societies – and I could wish to see such societies established in every part of this Republic.

But, in my opinion, a central agricultural association is at present particularly needed. One that would be able to extend its beneficial influences so generally as to awaken and keep alive throughout the country an active interest in its proceedings. Such an association would certainly deserve, in a liberal degree, your countenance and aid.

Many of you, gentlemen, are from agricultural districts, and are entitled, far better than myself, to interpret the wishes of those engaged in agricultural pursuits; therefore, on the present occasion, I have only to say, that whatever measures you may adopt for advancing the interests of agriculture shall have my ready and cheerful concurrence.

With respect to common schools, and the importance of extending the means of education – I feel that I cannot do better than to invite your attention to what I had the honor of communicating to the Legislature, on this subject, at its last session. I am quite sensible of the feeling of the legislature with regard to the extension of the facilities of education; and I exceedingly regret, gentlemen, the pecuniary disability which still exists; and which alone, I

am sure, prevents your doing all that you desire to do for the promotion of useful knowledge. It is, however, a source of much gratification to know that our friends abroad – especially in the United States – in this respect, are interested in our behalf. Besides the valuable assistance we are receiving, in the education of the youth of this Republic, from various missionary societies in the United States: you are doubtless aware, gentlemen, that an association has been formed in Boston, United States, and has been chartered by the Legislature of the State of Massachusetts, for the purpose of receiving and managing the funds, and the general scope and plan of a college in Liberia. A member of the corporation in a letter to me dated June last, says: “We shall soon need a free communication of your views on this subject, of education, on all points that may occur to you.

It is obvious that a charter from our government will be needed for the proposed college, with suitable ground for such buildings as may be required, and such patronage and aid towards the erection of buildings as the government may be able to bestow. We shall of course do nothing more than collect and invest funds, until we receive a communication of your mind, on the subject. Whether the instructors shall be appointed by our Board of Trustees, with the concurrent approval of your government, or by the latter alone; or by the corporation to be chartered in Liberia – are questions which you will consider and favor us with your minds.” In reply to this communication I have assured the gentleman that every facility that this government can afford for carrying out the important objects of his board, will readily be granted; I, at the same time, intimated to him the embarrassed state of our public finances, and that but little, if any, pecuniary assistance could, at present, be rendered by this government; but that I would call the attention of the Legislature to the subject, and communicate to him the result of your deliberations. I therefore ask an expression of the Legislature on the points, suggested above, for transmission to the Board of Trustees.

The experience of another year has but strengthened the conviction entertained and expressed in my address to the Legislature at its last session; that our present militia system was rapidly tending to utter disorganization. It is with much regret that I feel obliged to say, that in my opinion all hope of reviving or sustaining it in its present form may as well be abandoned at once. It is evident that circumstances demand its entire reorganization upon other principles and with essentially different features. My own sense of the importance of establishing, cherishing, and supporting a strong and efficient militia force, is undiminished – not, however, that I advocate war, to this my feelings are decidedly averse; and it is in view of this, that I advocate the embodying of a militia. Surrounded as we are, gentlemen, by heathen tribes whose ruling passion is war; I look upon the military organization of this government as the most efficient anti-war measure that can possibly be adopted. But how to organize such a system, as will answer the ends contemplated, in the present state of popular feeling of the subject, is to me a problem of difficult solution. I must confess, gentlemen, my own inability to suggest a plan that is satisfactory to myself, or that I would take the responsibility in offering to your consideration. I recommend the subject to your attention, and pledge my ready concurrence in the adoption of any system that shall give the promise of being an improvement upon the present one.

Gentlemen, I have the honor to inform you that your resolution, of the 24<sup>th</sup> December last, authorizing the removal of the cannon from Central Fort to Fort Norris Battery, has been carried into effect; as yet, however, these cannons have not been mounted. The carriages are being prepared, and it is hoped to have them in a very short time ready for use. I regret very much that we were not able to have the carriages constructed of more durable materials, as cast iron for instance, which would relieve the government of the almost annual expense of supplying new ones, or keeping wooden ones which rapidly decay, exposed

as they necessarily are to the weather, in repair. I hope that the Legislature will, as soon as it may find it convenient, to do so, order iron carriages for all our stationary cannon.

In this connection I beg to call your attention to the dilapidated condition of nearly all the gun carriages on our frontier settlements.

Hitherto, the citizens of those settlements, with the exception of a very little aid, a year or two ago, from the government, have met the expense of the repairs of those carriages. But for some time, feeling themselves in no danger, they have neglected the repairs, and now look to the government to relieve them from this tax.

I scarcely need remind you, gentlemen, that the fiscal affairs of the government will demand your serious attention. In the early part of the year the most flattering anticipations were indulged of relieving the government from its pecuniary embarrassments. No one I believe entertained a doubt on the subject: and I fondly cherished the hope of being able, at this session of the Legislature, to congratulate you on the efficiency of your present revenue system. But, gentlemen, by reference to the Treasurer's accounts, you will observe that there still remains a balance against the government of \$36,000: of which amount, about two thirds are due to foreigners. I sincerely hope that the Legislature will adopt measures that will enable the Secretary to discharge speedily these claims. Necessarily a great proportion of the public resources is derived from duties on imports, and, as you are already aware, various circumstances, which were impossible to foresee and provide against, have concurred, during the year, to embarrass the officers of the customs, in collecting the tariff dues; and in some instances large quantities of merchandise have been landed on the Liberia coast, upon which the duties could not be secured, and of consequence, produced a serious deficiency in the receipts anticipated from that source.

The Secretary of the Treasury has been directed to lay before you, at an early day, an estimate of the appropriations necessary for the ensuing year: and also accounts, in detail, of the receipts and expenditures for the fiscal year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September last. The following is a concise statement of the accounts the Secretary will lay before you, viz:

In conformity with a resolution of the Legislature adopted the 28<sup>th</sup> of December last, authorizing the appointment of auditors of public accounts, &c., &c. – I appointed Messrs. Warner and Hicks to that duty. They have been laboriously engaged for some months, in the vouchers and accounts of all transactions at the Treasury Department, since the new organization; and they will have ready in a few days, to be laid before you a full report of their doings.

There are other matters, gentlemen, that deserve consideration, and to which I shall take occasion, during your present meeting, to invite your attention, by special communication.

Gentlemen, I now commend you to the source of all wisdom and knowledge; and I pray that God will guide and direct all your deliberations to His praise, and to the happiness and prosperity of the people of this Republic, and of Africa in general. Feeling, as I most certainly do, that you will avoid all hasty, and ill-considered projects; and that you will avail yourselves of the current experience of the times; and that that experience will not suffer delay, in its application, in consequence of any obstinacy in the exercise of delegated power – I beg to assure you that your labors, to promote the general good, will receive from me the most prompt and decided co-operation.

J.J. Roberts.

Government House,

Monrovia, December 3d, 1850.

## Annual Message to the Legislature December 3, 1851

Gentlemen: – it is the business of the Executive, on every occasion of the meeting of the Legislature, to inform them of the condition of the republic, and to recommend to them any public measure which he may think expedient for their adoption. It is therefore my first and indispensable duty to invite your attention to the providential favors with which our country has been blessed during the past year.

In addition to the inestimable privileges of civil and religious liberty, which we are still permitted to enjoy, we have abundant cause of congratulation and thankfulness that our land has been exempted from the visitation of any pestilential disease, and that, in the general, a remarkable degree of health has been preserved to its inhabitants.

The agricultural departments of the country were never more encouraging than at the present time; commerce is also rapidly increasing, both in variety and quantity of the articles of export; and I am happy in being able to inform the Legislature that a decided improvement, in the several towns and villages of the republic, is everywhere observable. Indeed, every fundamental interest of the government and people seem to bear the impress of Divine favor and approbation. These circumstances cannot fail to awaken in us a deep sense of the goodness of God, and inspire us with feelings of profound reverence and devotion to him who is the author of all good, and draw from us grateful acknowledgments for benefits so bountifully bestowed.

But, gentlemen, in the midst of so many gracious favors, we have not been wholly exempted from the evils incident to human nature, nor from the innumerable difficulties and embarrassments which more or less surround all governments. And, as if to test our faith, or to remind us of our obligations to the great Governor of the universe; or to convince us that in God alone is strength, and that in him only we should put our trust; we have recently been called to experience a severe affliction in the sacking and burning of one of our villages in the county of Grand Bassa, and the cold-blooded murder of a number of its inhabitants, by a band of ruthless savages, headed by Fisherman Grando, who, ten days afterwards, having collected a formidable force, made a desperate attack upon the township of Bassa Cove, but was happily repulsed with great loss on his side. This fellow Grando, for the last fifteen years, has been hanging like an incubus upon the skirts of the villages of Grand Bassa county, taxing his evil genius to the utmost to invent annoyances by which he might distress them, and by this last act has crowned his diabolical purposes.

This, gentlemen, is indeed a distressing occurrence, individually or politically considered; and is truly calculated to arrest our attention and impress us with the fact of the uncertainty of all human affairs; and teaches us how constantly dependant we are upon God for his protecting care over us.

And while we lament the occurrence, and especially the loss of so many of our fellow-citizens, prematurely cut off in the vigor of life by barbarous hands, we can but bow in humble submission to Almighty God, acknowledging our entire dependence upon his infinite goodness; supplicating his divine aid and protection; humbly entreating that he will deliver us from the machinations of all our enemies, and that he will bless us in the adoption of such measures as will be conducive to the good and welfare of our infant state.

Gentlemen, it is with inexpressible concern I have to inform you that, among the evils likely to result from these attacks upon our settlements in Grand Bassa, there is every reason to fear – nay, I cannot see that it can possibly be avoided – that we shall be involved in difficulties with several of the chiefs in that neighborhood, who, influenced by their cupidity –

Grando, it appears, having divided with them the plunder he procured from the settlement at Fishtown – joined him in the attack upon Bassa Cove, and are now maintaining a hostile attitude, defying the authority of the government.

Foremost in these acts of rebellion and threats of insubordination, is that miscreant, Boyer of Tradetown, who actually sent a large force to aid Grando in his attack, and how now a number of men armed at Grando's barricaded town, to defend him against any attempt that may be made to arrest Grando and his associates.

It is well known to you, gentlemen, that Boyer and Grando are kindred spirits, both alike destitute of every honorable sentiment, and capable of any act, however base and treacherous. I have great satisfaction, however, in remarking that, as far as I am informed, all the chiefs, except those of Tobacconee, New Cess and Tradetown, adhere strictly to their allegiance, and manifest the deepest concern at the treachery of Grando, and Boyer's participation; and several of them have sent me assurances of their readiness to co-operate with the government in maintaining its authority and punishing the guilty parties.

This unprovoked and cruel outrage has aroused universal indignation; and every voice is raised to demand that a just retribution be visited on the perpetrators of so foul a deed. And, gentlemen, the period is now arrived which claims from the legislative guardians of the nation's rights the adoption of such measures as will at once convince all within its jurisdiction of the power and determination of the government to maintain its authority, and punish all crimes committed within its territorial limits. Every consideration demands this at your hands. To war against the dangers that assail; to guard against the dangers that threatened; destroy or drive to a distance every thing by which security might be invaded, is the purpose for which civil governments are formed; and the people have a right to require of the guardians of the public safety the adoption of such measures as will secure these important ends. Therefore, gentlemen, this subject will doubtless claim your first attention.

The circumstances of the several attacks and massacre are fresh in your memory; and I deem it wholly unnecessary to trespass upon your valuable time – doubly so at this juncture – to recount them here.

With respect to myself, I find that my duty is plain before me; and however painful the being obliged to resort to military force – though justifiable by example and necessity, yet disagreeable in itself, and repugnant to my own feelings – I should certainly but ill deserve the confidence of my fellow-citizens, were I not on the present occasion earnestly to recommend that immediate and efficient steps be taken to apprehend Grando and his associates, and bring them to justice; and also to punish those, who, by their menacing preparations and aspect of combination against the authority of the government, have placed themselves in a position which justly entitles them to the severest chastisement. That strong measures be immediately resorted to, is absolutely necessary to the permanent establishment of the authority of the government in certain districts, and the future security of persons and property, as well as of the peace and harmony of our citizens.

The protracted moderation of the government towards certain chiefs and head men in the Bassa country, seems only to have had the effect of producing in them the belief that the government will either continue its forbearance or that it has not the power of maintaining the majesty of its laws. This latter, as you well remember, gentlemen, was the opinion of Gatomba for several years; who continued his depredations, though admonished again and again, until arrested in his career by the strong arm of military power; since which time, no one has been more peaceable, and scrupulously obedient to lawful commands. And this appears to be the only method of effectually arousing others from the same delusion. Had this course been pursued – as his conduct justly deserved – in regard to Grando some years

ago, we might have been spared the outrage he has committed, and the present necessity of punishing his guilt.

Besides the almost innumerable minor depredations of Grando upon the inhabitants of Grand Bassa, this last, gentlemen, is the fourth capital offense of which he has been guilty: thus four times has his life been justly forfeited to the satisfaction of the outraged law. That he procured the murder of Governor Finley, there is but little room for doubt; that he at another time ordered the murder of two of our citizens, is also certain; that he soon afterwards assembled in arms and twice attacked the said village of Bassa Cove, is a fact of history; and the cruelties he committed on those occasions will long be remembered by many of our citizens who severely suffered. And is his cup of iniquity not yet full? Shall he be longer permitted to revel over the mangled corpses of our murdered fellow-citizens? It is for you, gentlemen, to answer.

I am satisfied, however, that you agree with me that the time is fully come when the government cannot longer suffer its authority to be trampled on with impunity; and that you will now take measures to put an effectual end to these cruel depredations, and establish permanent security to the persons and property of all within our jurisdiction. This is due not only to our own citizens, but also to strangers sojourning among us, peaceably engaged in mercantile pursuits. And to neglect this duty longer, you will be assuming, gentlemen, an immense weight of responsibility.

Under the existing aspect of our affairs in the county of Grand Bassa – especially, information having reached me that the chiefs of Tabacconee, New Cess, and Tradetown, were supplying themselves with powder and guns from vessels trading along that part of our coast – I have thought it not inconsistent with a just precaution to interdict all trade and intercourse, for a time, with the inhabitants of the above-named districts, and to require the removal of all trading factories established in said districts. It remains for the Legislature to determine how long this restriction shall continue.

After the attack of the 15<sup>th</sup> ultimo, it was thought advisable, at least to relieve the citizens from the fatigue of constant watching, to send down a small detachment of men from this place; and on the 17<sup>th</sup>, a company of seventy-five was embarked on board the government schooner Lark, and was landed there the following day; where the company still remains on duty. I should not omit to mention here, that we are indebted to Captain Pearson of the United States ship Dale, for his prompt response to my application to be conveyed in a ship to Grand Bassa. The arrival of the Dale and Lark was very opportune, as we have every reason to believe that another attack by the natives was contemplated, and that they were only deterred by the presence of these vessels and the arrival of re-enforcements. Up to the present time, nothing further has occurred there, except that the fishermen are rapidly leaving the country.

It affords me great satisfaction to be able to inform the Legislature that, excepting the difficulties in Grand Bassa, our relations with the tribes bordering on our territories, and those within our jurisdiction, have undergone no material change since your last session. And generally, from a conviction that we consider them a part of ourselves, and cherish with sincerity their rights and interests, the attachment of the natives is daily gaining strength. Constant applications are being made to the government to supply them with school teachers, and with other qualified persons to reside among them, to instruct them in the civilized modes of agriculture and the mechanic arts; and it is a matter of deep regret that the government, for want of pecuniary means, has not been able to meet their wishes, but to an exceedingly limited extent.

In conformity with the wishes of the Legislature, expressed in their resolution of December last, the government interposed its authority, and succeeded in putting an end to

actual hostilities between the Vey and Golah chiefs, but failed to effect a full reconciliation between the contending parties. They, however, pledged themselves to a perpetual armistice. Nevertheless, I regret to say, symptoms of an outbreak have manifested themselves, now and then, on both sides; but the government has kept them in check; and has not relaxed its endeavors to effect a pacification; and to accomplish this purpose, strenuous efforts have been made to assemble the whole of the chiefs at this place. And though both parties express a decided willingness to have their disputes and difficulties arranged and settled, and friendship restored, still, owing to their natural jealousies and great propensity for war, this desirable object has not as yet been effected. In obedience to the government, in September last a part of the chiefs assembled here; but in consequence of the absence of some of the Vey chiefs, who had not been summoned, and whose presence was necessary to the adjustment of some of the difficulties, the council was adjourned till the 17<sup>th</sup> ultimo. The Vey chiefs, G. Cane and Boombo, were punctual in their attendance, and have remained here ever since, awaiting the arrival of the Golah Chiefs, Tom Gum and Dourabay. These dignitaries made their appearance last in the afternoon of Saturday last. The council assembled day before yesterday, and I engaged the assistance of several gentlemen to aid me in conducting the investigation of their numerous charges and complaints. The whole affair is exceedingly complicated, and as yet we have not been able to arrive at any settlement of their difficulties. I am happy, however, to inform you that there is every reason to hope that the meeting will result in an entire reconciliation of the parties, and the permanent restoration of harmony and a good understanding among the tribes.

Gentlemen, I feel particular satisfaction in remarking that nothing has occurred during the past year to disturb our amity with foreign powers. In the United States, the cause of Colonization seems to be gaining favor, and a growing interest in that country in favor of Liberia is everywhere manifested. We have cause, however, still to regret that the United States government has not yet seen fit to acknowledge the independence of this republic. And though we are not insensible of the cause of this delay, still we had every reason to hope and expect, notwithstanding the peculiar institution of that country, that it would have been among the first to extend to us the friendly hand, to welcome Liberia among the family of nations. I am happy to remark, however, that we have still grounds for hope that the United States government will not much longer withhold this token of friendship. We have also good grounds for belief that she will even do more – that she will aid this infant State, peculiarly, in her efforts to introduce into Africa the blessings of civilization and Christianity.

It also affords me much pleasure to observe that the kind feelings of Her Britannic Majesty's government towards Liberia are unabated. We have recently had several proofs of the deep interest Her Majesty's government and the British people generally entertain for the future welfare of this infant state. And it is proper for me to mention here, that we are indebted to Her Majesty's government for the hull and part of the machinery of Her Majesty's steam-vessel *Flamer*, presented to this government by Commodore Fanshaw, &c., &c., in the name of Her Majesty. I have also the satisfaction of communicating to the Legislature that I am informed in a dispatch from Viscount Lord Palmerston, &c., &c., "that Her Majesty's government, in order to evince its great desire to encourage the growth of cotton in this republic, has given orders that five of the best kinds of cleaning-machines shall be prepared and sent to Liberia." These machines, however, have not yet been received.

You will, I am persuaded, gentlemen, learn with no less pleasure than I communicate it that I have received from His Excellency, Chevalier Bunsen, His Prussian Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of St. James – through whom I had the honor of making the application to His Prussian Majesty's government – a dispatch

containing a formal recognition of the independence of this government by His Prussian Majesty.

I have also assurances that two or three other European governments will soon follow the example of Prussia, in the recognition of our independence.

I have had the honor of receiving from the Board of Trustees for Education in Liberia – chartered, as you are aware, by the Legislature of the State of Massachusetts, United States – a communication, requesting that this government will incorporate and establish the proposed college, and endow it with such lands or funds as the government may be able to afford. This communication will be laid before you; and I feel satisfied, gentlemen, that you will give it that attention which its importance demands. I have particular satisfaction in being able to inform the Legislature, that the trustees have received very flattering encouragements from the friends of our race, to persevere in their efforts to carry forward the great work of Christianizing and civilizing Africa. I am advised that, on the receipt of the charter and information of the organization and officers' names of the Board of Trustees in Liberia, the American Board will be prepared for correspondence and immediate action with them, in regard to the erection of suitable buildings, the selection of proper instructors, &c., &c.,.

It is proper likewise for me to inform you that I have received, by the hands of Rev. Mr. Christy, agent of the Kentucky Colonization Society, a set of statute laws of the State of Kentucky, presented to this Republic by the Legislature of that State. It has also been notified to me, that the Rev. Mr. Gurley, in our behalf, has made application to the Congress of the United States for copies of the State papers of that government; and we have reason to believe that his application will be favorably considered by the ensuing session of Congress. These papers, should we obtain them, will be an important acquisition to our public library.

Hon. S. A. Benson, of Bassa Cove, has been directed by the New Jersey Colonization Society to apply to this government for its concurrence in the establishing of a new settlement, under the auspices of said society, on some eligible site in the mountain region, in the rear of Grand Bassa. The principal object, I believe, of the society is, to procure a more healthy location for emigrants arriving from the United States; but, as to their precise plans, I am not fully informed. I will, however, lay before you Mr. Benson's communication to me on the subject, and in the course of your deliberations you may be able to obtain further and more satisfactory information in regard to the enterprise.

I am requested to communicate to the Legislature the wish of the American and New York Colonization Societies – as expressed in a set of resolutions, unanimously adopted by those societies – that the new settlement in the county of Grand Bassa shall be so arranged as to extend from the northwest limits of the present villages of Bassa Cove, so as to include both settlements; and that the new township be named “Buchanan,” in honor of the late Gov. Buchanan, who, under the auspices of the New York and Pennsylvania Colonization Societies, established the settlement of Bassa Cove, and whose remains now lie buried there. This arrangement and change of name seems to be the wish of a large number of the friends of colonization in many parts of the United States; and I understand that a petition extensively signed, requesting this favor, has been forwarded to a gentleman of Grand Bassa, to be presented to the Legislature. I beg to recommend this subject to your favorable consideration.

I will lay before you, gentlemen, a communication from Geo. Wright, Esq., of Liverpool, who wishes to obtain from this government, for a term of years, a special license for the making of palm oil by machinery, at the several principal places on our coast; and, further, to be allowed the rights of introducing into this republic a copper coin of the denomination of one, two, and three cents; under such restrictions and regulations as the government may deem proper for its protection. Provided the privilege be granted, he asks that both the

machinery and coin shall be admitted into the republic free of duty. He is very sanguine that such an arrangement will greatly promote both his and the interest of this government, and is exceedingly anxious to commence the manufacture of palm oil with as little delay as possible. I therefore ask an early expression of the Legislature on this subject.

Gentlemen, during the interval of the Legislature, due attention has been paid to the execution of the different objects which were specially provided for by the laws and resolutions of the last session, and, as far as practicable, have been accomplished. The several reports of commissions, &c., &c., will be laid before you. I may state here that the new court-house in the county of Sinoe has been completed, and that county, to the extent of the appropriation has been placed in a state of defense. I regret to state that the work on the jail, ordered to be erected in the county of Grand Bassa, has not progressed as I had confidently anticipated. Circumstances, however, over which the authorities there had no control, have impeded the work, and, therefore, no blame is to be attached to them. You will be furnished with the proceedings in respect to the establishment of the unfortunate settlement in that county. The bridges, five in number, ordered to be thrown across certain streams in the interior of this county, have been completed according to the provisions of the act authorizing the work. I am also pleased to state, for the information of the Legislature, that the statute laws of the republic directed to be compiled and printed are in a forward state of completion, and will, in the course of a few weeks, be ready for circulation.

Gentlemen, during your present session, there are other matters of grave importance that will claim your particular attention. And the first to which I would invite your consideration is the Navigation, Commerce and Revenue Law of this Republic, against the operation of which, British merchants, engaged in trade to this coast, are still alleging complaints to Her Majesty's government. They complain that the present provisions of the law, in many respects, are unnecessarily restrictive, and that, instead of encouraging, they tend materially to embarrass commercial intercourse with the citizens of this republic; and that, in one or two particulars, the law in question infringes the stipulations of the treaty subsisting between this government and Great Britain.

But, gentlemen, while it may be readily admitted that some modifications of the Navigation, Commerce and Revenue Law might be adopted which would afford greater facilities to trade, it is also clear – and I am exceedingly sorry to say – that many, if not all these complaints have grown more out of commercial jealousy and unkind feelings towards Liberia, than in consequence of the operation of the law regulating commerce and revenue. At an early day of the session, I will lay before you copies of a correspondence had with this government by Her Britannic Majesty's Consul, in regard to these complaints.

These papers, gentlemen, set forth very clearly the nature and character of the several complaints of British merchants, and their demands, as also the suggestions of Her Majesty's government in regard to a revision of certain parts of our commerce and revenue laws. And I deem it unnecessary to say more than to repeat, what I have already remarked: that, in my opinion, it is very possible that some of the provisions of the present commercial regulations might be so amended as to afford greater facilities to commercial enterprise, without materially affecting the revenue or any other important interests of the government. And it cannot be doubted that the interests of Liberia require that her intercourse with other nations should be facilitated by every means in our power.

I therefore earnestly recommend to the favorable consideration of the Legislature the various subjects and propositions contained in said documents. I am aware, gentlemen, that the question of our commercial regulations involves matters of grave importance; and it rests with the judgment of the Legislature to decide how far our present circumstances will authorize any modification in our present commercial system. I am satisfied, however, that

you will carefully review the whole subject, as it has been presented to you, and will give it that attention which its weight and importance demand; and that you will to the fullest possible extent, meet the wishes of Her Majesty's government, and remove every reasonable ground of future complaint by any of Her Majesty's subjects.

Gentlemen, another subject which will claim your attention, in the course of the session, is a review of our military establishment. This is called for by the events which have recently transpired in our midst. It certainly merits inquiry what imperfections in the existing system further experience may have unfolded: and that imperfections do exist, no one will question. Surrounded as we are by savages, whose ruling passion is war, nothing is more certain to render our tranquility permanent than a well-organized militia, and a constant preparedness for any emergency. Military displays, which in civilized countries, may be justly ridiculed as useless, have among savages a most salutary effect, in regard to their subordination. And as a further measure of public security – that is, to check every attempt to disturb the peace and tranquility of the aboriginal inhabitants of the republic – I cannot omit to call your attention to the necessity of providing against the improper interference of foreign traders with native chiefs, in matters belonging wholly to this government. It is a notorious fact, that difficulties and disputes among certain native tribes within our jurisdiction have been protracted by such unwarrantable conduct, more than once nearly resulting in open hostilities. Every consideration of public safety demands that stringent measures be at once adopted to prevent such intermeddling in future.

There are other subjects, gentlemen, that will present themselves to your consideration during your present deliberations. I shall, therefore, content myself with a general reference to only one or two more. These are: the public buildings in this county, especially the lighthouse and jail, which are in a very dilapidated condition, and require immediate and extensive repairs; a census of the population of the Republic is extremely desirable, and some further regulations in regard to the post Office Department may be necessary to meet the new postal arrangement between Great Britain and this country, and such as will probably be established between the United States and this Republic.

Gentlemen, it will doubtless add to your concern to be informed that, in looking forward to the future expense of the operations which may be found inevitable in consequence of the difficulties in Grand Bassa, and other necessary plans of the Government, which will demand increased expenditures, the product of the present revenues is not likely to be adequate to the purposes of the government the ensuing year; this, however, will be better ascertained in the course of the session, when it will rest with the judgment of the Legislature to provide for such contingency. The Secretary of the Treasury will lay before you the accounts of receipts and disbursements at the Treasury Department, for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September last. The following is a concise statement of the accounts as rendered by the Secretary:

#### Receipts.

Duties on imports	\$ 13,294.35
From S. Gurney, Esq., London, 500	2,200.00
Sale of public lands,	978.00
Sale of merchandize, &c.,	6,255.97
From other sources,	9,310.68
	\$32,039.00

#### Disbursements.

Legislature,	\$ 1,366.71
Civil List,	5,942.13

Judiciary,	1,407.99
Schooner Lark,	5,281.25
Public Buildings,	1,708.90
Light-house,	237.87
Settlements at Fishtown, Grand Bassa,	1,436.86
Wreck Flamer,	714.36
Paid on deposits, &c	784.36
Territory,	2,139.88
Paid of foreign claims,	11,272.43
Drawback on merchandize,	532.62
Contingencies, pensions, military, and elections,..	1,212.23
	<hr/>
	\$34,039.14

You will observe, gentlemen, that the receipts of the past year have not been equal to the disbursements; nevertheless, while the liabilities of the government at the close of the fiscal year were \$9,969, the assets were \$14,627, leaving at balance in favor of the government of \$4,657. The committee appointed to examine the accounts of the Treasury Department for the years 1848 and 1849 have completed their labors, and their report will be laid before you.

Gentlemen of the Senate, I scarcely need remind you that, according to the constitution, the term of office for which many of the officers of the government were appointed, expires with the present session of the Legislature; and it is for you to confirm or reject such nominations as may be presented to you, to fill the vacancies thus occurring.

In the exercise of this power, I am satisfied you will be guided by an inflexible desire for the public good; and that you will not approve the appointment of any individual in whose integrity and ability you have not the fullest confidence. It is due to the officers, generally, who have been associated with me in the various departments of the government during the last two years, for me to state that, with but one or two exceptions, they have discharged their several duties faithfully, and with much credit to the government and themselves.

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives, it is possible that, in the course of the session, I may have other communications to lay before you that will deserve your serious attention; I therefore close this, with a full reliance, that under the blessing of Divine Providence, you will unite your exertions for the welfare of your common country. I assure you I am not insensible of the arduous duties now before you. The making of laws for a community, at all times deemed a most momentous and important object, must now call forth your particular circumspection and most serious deliberations; and I can but reassure you of the willingness with which my co-operation will be afforded; for, in the truth, I affirm, I have nothing more at heart than the interest of Liberia, and the happiness of my fellow citizens.

J. J. Roberts.  
Government House,  
Dec. 3, 1851.

## Annual Message to the Legislature (Summary)\* December 15, 1852

President Robert's Message: On the 15<sup>th</sup> inst: President Roberts delivered his message before the Legislature. It embraced a couple of history of all his doings while in England and France. We are delighted at the result of his mission to England;-Subjects of a perplexing character, and which in our opinion, were calculated to disturb the friendship which the British Government have constantly shown towards Liberia, are now favorable arranged, and we hope definitely settled. The President had many adverse circumstances to contend against – the most unfounded charges were brought against the people of Liberia and they were to be met and refuted – this he does satisfactorily – and gained many strong and influential friends for Liberia.

The President, in his message, acknowledges the kind attention extended to him by the Governments of England and France and makes gratifying mention of the interest manifested for the welfare of Liberia, and the assistance rendered him in the object of his visit to England, by our old friends S. Gurney, G. Raiston, Drs. Halgkin and Wagstaff, M. F. Tapper, &c. &c. Their Excellencies A. Lawrence and Jr. R. Rogers, U. S. Ministers in London, are also mentioned ascertain deep interest for the future well-being of our infant Republic. In France the President found in Admiral E. Bonet-Vilannez a warm friend to Liberia, from the U.S. Minister in Paris, Mr. Reeves, be received every mark of attention.

The President's visit to France & his interview with the Prince President will – it is presumed have a happy effect. The Prince President proved himself familiar with he history and present condition of Liberia, and assured the President that the had watched the growth of Liberia with great interest, and would do all in his power to solace its prosperity – that he felt certain that Liberia would succeed, and that it was worthy of the sympathy and kind feelings of every nation. The Prince consented to present to the Liberian Government several hundred stands of arms, and as many uniforms, and is believed that an armed vessel will be presented also.

We have not the space to notice the message, at present at greater length, we hope to be able to do so in our next.

## Annual Message to the Legislature December 6, 1853

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives

It is my duty on the present occasion of your meeting to inform you of the condition of the Republic. And I cannot perhaps commence in a manner more appropriate than by erecting another Ehenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" Every revolving year brings with it cause of congratulation and thankfulness to God that the great work in which we are engaged, of rearing up on these barbarous shores a Christian State, is onward in its march, by gradually developing its practicability and excellence.

During the year that has just passed a kind Providence has watched over us for good, and our country has been signally blessed in all its relations. Every important interest of the

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\* Full text not located

Source: *African Repository* (1850–1892) June 1852; 28, 6; APS Online, pp 160–162

government and people seems to bear the marks of Divine favor and approbation. No pestilence has afflicted our land; but, on the contrary, an unusual degree of health has been dispensed to its inhabitants. The agricultural prospects of the country were never more encouraging than at the present time – in no year of the Republic have the labors of the husbandman been more abundantly rewarded. The mercantile interest of the country seems to be in a healthful state; our merchants are extending their operations by opening up new sources of commerce ; and their efforts are producing very satisfactory results, not only in reference to products and trade, but the prosperity attending these branches of industry and enterprise has given an impulse to general improvement decidedly encouraging. Our educational interests have also been blessed – the educational facilities extended to the people through missionary enterprise, and the benevolence of private individuals in the United States, are now more extensive than ever before, and promise much good to the youth of our several communities – who, I am glad to say, are availing themselves of these advantages, and are making gratifying advancements in the various branches of useful knowledge. But above all, God has been pleased to bless the people by a gracious visitation of His churches – inspiring them with a spirit of pure and undefiled religion – thereby wonderfully extending the inestimable benefits of christianity among the idolatrous tribes of this land, and dispelling the gloom of moral night which has so long overshadowed them.

These blessings, gentlemen, are not fortuitous, but sure indications of Divine protection and favor, and should create in the minds of our fellow citizens generally, as I doubt not they do, feelings of devout gratitude and praise to that beneficent Being who in His goodness continues to favor us with such distinguished mercies. And in this connection I am impressed with the belief, and there is; certainly nothing in it presumptuous or extravagant, that the prosperity of our country, resulting from these blessings of Providence, has a relation to something out of it, and beyond itself. Its meaning evidently is' in subservience to the good of Africa ; and to my mind is sufficient proof that God is forming this people for himself; that He has raised up Liberia to exert a special agency in the great work of redeeming this vast peninsular from barbarism, superstition and idolatry.

I maintain fully the doctrine that "God has just as really a work for nations to do as He has for individuals;" and that there may be just as much of speciality in one case as there is in the other. If diversity of position, gifts and social relations, lays the foundation for a difference of action and influence as it respects individual persons, why may not the same diversity, existing as it does among the great masses of men, present a reason for special exertion and influence, as it respects particular nations ? And this appears to me to be consistent with the history of nations in all ages. In the wise economy of God each nation has its particular work assigned it, and is responsible for its performance. Many considerations lead to this conclusion. And, in relation to Africa, it would seem that the past history of Liberia clearly indicates some special design in Providence, some intimation that through her the conflict between truth and error, between freedom and slavery, is to be decided, and the victory given to eternal righteousness in the elevation of down-trodden Africa: A single glance at the past and we readily see there was something in the first planting of these settlements, something in the character of the men who formed the nucleus of this Commonwealth, which is altogether peculiar, and seems plainly to indicate some special design. Perhaps no other nation began its existence under circumstances so peculiarly embarrassing as ours. But the men who laid the foundation of Liberia's existence were chosen and precious. They were not men of extensive learning, or of great wealth, but enterprising, conscientious men, imbued with the principles of freedom. Keenly alive to the wrongs they were suffering they fled from grinding oppression to this, their fatherland, to establish and enjoy, in government

and religion, what is set forth in the Bible as the birth-right of all men, and the foundation of all advance in human well-being.

The settlement of Liberia by such a class of men was a great event in the Providence of God, and seems most clearly to point out His purposes; and to our election for some special and mighty agency in the work of rescuing this continent from the iron grasp of ignorance and sin. And, gentlemen, do we not see indications also of the same design in the training to which the infancy of Liberia was subjected. Means and ends have a connection: -by the character of the one we are led to look for something answering to it in the other. A remarkable antecedent in the Providence of God fore-shadows to us peculiarity of design in the sequence. And this is clearly illustrated by the strange facts in the early history of Israel. The wonderful providence in reference to that people must have made a deep impression on all reflecting minds that God was forming them for some great end, that He was training them for some mighty agency in the work of His mercy to man.

The beginning betokened the design. And so we may reason in reference to Liberia. In the annals of no other country, Israel alone excepted, is there to be found such a series of trials, such a wrestling with difficulties, such scenes of imminent peril, and of signal deliverance. At every step we have been made to see our danger, and the hand of God in our rescue from it.

And, gentlemen, what could be more remarkable than that Providence, which, notwithstanding our feebleness, advanced us so rapidly to the position of acknowledged nationality? and gave to our institutions a character so simple and free, at the same time wholesome and efficient, admirably calculated to develop the energies of the people, and to exalt them in intelligence and virtue; institutions whose influence, like the congenial atmosphere we breathe, pervades all, sustains all, and yet interferes with no act that is right: allows the fullest, freest exercise of thought and feelings of everything compatible with the existence of virtue as the foundation of all freedom.

Here government is purely a benevolent arrangement, looking to the good of Africa, affording encouragement to the progress of civil, social, and religious improvement among her children, leading them to that elevation where, in the Providence of God, I believe they are destined to rise- "that they may see good days wherein they have seen evil."

That Liberia has been trained in the school of a particular providence, and has been raised up for a particular work, in my mind scarcely admits of a doubt. And the character and extent of that particular work to me seems equally clear. And, gentlemen, those wonderful providences towards us should lead us to feel secure in God while we walk in the path which He has marked out for us.

I am sensible; gentlemen, that this subject has long engaged your attention, and that you are deeply interested in the welfare of the heathen around us, and especially those, in the Providence of God, placed under our immediate care; and, I doubt not, you will adopt such additional measures within your reach, as will bring them more speedily to the enjoyment of all the blessings of civilization and Christianity.

Considering the state of these people – so debased and degraded, through long ages of neglect and misery – it is exceedingly gratifying to observe the great and important changes which are now so rapidly being wrought in the social and moral condition of many of them. And these changes are steadily going forward, effecting not only the tribes immediately within the bounds of the government, but their influence is penetrating into the interior, and will ultimately and speedily be felt by those at the remotest distance. So far certainly the end has been commensurate with the means. And it is a matter of great encouragement to know that there is still an increasing willingness on the part of the natives to accept the benevolent offers of instruction held out to them by the government, and by christian associations. "Do

good and communicate to all men as you have opportunity," I may repeat here, is a Divine command, and strictly applies to us in reference to the improvement of the aborigines of this land. And I know this to be your most earnest desire.

Gentlemen, I feel great satisfaction in being able to inform you that since the last meeting of the Legislature nothing has occurred to disturb the friendly relations happily subsisting between this Government and foreign powers. No cause of complaint seems now to exist, on the part of foreign merchants and traders in relation to our commercial regulations ; but their intercourse with the citizens of the Republic, as far as have come to my knowledge, is harmonious and conciliatory.

We continue to receive from her Britannic Majesty's Government assurances of friendly concern for our welfare. From the French Government we are also receiving tangible proofs of the interest His Imperial Majesty feels in the future prosperity of this infant State. As a present to this government, the French Minister of War has forwarded recently one thousand stand of arms, to be followed shortly – as advised by our agent in Paris – by an equal number of equipments for our militia. I am happy also to inform the Legislature that, during the year just passed, the independence of Liberia has been formally recognized by His Belgian Majesty – accompanied with expressions of friendship, and warmest wishes for our success and happiness. By recent intelligence from the United States I am assured that the cause of African Colonization, and of Liberia, is rapidly growing into public favor, in that country. I regret, however, to have to acquaint the Legislature that the contemplated exploration by Commander Lynch of the country lying east of this Republic, is, for the present at least, given up.

I am aware that our fellow citizens entertained encouraging hopes that this benevolent enterprise, on the part of the United States Government would be carried into immediate execution. I know of no project – whether considered in relation to the development of the resources of the country, and the extension of commercial enterprise, or whether with a view to the spread of civilization and Christianity – that promises more real good to Liberia, and to Africa in general, than an exploration of the interior just at this juncture. Unfortunately for us, our limited pecuniary resources will not allow us to undertake the work. We will, therefore, hope that the enterprise will not be wholly abandoned by the government of the United States.

I am gratified in being able to inform the Legislature that, with one or two exceptions, the public peace among the native tribes within our jurisdiction, has been steadily maintained, and among the tribes, by whom we are surrounded, I am happy to say, the best feeling towards this government prevails.

I have to state, and it is matter of regret, that the efforts of the government to produce a reconciliation between certain Vey and Golah Chiefs, and restore peace to the country bordering on our northwest frontier, have not been as completely successful as could be wished. – Notwithstanding every effort on the part of this government to accommodate the differences between them, in the early part of the present year their affairs grew worse, and assumed an aspect which threatened the most fearful consequences. The Vey Chiefs were obstinate – received our commissioners coldly – and disregarded every overture made to them for an amicable adjustment of the disputes and difficulties, which were distracting the country. – Nothing but war could satisfy their claims. Indeed one of their chieftains, Boombo – encouraged by George Cane, of Grand Cape Mount, became so emboldened as to extend his depredations into the Dey country – sacking and burning towns and villages – murdering scores of the inhabitants, and carrying off hundreds of others into captivity.

Matters being driven to this extremity no alternative was left the Government but to take immediate, decisive, and coercive measures to check – nay, to put an end to these acts of

aggression and cruelty. – Therefore in conformity with a resolution of the Legislature, adopted at its session in December last, " authorizing the Executive to employ the most feasible, and, if necessary, forcible measures, for the purpose of bringing about a speedy termination of the existing difficulties and wars in the vicinity of Grand and Little Cape Mount" – early in the month of March a detachment of two hundred and fifty men; under the command of Lieutenant Colonel McGill, was ordered to proceed to Little Cape Mount – to afford protection to the peaceable inhabitants of that district – to maintain the authority of the government – and to apprehend the offending chiefs, that they might be brought to answer for the gross violation of their solemn engagements with this government, to abstain from all wars: and that they be required to make reparation for the wrongs they had committed on unoffending tribes.

On the arrival of the troops at Little Cape Mount – after some delay – all the principal Chiefs, on both sides – except two – were assembled, and an investigation commenced of the matters in dispute between them, and of those chiefs, who were implicated in the outrages committed on the Dey tribe. These matters, however, were found to be exceedingly complicated, and likely to consume much time in their adjustment; it was therefore thought advisable that the chiefs – who readily consented – should repair at a time fixed to Monrovia, where the investigation would be resumed, and a final settlement had of all the difficulties between them. In the mean time the atrocious criminality of Boombo being clearly apparent, he was arrested, and conveyed to this place, and handed over to the civil authority for judicial examination.

He has been tried, and found guilty, on the fullest testimony, of all the charges alleged against him, and is now in prison undergoing the penalty of the law. With apparently deep humility and contrition, he acknowledges the enormity of his crime, and admits the justice of the punishment awarded him. Several Dey chiefs have recently joined, under assurances for his future good conduct, believing, as they say, he was influenced wholly by George Cane, who has now abandoned his interest, to ask the clemency of the Government in his behalf. I submit their request to the consideration of the Legislature, simply remarking, gentlemen, that perhaps, under all the circumstances, some commutation of his sentence might possibly be a matter of policy consistent with prudence.

I have the satisfaction to inform the Legislature that the measures taken by the Government, in reference to the Vey chiefs residing at Little Cape Mount, though not producing all the good effects desired, proved very beneficial by restoring peace to that neighborhood, and enabling the natives – especially of the Dey Country – to resume their agricultural pursuits, which in consequence of the disturbed state of the country had for some time been neglected; and but for the timely interference of the Government, another year would have found them almost wholly destitute and in great distress.

George Cane failed in his promise to meet the other chiefs here in April last, and I have reason to believe he has united with the Chief of Gorrnamra, and has recently made one or two predatory incursions into the eastern section of the Golah Contry. The intelligence, however, is not certain: I shall nevertheless be able, doubtless, during your present session, to give you further and more definite information in regard to him. With George Cane war seems to be a ruling passion. No persuasion, I fear, will restrain him from shedding the blood of his defenceless brethren. But that he must be checked, gentlemen, is certain. Common safety requires it, justice and humanity demand it, and these claims are not to be resisted. If therefore, it shall be established that George Cane is yet carrying on his predatory wars; some measure should be speedily adopted to restrain him. I am happy to inform the Legislature, that with this exception, no serious discord seems to exist among the tribes within the jurisdiction of the Republic.

The state of affairs in relation to Trade Town remains unchanged excepting, which was very desirable, that a reconciliation between Boyer and Jim Flo of Trade Town Point has recently been effected. Boyer, however, has not yet fulfilled all his engagements with the government – especially in not having secured and delivered up for trial, the person of Grando – whom he aided in the attacks upon our settlements in the county of Grand Bassa, in the year 1851. He has paid five hundred dollars in consideration of his misconduct on that occasion; but protests his inability, – in consequence of Grando having escaped out of the country, to apprehend him. In every other respect he promises implicit obedience, and is constant in his assurances of fidelity to the government, and earnestly intreats that its ban upon him, in relation to commercial intercourse, may be removed. And perhaps it is due to him that I should state that notwithstanding the dubiousness of his motives, in one instance certainly he has demeaned himself in a manner which entitles him to some credit. A few months since a Portuguese slaver attempted to revive the slave trade in that district, and Boyer, with some others, engaged to deliver him within a certain number of days two hundred slaves, and received in advance a portion of the purchase money; in the mean time, however, Boyer communicated to the authorities at Grand Bassa information of what was going on, which enabled the government to take measures to frustrate the whole design.

But, gentlemen, with respect to Boyer I may also state that hitherto, than he, no chief within the bounds of the Republic, George Cane and Grando perhaps excepted, has been guilty of grosser deception and unblushing duplicity in his intercourse with the government. For this reason, in connection with his failure to arrest Grando, whose escape from Trade Town there were good grounds to believe he favored, indeed advised, I have not thought proper to withdraw the interdict prohibiting trade and intercourse with that territory.

It will now rest with the judgment of the Legislature to decide how far his recent conduct merits future confidence – also to determine whether any other demand shall be made in lieu of the stipulation for the delivery of Grando – which was a covenant of the first importance – and also whether the interdict in reference to trade shall be raised.

I am gratified in being able to state, gentlemen, that no measure hitherto adopted by this government for the punishment of gross misconduct on – the part of native chiefs; especially those residing near the sea coast, has produced more satisfactory results than the interdiction, and the firmness with which it has been maintained, of commercial intercourse with Trade Town. I am satisfied it has given a stability to the authority of the government which no other measure could have produced in so short a time. And I am clearly of opinion that a similar policy, in reference to Grand Cape Mount, or the establishing of a settlement there, will have to be adopted to restrain George Cane from indulging that indomitable propensity for war which seems to possess him. The natives of that neighborhood report that he boasts of his intention to continue the war, and should the government send troops to chastise him he has only to retire for a few weeks into the interior, beyond their reach, and when the troops shall have left the country he will return to prosecute his designs. Such doubtless are his reasonings, as he is aware of the impracticability of maintaining a military force in the country for any length of time. The antidote, however, is an interdict of commercial intercourse with Grand Cape Mount.

Close up the channels through which he obtains his supply of arms and other munitions of war, and, in a very short time he will be powerless, and like Boyer, will return to his allegiance to the government.

In this connection, gentlemen, I am happy to state that the successful attack, by the troops of the Republic, in 1852, on Boyer's fortified town, which was supposed by the natives to be impregnable, has, I am persuaded, fully established, in regard to the natives; the

invincibility of our arms, and that in future the authority of the government is not likely to be opposed by open force.

Nevertheless, I beg to remind the Legislature of the importance of continuing a well organized militia, which, in reference to the natives, seems to be the only thing that can give them an idea of the power of the government. And, gentlemen, this is not the only consideration which should draw the attention of the Legislature to the necessity of cherishing and maintaining an efficient military force.

We have settlements remote and weak, surrounded on-all-sides by savage tribes who delight in war, and whose cupidity is easily excited, and which, in many instances, is only restrained by a knowledge of the readiness and power of the government to punish their temerity. It becomes us therefore to be prepared for any emergency. Our citizens should be thoroughly trained in the use of arms, and for acting together if called into the field. But to effect this satisfactorily our present militia system requires revision. And I would recommend it, gentlemen, to your careful attention, with the hope that you will adopt such improvements as shall give promise of greater efficiency to this arm of public defence.

It has been suggested, gentlemen, in respectable quarters, that the Legislature, at its present session, should take into serious consideration the necessity of recommending to the people some amendments to the Constitution, which the times seem to demand.

An amendment to the 11<sup>th</sup> section of the 1st article, which defines the right of suffrage, is suggested as being particularly desirable. The object of this amendment it appears, is to provide against abuses of the elective franchise ; as also against evils which it is supposed are likely to arise in the event of a large influx of immigrants on the eve of an election, who, according to existing regulations, are permitted, immediately on their arrival in the Republic, to draw lands under a certificate; which certificate, as expressed in the law, gives only an "imperfect right" in the land until certain improvements shall have been made on it, when said certificate maybe exchanged for a deed in fee simple.

The section of the constitution referred to provides that "every male citizen of twenty-one years of age, possessing real estate, shall have the right of suffrage." By some it is held that persons holding land under certificate come within the meaning of this section; others maintain that the word possession, as employed in this connection, was intended to imply absolute right or title to a freehold estate in one's own right, subject to no conditions ; therefore the party holding land by certificate only cannot claim under it the privilege of voting. This subject by some means came up before the Legislature at its last session, when the following Bill, entitled "An Act defining the right entitling male citizens to suffrage," was adopted, viz:

"That from and after the passage of this Act, all male, citizens of twenty-one years of age, who have drawn lands, and holding a certificate, showing the time at which said lands were drawn, thereby giving the drawer possession, shall be considered possessors of real estate, and allowed the right of suffrage during the term which is allowed by law for the improvement of said lands." This definition of the Legislature, however, though observed at the late general election, does not settle the question at issue. Indeed instead of satisfying the objections that had been raised it has given rise to new grounds of complaint, and has also excited no little animadversion among the people. It is contended that the act of defining is in itself unconstitutional, and though adopted possibly as a fiction of policy, it is calculated to establish a precedent of a most dangerous tendency, at once repugnant to, and subversive of the first principles of the Constitution. And, gentlemen, it must be admitted that the arguments carry with them some weight. It is too well known scarcely to require mention that in forming the Constitution no one principle was kept more prominently before the Convention than a division of the three great powers of the government, legislative, judicial, and

executive: that they should be independent of, and separate from each other each confined to the discharge of the proper and legitimate functions assigned it. Under this wise and judicious arrangement it is for the Legislature to make laws, not to interpret them, those even of the least importance, much less the fundamental law of the Constitution. To weigh words and sentences, to define their distinct and legal meaning, especially in reference to the provisions of the Constitution, is for another department of the government, not the Legislature.

However, it was this action of the Legislature principally, I believe, that suggested the idea of amending the constitution. But, gentlemen, while I confess that in my opinion some amendments to the constitution consistent with the interest of the people, and perhaps at the present time demand, are desirable, I am also of opinion that no such necessity exists for the purposes contemplated, in regard to the section referred to. It is nevertheless quite plain that the subject which has led to these reflections is one of much importance, and is entitled to the serious and candid consideration of the Legislature. The abuses complained of, and the evils likely to arise from the causes to which I have alluded, are such, gentlemen, as should be remedied, and provided against. And the remedies to be applied are clearly within the scope of the powers of the Legislature. A slight revision of the law regulating elections, will correct the one, and the passage of a naturalization law will secure the object desired in regard to the other.

Gentlemen, in a young and prosperous state, where with each revolving year, the power and resources of the Government and the energies of the people are being rapidly developed, it becomes frequently expedient to make new laws, or modify old ones, to meet the exigencies of affairs growing out of these changes, hence the frequent recurrence of your meetings.

And coming as you do from all parts of the Republic, it is presumed that you are acquainted with the particular wants of the people, having learned from them the practical operations of old laws and the expediency of enacting new ones. It is therefore expected, gentlemen, that your attention will be drawn to a review of the present code, in all its branches, and that you will make such additional laws, or amendments, as the general good may require or that circumstances may justify. I may however be permitted to invite your particular attention to the navigation, commerce and revenue law, which in view of the extension of trade requires, in my opinion, some alterations, which I will take occasion at an early day to lay before you, necessary to its efficiency, and at the same time will be affording greater facilities and encouragement to commercial enterprise.

I am not aware, gentlemen, of any very important changes necessary to be made in the Judiciary. The present system, though susceptible of improvement; works well, except perhaps so much as relates to the probate-court, whose power should be increased to enable it to act with more promptness in the settlement of estates. I recommend the whole system however to the careful attention of the Legislature. Nothing certainly is more interesting to the public happiness, than the faithful administration of justice. To this branch of the political organization the citizen looks with confidence for the protection and security of his rights, and for the redress of grievances. Before the court he presents himself, with full assurance that just recompense will be awarded him for wrongs which he may have suffered from the hands of others. It is therefore important, that every facility for carrying the laws into prompt and faithful execution should be provided. And I may also add that it is equally important that the rules of legal proceedings before the several courts, should be made as simple as possible, stripped of all unnecessary technicalities, and brought within the comprehension of every citizen.

I beg also, gentlemen, to draw your attention to the subject of education, than which no subject is more vitally important to the future welfare and prosperity of our infant state. The government being immediately under the influence and control of the people, wisdom and

knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among them, are as absolutely necessary to the support and stability of the government, as for the preservation of their rights and liberties, and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country, it is the duty of the Legislature to cherish and sustain, by every possible effort, this great interest. I am sensible, gentlemen, of the deep solicitude you feel in regard to this subject; I am well aware that the limited state of the public finances, at the present time, will not allow you to appropriate much money to this object. I doubt not, however, that you will encourage, to the extent of your ability, those missionary societies and other institutions which are promoting among us the means of education, as well as true religion; and are preparing many of the youth of the Republic for useful employment both in Church and in State. I have the satisfaction to inform the Legislature that the Act of incorporation for "Liberia College" has been accepted by the gentlemen therein named, as Trustees – that they have organized themselves into a body corporate; and though their plans, I believe, are not yet fully digested, we may hope that they will be able soon to carry the contemplated college into operation. It has been suggested, however, that some of the provisions of the charter are not as clear and as well defined as could be wished, therefore doubts might arise in regard to their true meaning, which it would be well to prevent by an amendatory act, a draft of which has been handed to me, and is herewith submitted for your consideration.

Another object of general interest, which deserves the fostering care of the government, and which cannot fail to suggest itself to your attention, is agriculture. There are but few subjects that can enter with greater force and merit into the deliberations of the Legislature than a consideration of the best means of promoting, especially among the native tribes, the agricultural interests of the country. This source of national independence and wealth I recommend to the constant guardianship of the Legislature.

The land along the banks of the St. Paul river, as far as Millsburg, having been all taken up, it has occurred to me, gentlemen, that great advantages might be secured by opening an avenue or road from the river, at some suitable point, leading into the interior; on each side of which farm lots may be laid out for the accommodation of new settlers. I have conferred with the gentleman who has charge of the Colonization Society's affairs, and the location of immigrants coming out under its auspices to this country, upon this subject. He approves the plan, and thinks that the society would not object to defray a portion of the expense thus incurred. I recommend the subject to the favorable consideration of the Legislature.

Perhaps, gentlemen, of all the evidences of the prosperity of the country the increase of population is the most unequivocal. And with respect to Liberia, the constitution requiring that the first enumeration under it shall be ordered by the Legislature this has not been ascertained since the year 1843, I beg, therefore, to recommend to the particular attention of the Legislature the propriety of making provision, at the present session, for taking a census, or enumeration of the whole inhabitants of the Republic, including the entire, aboriginal as well as the Americo-Liberian population.

Gentlemen, I have the honor of laying before you a communication from Governor Wright, enclosing an Act of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana, in reference to the purchase of a tract of land in Liberia, as a location for emigrants from that State. You will observe, gentlemen, that one of the provisions of the Act is opposed to the existing regulations of this government with regard to the allotment of lands to emigrants, and which, in my opinion, it would be impolitic to adopt. I have communicated to Governor Wright my views respecting that provision, and have stated some of the reasons which make it inexpedient for this government to entertain it, and at the same time suggested a plan which I thought might meet the wishes of the General Assembly. Accompanying is a copy of my

letter. No further communication from Governor Wright however has been received. Nevertheless, in the mean time I would ask an expression of the Legislature in regard to this subject, that the Executive might be prepared to act definitely should the question be revived.

I have an intimation, gentlemen, that a subject of much delicacy will probably be submitted to your consideration during the course of the present session. I allude to a petition which I understand will be laid before the Legislature by Mr. Jacob Vonbrum, and others, his relatives, of Grand Bassa, who claim the right of property in a certain tract of land in the aforesaid county, lying along the beach between the old settlement of Bassa Cove and Fishtown Point. They rest their claim on a purchase alleged to have been made many years ago of King John, by their father, to secure the right of way to the coast. This being a subject of much importance, I may state for the information of the Legislature, that a portion of the tract claimed was purchased whether before or after the purchase alleged to have been made by Mr. Vonbrum's father is uncertain – of King Joe Harriss, by the New York and Pennsylvania Colonization Societies; and was occupied in 1834 by the immigrants landed from the ship Ninus, whose melancholy fate forms a part of the history of Liberia. And subsequently, in 1836, a council of the chiefs of the whole country, attended by Governor Buchanan and Dr. Skinner, was assembled at Fishtown, when, as appears from the document executed on the occasion, not only the purchase made of King Joe Harris was confirmed, but the remaining portion of the territory lying around the sweep of Bassa Cove was ceded to the Commonwealth. It also appears, from what I can learn, that Mr. Vonbrum's father was represented in this council, but no claim was set up in his behalf, or any reservation made in his favor. I beg, however, to add that while the rights of the government should be strictly guarded and looked after, individual rights are no less sacred, and that justice to Mr. Vonbrum, and those connected with him in the claim referred to, demands that a candid and careful investigation of the whole matter be had by the Legislature, and if the claim can be established, that their rights be secured.

I have the satisfaction to inform the Legislature that the progress of repairs and improvement of public buildings has been as favorable as circumstances have permitted. For want of funds, no measures have yet been taken to commence the building ordered to be erected in this city for the Executive residence. I am happy to say, however, that the prospects are now more favorable, and that the work may be commenced, during the present season, under a fair prospect of being prosecuted to completion within a reasonable time. I would also invite your attention to the dilapidated condition of the light house on Cape Mesurado, which is almost entirely unfit for use. I recommend that provision be made for the erection of a new house, more suitable to the purpose, and for supplying a lamp better adapted to the wants of the mariner. A further appropriation for the erection of the prison in the County of Grand Bassa is found to be necessary ; and to which I would ask your particular attention. Your consideration is also invited to the accompanying communication from Mr. Edward Hall, of Greenville, Sinou, requesting on behalf of the proprietors of the Saw-Mill in that County, that the Government will extend to them such aid as will enable them to carry forward more successfully their operations.

The estimates of the appropriations necessary for the ensuing year, together with an account of the receipts and expenditures at the treasury will be laid before the Legislature at an early day. In the account, gentlemen, you will observe that the expenses of the year have been greatly, though unavoidably, increased by the necessity of maintaining for several months, a garrison at the new settlement of Buchanan, as also by the expedition to Little Cape Mount, and other measures which the Government has been compelled to adopt for the purpose of settling disputes and difficulties among certain native tribes, and putting an end to their cruel and destructive wars. But we may reasonably hope that the harmony now so

generally subsisting between the several tribes will continue, and that in future there will be no occasion for expending any considerable amount of money to maintain this good understanding and preserve peace.

I may not omit to mention in this place, also, that we are under renewed obligations both to the American and to the New York State Colonization Societies for pecuniary assistance rendered the Government, during the year, and which arrived very opportunely, to relieve it of some pressing demands.

In the report of the Secretary of the Treasury the state of the public finances will be fully shown. I have great pleasure, however, of stating here, that the condition and prospects of the revenue are decidedly encouraging indeed, quite equal to our most sanguine expectation.

During the year just passed the revenue has been more considerable than during any former year. And from the increased, and still increasing trade, and commercial facilities, bringing into the Republic, large quantities of merchandise, it may be safely estimated that the revenue which will be received into the treasury, from that source during the present year, will considerably exceed the amount of receipts of the year just ended. It is therefore confidently hoped that with the means which the Government will have at its disposal, from various sources, during the year, not only its ordinary expenses will be met, but all its present liabilities will be discharged, and that such public improvements may be made as are thought to be particularly necessary.

The following is a concise statement of the receipts and disbursements at the treasury, as detailed fully in the accounts which will be laid before the Legislature, for the fiscal year ending 30th September last.

Showing the receipts, into the treasury, from all sources, to have been \$35,093, while the public expenditures to the same period have amounted to \$32,072; leaving in the treasury on that day, exclusive of sundry merchandise in public warehouse, \$2,695. I may also add, there is now due the treasury, from various sources, the sum of \$7,963; and the present liabilities of the Government, including \$5,738 due to foreigners, amount to \$13,925; leaving a balance against the Government at the period above named of \$6,062.

It is my duty to inform the Legislature that the strictest accountability has been observed by the officers who have been charged with the management of the fiscal concerns of the Government. No delinquency has been discovered. And as the period for which many of the officers who have been associated with me in the administration of public affairs, during the present Presidential term, expires with the current year, I avail myself of this occasion to assure the Legislature that the officers, generally, have manifested their best endeavors in the discharge of their respective duties, and I am greatly indebted to them for their cordial support and co-operation in every thing which has been suggested for the advancement and benefit of the public interest. But, gentlemen, in the afflicting dispensations of Divine Providence, during the year, two of our most distinguished fellow citizens and public servants, have been removed by death. To say that Hon. H. Teage and James Brown are no more, is but to open afresh the fountain of public grief. But while we bow in humble submission to the afflicting hand of Divine Providence; the earnestness of language – the force of arguments and the commanding eloquence of our late Secretary of State, can never be erased from the memory of those who have listened to his patriotic appeals in this Chamber, in advocacy of Liberia's rights and national interests. Superior genius and talents were his, and his mind endowed by nature with a lively imagination, and a remarkable degree of logical strength, admirably fitted him for the many responsible public stations, which through the course of many years, he was called to fill.

And (except that his public career numbered fewer years) less may not be said in reference to the public services of the late ex-Senator Brown, whose love of country knew no

bounds, whose ardour increased in proportion to the difficulties which surrounded it, and when danger threatened, no personal sacrifice was too great for him to make for the public weal. It is not for me however, to pronounce here an eulogium on the public life and character of these eminent men. Their public deeds are identified with, and belong to the history of Liberia, and will be recorded on its pages.

Gentlemen, in the above, I have submitted for your information, and have recommended to your consideration such objects of public concern as occurred to me worthy your particular attention and serious deliberation. I may however, during the course of your session, have occasion to invite your attention to other matters of interest connected with the common weal. In the mean-time, gentlemen, I am fully persuaded that your own zeal for the interest of your fellow citizens, will readily suggest to you other subjects of importance, which will claim your immediate attention.

It is a matter of congratulation that the view which I have been able to lay before the Legislature of our affairs – foreign and domestic-presents gratifying and indubitable proofs of the continued prosperity of our country.

And in conclusion, gentlemen, allow me to say that I am deeply sensible of the arduousness as well as of the importance of the labors in which You are now about to engage. To your guardianship are committed the rights and interests of the whole people of this Republic; and your first care is to preserve and foster these by good and wholesome laws, thereby laying deep the foundation of Liberia's future happiness and prosperity. And, gentlemen, I scarcely need remind you that the prosperity of a nation depends much upon the purity of its patriotism; especially of its legislators. If this be founded on the broad and solid basis of right, political economy, as well as moral philosophy, pledges to it the possession of every object which lies within the grasp of national desire. If we desire to seek our country's good, to see her people prosperous and happy, her government permanent and just, and her national character high and commanding, this is true patriotism – a passion which if controlled by virtuous principles leads to much that is generous in sentiment, elevated in purpose, and noble in action. Men, however, do not always distinguish between the popular and the true notion of patriotism. Local attachment is a radical principle in the constitution of man, and often leads him to that popular notion of patriotism which is selfish in its objects, and in its domestic relations devoted to sectional interests. But this is not true patriotism, that patriotism which, unbounded by county lines, or sectional prejudices, is founded upon the law of benevolence, and when exercised extinguishes a thousand jealousies which are ever ready to interrupt public harmony. True patriotism is, in its very nature, virtuous; doing right, which is virtue itself. It aims by equal legislation, extending to the remotest angles of the country, to encourage and support the interests of all.

Acting ourselves, gentlemen, upon these principles of a pure and high-minded patriotism; and inculcating them in the rising generation, then shall our patrimony be also that of our children – and Liberty, having here found a home, shall abide for ever.

Gentlemen, I have now only to assure you of my cheerful concurrence and assistance, where required, to promote the discharge of your present duties. And my earnest prayer is that your minds may be drawn to that Almighty Being, the source of all wisdom and knowledge, and, from whence come all earthly blessings; that He will enlighten your understandings, and so direct your deliberations that whatever measures you may adopt they shall tend to the perpetuity of our institutions, the improvement of society, and the spread of civilization and christianity among the barbarous tribes of this continent.

J. J. Roberts,

Government House,

Monrovia, Dec. 6th, 1853.

## Annual Message to the Legislature December 20, 1854

Gentlemen: After an absence of a few months, it affords me great satisfaction to meet you again, assembled in your legislative capacity for the discharge of the arduous and responsible duties which devolve upon you as representatives of the people – the guardians of the rights of your constituency; and the fountain whence should emanate good and wholesome laws.

It is not my purpose, gentlemen, on the present occasion to advert to such local public affairs as should, and doubtless will, claim your attention during the present session; these have been laid before you, with such recommendations as were deemed advisable. It becomes my duty, however, as during my absence I have not failed to consider, and, by every means in my power, to advance the interests of our infant state, to report to you such proceedings, of a public character, as have engaged my attention while abroad.

Very soon after my arrival in England, I was glad to discover that, notwithstanding the slanderous reports of our enemies and traducers, a lively interest was still felt, both by the Government and the people of Great Britain, in the future welfare and prosperity of Liberia; and that it only required a little exertion, in the way of circulating correct information, to remove certain false impressions, which, I regret to say, in some quarters had gained credit, – and thereby increase the feeling of friendship and benevolence which seemed everywhere anxious to develop itself.

I scarcely need remind you that hitherto the Abolitionists of England – particularly the large and respectable body of Friends – have more or less maintained a silent disregard of the claims of Liberia upon their sympathy and support; from the fact of its connexion with colonization. But I am happy in being able to inform you that although their prejudices against the American Colonization Society, held in consequence of the view they take of the motives of that Society, especially of its Southern supporters – are but little abated – I found among the Quakers of England many warm, devoted friends, and consistent advocates, not only of our race, wherever oppressed, whose rights they steadily maintain, but also of the interests of Liberia; which they now readily admit has sustained herself beyond their most sanguine expectations; and that whatever might have been, or still are the motives of the Southern advocates of colonization, Liberia seems to be the child of heaven, and under the fostering care of divine Providence, is destined to do more for the elevation of civilization and Christianity into Africa than any other enterprise – civil or religious – hitherto conceived: and of consequence is deserving of the sympathy and support of British philanthropists and of the civilized and Christian world. This sentiment was advanced and favorably received by the audience, by Joseph Sturges, Esquire, a leading abolitionist, at a large anti-slavery meeting held in London, not long since.

Being encouraged by indications so decidedly favorable to the interests of Liberia; and being backed by the kind offices of several influential persons with whom I had conferred in regard to the measure – I availed myself of the occasion to broach to Her Majesty's Government a subject which has long been to me an object of serious reflection, and one I have ventured to hope might be realized at no very distant day. I allude, gentlemen, to securing to Liberia a suitable port for naval purposes – such as repairs and construction – of which we are present almost wholly deprived; and which, in some way, must be overcome before we can hope to attain any consideration maritime importance. – And to me it appears that no place upon the west coast, afford the facilities we require more invitingly than Sierra Leone.

I therefore determine – presuming the measure would meet with the approbation of my fellow citizens – to open the subject to Her Majesty’s Government. And at the first interview with which I was honored by the Earl of Clarendon, Her Majesty’s Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I briefly adverted to the commercial disadvantages we suffer in consequence of the obstructions – by shallow and shifting sand bars – at the entrance of all the rivers within our jurisdiction; and assured his Lordship that this was an inconvenience which greatly impeded the progress of Liberia, and almost paralyzed our future hopes of maritime greatness: – that, at present, no object was of greater importance to the commercial interests of Liberia than a safe and commodious harbor where vessels of the largest size might be constructed or repaired, and that we cherished the hope of being relieved from the embarrassment by the kindness of Her Majesty’s Government through the means of Sierra Leone.

Though, at first, the proposition was received with some indications of surprise and but little favor, before we parted, his Lordship kindly intimated a willingness to hear me again on the subject after my return from Paris, whither I proposed to proceed in a day or two, to try by a personal application to have completed entire the donation of military equipments, promised by His Imperial Majesty. Impressed with the conviction that Liberia should be accepted more generally into the family of nations, thereby increasing the interests in her favor abroad, my thoughts had also been directed to the propriety of using the opportunity afforded me, by the acquaintance of two or three of the representatives in London, of European powers which had not recognized the independence of Liberia, to make an appeal for that purpose. I therefore, without loss of time, addressed myself to the representatives of Spain, Denmark, Saxony, Oldenburg, and the Hanse Towns, soliciting their cooperation in furthering my wishes.

Their assent was readily obtained; with an assurance that the application should be immediately transmitted to their respective Governments.

These preliminaries arranged, I crossed the Channel, and at Paris, was received very kindly by His Excellency Drouyn de Lhuys, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, who expressed his unabated interest in the welfare of the “New Republic” and with respect to the promise of uniforms, & c. to the Liberian Government, he remarked, it was a matter of regret to him that, in consequence of the pressing demand upon the French Government for military equipments for the army of the East, he had found it impossible to engage the attention of the minister of war to the completion of the donation to Liberia, by having made up, as was contemplated, a new uniform suited to the climate of the tropics. He promised however to confer with the minister of war, and, if possible, have the whole arranged before my departure.

This I pressed upon the grounds of a desire to forward the uniforms by a French vessel then fitting, and to sail in a few days for Monrovia.

At the subsequent interview with his Excellency Le Comte de Lesseps, Director for Foreign Affairs, he informed me that the minister of war was most anxious to meet my wishes; but it was impossible to do so unless I would receive the number required from a stock of Garde Mobile uniforms which he had on hand, and which he feared were unsuitable, in size especially – for the Liberia militia. Under the circumstances, however, I thought it advisable to accept these, in the hope of being able to forward them by Mr. Dumont’s vessel, the “Maria” – and arranged with him accordingly.

I also availed myself of the occasion to renew the application for a small armed vessel, which had been partially promised as a donation to this government; but could obtain no positive pledge. The increased wants of the French navy were urged as embarrassments at the present time. Hopes however, were held out that at some period, not remote, a vessel of

war might be added in proof of the decided interest His Imperial Majesty feels in the prosperity of Liberia.

The non-ratification – on the part of the French Government – of the treaty, concluded some time since between this Republic and the French Empire, was discussed and explained. The delay was solely in consequence of a disagreement between the English and French copies of the Treaty. I was however assured that the French Government had no objection to either the English or the French version. But, to avoid future difficulty, as soon as the discrepancy was discovered, the attention of Mr. Dumont, our agent in Paris, was called to the fact, and he requested to communicate with this government in regard to it. This Mr. Dumont did about eight months since. The period named, within which the ratifications should have been exchanged, having expired, it was doubtful with me whether any other remedy than the negotiation of a new treaty could be applied. It was suggested however, that an explanatory article might be added, and the exchange made without further ceremony. But this did not accord with my notion; as to me it appears clear that the explanatory article suggested must also be ratified before any exchange could legally take place; it, therefore, remained to write out new copies of the treaty, with the necessary corrections – to be ratified as a whole, and the ratifications exchanged within a time to be named. This course was finally agreed upon. But the Director of the Board of Trade being absent from the city, some five or six days must elapse before new copies could be prepared. And as my time was too limited to allow me to remain so long in Paris, it was arranged that the matter should be referred to the French Ambassador at London – between whom and myself the corrections were to be agreed upon; and by us the new instrument was signed.

Up to the time of my departure, however, no instructions, in regard to the subject, had been received at the Embassy; which possible might be accounted for in consequence of the news of the battle of Balaklava, which it was supposed diverted, for the time being, the attention of the minister from all matters, not of pressing importance. So the treaty with France remains a subject for further consideration, and, if renewed future negotiation.

And with respect to the uniforms, I may here remark, that although my expectations of being able to forward them by the “*Maria*” were high and almost certain, in this too I was disappointed; and not only in not being able to forward them as soon as I hoped; but also in the delay which must now attend their delivery. The following extracts from letters received from Mr. Dumont, soon after my return to London, will give you an idea of the encouraging prospects, and of the delay.

Under date, November 6<sup>th</sup>, he writes: – “Sir, I make haste to let you know of the result of my solicitation to the French Government, and I am happy to tell you that I have just been officially informed that His Imperial Majesty has been kind enough to order that a thousand military uniforms should be held at my disposal to be sent to you, as a friendly gift, and at the same time as a benevolent token of the interest His Imperial Majesty bears to the people of Liberia, and the true esteem he possesses for your Excellency personally. I received this morning from the Foreign Office a regular document stating the said grant. I will hasten as much as possible the completion and delivery of those important materials: but I am afraid they will not be ready in time to be sent by my ship “*Maria*” which is going to sail from Havre about the 15<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> inst. I will then put them on board “the *Star of the Sea*” that I intend to send to Liberia in January next. At all events your Excellency may rely on my careful attention to that affair. But being aware how much you feel interested in it on account of its moral and material consequence, I would not lose a moment to impart to you such good news.

I was also regularly invited to make application to His Excellency, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, in order that a French consul should be accredited near you. I will immediately write on the subject.”

The above however respecting the uniforms, was, in a few days afterwards, rescinded – as appears from the following letter, dated November 16<sup>th</sup>:

“Sir” says Mr. Dumont, “I duly received the letter you did me the honor to write to me on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst: at the very moment it reached me, I was preparing to impart to you a new intelligence.

Having been lately invited by the Director of Materials at the ware office, to go and confer with him respecting the thousand uniforms which His Imperial Majesty has been kind enough to grant us, I called this morning, and beg to let you know the result of our conversation.

The uniforms of the Garde Mobile of France that had been spoken of at first are in such a condition as to be considered now as unworthy of the Emperor’s intention. It was therefore, resolved that a thousand new uniforms should be made; and my opinion was asked as to the most convenient shape. Here is the shape we agreed upon, and I was desired to ask the advice of your Excellency of the subject. These uniforms are very much like those of the French soldiers in Algeria, and would I think perfectly suit the people of Liberia; viz: yellow leather gaiters – spatterdashers – from the ankle bone to the knee; large red cloth pantaloons down to the gaiters; iron-gray cloth short coats with red laces; blue cloth waistcoats; and red felt caps with blue strings. These uniforms, that are very well appropriate to the climate of Liberia, will do honor to the Sovereign who grants them as to your Excellency. I beg you to let me know in your next letter if you approve them.”

In reply to this letter, I did not think it necessary to add any suggestions, either with regard to the shape or the material of the uniform proposed; I did however, avail myself of the occasion to urge, strongly, that a thousand knapsacks be included, and if possible, that the whole be sent out by the “Star of the Sea” in January ensuing: which I have reason to believe will be done.

I have not the slightest doubt that Mr. Dumont will exert himself to this end. In his letter to me on the day of my departure from London, he says, “I am very much satisfied to find that you fully approve of the designs I imparted to you for the military uniforms; I will, therefore, get them made as soon as possible. Some French officers, with whom I spoke of them, were of the opinion, that they are the most convenient for the people of Liberia, and very well adapted to the climate being altogether of a very good military aspect. I will make my best endeavors to obtain also the thousand knapsacks you mentioned.” And with respect to the prospects of obtaining a small vessel, he remarks, “I have very good reason to assure your Excellency that besides the military uniforms already granted, I will, I am confident, obtain within a short time the delivery of a small ship of war according to your desire.”

Mr. Dumont, in the letters from which the above extracts are taken, refers to two other subjects which, will claim your attention: – viz, his desire that Liberia should be represented in the French Exhibition of 1855 – and the question of some compensation for services rendered this Government to receiving and forwarding military equipments. These letters I submit to your favorable consideration.

On my return to London I found that several persons of influence had interested themselves in the subject of securing to Liberia the commercial facilities of Sierra Leone. A distinguished philanthropist and friend of Liberia proposed to advocate the measure through the columns of the press, by leading articles and a series of letters addressed to the Earl of Clarendon: – The heads of his first letter he had prepared, a copy of which I have, and you will take occasion to submit to you – and awaited my return from Paris to obtain certain

statistics and facts which he wished to embody. Others had taken a lively interest in the matter and promised to further my wishes by every means in their power.

Thus encouraged, I sought an early interview at the Foreign Office, and was gratified to find that the subject seemed to have gained favor, since it was first proposed. I hesitated not to press the questions by every argument I could command in support of the claim I conceived the descendants of Africa – above all others – do have in whatsoever concerns the interests, and future well-being of the Christian State established, and independently maintained by them upon the soil of their forefathers. I was however informed that nothing definite could be arrived at during the short stay I proposed to make in England; but that the question would be submitted to the consideration of Her Majesty's Government – though Lord Clarendon feared the time had not yet arrived for the adoption of a measure so important, we should be informed as soon as practicable, what hopes might be entertained of a favorable issue.

Though I made the most strenuous efforts gentlemen, it was scarcely to be hoped that any thing more definite could have been accomplished within the period of my short visit. The question however, – under encouraging auspices – is now fairly before Her Majesty's Government, and I am fully persuaded, if followed up, we may reasonable anticipate the accomplishment of this important object within a comparatively short period.

How far I have met the views of the Legislature and of my fellow citizens generally, in the course I have pursued in regard to this matter, is for you, gentlemen, to say. With respect to my application for the further recognition of the Independence of Liberia, I have to state, that up to the time of my departure, all these Governments had not returned an answer to the communications of their respective ministers on the subject. I was however assured that the solicitation would be renewed and that but little doubt was entertained of the success of the demand; and that we might expect shortly to be informed of the result through our agent in London. The Governments of Saxony, Oldenburg, and the Hanse Towns communicated their favorable reception of the application for recognition; and at once authorized their representative at the Court of St. James, Chevalier Colquhom, to negotiate with the Republic treaties of Recognition, Amity, and Commerce. I had not contemplated however, entering into any commercial stipulations; a mere formal recognition of the independence of the Republic, by an official letter, was all I sought. Though it was argued that commercial treaties were the bonds of nations to regulate their friendly intercourse, and the usual method of receiving new States into the family of sovereignties, I did not think a commercial treaty absolutely necessary to the object of a mere recognition, &c. – and cited the example of Prussia and Belgium, both of whom had formally acknowledged the independence of Liberia in the absence of any commercial treaty; and further, that however much disposed I might be to meet this suggestion, I had not the time at command then to warrant my entering upon the negotiation of commercial treaties; therefore nothing further was concluded in regard to an acknowledgement of our independence.

Gerald Ralston, Esq., who was intimate with Chevalier Colquhom, greatly assisted my efforts; and promised to continue his kind offices in pressing the subject to a speedy and favorable termination. A few days before my departure from London, he enclosed to me the following note, addressed to him by Mr. Colquhom, from which I apprehend he too entertains the opinion that treaties will be necessary to the object of recognition, and therefore wished to provide for that contingency.

He writes Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>. "My dear Sir, I have delayed answering your note till I should have gotten an answer from Saxony, whither I sent as desired. I am in daily expectation of his answer. I again refreshed the memory of the minister of Oldenburg, and wrote urging on the Hanse Towns, who had declared themselves favorably inclined, expedition, but you know

Germans are not Americans in that respect. It is unfortunate that the President's stay is so short, but it will be prudent to avoid miscarriage that he leave you three full powers, one for negotiation with the kingdom of Saxony, one for Oldenburg, and one for the Hanse Towns: in any case, he must leave you an authority or full power to exchange ratifications, which could not possibly be done, save he should be again shortly in London. This is a mere formal act, and your only duty to see that the exemplifications agree with the treaty as signed."

I did not, however, leave any authority or full powers to negotiate treaties or exchange ratifications. Nevertheless, this note is important inasmuch as it indicates that treaties of friendship and commerce may be negotiated with those powers, should the legislature deem it advisable. And I beg to solicit, gentlemen, an expression of your opinion in regard to this subject.

It cannot be doubted that the extension of our political relations, must necessarily add to the standing and moral influence of the Government, while on the other hand it is equally clear, that the greatest circumspection should be observed in entering into commercial stipulations with foreign powers. In this regard, the Senate, of course is the great safety valve, and no treaty stipulations, detrimental to the interests of Liberia, are likely to escape detection when submitted to their scrutiny.

While in England, gentlemen, I had the pleasure of meeting, frequently, a number of distinguished citizens of the United States, all of whom expressed unqualified regrets and mortification, at the indifference of their Government towards Liberia; and especially at the unkindness of not acknowledging her independence. They seemed to feel the more, that Liberia, the child and boast of American philanthropy and benevolence, was receiving so much consideration and favor in Europe, while the Government of the United States still neglected her. For aside from every other consideration, it appeared clear to them that European powers were establishing an influence in Liberia, which must in time, unless their Government speedily change its policy, prove disastrous to the commercial interests of the United States on the African coast. Feeling myself that such were the natural tendencies of the opposite policies pursued, I of course offered no argument in contravention of the sentiment advanced.

On two occasions, by invitation, I met several American gentlemen, when the claims of Liberia, upon the United States Government, were freely discussed. Hon. G.N. Sanders, especially deep interest in the subject, and strongly recommended that Mr. Buchanan should take up the subject officially, and urge it with all the power of his influence, upon the attention of his government.

Mr. Buchanan readily promised his cordial co-operation in any measure that could be made to appear to him practicable. Mr. Sanders advised as the most feasible and ready means of reaching the object, that I should, while in England, address an official letter to Mr. Buchanan, adverting briefly to the rise and progress of Liberia – to the extension and growing importance of the trade – to the claims of her citizens upon the sympathy and benevolence of the Government of the United States – to the attention and consideration the Government of Liberia has hitherto received, and is still receiving from European powers, and the effect these marks of attention and kindness are likely to produce upon the minds of the people, resulting prejudicially to the commercial interest of the United States with Liberia – and finally to propose on the part of Liberia, the negotiation of a treaty, stipulating to admit *duty free*, all merchandise imported into the republic in American vessels, the Government of the United States will pay to the Government of Liberia one hundred thousand dollars annually for ten years.

Though ten hundred thousand dollars was a tempting consideration, I did not deem it proper for me to accede to the proposition; first, upon the ground, that I had not the slightest

hope of succeeding in such a measure with the present administration: and secondly, were my doubts of success ill founded, and however much my personal views inclined me to favor the measure – I could not think of proposing a stipulation so important which had been canvassed, with regard to its merits, by my fellow citizens. Though Mr. Sanders, and others, were exceedingly anxious that some effort should be made with as little delay as possible, the subject was allowed to rest here, with the understanding that I would submit it to the consideration of the legislature on my return to Liberia; and should it be approved, to take the earliest opportunity of communicating the result to Mr. Buchanan.

With those details, gentlemen, I beg to submit the matter to your serious and candid consideration – not doubting but that you will give it that attention which its merits and importance demand. I am aware that this is a subject involving considerations of the deepest concern, both to the present and future interests of Liberia, and to be entered upon with great circumspection, and mature deliberation; still I indulge the hope that the legislature will be able to arrive at such a conclusion, in regard to it, as that the executive may be advised as to the course proper to be pursued in his correspondence upon the subject.

Having, gentlemen, in as few words as possible, given you a statement of the political matters which have employed my attention while absent, I am also happy to be able to inform the legislature that their wishes – as expressed in their resolutions of January last, respecting military and other public buttons, and a light house and lamp for Cape Montserrado, have been carried into execution.

As soon after my arrival in England, as circumstances would permit, I contracted for the manufacture of the above named articles, but found that it required more time to complete the order than I had expected; so I had not the satisfaction of bringing them with me. They will be forwarded, certainly, by the packet of the 24<sup>th</sup> inst. I have also to inform the legislature that – being impressed with a conviction of the necessity of a new paper currency assumed the responsibility of having engraved plates for striking bills of the denomination of fifty cents, one dollar, three dollars, and five dollars: and ordered to be printed, a sum equal to six thousand dollars. I am sorry to say that I was disappointed also in not having these ready in time for me, but they too will be at hand by the forthcoming packet; in the meantime, I procured a rough impression which will give you an idea of the description of the bills, and beg to submit to your judgment and approval or otherwise of the responsibility assumed. Besides this I have assumed one other responsibility, for which, gentlemen, I have to ask the approval of the legislature. During my sojourn in London, I had frequent conversations with S. Gurney, Esq. on the subject of a metallic currency which he thought we ought to have – as well for the conveniences of trade, as to mark the existence and the nationality of the Republic. I agreed with him of course, as to the propriety and importance of such a medium; but, at the same time, hinted the inability of the Government – in consequence of its limited pecuniary resources – to remove at present, this embarrassment. A few days before my departure from London, while speaking on this subject, Mr. Gurney proposed to supply one hundred pounds, in aid of procuring such a currency, on condition that the Government of Liberia would supply another hundred pounds. He further proposed to advance the whole amount – say two hundred pounds – and to have the dies cut, and the coin struck immediately – in one and two cent pieces – to be forwarded by the steamer of the 21st January next; on the receipt of which the one hundred pounds from the Government might be remitted. I scarcely need say, that I accepted his proposition, and that the work was put immediately into the hands of the coiner. Besides the great facilities, such a means of exchange will afford to the commercial transactions of the country, and the stamp of nationality a coinage always impresses upon the public mind – whether at home or abroad, and estimating the proposed coin at the standard value of the copper currency of the United

States, it will realize to the Government at least thirty per cent; and which, including the one hundred pounds presented by Mr. Gurney – will add to the money resources of the Government some seven or eight hundred dollars. No mean token of the generosity, of the interest, Mr. Gurney feels in the welfare of Liberia. And as an additional further proof of his interest and benevolence, I may be permitted to add here, that at our parting he authorized me to draw on him for fifty pounds, to be applied to educational purposes in Liberia.

I beg to inform the legislature that I have procured upon the requisition of the Secretary of the Treasury, sundry articles which were needed for the use of the Government Schooner Lark – such as copper, canvass, cordage, paints, oil, &c., also I have obtained a good supply of stationery for the various departments of the Government; including suitable books for records – of the registry, and respective Courts of the several counties – all lettered appropriately, according to the uses for which they are intended.

And I am happy to add, gentlemen, that the bills, for all the articles enumerated above – except for the copper coin; which, if approved, I have to request you provide for refunding – are closed and settled.

From Sir Horace St. Paul – a staunch friend of Liberia, and a decided advocate for the spread of Christian knowledge throughout Africa – I obtained a donation of thirty pounds worth of bibles, testaments, &c., for distribution among the Sabbath and other schools of the Republic.

I beg to request, gentlemen, that the legislature will order the discharge of the small amount – say fifteen or twenty dollars – for freight &c.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I have only to add, that when I left you, it was with the hope of enjoying a little relaxation from the incessant toils of public duty: which the state of my health seemed to require. But disappointment awaited me – for no sooner had I arrived in England than I found that the interests of Liberia demanded my attention. And who, worthy of the name of Liberian, would not willingly make any sacrifices for his country's interest – forgetting his health, or any other private interest; undertake any toils, however arduous, in the cause of Liberia. I, therefore, hesitated not to devote my best energies to her service; and during the six weeks I spent in Europe, there was scarcely a day – nay, scarcely an hour, that I could appropriate either to rest or pleasure. And my only regrets are that I have not been as completely successful, in all my efforts, as my fondest wish suggested. If, however, in any degree, I have promoted the interests of Liberia, I feel gratified, and have no complaint to utter. I have only done my duty, and beg to assure you, gentlemen, that I have performed that duty to the very best of my ability.

All of which is most respectfully submitted to the kind consideration of the legislature.

J.J. Roberts  
Government House,  
*December 20th, 1854*

## Annual Message to the Legislature December 20, 1855

Gentlemen,

The occasion of your annual meeting is always one of deep concern to your fellow-citizens generally. As legislators, every interest of the State and people are entrusted to your patriotism and good judgment. To you are delegated powers, bounded only by the fundamental law of the land. In your legislative capacity it is your province to pass in review all the statutes

of the Republic, and to adopt such alterations or amendments of existing laws, and to originate such new ones, as in your wisdom may be deemed essential to the sound principles of your Government, and in like manner conduce to the best interests of your constituents. These duties, Gentlemen, are important, and call for the exercise of integrity, independence, patience, a sound judgment, and a careful discriminating mind. Therefore you are selected from the body of your fellow-citizens for you intelligence and good reputation; and on the faith of these is believed that the duties of your office will be effectually performed. That these duties are highly responsible is readily perceived. On your actions depend essentially the destiny, the happiness, and the future prosperity of those you represent. That you are not insensible of the importance of the trust confided to you, I have every reason to believe.

I therefore deem it unnecessary to remind you, Gentlemen, that whatever acts you adopt during your present session-within the scope of our chartered rights – must be binding alike on you and your fellow-citizens, for good or for evil, during another legislature year. But that you will discharge faithfully, and to the best of your ability, the responsible duties committed to your hands, I doubt not your fellow-citizens generally have every confidence; and on their part they will sustain you in the legitimate functions of your duty; for they are not ignorant that on the maintenance of law the public good and security depends.

Upon this occasion of addressing the Legislature, though we have not been wholly exempted from public embarrassments, I am possibly impressed with a feeling of congratulation, inasmuch as the duty occurs under circumstances of a most encouraging nature, as people we are advancing in all that ennobles and dignifies man, and facilitates the improvement of human society with gratifying rapidity; and whatever may be our individual differences with respect to politics, or the mode or means by which our national prosperity is to be advanced, there is, unquestionable, a spirit animating all classes of our fellow-citizens, which will not suffer them to withhold their support from the Government, or to disregard the bounties of Providence so liberally bestowed upon them; but the first they are ready to offer on every occasion of emergency, and the latter they will receive with grateful hearts, and apply them with zealous promptitude to the advancement of the general good. Herein, Gentlemen, lies the secret of our national success.

And I am gratified in being able to inform the Legislature that our country continues to be highly favoured in all the elements which contribute to individual comfort and national prosperity.

In taking a survey of the present condition of our country, on reference to subjects interesting to the public weal, we cannot fail to be impressed with sentiments of grateful acknowledgment to the Disposer of all good for having vouchsafed to us, during the past year, such signal blessings of His providence. Though the past rainy season was one of unusual protraction, and to human calculation apparently unfavourable to health, still in an eminent degree this inestimable blessing has prevailed generally within our borders; and while war has been making its ravages, and is still producing painful calamities among some of the most enlightened and Christian nations of Europe, and while certain civilized communities on this coast have been involved in deadly strife with their savage neighbors, we, until within the last three or four weeks, have enjoyed uninterrupted peace. Under these favourable auspices the Government and people of Liberia have been enabled to advance every important interest connected with their welfare. And that every branch of industry and enterprise has received attention and encouragement, the progress of general improvement and national advancement, everywhere observable, especially in the counties Montserrado and Grand Bassa fully attest. Excepting in Sinoe County – where, from causes not satisfactorily accounted for, the crops have fallen short – the labours of the husbandmen have been abundantly rewarded, and notwithstanding the interruption of trade which occurred with certain

portions of the interior, in consequence of disturbances among native Chiefs, the commerce of Liberia has suffered no diminution, and is now in a healthful condition; the enterprise of our merchants, too, is now opening up new channels of trade which give the promise of encouraging remuneration for their efforts.

Indeed the spirit of improvement and enterprise is abroad in the land. It stimulates the hearts, not only of our Americo-Liberian population, but also of the aborigines incorporated with us, and is producing most gratifying results.

There are but few objects which, as a people, we can decide which we do not possess, or which are not within our reach.

To preserve, to improve, and to perpetuate the sources, and so direct in their most effectual channels the streams which contribute to the public weal, and to individual comfort and happiness, is the purpose for which civil societies are formed. And we, Gentlemen, are blessed with a form of government which protects citizens in the full enjoyment of their civil, political, and religious rights., and the free exercise of all their facilities to pursue the impulse of their nature, and the obligation of their duty in the improvement of their own condition – a government which guarantees to the humblest citizen the means of justice and the enjoyment of all the immunities contemplated by the organization of civil government.

How far the public institutions of Liberia have been sustained by the patriotism of her citizens, and how far they have succeeded in establishing their capacity for self-government, are questions to be answered only by pointing to her present favourable condition, the order which has marked her progress, and the pertinacity with which she has maintained public faith during the period of her nationality; and it cannot be denied that, in these respects, she will compare favourably with any other nation of the same age.

In assuming her station among the civilized nation of the earth Liberian entered upon a career which filled the minds of the best friends of our race with anxious solicitude as to the result of the enterprise. They feared that the time had not yet arrived when the people of Liberia should assume responsibilities so difficult and perplexing, arguing that by a failure here the race would be doomed to perpetual inferiority and degradation. There were those who doubted the capacity of the African race for self-government, under most favourable circumstances. And it is within the recollection of us all, with what fear and trembling some of our own citizens entered upon the important step; not, however, that they believed the dogma of natural African inferiority, and consequence incapacity for self-government. This they know to be a vulgar prejudice, founded on the pride and ignorance of those who, by oppression, have kept the black man at such a distance as to be unsure to form a right judgment of his true organic capacity for development of culture; nor were they unaware of the fact, that the many things appertaining to civilization and political progressiveness, ascribed to the superiority of the white man, are the results of fortuitous circumstances and favourable combinations, which, when enjoyed by any other race, would produce effects equally honourable and salutary. But other and more weighty considerations impressed the people of Liberia with the importance of the measure proposed to be adopted. The moment was a critical one. They were about to launch upon the boisterous sea of nationality – to guide by their own hands the little ship of State, freighted with the destinies of all their earthly hopes. Could it be other than a moment of intense anxiety.

Especially in view of the feebleness of our numerical strength and the limited financial resources of the community-subjects of the first importance in maintaining a national existence.

With these facts before them, it was not surprising that reflecting citizens should recur, again and again, to the questions—"Has our apprenticeship in the art of managing public affairs been sufficiently long to prepare us for the arduous and responsible duties of self-

government?" And in assuming an independent position, "How far will other Powers respect our national rights?" "What Governments will extend to us the friendly hand of recognition, and receive us into the family of nations?" These were considerations, surely, which demanded most serious attention and sober reflection; for to remain isolated upon this barbarous coast, uncoun tenanced by other nations, it were not unreasonable to fear that independence would avail us nothing; but, indeed, might expose us to insult and serious embarrassments.

But, on the other hand, however much we might feel disposed to shrink from the responsibility, there were circumstances of a political nature, involving questions of the gravest importance, which could be met and put at rest only by a declaration of our independence and sovereignty. Thus we were impelled forward, and seemed to be borne along by an unknown force to the accomplishment of an end, the judiciousness of which time alone could determine.

And now, Gentlemen, in looking back to review the ground over which we have traveled, it can but be a source of gratification and thankfulness to know that the result of the enterprise – or experiment, if you please – has, so far at least, been crowned with success equal to the most sanguine hopes of those Christian philanthropists by whom Liberia was planted, and those of our fellow citizens who were prominent in the initiative of her national organization.

And although our claim to the civilities of national brotherhood has been disregarded in a quarter where we had good reason to expect favour, some of the enlightened and powerful nations of the earth have not suffered us to appeal in vain to their magnanimity and sense of justice for a recognition of our independence and national rights, nor to their sympathy and benevolence for encouragement and aid in the work of Africa's redemption. And today Liberia occupies a position in the civilized world no less honorable than prosperous, and, with reference to the people by whom we are surrounded, I may also add, no less responsible than gratifying.

The "Lone Star" of Liberia's national insignia seems, in the order of Providence, to be the star of hope to the savage tribes of this degraded land. Here, by the blessing of Heaven, we have planted the standard of freedom, civilization, and Christianity, whence it is hoped will radiate light and truth, penetrating the dark recesses of benighted Africa, dispelling the clouds of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry which have so long enveloped the minds of her unfortunate children; and here too, having, under the Divine protection, successfully laid the foundation of political and religious liberty, we are pledged to posterity to continue the work of the superstructure with unabated zeal – to preserve in their purity the social and civil rights with which we are so eminently blessed, and to hand them down unimpaired to the generation which shall succeed us. This we can do only by a strict adherence to the principles of virtue and true patriotism, and by persevering industry. Should we fail to conform to these, He who has committed to our hands this important work will hold us strictly accountable for the manner of our conduct.

That you, Gentlemen, and our fellow-citizens generally, are properly impressed with a sense of this weighty obligation, past experience leaves but little room for doubt. If faithful to that wise, patriotic and humane policy which has hitherto marked the progress of legislation in Liberia, we cannot fail to go in the happy career we have begun, and which, in the short period of our political existence, has brought us to a position most favourable to the realization of our fundamental hopes.

The view which I have now to present to the Legislature of our affairs – foreign and domestic – will, I am persuaded, sustain the idea I entertained of the public prosperity; and, at the same time, impress you, Gentlemen, with the auspicious circumstances under which

you will commence your present session. You will not of course understand me to mean that the prosperity of Liberia is complete – that she has already attained the acme of her glory – not to be increased, nor indeed, that the duties which now lie before you are not arduous and self-sacrificing.

All governments are or should be progressive, and year after year should produce evidences of the social, civil, and political advancement of the people.

And it is expected of you, Gentlemen, that by your legislative enactments the true interests of Liberia will be so promoted during the ensuing year as to give strength and permanency to the institution of our country, and vigour and encouragement to the various branches of industry, that you will adopt such measures as will essentially promote, nay, as will firmly establish, the principles of sound and good government, making them the creed of the people' and such also as shall tend to cultivate the best feeling of friendship with foreign nations, and confirm their confidence in our national integrity and ability for self-government.

I have great satisfaction in being able to inform the Legislature that, during the past year, nothing has transpired to interrupt the steady progress of public affairs, and that in every respect the national dignity has been faithfully preserved.

Our relations with foreign Powers have undergone no unfavourable change since the last meeting of the Legislature. The policy of Liberia has always been, in her commercial intercourse with other nations, of the most liberal character; she has avoided all unnecessary restriction in her trade and maintained commerce on the footing of perfect reciprocity – invariably cherishing the most friendly relations and intercourse with the citizens and subjects of every country on principles and conditions which would make them permanent. Though a few years since, as is well remembered, the system of commercial intercourse adopted by this Government in reference to her domestic trade was source of much speculation and animadversion on the part of certain foreigners trading with Liberia, and in consequence of the obstinacy and unfriendly disposition of some of these, the Government experienced at the time no little embarrassment, both at home and abroad – at home, because they influenced certain of our aboriginal population to acts of insubordination which threatened serious results; and abroad, because the subjects led to perplexing correspondence with several foreign Governments, which thought proper to interpose investigations with regard to rights claimed by their respective citizens, and alleged to have been invaded. But, happily, the business and the reasonableness of the system have been fully developed and made apparent, and is now no longer a matter of complaint or of dissatisfaction.

Foreign Powers, especially those with whom we have political relations, are satisfied with respect to our desire to encourage and extend, under whatsoever regulations, commercial intercourse throughout the extent of our political jurisdiction, that commerce may have its full influence and effect in advancing civilization and Christianity among the barbarous tribes of this coast. Under this conviction, doubtless, several European Governments are making anxious inquiries respecting the present and future prospects for our country. Indeed some of them seem particularly interested in our national advancement, and are readily extending to us the hand of friendship.

From the Governments of England and France we continue to receive assurance of kindness, and of earnest solicitude for ultimate success in the career of nationality. These assurances cannot fail to have a happy influence on the character of our country; assurances which, I doubt not, will give the people of Liberia no less pleasure to reciprocate than to receive.

A Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation has recently been concluded between this Government and the Free Hanseatic Republics of Lubeck, Bremen, and Hamburg.

With respect to this Treaty, I have only to remark that it embodies those principles of friendly policy which bind nations to mutual good understanding and give permanency and effect to their profession of cordial disposition to cultivate amicable relations in their future intercourse. At an early day I will lay the Protocol and Treaty before the Senate for approval, if in their judgment it shall be deemed proper I will also avail myself of the occasion to submit to the consideration of the Legislature a communication which I have received from the Prussian Government on the subject of negotiating a Commercial Treaty with the Power, embracing all the Governments, members of the German Customs League.

To this favourable view of our relations with distant civilized States, I am also pleased in being able to add that our relations of friendship with the numerous aboriginal tribes of this country, ordering on our frontiers, have been preserved, and the opportunities to improve them have been cultivated with anxious and unremitting attention. In no instance during the year has any hostile dissention been evinced by any of these tribes towards this Government, but on the contrary, they have manifested the greatest respect for the Liberian authorities, have received our citizens, visiting them for the purposes of trade, with much kindness, and seem properly to appreciate our kindness.

Passing, Gentlemen, from our foreign to our domestic affairs. I am glad to say, that they too – excepting the present state of affairs at Sinoe – present a picture equally favourable to the public propriety and national progressiveness.

The improvement of the native tribes within the limits of the Republic has ever been object of deep concern both to the legislative and executive branches of the Government; and it affords me much satisfaction to observe, that the measures which have been adopted by the one, and the efforts contributed by the other, for the instruction of this portion of our population in the arts of civilized life, and the duties and advantages of civil government are producing effects in many parts of the Republic which give encouraging promise of ultimate success.

As might of course be expected, difficulties have arisen between some of these people scattered along our coast; in but few instances, however, has the authority of the Government been defied, or even disregarded where it has been interposed to settle their disputes.

In the early part of the present year some misunderstanding arose between certain Chiefs occupying portions of the New Cess and Grand Bassa districts, which at the time was not considered important; after a while, however, the affair assumed a threatening aspect, and in June last a party of marauders, under the direction of Prince Wee and one or two other turbulent chieftains, made an attack upon the town of one Topaneo, and carried off a number of the town people and a large quantity of their effects. By the vigilance of the local authorities of Grand Bassa, however, the principal aggressors were immediately arrested, and required to restore the persons and property seized, and make restitution for other damage sustained by Topaneo, by the burning of his town. All of which have been satisfactorily arranged, and the aggressors otherwise punished for their infraction of the laws and disturbance of the public peace.

About the time of these occurrences a dispute arose between Jim Flow, of Trade Town Point, and the people of Grand Corrow, in consequence of an attempt on the part of the latter to restrict the people of the former place from intercourse with the interior for the purposes of trade. To effect this object a certain Grand Corrow chieftain established a town on the road leading to the “bush country,” and from this point committed several depredations on the people of Trade Town Point, while passing to and fro. These interruptions finally engendered angry controversy, which led to several encounters between the tribes, in one of which the said town was seized and held by Jim Flow.

I visited Trade Town Point and Grand Corrow in September last, and had an interview with some and corresponded with others of the respective chiefs. Each, of course, complained of wrongs alleged to have been committed by the other. But as I could not remain sufficiently long to examine thoroughly into and settle their differences, I demanded an immediate suspension of hostilities, and assured them that Commissioners could be appointed and sent down without delay to investigate the matters of dispute between them, and make such award in the premises as in their judgment be deemed just and equitable. They readily consented to the demand, and promised faithful conformity to the decision of the Commissioners.

Early in October, Messrs. H. W. Dennis and A. W. Gardner were commissioned, and proceeded to Trade Town Point and Grand Corrow, where they assembled on board the Lark, all the parties, and carefully investigated their complaints, pro and con. It was clearly ascertained that without provocation the Grand Corrow people were the aggressors. The Commissioners, therefore, required of them that restitution be made to Jim Flow of the property, or its value, seized from the people of Trade Town Point, to remove the obnoxious town, which it appears had been a shelter for some worthless fellows who lived by plundering traders of other tribes, and that in no case thenceforward should the people of either party be molested or in any way interrupted while traversing said road. Both parties were required also to pay a small fine to the Government for having resorted to force instead of submitting their complaints to the proper authority for adjustment. To the award of the Commissioners they willingly assented, paid a portion of the fine imposed, gave assurances of the faithful performance of all the stipulations adjudged by the Commissioners, and pledged themselves to perpetual friendship.

According to instructions, the Commissioners also inquired into the complaint of Mr. Moore James against the Grand Corrow people for having wrested from his captain certain stranded property saved from his vessel wrecked near that place in May last. They admitted having carried off goods to the value of about 200 dollars, but pleaded in excuse that according to their understanding of the will of Providence “a vessel wrecked near their habitations is a godsend, and from time immemorial their fathers had exercised the right of appropriating such property to their own use.” This right, of course, the Commissioners could not recognize; nor, indeed, did the accused parties themselves expect they would; but some excuse must be made, and to plead ignorant of the law of humanity and of civilized usages, they thought might, perhaps, secure them from the punishment their conduct justly deserved.

The Commissioners, after hearing all they had to say, deemed it advisable, in view of various considerations, only to require them to reimburse Mr. James the amount seized; and to pledge themselves never again to be guilty of similar conduct, but in like cases of distress to render all possible assistance and protection to persons and property. These terms they unhesitatingly agreed to and gave suitable guarantee for their faithful fulfillment.

The only other exclusively native difficulty in our leeward counties, during the year, of public concernment, and which perhaps has some connexion with the causes that instigated the recent attacks upon our settlement at Sinou, is a controversy of some years' standing between the people of Grand and Little Bootoo districts, and a tribe interior to those places who claim the right of passage through the territories to the sea coast for the purposes of trade. This right is resisted on the ground alleged by the Bootoos, “that God has appropriated to the tribes of the country their several locations, and that those on the sea coast are placed there for the purpose of managing all commercial concerns, and that interior tribes are to employ them as their factors or agents in all matters of trade with foreigners.” The absurdity has maintained for many years among the tribes occupying the sea board, a mere pretext of \_\_\_\_\_ for speculating on the tribes of the interior, and has given the Government

no little trouble in eradicating it from many parts of our coast. And in this instance Commissioners have been repeatedly sent to the respective parties to convince the one of the unreasonableness of the restrictions imposed, and to impress forbearance on the part of the other, with the hope that the Government might be able to effect an amicable arrangement between them by removing the causes of complaint. These efforts, however, proved unavailing further than to restrain them from acts of violence, until the early part of the present year, when King Juvier, the interior chief, sent one of his sons to confer with the Bootoo people, and to urge his claim to direct intercourse with the sea for commercial purposes. This son, it appears, was seized and basely murdered, and, as was to be expected, hostilities immediately ensued. Whereupon Commissioners were dispatched to the belligerents with the hope of reconciling their differences, and restoring peace. King Juvier, though much grieved, and exceedingly indignant at the murder of his son, received the Commissioners kindly, and expressed his decided willingness to submit his claim and grievance to the arbitration of his Government. But the Bootoo people, with an insolent disregard of the overtures of the Commissioners, persisted in their aggressive acts, and indeed committed several outrages upon the Americo-Liberian settlers at Sinou, which so annoyed them as to make it absolutely necessary that something should be done to relieve them from those embarrassments. In September last I visited Sinou, mainly for the purposes of trying to adjust and settle these difficulties. Though several messages passed between the Chiefs of Grand Bootoo and myself, I could not succeed in obtaining an interview with them. I therefore informed them, that failing all others, it would be the duty of the Government to resort to coercive measures to restore peace to the country, especially within the jurisdiction of the Republic. Upon this intimation, they promised to take immediate steps to reconcile the differences between King Juvier and themselves, and that the reconciliation should be perfected before the middle of November ultimo. This promise however, they failed to keep, though they adopted the artifice of frequent communications with the authorities at Sinou, assuring them that the difficulties between them and Juvier were in progress of settlement; but we have reason to know they were acting in bad faith, and instead of using efforts of pacification, they were employed in preparations for a more vigorous war. And, doubtless, fearing the Government would compel them to an equitable arrangement with Juvier, they have instigated the Blue Barre natives, in which they too have taken part, to the recent attacks on settlements in Sinou county.

In relation to the difficulties at Sinou, I have to inform the Legislature that it appears, on the 18<sup>th</sup> ultimo, a canoe and three kroomen belonging to the British barque Ariel, lying in the harbour of Greenville, while proceeding to the shore, were seized by certain fishermen residing at Blue Barre. The following day Mr. Harriot, supercargo of the Ariel, appealed to the local authorities of Sinou county for a process to have restored the persons and property thus seized. The sheriff of the county, with a small party of men, was directed to proceed to Blue Barre and demand the surrender of said canoe and men. After some hesitation one of the men was given up, with a promise that the other two would be set at liberty the next day. There appears to have been no threat or disturbance on either side; and the sheriff, with the whole of the party that accompanied him, as he positively asserts, returned quietly to the river, and had entered his boat, when he discovered the smoke of a small native town on fire. Whether this town of a few worthless huts was fired by accident, or whether by some mischievous boys who had gone over with the sheriff's party, or whether by the natives themselves to create a pretext for commencing hostilities, has not yet transpired. The latter, however, is strongly suspected to be the case; though, I regret to say, there seems to a possibility that the first was communicated by a mischievous little boy who was on the Blue Barre side at the time of the occurrence.

We are aware that, the early part of this year the Blue Barre people manifested some little irritation, in consequence of the arrest and punishment of three or four persons belonging to that tribe, for robberies, &c. committed on the settlers; and it is also known that the Bootoo people have been tampering with them for some to induce them to acts of insubordination. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the fire was the work of their own hands. At any rate, as had been custom hitherto in case of difficulty with the settlers, they asked no explanation nor made any demand for redress, but the following morning barbarously murdered two of our citizens who had crossed as usual to Blue Barre to pursue their labours. Shortly afterwards a party entered the settlement of Readsville, and murdered an old man, and his daughter. By this time the alarm of war had spread through the settlements, and hasty preparations for their defense were made.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> Readsville was attacked by a pretty large force, but the natives were repulsed with considerable loss. They retired in the direction of Bluntsville, our most remote settlement, the inhabitants of which, fearing they would not be able to defend themselves, fell back upon Readsville. Thus abandoned, Bluntsville was sacked and burned. The following day unsuccessful attacks were made on the settlements of Louisiana and Upper Farmersville. On the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Lexington was furiously attacked by the combined forces of the three tribes. These settlers, being well posted in the church and school-house, defended themselves manfully; and, strange to say, by a wonderful interposition of Providence, though the conflict was long and fierce, without the slightest casualty on our side. It is to be regretted that the day after this noble defense, for some cause or other, the settlers abandoned their favourable position for protecting the village, when the natives returned and laid in ashes the church, school-house, and several other buildings; since which time, up to the 9<sup>th</sup> instant, the enemy, hanging upon the skirts of the settlements, has, with small parties, employed himself in annoying and harassing the settlers in their communication with the several settlements. On the 9<sup>th</sup> a vigorous attack was made on Farmersville, but without loss on our side excepting two men slightly wounded. We have had, in all, eight killed and ten wounded, two since dead. I am happy to inform the Legislature that, with some few individual exceptions, the militia of Sinou have behaved well, and deserve credit for the coolness and bravery they displayed during the attacks, on several trying occasions.

By the kindness of Her Britannic Majesty's Consul and Captain Gruble, of Her Majesty's steam-vessel Teazer, I was enabled to visit Sinou on the 27<sup>th</sup> instant, and to spend a day there, that I might better understand the actual state of affairs, and the means of defense. From the observations I was enabled to make, I think the settlers will be able to maintain their present position and prevent the further destruction of property.

Some 50 or more families of the outer settlements beyond the reach of protection, have been compelled to abandon their homes, barely escaping with their olives, and have taken shelter at Greenville, wholly destitute, and in a pitiable condition. On the 4<sup>th</sup> instance the schooner G. R. M. Gill, with a small detachment of men from this place and Grand Bassa, and supplies for the troops, and temporary wants of the destitute women and children, was dispatched for Greenville. She arrived there on the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> instant, whence the Lark sailed on the 10<sup>th</sup>, having remained there since the 23<sup>rd</sup> ultimo.

The commanding officer at Sinou, Colonel Dickerson, has instructions to act only on the defensive until the pleasure of the Legislature is known. I therefore beg to recommend this subject, Gentlemen, to your earliest attention.

It is desirable that measures should be adopted, with as little delay as possible to relieve our fellow-citizens in Sinou from their present difficulties and embarrassments. I am happy to inform the Legislature that King Juvier continues firm in his friendship, and as soon as he heard of the attack upon us by the Bootoo people, he sent a party of his men within the Boo-

too district, and is there holding them in check, otherwise our loss might have been much more serious. I am also glad to say that King George and others of the Blue Barre Chiefs have behaved well towards us. On one occasion when the enemy was approaching stealthily upon one of our settlements he gave the alarm, and by every means in his power has restrained his people from taking part against us. Whatever, Gentlemen, may be the considerations in reference to the Blue Barre people, in consequence of the burning of the town referred to, advantage should be taken of the present favourable circumstances to chastise the Sinou and Bootoo peoples for their unprovoked outrages, and to teach them there is sufficient power in the Government to maintain law and order, and to punish crime. The measure necessary to this end I submit to your sound discretion and good judgment.

In compliance with the Act of the last session of the Legislature, entitled, "An Act authorizing and directing the formation of a settlement at Grand Cape Mount," a company of 68 efficient men was organized and dispatched for that purpose under the superintendence of Hon. A. D. Williams early in April last. On reaching the Cape it was discovered that the state of the country was wretchedly deplorable; distracted by internal feuds, and involved in war with a powerful neighbouring Chief. The principal headmen of the country, excepting George Cain, who was too ill to attend, were immediately assembled, and the objects of the Government in wishing to form a settlement there fully explained to them. They expressed decided satisfaction at the measures proposed by the Government to restore quietness and peace to the country; they seemed fully to appreciate the interest of the Government in their behalf; and with much feeling declared that, in their opinion, the measures then about to be adopted were the only means of relieving them from impending dangers. They were glad to have in their midst a civilized community, not only for the protection it would afford them against the aggression of other tribes, but it would also maintain order in the country, and be the means of reopening commercial intercourse with the interior, which for several years had been almost entirely closed. They hoped, therefore, that no time would be lost in adjusting their domestic differences, and in terminating the war between them and Farfarney. With the promise that these matters would be attended to at an early day, they gave assurances of their hearty co-operation in all the wishes of the Government. These preliminaries arranged, temporary houses were speedily erected on a site near the base of the mount contiguous to the river for the accommodation of the settlers, and around which entrenchments were opened, and every precaution taken to secure the settlers against treachery, should it be contemplated.

According to previous arrangements I visited the new settlement again in the early part of July, and met the Chiefs of Grand Cape Mount, Sugaree, and Manna in grand palaver, and their respective complaints and grievances. After investigating thoroughly the several matters of dispute between them, we succeeded in placing their differences in such a train of pacification as soon led to a satisfactory settlements of all their internal contentions. I also made an effort to have an interview with Farfarney, but failed. I, however, communicated with him relative to discontinuing hostilities against the Vey Chiefs, but he would return only evasive answers, which left but little doubt of his intention to prosecute the war. And soon after my return to this place, he planned and put on foot two expeditions against the Veys, both of which, however, signally failed, and the attacking parties were driven back with great loss. During a recent visit to the settlement I availed myself of the occasion to send to Farfarney to inform him that he could no longer be permitted to disturb the peace of the country by his predatory wars; and unless he consented to an amicable adjustment of the differences subsisting between him and the Vey people, the Government would be under the necessity of taking measures to restrain him, either by confining him within his own limits or by ejecting him from the country. He complained of many wrongs alleged to have been

committed by the Veys; among others, that they had murdered his mother, and several of his children; he, therefore, felt inclined to fight them as long as he lived;" nevertheless, "if the Liberian Government demand that he shall cease hostilities and talk palaver, he must submit." I apprehend, however, that his late reverses have produced some material change in his prospects, and possibly he may not be indisposed to a settlement of the differences by negotiation under the guarantee of this Government. Still I doubt his sincerity. Measures, however, are in progress to bring about a reconciliation; and I may be able in a few days to communicate to the Legislature the result, favourable I hope, of these efforts.

With respect to the new settlement, I am happy in being able to state, that everything there has gone on admirably well. Though much of the time the weather has been very inclement, and the settlers much exposed, still they have performed the duties with cheerfulness and are greatly encouraged. In connexion with the subject of this settlement, I may here observe that some time since, as you will remember, the Indiana Colonization Society, under authority of the Legislature of that State, proposed to purchase a tract of land in Liberia for the use of their emigrants. This land they wished in the neighbourhood of Grand Cape Mount, to be conveyed to, and held in the name of said society, and by them distributed at pleasure. It was deemed inconsistent with the policy of this Government to grant lands to any foreign body whatever; and besides there were other reasons which made it inadvisable to accede to the proposition of the society. These considerations were communicated to the Colonization Board.

I have received, recently, a communication from Governor Wright, in which he admits the wisdom of the arrangements made by this Government for the settlement of emigrants.

He informs me that the Legislature of Indiana has so amended the law, under which the purchase, referred to above, was authorized to be made, as to afford the Colonization Board ample power to negotiate with the Republic of Liberia for land for the use and benefit of coloured persons emigrating to this country from that State, on the best terms possible; and that the title for which to be "vested immediately in the emigrant."

It is also stated that the Indiana Colonization Board have abandoned the idea of distinct settlement; and seemed disposed to leave the location of their emigrants to the discretion of the Government, in connexion with the settlements already established.

They contemplate sending a company of emigrants in the approaching autumn; and Governor Wright remarks, "Being anxious to have suitable arrangements made for them all without delay, and having such confidence in the discretion, kind feeling, and good faith of the Government of Liberia, that we do not apprehend any difficulty in arranging this matter satisfactorily, we hereby authorize you, in case your Government shall consent to sell us land for the object we have in view, at a price not exceeding one dollar per acre, to draw on John W. Lord, Esquire, agent of the State of Indiana in the city of New York, at ten days after sight, for the sum of 1,000 dollars to be placed on the books of your Treasury to the credit of the State Board of Colonization of Indiana, and returned in lands according to such agreements as shall hereafter be definitely made between said Board and the Government of Liberia." Governor Wright's letter contains inquiries and suggestions proper for your consideration, and will be laid before you.

I have to inform the Legislature that the public works ordered by the last session, have been carried forward to the full extent of the public finances. The obstruction directed to be removed from the north-west branch of the Junk river, have been satisfactorily effected; and the navigation of that stream to its source has been rendered safe and easy. The lighthouse on Cape Mesurado is completed, and a bright light now maintained there; a commodious court-house of substantial and durable materials, has been erected in the county of Grand Bassa; bridges, connecting the settlements of Greenville, Lexington, and Louisiana, in the

county of Sinou, have been constructed, and the public buildings generally of the several counties have received such attention and repairs as were found to be necessary to their preservation and wants. I regret to have to say that, for the want of funds, the work of the Government house has not proceeded further than to secure portions of the necessary materials for the building; and for the same reason the bridges and roads ordered to be constructed in this county have not been undertaken. Due attention has been paid to the resolution of the last session, authorizing a certain number of muskets, accoutrements, &c., to be deposited in the counties of Grand Bassa and Sinou. But in consequence of not being able to carry into effect the stipulations under which the block-houses and armories were ordered to be erected in the above named counties, these works remain the subject of your present consideration.

Among the other objects, Gentlemen, of public concern, which will claim attention during your present session, none are more deserving legislative encouragement than agriculture and commerce; as well also – and perhaps at this juncture first in importance – the intellectual improvement of the people.

Agriculture, being the admitted basis of individual wealth, comfort, and happiness, and of national prosperity, has hitherto been a subject of annual legislation. For its promotion many plans have been introduced; at first view, some of these appeared most feasible. But I am sorry to say that as yet not one has met public expectation. The “Act of the Legislature,” it was hoped would supply the necessary impetus to agricultural industry. But upon careful examination it has been found to contain provisions which, under present circumstances, make it almost wholly inoperative. The restrictive provisions to which I refer have been publicly canvassed, and doubtless have been revolved, again and again, in your own minds; I therefore deem it unnecessary for me to say more here than to ask for this subject your careful attention, and to recommend, if you think it compatible with the public interest, such modifications in the present Bill, as will render it practicable for the Government to procure at once the machinery needed for manufacturing sugar and cleaning coffee.

And as commerce and agriculture are twin sisters, inseparable in interests, and dependent for support the one upon the other, I cannot doubt but that you will give commerce also that consideration which its importance demands. And as far as legislative action can increase its prosperity, that you will give it that encouragement, by the adoption of such liberal measures, as will tend to facilitate trade and commercial enterprise, and afford accommodation and protection to our merchants.

The subject of education – so important; nay, so absolutely necessary to the stability and perpetuity of our republican institutions, and to the development of the vast resources of our country – will present itself with irresistible force upon your attention. It is a matter of thankfulness, Gentlemen, which cannot fail to impress us with feelings of profound gratitude – that our educational interest has been, and is still an object of deep concern to American philanthropists. Several Christian denominations in The United States have for years been contributing liberally to our means of mental improvement. They have been maintaining schools in various parts of the Republic for the moral, religious, and intellectual training of our youth, and but for this assistance dark, indeed, might be the prospect now before us. But happily, through these instrumentalities, much good has been effected; and thus some of our young men are being trained for usefulness, and give promise of efficiency in the various departments of Church and State. These facilities, supplied by foreign benevolence, however, are not sufficient for the educational wants of our numerous aboriginal population; nor, indeed, would it be reasonable for us to expect from abroad all the means necessary to the education of these people. We must put our shoulder to the wheel, and push forward the work of the civilization with a mighty effort. It is not only demanded by a wise policy, but it

is our indispensable duty to use our best endeavours to reclaim these people from barbarism. I know that the improvement of the natives, within our territorial limits, is an object of deep solicitude, which has claimed the attention of successive Legislatures; and I have every reason to believe, Gentlemen, that you, too, will do all in your power to advance this object. Our relation to these people is particularly interesting. Though rude and ignorant, they are our brethren, and not to be driven out from among us; but are to be drawn within the circle of social compact – to be incorporated, not only nominally but practically into our body politic – to partake and enjoy alike with us all the blessings of civil society. How very important, then, that they be taught, by every possible means, the arts of civilization and the doctrines of Christianity. Indeed, to fit them for a national participation in the duties and blessings of human society their civilization is indispensable. Many difficulties I am aware, growing out of their deep-rooted, barbarous habits, present themselves to the attainment of this desirable result, within any very short period. The work is one of time, and its progress, in the natural order of things, necessarily gradual. But past experience has shown – though their conduct sometimes seems to dampen hope – that, by untiring perseverance and a faithful trust in Providence, it can ultimately be accomplished.

Some well digested plan, which will, as speedily as possible rescue these people from their present degraded condition is due to them, to the cause of humanity, and to the honour of the Government. I, therefore, earnestly recommend that the Legislature will adopt such additional measures as may be found within their reach to extend the means of instruction in letters and the arts of civilized life, as far as possible, among the aboriginal inhabitants of the Republic; and in connection with this subject, I beg also to recommend that the Legislature will authorize the appointment, in each of the counties of the Republic, of an officer whose special duty it shall be to look after the interests of the aborigines within his respective district, to hear their complaints, to give advice and command in their business transactions, when called on for that purpose, and to represent them in all matters of dispute resulting in judicial investigation before any of the courts of the Commonwealth.

In examining, as you doubtless will, into the efficiency of the various departments of the Government, you will readily perceive that the exigencies of the public service require improvement in some of them to render them more adequate to the wants of our growing community and the pressure of public business daily accumulating.

The judiciary especially I would recommend to your serious deliberations. Nothing, perhaps, pertaining to civil government is more conducive to public tranquility, nor better calculated to inspire public confidence than a speedy and comprehensive administration of national justice. I may mention here an inconvenience which at present exists in relation to the mode of commencing actions against the Government for the adjustment of claims, real or imaginary, in favour of individuals. I beg, therefore, to draw your attention to the 17<sup>th</sup> section of the Bill of Rights, which provides that “suits may be brought against the Republic in such manner and in such cases as the Legislature may by law direct.” Hitherto the Legislature have provided only for the adjustment of claims involving title to lands for the Government. But other causes of complaint are, in the very nature of things, likely to arise; and as, in such contingency, citizens and others would be greatly embarrassed in respect to the course and means of obtaining redress, it is therefore the duty of the Legislature to designate, without further delay, the cases in which suits may be brought against the Government, and the manner in which they are to be conducted.

I deem it to be my duty on this occasion again to invite your attention to a careful examination of our present militia organization. Another year’s experience, added to long and patient reflection, has strengthened the opinion I have heretofore expressed to the Legislature, the cause of the great inefficiency of this and of the public defense. There can be no

question that a more efficient organization of our militia is essential to that security, which is one of the principal objects of all Governments. While we have no regular military establishment – and I could hope the day will never arrive when that shall be found necessary, but that in time to come, as in time past, we may safely rely for protection on the great body of our fellow citizens – it is important, situated as we are, in the midst of warlike savage tribes, whose favourite mode of settling all disputes is by brute force, and who are ever restless, and on the slightest occasion ready to resort to arms, as the recent occurrences at Sinou too clearly demonstrate, that the citizen soldier should be so trained as to be able to act efficiently whenever his services may be required for the defense of his country.

I have great pleasure in remarking that our fellow-citizens generally, with an alacrity honourable to themselves, have always responded to the call of their country in the hour of danger, and their success in arms has been equal to their courage and their devotedness to the public service. In our early contests with the natives, however, great skill in military science, or even in ordinary tactics, was not essential. But the times have changed, and now the tribes around us are becoming expert in the use of firearms: and if by any misfortune we should be drawn into collision with any of the most powerful of these, it would be different from what it is now at Sinou; nor is it certain that we would be prepared for such emergency. It is obvious enough that but little useful knowledge is gained by the musters and drills as now established, and that the whole system requires thorough revision. In submitting this subject to your consideration, I would recommend the appointment of a board of military officers, whose experience will enable them to make some suggestions which might aid your deliberation in regard to this matter.

I scarcely need advert to the occurrences which transpired during the late general election to impress upon you, Gentlemen, the necessity of remodeling the law regulating the elective franchise.

Amidst the collision of party spirit, originating in speculative opinions, or in different views of administrative policy, I think I can safely say, the political creed of Liberia, without a dissenting view that can be heard, is, that the will of the people is the source and the happiness of civil society, the end of legitimate Governments; and that the best security for beneficence, and the surest guarantee against the abuse of power consist in the freedom, the purity, and the frequency of popular elections. And this is true. But it seems to be equally true that intrigue and corruption are the natural defects of elective Governments, which are to be watched with lynx-like eyes.

In times of great political excitement and party frenzy, men, more or less, of all political parties, are too apt to substitute adroitness for patriotism, which always tends to degrade political morality until it finally genders into corrupt influences most pernicious to the public good. To neutralize these, requires all the force of well digested laws, made positive and explicit, and unflinchingly executed.

I feel that the Legislature will do its duty in this respect, and prevent the recurrence, certainly, of the embarrassments which, for several days, have delayed the organization of the House of Representatives, and thus interrupted the progress of public business. This experience, however, clearly demonstrates the expediency of interposing such checks against frauds at elections as will maintain the purity of the ballot-box, and secure a legitimate expression of the will of the people in the choice of their officers.

There is no greater truth in political economy than that the stability and perpetuity of Republican institutions depend almost exclusively on the purity of popular elections. Once let corruption and fraud be practiced with impunity on the ballot-box, and away goes popular Government, away goes civil liberty, to be substituted by anarchy, oppression, and all

adjuncts consequent upon depraved human nature, developing only sordid interests and vile political ambition.

These remarks, Gentlemen, be it understood, are not intended to convey any invidious allusion to party organization in Liberia, but are prompted, I assure you, only by an anxious desire to see those evils provided against which are too common in all free countries and too frequently practiced by thoughtless individuals of all political parties, as well in Liberia as elsewhere.

Intimately connected with this, is another subject, to which I cannot refrain from inviting the attention of the Legislature.

I allude to the expediency of a Naturalization Law. I am assured, Gentlemen, of the diversity of opinion, on the part of our fellow-citizens, in regard to this question, and that recently it has been the theme of much speculation throughout the country. And I have listened with much attention, and have carefully examined all the arguments I have heard adduced on both sides, but, with becoming deference to those who take an opposite view, I must say that I am more than ever before, impressed with the belief that the time has fully arrived when the peace and harmony of the community and the safety of the institutions of our country demand this protection.

I think, Gentlemen, it cannot be maintained, as has been asserted, that the advocates of this measure are inimical to immigration, and entertain unfriendly feelings towards those who may have recently arrived among us. For such assertions, I am fully persuaded there can be no just foundation.

But the measure is one founded upon the sound principle of national prudence – a measure adopted, as far as my knowledge goes, by all civilized nations of the earth. Yea, it seems to be, and very properly too, the cardinal principle of every Government established on the right of the people to govern themselves – a right which human experience has evidenced – can only be beneficially exercised when the training, the habit of self-government, and the general diffusion of sound morals and education among the mass of the people have given the capacity for the exercise of that right.

Can it be believed that a person just coming into a country is well enough acquainted with the wants and resources of the Government to take part immediately in its management; or that, being a stranger, he would be likely to know what persons to vote for to secure the best interest of the State? Surely not. Hence, then, the principle recognized by all other Governments, and why not in Liberia?—that before a man's right to participate in the government of the country is conferred, he shall have lived long enough in it to have become conversant with its institutions, and sufficiently imbued with their spirit as to be able to exercise the right of citizenship with benefit to himself and the community at large. This, Gentlemen, is a question of no little importance to the future of Liberia; a question on which depends, in an eminent degree, the future happiness and prosperity of the people; a question, perhaps, upon which are suspended the safety and perpetuity of our Republican institution. It is a question whose bearings and relations are greater and more extensive than I will attempt to depict or describe. These, I am sure, you feel and understand without my dwelling upon them.

In bringing this question to notice of the Legislature, I have done, Gentlemen, what I believe to be my imperative duty, as I am convinced in my own mind of its necessity, I now submit it to your serious and candid deliberations; only adding that, in the consideration of the subject I do hope that the Legislature will look into its merits, discarding all calculations of a political character connected with the party conflicts of the day. Legislation subjected to party influence can never be just or conducive to the public weal; nor will it long retain the sanction of the people, whose active patriotism is not bounded by party considerations, nor

insensible to that spirit of concession and forbearance which gives life and animation to our political compact. Sensible as you are of this important fact, I am fully persuaded that your reaction, whatever it may be in regard to this question, will not be governed by party feelings or prejudices, but will be controlled by higher and purer motives, centered in the patriotic determination to promote, by every possible means, the great interests, present and future, of our yet infant but rising State.

The propriety of enacting a law defining the nature and regulating the operation of promissory notes and bills of exchange has occurred to me as meriting the attention of the Legislature. It strikes me as necessary to the trading interest of our community, in business transactions promissory notes and bills of exchange are bought and sold in the markets as other property. It is, therefore, important, nay, necessary, to the protection of the merchant, that it be defined by law how far they are to be recognized as evidence of a debt, and the relation each party thereto sustains to the holder; also what forms shall be observed in protesting promissory notes and bills of exchange, and the manner of giving notice, and what rate of damages shall be allowed and paid upon the protest for non-acceptance or non-payment.

I also recommend to the consideration of the Legislature the subject of a law of descent or hereditary succession. The law of inheritance is of the highest importance in all countries, and should be relieved, as much as possible, from all ambiguity and all extraneous matters which might tend to create embarrassment and confusion. Indeed, in relation to Liberia this question is involved in great doubt and uncertainty. We find in an old biennial code of the Commonwealth a law, very indefinitely describing "who shall be a man's heirs in the colony." But this law, obscure in its provisions and unsatisfactory in its doctrine of descent, has not been brought into the revised statutes of the Republic, and now, I believe, considered by many of our citizens as obsolete.

I beg leave respectfully to remind the Legislature of a Bill which was introduced and discussed at the last session, in relation to the recording of conveyances and other documents implying titles to lands. This is matter which demands, for many reasons which I need not stop here to mention, legislative action, and I cannot too strongly recommend it, Gentlemen, to your further and more favourable consideration.

I would also remind you of another subject among the unfinished business of the last session, a matter relating to a suitable remuneration to Mr. J. J. Dumont, our Consul-General at Paris, for services rendered in receiving and forwarding certain military equipment presented to the republic by the French Government. Mr. Dumont has recently been urging his demand with much earnestness, and I regret to say, with equal unreasonableness. He alleges that promises of remuneration were made by me, which I most distinctly disavow. At an early day I will lay his correspondence before you, from which you will be enabled to discover the inaccuracy of his statements. I trust, however, the Legislature will take such action in the premises as will afford him such remuneration for his services as shall be deemed equitable and proper.

In averting to the subject of internal improvements, it is only necessary, perhaps, for me to observe, that I consider it incumbent on the Legislature to contribute, as far as may be found practicable, to works of public utility and the development of the national resources of the country. There are unquestionably many objects of great national importance to which the care of the Government may be beneficially applied, and perhaps the time is arrived when, among other objects which claim attention, something might be done towards the exploration of the region lying interior to our territories by which means much useful knowledge might be gained respecting the geography and healthfulness of the country interior, and of the character of the several tribes beyond us; and, at the same time, such an effort

could not fail to promote in an important degree the commercial interests of our citizens and advance the cause of civilization.

We have it, Gentlemen, constantly before our eyes that professions of superior zeal in the cause of internal improvements are loudly and earnestly put forth by candidates of all political parties in constituting the highest claim to the confidence of the people; and the people, of course, have a right to expect that this interest will receive a proper share of legislative attention. They will not, however, require more than might reasonably be accomplished with the means at the disposal of those whose duty it is to direct them.

And to what extent the public finances will allow you to prosecute the measures of internal improvements, which I believe you desire to see effected, the state of the Treasury and the prospective revenue of the country for the current year can only determine.

With respect to the condition of the public finance and the prospects of the revenue for another year, I am happy to be able to inform the Legislature that they are fully as favourable as could be expected, and exhibit the resources of the country in an aspect highly flattering and auspicious of the ability of the Government to prosecute with vigour the various objects of national policy where the general good may seem to demand. According to the estimation of the Treasury Department it is ascertained that the revenue of the country is steadily increasing.

At an early day the Secretary of the Treasury will lay before you accounts in detail, of the transactions at the Department during the years last past; as also the estimates of appropriations necessary for the various departments of the Government during the current year.

In conformity with a resolution of the last session of the Legislature, “authorizing the appointment of three responsible and competent persons to audit all unaudited accounts,” I named Messrs H. W. Dennis, W. A. Johnson, and R. L. Stryker to that duty. These gentlemen, with great strictness and perseverance, have carefully examined and compared vouchers, and audited all unaudited public accounts from the year 1851 to the close of the last fiscal year, September 30<sup>th</sup>; and I am authorized to say, that they have found the state of the public accounts satisfactory, and furnishing indubitable evidence of the accountability of the Treasury Department in relation to the public expenditures. The auditors’ report is not quite completed, but in a few days will be laid before you.

The copper coin, ordered to be struck, according to the proposition of S. Gurney, Esquire, has arrived, and awaits the further order of the Legislature.

I am also authorized to say, that if the amount of copper coin already received is deemed insufficient for the demand, and the Government is disposed to increase the circulation, Mr. Gurney will contribute another 100/ sterling, on like condition as the first, to that object.

I would observe here, that the present mode of making returns of the public money falling into the hands of agents charged with its collection, especially court and military fines, is in some respects unsatisfactory; and a large amount of these, now outstanding, might be collected by a little more vigilance on the part of the officers whose duty it is to enforce payment. With a view to some reformation in these matters, I recommend the subject to the attention of the Legislature.

Having, in this communication, given you a view of the present condition of the affairs of the Republic, and having presented to you the circumstances which have occurred since the last session of the Legislature, interesting to the public weal, and having recommended to your consideration such objects of public concern as I deemed sufficiently important to claim special and immediate attention, I shall avail myself of a subsequent occasion to bring to your notice some other matters of a public character which I consider interesting to the general good, and others of a private nature which I would submit to your consideration;

among these is a matter relating to the landing of a quantity of ardent spirits at this port from the brig Haywood in April last, involving the question of refunding an amount of duties paid on said spirits – landed under a false impression of the operation of the law of the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, and which false impression it is alleged was received from the Collector of Customs. All the facts, in regard to this case, as far as they have come to my knowledge, will in due time be transmitted to the Legislature.

Gentlemen, as the period retiring from office is near at hand, and this being the last occasion which will occur to me of addressing both Houses of the Legislature at the commencement of their meeting, I cannot close this communication without recording here an expression of my sincere gratitude for many indulgencies I have received from time to time at the hands of this branch of the Government, and the same grateful acknowledgments are due for the repeated proofs of confidence manifested towards me by my fellow citizens generally, whose support and encouragement have sustained me in the discharge of the arduous and responsible duties which have devolved upon me in the management of their public affairs. In directing these I cannot have escaped error; it is incident to imperfect nature. One thing, however, consoles me that in whatever it has been my lot to commit errors, they have been the result of my weak understanding, and not of intention.

To administer impartial justice; to maintain the honour of the Government, and the rights of my fellow-citizens; and to advance the true interests of Liberia, have been my constant aim, and the motives which prompted every action of my public life.

My thanks are also due to all the officers of the Government who have been intimately associated with me in the administration of public affairs, and I beg to be permitted on this occasion to tender to them my grateful acknowledgments for their co-operation and assistance accorded to me on all occasions, and under all circumstances, however trying or embarrassing.

I now, Gentlemen, commend you to the guidance of Almighty God, with full reliance on his merciful providence for the maintenance of our free institutions, and with earnest supplication that He will direct you in all your deliberations on the topics of general interest to which I have adverted, and such others as your more extensive knowledge of the wants of the people may suggest. Recollecting always that it becomes us to cherish a devout gratitude to that Divine Providence whose goodness has been so remarkably extended to this infant but rising nation, and to implore from the same omnipotent source a blessing on the consultations and measures about to be undertaken for the welfare of our common country, and the prosperity and happiness of our fellow citizens. To this end I earnestly entreat that in all your deliberations and counsels you will cultivate a spirit of harmony and unanimity of action, laying aside, if such there be, all sectional or other considerations not compatible with the general weal; and, with common zeal and common efforts, cheerfully co-operate in the adoption of such measures as will promote the supreme good of our beloved Liberia.

J.J. Roberts.

Government House,  
Monrovia, December 20, 1855

Stephen Allen Benson  
II President of Liberia: 1856–1864



Annual Message to the Legislature  
December 3, 1856

To the Honorable Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives:

The period having arrived at which the law of this Republic makes it my duty to meet you, it affords me great pleasure to do so, for the purpose of making representation to your honorable department, of the foreign and domestic affairs of this Republic; as also of recommending such public measures, as I have deemed expedient under existing circumstances.

We have great cause to feel profoundly grateful to the Father of all our mercies, for his preserving care and direction of us and our public affairs through the course of another year, which has been marked by difficulties and dangers of no ordinary nature.

The ushering in of my administrative term, was a juncture fraught with many disadvantages and discouragements. About six weeks previously, at a time when this government, and especially that county, were ill prepared for such an event, a most distressing civil war had broken out between the Americo-Liberians of Sinoe county, and the aboriginal tribes, known as the Grand and Little Butaw, the Sinoe and the Blue Barree tribes inhabiting said county which, for some time, threatened the extinction of our settlements in that section of this Republic. Three of the interior settlements had been abandoned, and two others partly destroyed by the flames of the enemy, were but feebly occupied as outer stations. The crops were nearly all destroyed: all inland communication, and consequently such supplies as the country usually afforded, were cut off; thus suddenly rendering four-fifths of the Americo-Liberians in that interesting county entirely dependent on charity for food and raiment, at a time when foreign and domestic provisions were more than fifty per cent higher than usual; so that the extinction of the settlements in that interesting county by war and its concomitants seemed inevitable, and was pretty generally apprehended.

But we have great cause to feel grateful, that Divine Providence has mercifully dispelled during the year, most of the clouds that presented such a portentous aspect, and has measurably caused a genial and encouraging sunshine of security, prosperity, independence, and contentedness to ensue.

The military campaign authorized and requested by you, at the last session, to be put on foot, for the purpose of chastising the aggressive tribes of Sinoe county, and for the protection of our settlements there, has been faithfully and effectually prosecuted under the able command of General John N. Lewis. The first regiment (Col. Payne) sailed from this port on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January; and the second regiment (Col. J. D. Washington) From Grand Bassa, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the same month for Sinoe, where they were joined by the third regiment; (Col. S. Dickerson,) and took up the line of march on the 31<sup>st</sup>, to operate against the Grand and Little Butaw, the Sinoe and Blue Barre tribes, and by the 23d of February, had inflicted such a chastisement, as was necessary to carry out the object contemplated by the act; and on the 26<sup>th</sup> February embarked for home, having sustained very little numerical loss. In the prose-

cution of that campaign, (which, properly speaking, was but the suppression of an insurrection of heathens,) the policy was to adhere as closely as possible that humane principle in international law, which enjoins "To do the enemy as little harm and as much good in time of war, as may under existing circumstances, accord with a sound discretion."

Considering gentlemen, the relation we sustain to aboriginal Liberia, our great duties, responsibilities, and brilliant hopes, with respect to their future social, political, and religious welfare, it was generally regretted that measures so revolting to our feelings had to be resorted to for our own, as well as their safety and benefit.

The great pressure of business consequent upon the incipiency of my administrative term, prevented my revisiting Sinoe after the return of the troops, until the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, when I was happy to find that Judge Murray, associated with commissioners, had, on the ninth, two days previously, concluded a satisfactory peace in Greenville with the Grand and Little Butaw tribes; and during my stay there, I succeeded on terms mutually satisfactory, in negotiating peace with the Bleu Barree and Sinoe chiefs, who met me in the court house at Greenville for that purpose.-Copies of the terms of peace will be duly laid before the Honorable, the Senate, in which it will appear that reasonable indemnities were exacted of them; reparations sufficiently stringent, when taken in connection with the chastisement they had already received, to cause them to reflect seriously in the future before perpetuating similar aggressions; and from their general expressions of regret, exhibitions of humility, and solemn promises of future good behavior and loyalty, I cannot doubt, if a judicious course I observed by the Americo-Liberians, that that county will rest from war at least a score of years, if not perpetually. In order, however, to contribute to the perpetuation of peace, I advise that provision be made, so soon as our pecuniary circumstances will allow, for putting the settlements there, as well as elsewhere, within the Republic, in a state of defense.

A great number of our fellow citizens inhabiting that county have long since returned to their deserted villages and homes with new life and zeal, and are praiseworthy laying the foundation of a permanent prosperity and independence.

During my visit to Sinoe, I dispatched Capt. Crayton via Butaw, with friendly assurances to Joe Weah, an interior chief, with whom for many years we have been on the most friendly terms; the obstruction of whose intercourse to our settlements by the Butaws, who had been waging war against him for several years for that purpose, has proved very retarding for the prosperity of our settlements for years; and the interposition of this government so as to establish free intercourse, contributed in a great measure to the assumption, by the Butaw tribes, of the late hostile attitude towards us. These friendly assurances were cordially reciprocated by Joe Weah and tribes contiguous, and a proposition was made by him, and an understanding had, that, as former obstructions were now removed, a good road be opened from our settlements to his town; in the prosecution of which he pledged the co-operation of his people. It is said by those who have visited it, to be a healthy, fertile, well-watered and timbered country, furnishing an abundance of rice at all seasons, and with contiguous sections abounding with many valuable commodities.

I visited Grand Cape Mount early in May, for the purpose of regulating matters at Robertsport, as well as to bring about a cessation of hostilities among the seaboard tribes of that country. I am happy to inform you that I succeeded in making peace between the two principal belligerents, George Cane and Far Forney; and the long obstructed intercourse between them was re-opened and has not been obstructed since: both chiefs have since died, the former last month, and the latter during the month of June.

The term of the enlistment of the volunteers to Robertsport having expired on the first of April, they had become discouraged by the impoverished state of the country induced by constant war and their discouragement was augmented by their continued disappointment, in

an accession by immigration; but I could not for a moment entertain the idea of an abandonment of that promising settlement, after so large an expenditure by government for its establishment. I had, therefore, to assume the responsibility of continuing their rations for four months beyond the original term of enlistment, by which time, I indulged the hope that the settlement would be strengthened by immigration, with the understanding that they remain there as permanent settlers. I also assured them, should circumstances require them to be called into actual service up there this year, I had no doubt that you would authorize their adequate compensation.

Though it is possible, we may find it necessary at some future day, to chastise some of the more interior tribes of that section of the country, for persisting in the prosecution of their predatory wars, on which they have so long depended for livelihood, yet for the present, it is a very highly gratifying fact, that peace so generally prevails within our borders, and that the aborigines are manifestly increasing in their respect for, and loyalty to this government; and are encouragingly progressing in those principles of civilization that are destined to elevate them to social and religious blessings as well as to national greatness.

During the month of March, I sent up a surveyor to lay out the city of Robertsport, who returned in the month of May, with a certificate from the General Superintendent, stating that four hundred and sixteen lots had been laid off. I am happy to say, that about one hundred of the immigrants by the *Elvira Owen* were landed there early in September, under the supervision of the Rev. John Seys, Special Agent of the American Colonization Society; and one of the fine commodious receptacles brought out by the same vessel, has been erected at that place for the accommodation of successive companies of immigrants. The volunteers and immigrants have drawn their town lots, and are praiseworthily converting that wilderness into civilized habitations. I know of no seaboard settlement in Liberia possessing more and greater advantages. As it was deemed advisable that the farms be apportioned of lands up the country, which can be reached by ascending the bay and river, I have deferred their assignment until such time as the present settlement shall have acquired sufficient numerical force for self-protection; meanwhile there is sufficient public land contiguous to Robertsport, that the settlers can cultivate for the present with more convenience, profit and safety.

I beg to invite your attention to the propriety of making suitable provisions for the administration and government of the local affairs at Cape Mount.

In case you are pleased to constitute it a distinct county, in compliance with the petition of its inhabitants, and will invest it with the usual county officers and organizations, then my duty will be plain, but should it not be made a separate county, then it will be necessary for you to make special provisions for the administration and government of their local affairs, so as to obviate in some degree, the great inconvenience and expense that would in such case result from their being so distant from the county seat, and the poor facilities for communication and transportation. In either case, I advise that you constitute Robertsport a port of entry and delivery.

The Rev. John Seys, well known as a devoted Christian missionary for a long time in Liberia, arrived in the ship *Elvira Owen* in the month of August, as Special Agent of the American Colonization Society; and among other important duties, he is charged with the mission, by permission of this government, of making exploration interior, for the purpose of selecting a suitable locality for the formation of an interior settlement, with a view of testing the comparative healthiness of our seaboard and interior in the acclimation of immigrants. This laudable enterprise was originated some years ago, by the New Jersey Colonization Society; but circumstances have prevented its prosecution hitherto. I am sanguine that its prosecution under well considered and judicious provisions meets your cordial approbation – and as this government has not as yet, to my knowledge, formally signified its concur-

rence in the measure, I beg to invite your attention to it at this session. I have already advised the Society of the propriety of a sufficient expenditure by them, in order to provide adequately for the security of said settlement. I shall be pleased to carry out any recommendation of yours in this matter.

I beg to invite your attention, at an early day of your session, to the communication of the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, 1855, addressed to the President of this Republic, by Governor Wright, President of the State Board of Colonization of Indiana, in reference to their procurement of land in Liberia, at a fixed price, for the purpose of making additional grants to immigrants from that State, to the quantity of land allowed immigrants by the existing laws of Liberia; as also soliciting information on other important matters connected with the future operations of said Society. As the operations of the Board have no doubt been retarded in consequence of your action on that communication not having been consummated at your last session, and as reply will be awaited with some anxiety, at an early day after this commencement of your session, I beg that you will give it your earliest attention.

I have also to invite your attention to the matter in dispute between the ex-collector of customs of this port, and Capt. Josiah Webber, of Salem, Mass., U.S.A., in reference to an amount of duties he was required to pay on a quantity of ardent spirits landed in this Republic after the first day of May, 1855, on which he claims to have paid duties previously, under the operation of the law immediately preceding that date and he now asks a refundment of the last amount paid; and as this can be done only by a physical act of yours, I believe that the subject will receive such attention and action as justice demands. As this matter was submitted to you at the last session, and remains among the unfinished business, you are in possession of the documents connected therewith.

In the month of August, there were furnished by the Secretary of State, to H.B.M. Government, on official application, the tariff of this Republic, also the value of the different foreign coins circulating within the same. The latter, in the absence of any statute fixing their value, were based upon usage. I advise the regulation of their value within this Republic by law at this session, so as to secure a legal uniformity in their valuation throughout the State. I also beg, that you will constitute the copper coin, procured by this government, partly through the beneficence of the late lamented S. Gurney, Esq., a legal tender of this Republic; and that you will authorize the issue and circulation of such an amount of the engraved bills of this Republic, as you may deem accordant with a sound policy under existing circumstances.

I have to call your attention to the "bounty land bill," which passed both houses nearly at the close of your last session; the which, from some objectionable features and provisions, was not approved. Without adverting to all I consider objectionable in it, I will simply invite your attention to the fact, that the act actually places it out of the power of its intended beneficiaries to dispose of their bounty lands, in case they wish to do so which I cannot believe to have been the intention of the framers of the bill, but was an oversight, through the great pressure and hurry at the time of its passage. This feature would render at least two-thirds of the claims entirely unavailing to the claimants, for reasons too manifest to need mentioning here. I beg, therefore, your reconsideration of the bill, and that you make such amendments as will carry out more satisfactorily, the very commendable object contemplated.

I have also to recommend the passage of a law defining citizenship of this Republic; that is, as to what shall constitute one a citizen of this Republic; as well as making provisions for carrying the same into effect. The passage of such a law should not be delayed longer, if we would obviate serious difficulties, not only among ourselves, but with foreign powers; a warning against which, we have had this year, in the attempt of the notorious A.T. Woods. I have to further recommend, that you so amend the act entitled "An act authorizing

the appointment of surveyors for each county, and defining their duties,” approved January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1855, as to require persons who may order land surveyed through the Land Commissioner, to pay the expense of surveying the same, provided the person thus ordering does not appear and have the said land sold at the succeeding Quarterly Court; and that the Land Commissioner be authorized to adopt such measures, as will insure its prompt and immediate collection.

The increase of cases of larceny within the Republic the last two years manifestly proves, that the statutory provision made for its punishment, approved January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1854, are not sufficiently stringent. – The bare requisition of fourfold if detected, will likely always prove a temptation to the committal of such acts, by the dishonest, acute speculator if the thief can satisfy himself, that the chances of his escape are good for five out of six, he will be encouraged to prosecute the business for a livelihood. It is highly important, gentlemen, that the law at once be made more effective, so as to timely check this growing evil.

I have to request your authorization of the appointment of one or more discreet persons in each county, whose duty it shall be to hear and determine such native complaints and misunderstandings, as are usually referred to the chief executive; and that you define the duties and jurisdiction of these officers, as well as the compensation of such of them, as may not be the regularly appointed general superintendents of counties. And as the aborigines living adjacent to our settlements perform no public duty, nor contribute otherwise directly to the support of the government; and as they claim and receive the protection of this government, which on an average, spends thousands of dollars annually, settling their misunderstandings, one with another, and in affording them protection, I therefore recommend, that a reasonable tax be imposed on them, to assist in defraying these expenses and that you define and authorize the organization of a system that will promptly and effectually secure the desired object.

Gentlemen, I have also to invite your attention, in a somewhat cursory manner, to the propriety of making the following amendments and additions to the judiciary code. I deem it unnecessary to offer any arguments in commendation of them, as they will no doubt readily commend themselves to your experienced and discriminating judgments.

1<sup>st</sup>. A law defining the method by which suit shall be brought against this government – wide 17<sup>th</sup> section of the bill of rights.

2d. A law of descent, or hereditary succession.

3d. A law requiring, within a given time, the public record or conveyances and other documents involving title to land, in order to their validity.

4<sup>th</sup>. A law providing for a more efficient organization of the militia of this Republic.

It affords me great pleasure to communicate to you, that nothing has occurred during the year to interrupt the tranquility of our foreign relations; and so far as I am cognizant, the most friendly feelings subsist between this government and all nations. This very desirable state of things has been greatly contributed to by the very commendable deportment of the foreign functionaries residing in the Republic, who, while they have zealously guarded the interest of their respective governments, have so demeaned themselves, as to have secured the confidence, respect, and best feelings of this government.

In the month of June, Dr. J. Z. Forney, Esq., arrived in this city, bearing a commission of United States Commercial Agent for Monrovia, and parts adjacent; and was received by this government in the month of July, after the requisite correspondence and understanding were had with him. Any further information, gentlemen, you may require with respect to this matter, will be duly laid before you.

I have the pleasure of informing you, that ratifications of the Hanseatic treaty were exchanged in London, by G. Ralston, Esq., on behalf of this government, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May; copies of which have been duly received at the State department.

In the month of April last, the Hon. H. H. Roberts, intending to make a visit to Europe, was commissioned charge de affairs of this government, accredited near the court of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of France; and having been duly recognized by that magnanimous nation, was enabled through his efficient ministry, to make such representations of the character, object, and claims of this infant Republic, as could not fail to make a true and favorable impression.

His Majesty, true to that magnanimity and benevolence that have hitherto characterized his reign, entertained up to the date of the last advise from our minister, his wonted feelings of friendship towards this infant Republic, and evinced a disposition to contribute to his welfare.

The special duties with which our minister was charged, were to exchange ratifications of the French treaty; to procure of the French government the first of the promised small vessel of war, and to adjust and settle the claims of our Consul General at Paris. I regret that he has not been able to consummate the prosecution of all these duties timely, for me to make full report to you of the issue, at this commencement of your session.

I have the gratification, however, of informing you that he succeeded in settling the claims made on this government by our Consul General a Paris, by the payment of two hundred and fifty dollars in addition to the thousand dollars appropriated for that purpose at your last session, of which I beg your approval. – Through the kindness of Mr. Woermann, of Hamburgh, the thousand uniforms presented by the French government have been shipped for this city, and are daily expected.

I am happy to inform you, that on the arrival of the Elvira Owen, I received, through the agency of the American Colonization Society, a valuable library, with surgical instruments and human skeleton, (constituting nine cases,) which were bequeathed to this Republic by the late lamented Dr. Kittredge, of Portsmouth, N.H., who, I learn, has been Liberia's unswerving friend for many years. This bequest is value at five thousand dollars, and I am sure, will ever be gratefully remembered, and duly appreciated by this government.

I also received early in the year, from Liberia's unrivaled and well known benefactor, Benjamin Coates, Esq., a large and beautiful lithographic picture of the Senate of the United States in 1850, which he kindly presents to the Honorable, the Senate of this Republic.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to state further, that through the instrumentality of the Rev. A. Crummell, who communicated with friends in the United States on that subject, an amount has been generously contributed for the erection of a library building in this city; and he is fully authorized by the donors to commence the same so soon as procurement of a lot for that purpose can be made of government. The Rev. gentlemen, accordingly, made application to me for a lot nearly four months ago; and in course of conversation it occurred to me, that notwithstanding he is not as yet advised as to their plans relative to the control and management of the library, yet, as it cannot be reasonably supposed, that it will be simply the product of benevolent heart for the general good of Liberia, you would readily allow its erection on the corner, or some other spot of the government square, as being the most convenient and suitable place. I will, at an early day, transmit to you a copy of the Rev. gentleman's communication with me on the subject; and as the work has been delayed several months for the purpose of procuring y our formal consent to its erection there, I am sanguine, gentlemen, that you have not the least disposition to retard a moment longer, an enterprise so very laudable – so very pregnant with blessings to the present, as well as future generations of this Republic.

I have the gratification to inform you, that in conformity to an act entitled “An act authorizing the settling of land difficulties in the settlement of Caldwell, and survey of lands in all the settlements of this Republic, where difficulties exist,” approved January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1855, I have succeeded, through the obliging disposition and efficient services of the Hon. D. B. Warner, Secretary of State, in settling the most intricate land difficulties at Clay Ashland and vicinity, and have made new assignments to most of those who have been ousted by the adjustment. I also appointed two commissioners for Caldwell in September, as provided in the said act, who finished their labors and issued the necessary certificates by the first of October; and the surveyor has been employed more than a fortnight re-surveying that township, and surveying the farm lands to be apportioned, agreeable to the provisions of the said act.

I also have the gratification of communicating to you, that in conformity to an act entitled “An act authorizing a just appointment of land to be surveyed for the citizens at New Georgia,” approved January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1855, I have had eighty-seven farms, comprising four hundred and ninety-eight acres, land off in the vicinity of New Georgia; and apportionments have been made to those New Georgians who were found deficient to the quantity to which they were by law entitled.

I made the effort, as soon I could this year, to have your resolution executed, which passed at your last session, authorizing and requesting the compilation of the laws of the Republic, including those of that session, together with our treaties, &c. &c. I am happy to say that Major Erskine whose services I was fortunate to secure as compiler, is progressing finely. I have contracted to have a thousand copies printed, one-third of which have already passed through the press; and unless the work be delayed by your order, so as to include the laws of this session in the volume, the entire printing will have been finished before the close of this session.

I have also to state, that the counties of Grand Bassa and Sinoe stand very much in need of a jail, each. The expense to government of renting private apartments in the County of Grand Bassa, in which to keep prisoners, almost amounts to a sufficient sum in two years to erect a suitable jail. I solicit your appropriation of moderate amounts for the erection of those two buildings, and that you authorize the sale of the present public building that is used as a jail in Greenville, in case I shall find it advisable.

The subject of education should by no means escape attention, though I can promise only a cursory notice of it on this occasion. I am happy to say that there is no abatement of benevolence and zeal on the part of our foreign friends, to assist in adequately providing for our educational interests; and we should, as a people, feel very grateful, and entertain the kindest feelings towards the foreign teachers residing within this Republic, who with much sacrifice of health, as well as of domestic and social enjoyment, are praiseworthy laboring for the moral and intellectual improvement of our youth. It is also very gratifying to know that some of the schools now in operation, and in contemplation, are to be conducted on the manual labor system: a system of operation that has been hitherto a great desideratum. While being so very liberally assisted by foreign benevolence, it occurs to me that it is not only a wise policy, until the imperative duty of this government, to support at least a good common school in each of our settlements, and to compel parents and guardians to give their children and wards no less than a definite number of years schooling.

I regret that the state of our finances does not justify, at this session, the recommendation to any extent of such measures as I deem best promotive of our agricultural interest. It is however a very gratifying fact, that an increased interest has awakened this year in that important department. This is manifest in the increased extent, as well as systematical ar-

rangement, of a number of the farms within the state, which has been induced to a great extent by the importation of increased facilities for cultivation and manufacturing.

I will venture, however to recommend the appropriation of two or three hundred dollars, to assist in defraying the expense of holding a national fair next December, in the government square of this city; as also to assist in awarding premiums to the best producers. I have no doubt that this measure will prove the incipient step to the formation of state agricultural society by our enterprising citizens, having its county auxiliaries, and holding its regular annual fairs; and thus, in imitation of the enterprising citizens of other civilized nations, encouraging one another, inciting a commendable spirit of rivalry, as well as dispensing throughout the state such useful information as will powerfully tell upon the interests of this rising Republic.

In connection with this subject, I am happy to say, that some of our enterprising citizens organized themselves into a company this year for the purpose of facilitating intercourse and transportation to and from the interior, by opening roads – which they purpose, I learn, to be conducted under well digested plans and regulations. This enterprise, if judiciously and energetically prosecuted, cannot fail to rapidly promote our commercial and agricultural interest, as well as greatly conduce to the spread of civilization and Christianity to the interior tribes. I am sanguine that this company, when duly recognized by you, will receive such countenance and encouragement as a wise policy shall dictate.

The organization of some well digested and effective system, by which unobstructed intercourse to and from the wealthy sections of our interior might be secured, has hitherto been a desideratum. The principal barrier has been a want of means for opening a highway, and for the adequate compensation of discreet and enterprising agents, to be located at suitable points, and to itinerate as occasion may require, for the purpose of carrying out the very humane and laudable provision contained in the 15<sup>th</sup> section of the 5<sup>th</sup> article of the constitution of this Republic, which recognizes as a cherished object of this government the improvement of the native tribes, their advancement in the arts of agriculture and husbandry; and which provides that the President shall appoint discreet persons to make periodical tours among them, for the purpose of calling their attention to and instructing them in those wholesome branches of industry, so soon as the legislature can make provision for that purpose by the appropriation of money.

Without mentioning other valuable commodities of our interior, I invite your attention to the one article of cotton. It is an unquestionable fact, that our interior tribes manufacture hundreds of thousands of domestic cloths annually, which must consume several millions pounds of raw cotton; thousands of these cloths, through much difficulty, find their way down to the seaboard annually; but if the communication was kept open, and they could be assured of a safe transit, and were encouraged by discreet and influential agents to increased cultivation of that useful article, in a very few years, millions of pounds would be brought down annually and exported; as also would other valuable commodities find their way down. Gentlemen, you will perhaps pardon me for being so sanguine and apparently enthusiastic on this subject, when I inform you, that I can well remember when not a thousand gallons of palm oil were to be bought annually on the entire line of coast (400 miles) between Shebar and Cape Palmas; but by encouragement it has long since increased to an annual exportation of a million of gallons. Equally rapid has the ground-nut trade increased by encouragement, within a few years, in Sierra Leone; and it is well known, that the natives of the interior are more industrious, ingenious, intelligent and friendly than the seaboard tribes. This is a subject that cannot fail to interest the Christian and commercial world; and I hope the mere outline of facts I have attempted, will induce such inquiry and investigation on the part of the speculator and philanthropist, as will not only lead to the discovery of facts far more

interesting than those I have stated, but to such a tangible manifestation of that interest as will, through the instrumentality of this government, happily subserve the cause of commerce, civilization and Christianity on this continent.

Gentlemen, I have next to perform the very painful duty of announcing to you, that both Church and State have sustained almost irreparable loss in the deceases of several distinguished citizens since your last session: – Hon. George R. Ellis, senator for this county; the Hon. Ex-Senator Charles Henry, and Col. James D. Washington, of Grand Bassa County; and the Hon. Judge Murry, of Sinoe County; have all been taken away from us within the course of the last three months. No eulogy from me is necessary to elevate your estimate of their character and worth. The loss of them is regarded by all who were acquainted with them, as a great national calamity, and their praise will stand forth in living characters upon the pages of our national history.

Gentlemen, I beg to bring my communication to a close, after I shall have stated that the past was of necessity a year of unprecedented expense to this government; and which has been keenly felt in the pecuniary pressure that obtained throughout the state. Had it not been for the expenditure of government for the formation of a settlement at Grand Cape Mount, and two or three other expenditures not properly belonging to the current expenses, the expense of the Sinoe war could have been met without embarrassment; but having all these expenses to meet, in addition to the current expenses, without the aid of a dollar from aboard in our great emergency, it is but reasonable to suppose, that under such circumstances, government would have been embarrassed in its operations. I am happy, however, to be able to inform you that the hasty apprehensions of some, as to the inextricability of this government from its present liabilities, shorter than three or four years, are unfounded in fact: of which you will be satisfied by the very concise statement I now proceed to give, of the receipts and disbursements of government for the fiscal year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1856. The Secretary of the Treasury will at an early day of your session, submit for your inspection and further information, full and detailed accounts to the same; which will also be published in a suitable, condensed form.

Receipts.....	\$42,644.44
Disbursements.....	\$59,349.76
Excess of Disbursements.....	\$16,705.32

It is proper that I should state for your information that the sum of \$14,000, for the rent and purchase of a President's Mansion, is included in the above disbursements; which, if subtracted – it being payable in annual installments of \$1,000 – would leave an excess of about 3,000 above the receipts. As before stated, this amount of \$14,000, was during the year reduced to \$9,000, which we hope to be able to cancel this year, so as to avoid nine years' interest.

It is also very gratifying to me to be able to communicate, to you, that the revenue of the last fiscal year has advanced twenty-five per cent on that of the preceding; thus evidently showing an encouraging increase of our commerce amidst the troublesome and pressing times of the year, and which is but another indication of the special interposition of Divine Providence in our emergencies.

Though we have reason to believe that our commerce and revenue will continue to increase gradually, yet, gentlemen, as there is so much that can be profitably done by government if in possession of the requisite means, and as the Executive is usually charged by your honorable department with the annual prosecution of so many responsible, important, and expensive duties, the prompt execution of which is expected by the public, for the fact that appropriations are made to meet these expenses, yet as there are seldom adequate ways and means devised to raise the amount of these annual appropriations, I beg particularly to invite your

attention to this subject at this session, so that in the future, the ways and means devised for raising the annual revenue, will harmonize with the annual appropriations.

Indulging the hope as I do, that the public finances will be in a more healthy condition during the present fiscal year than they were the last, and as a consequence, there will be a diminution of my cares and anxieties, I will no doubt have more time, and be better prepared to give the subject of Ways and Means, as also kindred subjects, more thought; which, with the aid of increased experience, may enable me at a future period, to render you efficient aid in the performance of this important part of your work.

Will you now permit me, gentlemen, to assure you, that you shall have my cordial cooperation for the dispatch of the very important business of the session; and I sincerely hope that you will be so endowed with wisdom, and every other divine qualification, as that your session will prove harmonious and profitable: a session that will be highly creditable to yourselves, and satisfactory to your constituents; and thus effect great honor upon our country in particular, and our race in general.

Stephen Allen Benson  
Government House,  
Monrovia, Dec. 3. 1856

## Special Message to the Legislature April 6, 1857

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

Since the close of your session on the seventh of February of this year, circumstances of an extraordinary nature have arisen, involving the political, as well as other interests of this Republic, which make it highly necessary for me to convene the Legislature, conformably to the provisions of our fundamental law.

In conformity with the Act of the Legislature, entitled "An Act providing for the relief of the State of Maryland in Liberia," approved the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 1857, which authorized and requested the President of this Republic - in compliance with the request made of this government, by the government of the State of Maryland in Liberia for aid of men and means - to organize and dispatch to that State, a sufficient military force to act as allies, for the purpose of assisting that government in suppressing the hostile tribes constituting a portion of its aboriginal inhabitants, and in restoring peace, I have the honor to inform you, that on the eleventh of that month, a force of one hundred and fifteen men, officers inclusive, under the command of Major General Roberts, embarked from this city for that State on board of the fine ship Mary Cardine Stevens owned by the American Colonization Society, and which was kindly tendered for that purpose by James Hall Esq., M.D., who at the time was most opportunely on a visit to this Republic - and were safely landed at the place of destination on the sixteenth of that month. I have also to inform you, that agreeably to the said Act, which authorized the procurement of a loan by this government for the purpose of assisting in carrying out the provisions of the Act, a loan of five thousand dollars was obtained through the kindness of Dr. James Hall, general agent of Maryland State Colonization Society, to be refunded in annual installments of five hundred dollars with six per cent interest.

General Roberts was also vested with ministerial powers agreeably to the provision of the said Act, to negotiate and arrange the terms on which the troops of this Republic should operate as an ally in that State. The necessity of creating such a commission would have been

superseded in a great measure, in case that government had accompanied its application for and of men and means with the presence of a Commissioner, so as to have arranged all necessary preliminaries.

In consonance with the spirit, and intent of the Act, our Commissioner was instructed to operate only defensively with the allies, until renewed efforts had been employed to negotiate a substantial peace between the belligerents; and in case of failure in these negotiations, then to operate offensively, after the government of the State of Maryland in Liberia had executed to this government, acceptable bonds of reimbursement within a reasonable time for all expenses incurred in rendering the desired aid.

While negotiations of peace were pending, a treaty of friendship, offensive and defensive, and of indemnification, was concluded (on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February,) between the Republic of Liberia and the State of Maryland in Liberia, with was ratified by the Senate on the 20<sup>th</sup> of that month; and a bond was executed in favor of this twenty thousand dollars, with the provision, that only the actual amount that had been, and might be expended by this government for aforesaid purposes, should be refunded when accurately ascertained.

These documents read as follows:

Treaty  
of  
Friendship-Offensive and Defensive  
between  
the Republic of Liberia  
and the State of Maryland in Liberia.

Whereas serious difficulties have arisen between the government of the State of Maryland in Liberia and certain of the aboriginal Tribes of the Cape Palmas district, and whereas the Government of the State of Maryland in Liberia - through its Executive acting under authority of an act of the General Assembly of the said State of Maryland in Liberia, passed January 26<sup>th</sup> 1857 - having applied to the Government of the Republic of Liberia for material and in the supply of munitions of war and whereas the Legislature of the Republic aforesaid penetrated with the necessity of affording prompt and efficient aid to a sister State and of putting an end to the sanguinary contest, which exposes the lives and property of the inhabitants of the State or Maryland in Liberia to the ravages of a savage foe: and animated by the desire of stopping the further effusion of blood and of arresting the evils of all kinds, which might arise from the continuance of such a state of things - have by an act approved February 8<sup>th</sup> in 1857; authorized the President of the Republic of Liberia to adopt measures for the formation of a armed military force - offensive and defensive - of volunteers to be raised in the said Republic of Liberia in settling the difficulties now passing between the said state, and those of the aboriginal inhabitants who are hostile within its jurisdiction; and in reestablishing peace and confidence, which are called for as much by the laws of humanity, as by the interests of all civilized communities on this coast; and whereas the President of the Republic of Liberia, by the Legislative act aforesaid, is authorized and directed to assume the expense of maintenance and payment of the Troops employed, and of the munitions of war supplied to the Government of Maryland in Liberia, for the purpose aforesaid - and as a means of doing so, the President of the Republic aforesaid being authorized so to do - has borrowed money on the faith and credit of the Government of Republic of Liberia - which money, as far as applied to the defense of the State of Maryland in Liberia in emoluments to volunteers, and the supply of munitions of war, is to be reimbursed to the Government of the Republic of Liberia by the said State of Maryland in Liberia:

Therefore, His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Liberia, and His Excellency the Governor of the State of Maryland in Liberia being desirous to regulate, by a formal

Treaty, the conditions of which the Troops of the Republic of Liberia are to serve the State of Maryland in Liberia, in its present emergency, as well also to settle the mode and manner by which the state of Maryland in Liberia will reimburse to the Government of the Republic of Liberia the amount of money expended or other considerations granted by the said Government for the Military assistance rendered in conformity with the Legislature act aforesaid:

The President of the Republic of Liberia has, for this purpose, named as his commissioner, Joseph Jenkins Roberts, a citizen of the Republic of Liberia &c. &c; and the Governor of the State of Maryland in Liberia having named as his commissioner Joseph Thomas Gibson a citizen of the State of Maryland in Liberia to conclude such a Treaty the said commissioners after having communicated to each other their respective powers, have agreed upon and concluded the following articles.

Art 1. The Troops of the Republic of Liberia, appointed by the President of the said Republic on the service aforesaid, shall co-operate in all military operations, whether offensive or defensive, as hereafter stipulated, with the Government of the State of Maryland in Liberia in the defense of the said State of Maryland and in bringing to just and amicable terms of peace, the aboriginal tribes now hostile to the said State of Maryland in Liberia.

Art. 2 In all cases the Troops of the Republic of Liberia shall be commanded by their own regimental and Company officers; Nevertheless when said Troops are concentrated with the Troops of the State of Maryland in Liberia, and acting together in line or otherwise, the senior General, Regimental, or Company Officers present – whether bearing a commission of the Republic of Liberia or of the State of Maryland in Liberia – shall assume the command of the whole allied force.

Art. 3. While it is understood that the individuals composing the military force supplied by the Government of the Republic of Liberia are subject to the civil laws of the State of Maryland in Liberia, and may be adjudged accordingly for any and all unlawful offenses committed by them or any one of them, within the jurisdiction of the said State of Maryland In Liberia; it is also understood and stipulated that the said Troops shall be subject to the military laws of their own Government only, and shall be tried for all military offenses by Court Martial composed of officers appointed by their own commander; and shall be punished according to the finding of such Court Martial, if approved by the commander, and in no other way.

Art. 4. The President of the Republic of Liberia, and the Governor of the State of Maryland in Liberia wishing to maintain concert and harmony of action in the measures necessary to be adopted for restoring peace - and as martial law has been proclaimed and is now in force in the State of Maryland in Liberia, it is deemed desirable and is hereby agreed and stipulated that the plans of operations against the enemy, and the measures for restoring peace shall be entrusted to a commission composed of His Excellency the Governor of the State of Maryland in Liberia; the Commander of the force of the Republic of Liberia Dr. James Hall Agent of Maryland Colonization Society, and four other Gentleman, to be named respectively by His Excellency the Governor, and the Commander of the Troops of the Republic of Liberia.

Art. 5. The State of Maryland in Liberia hereby solemnly pledges itself to reimburse to the Government of the Republic of Liberia all moneys or money value which may have been expended or granted by the said Government of the Republic of Liberia in the defense of the said State of Maryland in Liberia in its present emergency; - For the faithful performance of which, Bonds shall be executed by the said state of Maryland in Liberia, signed by the Secretary of State and countersigned by the Governor; the stipulations of which shall be faithfully performed. As the actual amount expended, or to be expended by the government of

the Republic of Liberia in the defense aforesaid, cannot now be ascertained, the Bonds aforesaid, shall be executed in the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars.

In case of such disagreements, as to any time or items of charge or charges the said commissioners shall be approved without unreasonable delay, and they shall convene as soon as practicable, in the City of Monrovia to consider and adjust the accounts which may be submitted to them, in case of disagreement between the commissioners in regard to any item or items of charge or charges, they shall be authorized to call in an Umpire, whose decision shall be accepted as final.

As possibly the amount for which the aforesaid Bonds are executed may be greater than the amount actually expended by the Government of the Republic for the purposes aforesaid, it is hereby agreed and understood, that when the amount actually expended shall have been reimbursed, the Bonds aforesaid, shall be considered canceled.

The Present Treaty shall be ratified by the State of Maryland in Liberia immediately and a certificate of such ratification shall be placed in the hands of Commissioner of the Republic of Liberia, and the ratifications shall be exchanged at Monrovia or at Harper, at the pleasure of the President of the Republic of Liberia within the space of Twelve months from the date hereof.

In Witness whereof the Commissioner of the President of the Republic of Liberia; and the Commissioner of the Governor of the State of Maryland in Liberia, have signed the same and have affixed thereto their respective seals.

Done at Harper, this nineteenth day of February Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-seven.

Signed J.T. Gibson

J.J. Roberts

To all whom these may come present.

Know Ye: That I, Boston Jenkins Drayton, Governor of the State of Maryland in Liberia, do hereby certify that the Senate of the said State did by Resolution passed by two-third vote on the 20th day of February 1857. Ratify, and confirm the treaty of friendship offensive and defensive between the Republic of Liberia on the one part and the State of Maryland in Liberia on the other part. By Commissioners of the reactive government in the town of Harper did negotiate and conclude the same.

Whereas the Law provides for the immediate ratification on the part of the State of M.D. in Liberia, and a certificate of the said ratification on the part of the said State of M.D. in Liberia.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the State of M.D. in Liberia to be herein affixed.

(L.S.) Done at the Seat of Government Harper, this twentieth day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty seven and in the Independence the Third.

By The Gov:

C.H. Harmon.

Secy: of State

(Signed.) B.J. Drayton.

Gov. M.D. Liberia.

Know all men by these presents:

That the State of Maryland in Liberia is held and firmly bound unto the Government of the Republic of Liberia in the just and full sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars, with six per cent interest per annum, payable to the order of the Secretary of the Treasury of the Republic of Liberia, endorsed by the President of said Republic, at the Treasury Department, Harper in

the State of Maryland in Liberia in gold and silver coin, in Annual installments of three thousand Dollars.

This Bond is executed in conformity with Treaty stipulations concluded between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and the State of Maryland in Liberia, the 19<sup>th</sup> day of February A.D. 1857 and Ratified by the Senate of the State of Maryland in Liberia, the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month and year above mentioned.

For the faithful fulfillment of the obligations of this Bond the Revenue and the sources of public revenue of the said State of Maryland in Liberia are hereby pledged. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal for the State of Maryland in Liberia to be hereunto affixed, and countersigned this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February A.D. 1857: Done at Harper, the seat of Government and the third year of the Independence of the State.

Charles Harmon.  
Secretary of State.  
(signed)

Boston J. Drayton.

*Governor, State M.D. Liberia*

I am happy to be able to inform the Legislature, that the necessity for offensive and defensive operations in that State by the forces of this Republics, as stipulated in the treaty just read, was superseded by the conclusion of a treaty of peace, friendship and indemnification on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February, between the allies and the hostile native tribes, on terms mutually satisfactory and honourable, which treaty reads as follows:

Treaty.

The following acknowledgements, declarations and stipulations have been duly considered, and are now solemnly adopted and proclaimed by the undersigned, that is to say; - The Governor of the State of Maryland in Liberia and the two commissioners, on the part of the said state, and three Commissioners, appointed by the Republic of Liberia, according to treaty stipulations, duly entered into between the governments - That from and after the signing of the Treaty between the government of the State of Maryland in Liberia and the Cape Palmas and Graway Tribes, hostilities between the several tribes and the State of Maryland in Liberia shall cease; and perpetual peace and friendship shall exist. The said Tribes do hereby place themselves under the protection and exclusive jurisdiction of the government of the State of Maryland in Liberia, and that they are now, and will forever remain under the aforesaid jurisdiction and protection.

1<sup>st</sup>. That the Cape Palmas people shall settle on the Hoffman river, north of Harris house and a small Krue town on the beach.

2<sup>nd</sup>. That the State of Maryland in Liberia to pay the Cape Palmas people:

1 hd Tobacco	\$150.00	50 ps. Blue baft	\$125.00
20 Muskets	60.00	50 kegs powder	1,000.00
50 ps. S. Stripe	125.00	600 was basins	
600 Plates	37.50	3000 pint Mugs	18.75
1000 1 Gallon Jugs	25.00	240 Cutlasses	50.00
100 "" Iron Pots	25.00	Sunders	50.00
			\$1,000.00

For their land they had occupied as town seats, the first installment in thirty days from date, the second installment the first of July, the third installment in four months from the last installment.

3<sup>rd</sup>. That the Cape Palmas and Graway people pay for burning of Mission premises at Mt. Vaughn, the amount of two hundred Kroos of clean rice or equivalence in cattle at the expiration of seven months. That the Cape Palmas and Graway people return the canoes and drums lost in the lake. The Cape Palmas people building on the Hoffman river, and the Graway people at Graway, promise not to disturb trade or any other Tribe or American trading on the beach or road with trade or otherwise.

4<sup>th</sup>. That, the Cape Palmas and Graway people shall not make any palavers with the Rocktown, Half Cavally, Fish Town, Middle Town, and Krebo people about this war after the Treaty is signed, but be friendly with them as with the Americans.

5<sup>th</sup>. That the Cape Palmas and Graway people shall not trespass upon the Half Cavally people's land ergo beyond the land marked up by Ex governor McGill.

6<sup>th</sup>. That the Graway people pay the amount of thirty six dollars or equivalent in rice or bullocks for the goods stolen from the Trunk which had been detained at their house, and also for the bullock stolen from Mr. Joseph T. Gibson, that the Cape Palmas and Graway people shall not disturb in any wise render any protection whatever to any of the men of the various Mission schools.

7<sup>th</sup>. That the Cape Palmas and Graway people promise to submit all disputes which cannot be sociably adjusted between themselves and other tribes be referred to the government for settlement. River Cavally, Barroks, Pelibo people the friend the Cape Palmas and Graway People shall not war or palaver with either or all those tribes who have fought against the Cape Palmas and Graway with the Americans.

8<sup>th</sup>. That the Graway, Palmas and River Cavally people shall not, in case of the wreck of any vessel on the beach near their towns, take council or plunder any such wreck; but in all such cases to return all to the Captain, Supercargo or Agent as may by or picked up for which they may be entitled to. They shall not engage in the slave trade under the penalties provided therefore by law.

9<sup>th</sup>. that the Cape Palmas people have free engress and ingress to carry away their growing crops their farms without molestation from the Americans. The Americans shall desist from cascade.

10<sup>th</sup>. That the Cape Palmas and Graway people cease from burying their dead on Russwurm Island after the signing of this treaty.

In witness where of we have hereunto affixed our names this 26 day of February at Harper Md. Liberia.

Podah Neh alias Yellow Will his X mark  
 Saba alias King of Graway his X Mark  
 Simile Belle alias Bill Williams his X mark  
 Peh Gikparmo alias King palm his X mark  
 Neh Weah X  
 Bar Nymiah X  
 Tanoa Queah X alias Black will  
 Greba Dweh X  
 B.J. Dratton  
 J.J. Roberts  
 J.R. Trill  
 Antony W.  
 Witness  
 J.W. Livingston  
 Com. U.S. Ship St. Louis

Joseph T. Gibson  
H. W. Easing

Thus the requisite and to the State of Maryland in Liberia having being tendered by forces, and peace between the belligerents have been established upon a permanent basis, troops under the directions of General Roberts were preparing for embarking for home, when from the government of the people as posed by their vote - he received volunteer propositions for the annexation of a State to this Republic: these propositions - as frequently modified by them you will find embodied in the document, I shall soon prepare to lay before you for your consideration, actions constituting the principal business which extra session has been called; which you will find based upon the flowing formal and legal proceedings, (To Wit:)

Pending the negotiations for peace, the citizens of that State being sensibly impressed with the necessity and advantage of that State becoming a member of this Republic, when after mature reflection and deliberation, they concluded should be by county annexation petitioned the General Assembly of that State asking that measures be adopted for obtaining an expression of the whole people means of the ballot box; whereupon the General Assembly passed resolutions, which were approved by the Governor, authorizing polls to be opened for the purposes aforesaid, at which people by the popular vote unanimously approved of County annexation to this Republic and on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February they elected Governor B.J. Drayton, Lt. Governor J.T. Gibson and Senator Thomas Fuller, Commissioners, with full powers to confer with the Commissioner of this Republic, and to settle and arrange with him without further recourse, matters and things necessary to the consummation of County annexation to this Republic; and an authority vested in them by the people, did in their name dissolve the government of the State Maryland in Liberia and ceded to the government of the Republic of Liberia their public domain with all things else, corporal and incorporate connected with the said government of the State of Maryland in Liberia, of which it was possessed previously to its dissolution; that throwing themselves in the arms of this Republic to be annexed thereto as a County member on equal footing with the existing counties of this Republic.

I now beg to proceed with the reading of the official document which embraces the aforesaid proceedings, and which also affords valuable information, necessary to be known by this government before consummating its action on the subject.

#### Union is Strength

Whereas it was contemplated by the several Colonization Societies under whose auspices Colonies or settlements were established on the Western Coast of Africa, that eventually these Colonies or settlements would form one Great Christian State; and whereas the people of the State of Maryland in Liberia, originally a Colony under the auspices of Maryland in Liberia, originally a Colony under the auspices of the Maryland Colonization Society in the United States, but now an independent State having dissolved its political relations with said Colonization Society-feeling deeply impressed with the necessity of uniting the said State of Maryland in Liberia to the Republic of Liberia - which measure is unquestionably important to the interests of both Governments, but more especially to the future protection, happiness, and prosperity of the people of the State of Maryland in Liberia. And whereas the people of the State of Maryland in Liberia, have carefully considered the subject of annexation to the Republic of Liberia in all its bearing; and having upon mature reflection determined that their best interests demands that immediate application be made for admission as member of the Republic and where as after full discussion of the subject by the people as to whether admission should be sought as a State after the model of the United States, or as a county on the footing of the Counties now composing the Republic of Liberia, it was deemed advisable,

for many reasons that County annexation is more desirable. Whereupon the people of the State of Maryland in Liberia acting upon their Constitutional rights – did petition the General Assembly of the said state of Maryland in Liberia asking the attention of the General Assembly to the subject and requesting that measures be adopted for obtaining an expression of the whole people by means of the ballot box. Whereupon the General Assembly passed resolutions, which were approved by the Governor authorizing Polls to be opened for the purpose aforesaid, and whereas county annexation was unanimously approved by the votes of the people, and on Wednesday the 24<sup>th</sup> day of February 1857 the undersigned namely Boston J. Drayton Governor of the State of Maryland in Liberia Joseph T. Gibson Lieutenant Governor and Thomas Fuller Senator were chosen by the popular vote of the people, Commissioners, with full power to confer with the Commissioner of the Republic of Liberia near this Government, and to settle and arrange with him without further recourse all matters necessary to the consummating of county annexation to the Republic of Liberia. The said Commissioner however not being vested with patent full power from his Government, for that purpose, declines the responsibility of negotiation a treaty of annexation; but nevertheless gives the undersigned reason to hope and believe that no objection will be raised by his government to county annexation; and that the people of the state will be received into the bosom of that Commonwealth, and have extended to them all the privileges and immunities now enjoyed and that may hereafter be enjoyed by any other county of that Republic.

While the undersigned would be glad to settle definitely one or two points which might be thought desirable before annexation still they deem it more desirable; nay, important in view of pressing circumstances, which threaten the tranquility of the state and also involved the safety and happiness of the people – that annexation should not be delayed for these preliminaries.

But having full faith in the justice and magnanimity of the Government of the Republic and of the people of the Commonwealth we, at once dissolve the Government of the State of Maryland in Liberia and throw ourselves into the arms of the Republic.

The undersigned being sustained in this impression by the mass of the people of his state, they propose to surrender into the hands of the Commissioner of the Republic and everything pertaining to the sovereignty of the state.

The Undersigned however, beg leave to submit.

1<sup>st</sup>. That the territory now composing the state of Maryland in Liberia shall be known as the County of Cape Palmas.

2<sup>nd</sup>. That in addition to two Senators provided by The Constitution of the Republic for each County the aforesaid County of Cape Palmas shall have at least three members to represent her in the lower branch of the Legislature of the Republic and in all other respects shall enjoy all the privileges and immunities awarded to other counties of the Republic.

3<sup>rd</sup>. That the stipulations entered into between the State of Maryland in Liberia and the Maryland State Colonization Society, concluded the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of February 1854 shall remain unimpaired.

4<sup>th</sup>. That all contracts and claims now existing shall be equally binding as if no change had taken place in this Government. And all suits actions, and prosecutions now pending shall be terminated according to the laws of the state at present extent.

5<sup>th</sup>. The Public Domain of the State of Maryland in Liberia compress all the territory living between the North Western boundary line of Wedabo and the Eastern line of Grand Tahoo or line formed by the River San Pedro on the east including all the barbers, bays, rivers, lakes, creeks and Atlantic waters, thereto appertaining.

6<sup>th</sup>. The number of Americo Liberian inhabitants is now estimated at Nine Hundred, and the aboriginal population of the state of Maryland in Liberia is estimated at sixty thousand.

7<sup>th</sup>. The State is well provided with suitable buildings for all county purposes.

8<sup>th</sup>. The present revenue of the State, arising from imports is about eighteen hundred dollars per annum, and the present liabilities of the state are about three thousand dollars (a schedule of which will be forwarded) most of which have been incurred in consequences of recent difficulties, and hostilities with certain aboriginal tribes within our jurisdiction, which difficulties and hostilities have happily terminated and tranquility restored.

9<sup>th</sup>. The assets of the state including public buildings and bills payable are about ten thousand dollars a schedule of which will also be forwarded.

Now therefore, we the undersigned Commissioners as aforesaid acting on authority vested in us by the people of the State of Maryland in Liberia do in their name and in their behalf hereby dissolve the Government of the said state of Maryland in Liberia, and the same is henceforward dissolved; and by these presents we the undersigned Commissioners as aforesaid, do cede to the Government of the Republic of Liberia all the public Domain of the sate of Maryland in Liberia with all her bare bays, rivers, creeks, lakes, and Atlantic waters thereunto pertaining including the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the same, also all public buildings, fort arsenals, guns and ammunitions of war of very kind and description whatever, which we the under signed Commissioners acting as afore said are prepared to and will deliver to the Commissioner of the Republic of Liberia now present in Harper or to any one whom he may designate as the Superintendent of the county of Cape Palmas for the being, and the said Commissioner of the Republic of Liberia is requesting, to assume immediately in the name of his Government the public affairs of the said county of Cape Palmas and establish here the authority of his Government, by unfurling the Flag of the Republic of Liberia.”

Given under our hands and seals at Harper this the Third day of March in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty seven.

Signed.

Boston J. Drayton.

J.T. Gibson.

Thos. Fuller.

In the event of your concurrence in the action of the government and people of the State of Maryland in Liberia, by which they have made formal application – after taking all the necessary preliminary steps on their part – to be annexed to this Republic as a county, and if you will ratify the same by the passage of a Resolution of annexation, then I solicit, that you will, in connection with the concomitant provisions of that Act, also take the following under favorable consideration:

1<sup>st</sup>, I recommend that measures be adopted as soon as possible, by which the existing Constitutional barrier may be removed, which will prevent that newly admitted county from having more than one representative in the Lower House for many years to come.

If admitted, that county should have as soon as possible three representatives in the Lower House, which will place it in that respect on an equal footing with the Counties of Grand Bassa and Sinoe. I am aware that this does not occur in the form and sense of an express stipulation in the document just read, but simply as a request made of this government; yet, the fact that they have manifested so much confidence in the integrity and magnanimity of this Republic, by unreservedly placing their political interests in our hands before this and other preliminaries were settled, should morally induce this government to most scrupulously demean itself in such a manner with respect to that county, as will fully manifest our worthiness of the almost unlimited confidence reposed in us.

2<sup>nd</sup>. In a letter bearing date of the 21<sup>st</sup> ult., received on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst., from the Hon. J. T. Gibson, Superintendent pro tem of the County, I am informed that the inhabitants thereof have made request through him to this government, to have the name of their County changed from the “County of Palmas,” as was first requested by them, to the County of Maryland.

This in my opinion is richly due to the State of Maryland in the United States of America, whose Colonization Society, having been liberally aided by the State government, planted and for a long item fostered the settlements at Cape Palmas; and whose solicitude for their welfare is yet undiminished.

3<sup>rd</sup>. I have also to request that you so amend the Act, “which authorize the division of the uniforms between the three Counties,” as to allow that County one hundred and twenty-five of them.

As I do not deem it necessary to particularize the necessary provisions to be made, in order that that County shall be invested with an organization and facilities similar to the other counties of this Republic, I will forbear to invite your attention further on that subject.

Our Commissioner having assumed – by the request of the government and people of that State – the political control thereof, placed the Hon. B.P. Yates, Vice President of this Republic, (who accompanied him thither on the aforesaid mission,) in charge of the public affairs there, with instructions to consummate certain measures which for want of time had not been completed at the time of his embarkation, which with the troops, took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> ultimo, on board H.B.M. Steamship *Heela*, Capt., Aplin, by whose kindness they were conveyed to this port and landed safely on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and on the following day, the troops were disbanded.

Col. Yates having faithfully prosecuted the duties with which he was charged by our Commissioner, committed the Superintendency to the Hon. J. T. Gibson, and on the 7<sup>th</sup> ult. Embarked for this port on board the U.S. Ship *St. Louis*, Capt. J. W. Livingston, through whose kindness she reached here on the 13<sup>th</sup> ult.

It is also proper that I should gratefully acknowledge here, the kindness of Capt. Aplin, of H.B.M. Steamship *Heela*; senior officer of this station, who most kindly gave passage to our troops from Palmas to this city, and who also kindly proffered any reasonable assistance this government might require of him.

And it also affords me a pleasure to gratefully acknowledge the kindness of Capt. Laporterie, of H. I. M. S. *Euphrates*, whom I met at Cape Mount a fortnight ago on his way to this city for the purpose of rendering such aid to this government as might be required for the adjustment of the difficulties at Cape Palmas.

To the government to which each of those three vessels of war belongs, we, as a nation, are placed under lasting obligations.

This Republic has great cause of gratulation, for the ability, energy and prudence with which our Commissioner prosecuted and consummated his very important mission. And our gratitude is richly merited by the officers and troops who accompanied him to that seat of war, for the martial conduct and patriotism which, as a general thing, characterized them during the campaign.

I now beg to lay before your Col. Yates’ report, as submitted to me, of the condition of the several departments, as well as of his proceedings down there.

Document No. 1, Is a treaty of peace and friendship concluded between the several tribes that were hostile to each other.

Document No. 2, Is the plan of the town to be built by the Chief Yellow Will of the Cape Palmas tribe, according to the assignment made him and his people in the Treaty of the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1857.

Document No. 3, Is the copy of a proclamation of peace issued by the Superintendent, enjoining upon all, on pain of punishment, to desist from future hostilities.

Documents 4 & 5, Are Reports of the public property at Cape Palmas. The former gives a catalogue and an estimated value of the public buildings; and by reference to the margin, you will find noted opposite each building, the necessary repairs that each requires. I have to invite your attention particularly to this and to solicit – owing to your pecuniary pressure – that you will order only such repairs made this year, as are indispensably necessary to preserve them from considerable injury before the next regular session. The light house should by all means be repaired and put in use as soon as possible.

Document No. 6, Is a report of the supply of munitions of war at the four military stations of defense, viz; Harper, Jackson, Mount Tubman and Latrobe stations.

Document No. 7, Furnishes a detail and aggregate report of the liabilities of that government at the time of its dissolution.

Document No. 8, Is the collector's report of the Customs up to the 7<sup>th</sup> of March, 1857.

Document No. 9, Is the Treasurer's report up to March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1857.

Document No. 10, Is a bill for merchandise amounting to ninety nine dollars and fifty one cents, which was disposed of by the Superintendent in the way of presents to native Chiefs.

Document No. 11, Is a list of the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary officers of the government previously to its disorganization.

Gentlemen, I now submit these documents, and am persuaded that it is unnecessary for me to solicit your favorable consideration of, and action on the one which details their formal proceedings preparatory to, and makes application for annexation to this Republic as a County. No matter what may have been the peculiar distinctive title of the government under which they lived, the fact remains incontrovertible, that we have been, are, and will continue to be one people with them! We are of the same race, and have a common destiny. We were actuated by similar motives in fleeing from the same land of oppression to this our common land of refuge; here to build up and maintain a free and respectable home for ourselves and posterity. We are unquestionably identified in every possible conceivable interest.

This fact partly accounts for the almost unlimited confidence exercised by them in the integrity and magnanimity of this government, as manifest in the entire proceedings on their part, preparatory to annexation; and which should be duly appreciated by us, and so far reciprocated as to prove to them, by our just and liberal action in the premises, that this government was, and is fully worthy of the bestowment of their utmost confidence.

It is but reasonable to suppose, that the expenses in connection with that newly admitted County for the first two or three years, will exceed the revenue accruing immediately within its geographical limits; for it will require perhaps one or two years to get the laws of this Republic in uniform and effective operation, in that County; but we should look beyond the present to the period, which – by proper management – cannot be far distant when the revenues accruing there will exceed the expenses, and when, as an auxiliary, she will contribute her quote to the general treasury.

Again, the moral benefits that will result from the annexation preponderate in favor of the measure, over all pecuniary considerations. It will be the means of extending our influence, of extending the healthful influence of the Christianity and civilization of a Christian State over scores of thousands of pagans, heretofore without its pale. It will give protection and encouragement to extended missionary operations. In a word, while increasing the power, influence and wealth of this Republic, it will meanwhile confer temporal and spiritual blessings to each and all within our borders.

Gentlemen, the limit of our national density is unknown to us; and though by the aid of reason and contemplation we oft-times imagine, and are almost sanguine, that we discover

through that vista of our future, the glorious halo by which the national density of our race is to be circumscribed through that instrumentality of this Republic; especially, when through the instrumentality of its gradually spreading Christian State, the vast multitudes of the ab-origines of this land shall have become as stones from the quarry, polished by art, and fully identified with us, yet the knowledge of our wisest men that respect is limited, and must continue somewhat veiled in uncertainty, until the consummation of our great work – the mission with which we are charged by the God of nations.

As a nation, small and impotent as we are, we have before us as great, as responsible, and as interesting a geographical field for moral and intellectual labor, as any nation on earth. It is our duty, and therefore should be our policy to persevere in that course that will characterize us as industrious, frugal, intelligent and moral people, meanwhile trusting in Divine Providence, and vigorously availing ourselves of eye opening by His providence to our national welfare. In this way we shall grow and spread far beyond our own calculation; and Christianity and civilization will soon be co-extensive on this continent with our geographical borders, which we both trust and believe will not be restrained, until our great mission as a Christian national on this continent is consummated, and our Fatherland is redeemed.

Stephen A. Benson.  
Government House  
Monrovia April 6, 1857

## Annual Message to the Legislature December 9, 1858

Fellow citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives:

It is a cause for unfeigned gratitude to the Father of all our mercies that in meeting you this day for the purpose of making my annual communication of the state of our public affairs, as well as of recommending public measures, I am able to say that though we have not been exempt during the last year from such perplexing incidents as are common to nations, yet we have manifestly shared largely in the blessings dispensed by His bountiful hand.

General Prosperity.

The seasons have been very regular; the crops – excepting those blighted by the salt winds within the vicinity of the sea coast in the County of Maryland – have been unusually large and diversified; the camwood and palm-oil trade has exceeded the expectation entertained the preceding year; our foreign relations, with one exception, are both tranquil and satisfactory; we have been blessed to a great extent with peace within our borders, and though in common with other nations on the earth, we have felt the monetary depression; yet to the reflective, to those of enlightened, patriotic, and liberal minds, this very depression, though a great inconvenience, will ever be regarded as a blessing in disguise. It has had the effect, to a very encouraging degree, of causing our citizens to search out and look to those springs of independent subsistence which lie within our own naturally Heaven-favored country.

Relations with Native Tribes.

There were several matters introduced at your last session which received your concurrence, and for the carrying out of which appropriation was duly made; but for reasons partly beyond my control, as well as those of a prudential nature, I have not succeeded in carrying them out. Among these I will mention my desired and intended visit to Gurroway, for ad

justment, either by pacific or coercive means, of the long standing difficulties between the Niffaus and Podeis, who, though not actively engaged in war, nevertheless obstruct intercourse, and stagnate the trade to a considerable degree. The departure of the Lark for England for repairs, leaving us without a suitable *Coasta guarda*, and facilities for traveling, the difficulties growing out of the recapture of the Regina Coeli in our waters, and the tedious correspondence and business connected with which, making my presence in this city very necessary nearly the whole year, have been the means of most painfully frustrating my cherished purpose of visiting the various settlements of our leeward counties, and several points along the coast during the year, and of my carrying out several objects that were so very accordant with both legislative and executive policy. I am happy to say, however, that notwithstanding this – expecting the abominable by the so-called emigration system – which invariably engenders within our jurisdiction wars, kidnapping, and consequently a breach of the laws of God, and of all Christian nations-peace, and respect for our laws among the aborigines, have been remarkably preserved. And though the influences of our Christian and civilized example have not extended as rapidly and as effectually among them as we have desired, yet it is both gratifying and encouraging to us to know, by incontrovertible evidence, that the benign influences of our Christianity and civilization are hopefully progressing among them; that proselytes are being made annually from their ranks, while the greater part of those living within fifty miles of our settlements are manifestly assimilating themselves to our manners and customs; and their confidence in and respect for us and our institutions are correspondingly increasing; and if the Divine blessing shall continue to rest as theretofore up on the great Colonization enterprize, in the prosecution of its philanthropic work amidst oppositions and discouragements – if there be no abatement in the wanted zeal of the Missionary Societies operating in this country, and if Liberia will keep its duty and responsibilities prominently in view, there is not a shadow of doubt that the great, and I may say one of the leading objects contemplated in the organization of the great Colonization and enterprize, viz: the civilization and Christianizing of this vast moral waste, will in due time be consummated.

#### Farm Land at Cape Mount.

In a special message at your last session, I requested that you would by law define and proclaim the area of reservation to be made as the corporate bounds of the city of Robertsport; in order that in laying of the contiguous surplus lands into a farming district, the wishes and the views of the Legislature might not be deranged with regard to that settlement. In the absence of any definite action by the Legislature on the subject – being urged thereto by the urgent necessity that the inhabitants of that settlement be placed in possession of their lands as speedily as possible, I instructed the Surveyor early this year to commence laying off farm lands (lots) immediately beyond a line which is parallel to, and three miles distant from, the street fronting the Receptacle, and lying between the building and the bay or harbor. Many of the inhabitants of Robertsport express a wish that the area reserved as its corporate bounds be diminished from three to one mile square; so as to increase at once the quantity of farm lands in the vicinity, and the facilities for reaching them. I shall be pleased to carry out any wish you may express on that subject.

In the month of March, 1857, I made a visit to Cape Mount, and ascended the bay about twenty miles – which, as you are no doubt aware, makes an indentation of twenty odd miles from the line of sea coast – and selected on its northern bank, commencing about six miles from Robertsport, a fine tract of land to be laid off in a farming district; it runs along the north bank of said bay about ten miles, extending interiorward indefinitely. I spend nearly two days in traveling over and examining that fine tract of land, and found it in every re-

spect well adapted to agricultural purposes; a great part of which overlooks the largest and handsomest inland sheet of water as yet known in Liberia.

The native chiefs expressed a desire that it be occupied at once, and I feel a desire almost amounting to anxiety that it be occupied as a farming district as soon as prudence shall dictate such a course as proper; for you will no doubt agree with me, that, next to a sufficient numerical force for self-protection and the suppression of the wonted cupidity of the natives, it is of importance that the proper regard be had to the moral, industrial, and to some degree the intellectual qualities of the founders and inhabitants of all our interior settlements, especially among a people like the Veys, who are intellectually in advance of many of the immigrants to this country from the United States – without which regard this Government would be involved in almost interminable trouble and expense growing out of difficulties imprudently brought about with the aborigines. And though a suitable community for the formation of that farming settlement can be selected from Robertsport, yet to do so at present would be to imprudently weaken that settlement in every respect. These facts suggest, as the most prudent course for the present, that as many settlers as are disposed should take their farm lands on the Cape and contiguous plains; and those who are not disposed to draw elsewhere than in the contemplated farming settlement, can find a sufficiency of public land in the vicinity of Robertsport to cultivate for the present.

Careysburg and new Road.

I made a visit to the new interior settlement of Careysburg early in February of this year, which was commenced and from several months was so very ably and successfully prosecuted under the supervision (as special agent) of the Rev. John Seys, the tried and staunch friend of our country and race; and I am happy to be able to bear testimony, not only to the beauty, but also to the capability of that section of country to sustain by manly effort a teeming population. Nor was I less gratified with the evidence I there had before me of the perseverance of its enterprising founder, as well as of Hon. J. H. Paxton, who succeeded him in the Agency, and holds the general superintendency under a commission from this Government.

Though the distance of that settlement from the sea-board, in a direct line forming a right angle with the coast line, will, when accurately ascertained, scarcely exceed sixteen miles, which is much less than is generally supposed – such mistakes, however, owing to the very serpentine course of the native foot-paths, and the large and not unfrequently dense growth of the forests, it is difficult for any one to escape – yet as the settlement has so far, to a satisfactory extent, secured the object contemplated in its formation, the emigrants sent out there having, up to the present, with little expectation, acclimated so very successfully – this fact, so long as it holds good, should be regarded as of paramount importance to mere distance. The settlement, however, lacks facilities for transportation; and until these are provided, the operations of the Society in that direction will of necessity be expensive; and the inhabitants will labor under great disadvantages. The Society has appropriated an amount to assist in the construction of a road down to White Plains; and the people in the several corporate capacities ought to contribute, either in labor or money to supply the deficiency for constructing a good road safely traversable by team. The present superintendent, following the commendable example of the founder of the settlement, has cultivated and maintained a friendly feeling and good understanding with the natives in that vicinity.

Interior Settlement at Bassa.

I received last June a copy of Resolutions of the Board of Directors of the American Colonization Society, passed at their last annual meeting, providing for the immediate formation of the interior settlement long ago contemplated in Bassa County, which had been *defeated if*

*not supplanted* by the formation of the settlement of Careysburg; and in the letters received at the same time from the Corresponding and Financial Secretaries, I was informed that advertisement had been made for names of a sufficient number to be given in to constitute a proper company before the sailing of the packet last spring, so that directions might be given for preparations to be made for their reception and accommodation on their arrival in the fall expedition; but it is said that up to the sailing of the Stevens last May no names had been received. It is an enterprize, however, in which, I learn by letters, the New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania Colonization Societies feel much interest, and I feel sure that their efforts will not be abated until their long cherished desire is honorably consummated. I wrote fully and encouragingly on the subject to the Corresponding Secretary by the last packet, but it yet remains to be seen, on the arrival of the next packet, what progress is being made.

Interior Settlers wanted in every County.

The fact is, we need, and should have as soon as is practicable, at least one good interior settlement in each county of this Republic; and this Government should by all justifiable means encourage their establishment as speedy and permanently as possible. It is a blind policy to retain or encourage any more emigrants to remain on or near the seaboard than are necessary for the protection of the sea board communities. They should by all means be encouraged to go back in approximation to the heart of this Republic and of this continent; their longing eyes and expectant hearts should be independently turned away – so far as subsistence is concerned – not only from our Atlantic coast, but from the country of their birth lying beyond the great Atlantic, unless turned thitherward in quest of a market for the superabundance of their products of agriculture of art – or affectionately in remembrance of a dear relative remaining beyond the high seas, or in commiseration of the cognition of millions of our race (bondsmen or the nominally free) dwelling there.

Liberia College.

I regret to have to state that within the last nine months no progress has been made in the erection of the College buildings. Your perfect knowledge of the cause of the suspension of operations supersedes the necessity of my advertence to it in detail. Justice to the administration, however, seems to require that further explanations than those contained in my last annual message, be now given of the cause of executive action in making the appropriation of land, and for the recommendation made to the Legislature.

Change of Site.

I then notified you of the safe arrival, as early as in December, 1856, of the materials for the College buildings, and that upon re-examination by the trustees of the original site selected for their erection on the hundred acres granted in the vicinity of Clay-Ashland, they decided its inappropriateness, owing to a large swamp said to be contiguous to it; and that I had, by request of the trustees, solicited that another appropriation of land be made, on which a suitable site might be selected for its erection; and that the action of the Legislature upon the application not having been satisfactory to the trustees, they subsequently determined to erect it within the corporation of Monrovia; and that in order to expedite and facilitate its erection, so as to save the materials from decay, I had assumed the responsibility of making a grant of twenty acres within this corporation, with the hope that you would increase the area to one hundred acres.

Why he gave a Promise of a new Site.

I did not particularize on the subject in my last message, because I deemed it unnecessary: not anticipating the difficulties that have since arisen respecting the place of its erection. But some of the litigant discussions had, and explanations given on the subject during this year,

having been such – though perhaps not intended – as tended to cause an erroneous view to be taken of executive action in the premises, and to render him chargeable with indiscretion and inconsistency, implied if not expressed, it becomes now necessary, in vindication of my official reputation – especially as this whole matter will, no doubt, form a part of the history of Liberia – that I should give a succinct explanatory statement of the ground of executive action, as well as of the controversy involved.

The misunderstanding and litigation during the year, which resulted in sustaining an injunction against the erection of the College in the Corporation of Monrovia, have originated, so far as I have been able to understand, from the following causes: 1<sup>st</sup>, an ignorance on the part of some, until litigation had progressed considerably this year, of the existence of the law which is said to locate it at Clay-Ashland; while others though aware of the existence of a law, denied that it positively fixed its location at Clay-Ashland, as contended for by the plaintiffs. I am free to confess that I was ignorant of the existence of the law which has since been judicially determined as fixing its location at Clay-Ashland, until litigation had considerably progressed. Major Erskine, who compiled the laws in 1857, and for this purpose had free access to the archives of the State, was more than once particularly instructed by me to make diligent research in the State Department for the act that was rumored had passed some years previously, incorporating the College. I judged from the reading of the caption of an act, to wit, “An additional Act respecting Liberia college,” found in the compilation made in 1853, that unless repealed, there must have been a previous or original act incorporating or pertaining to the College, to which the additional act was but an adjunct. But Major Erskine reported to me more than once, while he was prosecuting his work of compilation, that after diligent research for days he could find no trace of it. I also made diligent inquiring in person, to ascertain if such an act was in existence, so that it might be inserted in the new compilation, in case it had either been omitted in the previous compilation, or had passed subsequently to it; failing in the object of my inquiry, as had been the case with the compiler in the object of his research in the State Department, I very reasonably concluded that if ever such an act had been passed, it had been repealed or abrogated. Hence, upon a re-application to me by a committee from the trustees of the College, and subsequently by the President of the same, for a grant of land to be made within this corporation for that purpose, the latter gentleman having informed me, upon inquiry, that he knew of no law in Liberia that said grant would be in violation of, and that in the absence of express legislative action, the Executive had always made conditional grants of land to religious, educational, or other benevolent institutions – which I knew to be a fact, as well as perfectly consistent – I assumed the responsibility, as stated in my last annual message, of making a grant of twenty acres in this corporation, recommending its increase to one hundred acres; which under the circumstances, I would feel fully justified in doing again.

#### Defective Compilation of the Law.

Under the aforesaid circumstance I promised to grant a deed for the twenty acres. But the House of the Representatives having refused to confirm the grant, upon the ground, as they say, of its having been made ignorantly of a law still unrepealed, having passed six years ago, fixing its location at Clay-Ashland, which error resulted from the omission of the law in the compilation made in 1853, a year after its passage, and an injunction having been sued out by plaintiffs against the trustees, founded upon the declaration that there was a law somewhere existing fixing its location in the vicinity of Clay-Ashland, which law is said to be found published in a number of the *Liberia Herald*, issued early in 1852, agreeing, as it is said, with an interlined bill found among some rubbish papers; these, together with a reference to the journals of the Legislature and to a number of the *African Repository*, in which said act was also published, being regarded and decided by his Honor the Judge of the court

of Commons Pleas and Quarterly Sessions for this county, as sufficiently corroborative and conclusive to sustain the injunction, it were not reasonable to suppose that I would presume, under such circumstances, to so far willfully come in collision with legislative and judiciary action in the premises, as to grant a deed, the promise of which was made under circumstances induced by omissions over which I had no control, and of which I had no knowledge.

Recommends a speedy Decision.

Justice, truth, and candor, alike demand that these explanatory statements be made in vindication of my public and private reputation, from an implied if not expressed imputation of indiscretion, inconsistency, and instability, which erroneous impressions could not otherwise than obtain in the absence of these fully explanations. Having made these explanations, I have nothing more to add or recommend than to solicit such early and prompt action on the subject as will secure its immediate erection upon the most suitable site. Respect for, and gratitude to, the noblehearted donors and friends of the enterprize dwelling in foreign lands, should inspire us with this feeling and determination. You are now equally, if not more, competent than I am, to judge of the most suitable site. I feel sanguine, therefore, if you are satisfied that the original site at Clay-Ashland is unfit, and that the site in this corporation, on which its erection has been commenced, possesses superior advantages to any that have been offered up the river, you will not hesitate to legalize and continue this erection here, which would be a great saving of expense. I hope a spirit of conciliation will generally pervade and that it will in a special manner influence your action on that subject, so that the cherished desire of our benevolent, and magnanimous friends abroad, as well as that of every true patriot in Liberia, may be realized as speedily as the nature of the case will possibly admit.

Donation to the College Library from J. B. Collins, of New York.

On the arrival of the M. C. Stevens, last voyage, I received from the New York State Colonization Society through the Rev. J. B. Pinney, their Corresponding Secretary, a lot of fine books for Liberia College, donated by Mr. Collins of New York, which I have safely delivered into the possession of the President of the College. I also continue to receive each year from Benjamin Coates, Esq., of Philadelphia, valuable contributions of books to our public libraries.

Agriculture Prosperous in some Counties.

I am happy to be able to inform the Legislature that the agricultural interests of the Republic, especially in the counties of Montserrado and Grand Bassa, were never more prosperous and encouraging; and the approximation of the country to what may be considered independence may be considered independence on a permanent basis was never greater in the annals of Liberia.

National Fair and Premiums.

The National Fair of 1857 has greatly contributed this year to intelligent industrial efforts. And if it is continued annually, as provided by law, and the proper influence is exerted in its favor, as all intelligent patriots will do, it will be the means of bringing about a complete revolution and reform in the industrial departments of the nation, which will increasingly bless the country with peace and prosperity.

From the Rev. D. A. Wilson, Principal of the Alexander High School, and Mrs. L. H. Sigourney, of Connecticut, United States of America, I received last year five dollars each, contributed in the way of prizes. And by the Manchester Cotton Supply Association, a resolution has been recently passed, and a copy communicated to me, nobly appropriating the sum of £25, or \$120, per annum, for four years, for the best and most satisfactory samples of

cotton raised in Liberia each year; also four appropriate medals, to be awarded annually as second-class prizes; all which, in the name of the generous donors, I will take pleasure in awarding to the meritorious.

H. B. M. government, in furtherance of the very laudable object of cotton cultivation in Liberia, kindly sent out gratuitously to this Government, near the close of last spring, ten barrels of superior cotton seed, which, unfortunately, arrived about six weeks too late for the proper planting seasonal the seed, however, is preserved, and will be used to ensuing season, when ascertainment will be made as to its superiority to the several qualities of our native cotton.

Our citizens have made an encouraging commencement at it this year, as also has there been an increase in the cultivation of cane, coffee, and other staples; and from indications, we are led to believe that the increase will be greater the ensuing year. Small exportations of those products of their farms commenced this year, which, if properly encouraged by our merchants, there is not a shadow of doubt of their increase annually.

A new Census in Progress.

I have caused the Census of the Republic, exclusive of such aborigines as do not live in our settlements, which such statistics as are prescribed by law, to be taken this year; which I purpose having printed at an early day as possible.

Duty to Elevate the Native Tribes.

By reference to my annual message to the Legislature at the session commencing December 1856, you will perceive therein that I specially invited the attention of the Legislature to the claims of our aboriginal inhabitants upon, and their constant applications to, this Government for adjudication of their numerous misunderstandings and for protection, and the great expense to which the Government is subjected annually, in complying with their numerous requests. I also expressed regret that, for lack of means, the humane provision for their improvement, contained in the 5<sup>th</sup> article of our Constitution, could not be effectually carried out. I recommended that a light direct tax be levied on them to assist in defraying the expenses incurred by virtue of their relations to us.

In fact, the improvement of our aboriginal population, their social, moral, religious, civil and intellectual elevation, are subjects to which your attention has not only been frequently and urgently invited, and discussed by the Legislature in nearly all their phase, but subjects on which the Legislature have so far taken and consummated action, as that a bill, on more than one occasion, embodying their views and making provision, so far as was then deemed justifiable, passed one branch of the Legislature and attained to a second reading in the other. This is therefore very gratifying to know, that the great principle of duty, as embodied in the aforesaid article of our Constitution, has long since, and still continues to claim both executive and legislative solicitude; and I am further pleased to notice that the subject is awakening increasing interest and solicitude among our citizens in private and social circles; and that in almost every public address of late the subject is alluded to and discussed in earnest and eloquent strains.

The Legislature Warned not to Make a Different System of Education for Liberia and Natives, Tending to Degrade the Latter.

And I am happy to be able to say, that since the introduction of the subject to the Legislature two years ago, I have received written and verbal messages from several native chiefs, who have by some means learned the purport and object of the recommendation, expressive of their cordial approval of the measure, as being in perfect accordance with benevolence and justice, and assuring me that they stood ready to cheerfully comply at any moment with such

a reasonable arrangement and requisition. The fact is, I have not had, for the last six or eight years, any serious fears of the existence of insurmountable difficulties in the way of assimilating, in due time, the manners and customs of our aboriginal population to those of civilized life, and of bringing them, within a reasonable time, into a state of intelligent, loyal subjects of this Republic. That it can be effected only by the employment of the proper effort, attended with a degree of difficulty, none but a fanatic would deny; but I also contend that those difficulties do not form so formidable a barrier to the consummation of this cherished desire of every true Christian patriot, as is generally supposed. The fact is, though very gradually, yet it is most certainly and encouragingly approximating consummation each successive year; of this, no one who has given the proper attention to the matter will for a moment doubt. I am yet to be convinced, however, of the existence of any thing so peculiar in the condition and dispositions of our aborigines and in their relations to us, as to justify the adoption by this Government of a system of education and training for time, differing from the necessary to be employed with the Americo-Liberians and their descendants, for the accomplishment of the same results. If it be necessary to make provision by law for the training up of our aboriginal population thoroughly in the industrial arts, as a means of at once contributing to their own welfare as well as to the wealth of the nation, it is equally if not more necessary that the same law apply to the Americo-Liberians and their descendants. For I hold that the Americo-Liberians ought to be their exemplars, especially of industry, in the pursuits of civilized life; and I shall ever regard with suspicion any system of education and training for the aborigines, provided by law, that does not equally apply to ourselves, lest it should prove an introduction – though not intended – to a state of things that will cause them to be regarded as intended to permanently sustain the relation to us of hewers of wood and drawers of water, while our own sons and daughters may be encouraged to live in idleness, luxury and affluence. In a word, it would be encouraging a dangerous line of demarcation, that should have no existence in Liberia.

I must confess, as an individual, that my fears and anxieties for the last six or eight years, have been that the moral, intellectual, and industrial training of a majority of the emigrants who may arrive here in the future from the United States, as well as that of our posterity bred and born in this country, will not keep pace with the advancement of our aborigines in those elements of individual and national greatness. In order to show that those fears and anxieties are not unfounded, I have only to state what is pretty generally known in Liberia, that there are thousands of natives living within the jurisdiction of this Republic, who are intellectually in advance of at least one-half of the emigrants that arrive here annually from the United States. And we have only to ask, secondly, What is understood by contributing to the wealth of the nation or the resources of government? By what means is this great end to be effected? In what does it consist? Surely no one will deny that it consists in, and is effected by, productive industry; and that the exports of a nation are presumed to be mainly the result of productive industry. This raises the question, What proportion of the exports from Liberia annually is the result of the productive labor of Americo-Liberians? and what proportion of the aborigines? I submit these questions to you, gentlemen of the Legislature; and when you shall have decided them in your own minds, from the facts as they are, you will simultaneously prepare to answer as to which of the two classes or divisions of our population contributes most, *pro rata*, to the wealth of the nation and the resources of the Government.

It affords no argument in our favor to say that we export more, or that more passes through our hands to foreigners, in proportion to our numbers, than is the case with the aborigines, unless, before exportation, we had by our industry, by what political economists style *productive consumption*, attached an increased value to the article originally procured

of the aborigines, that is, unless we had, before exportation, converted, by our own industry and skill, the palm oil into candles, soap, &c.; the ivory into the numberless uses to which it is usually applied; camwood applied in the way of dyes to our manufactures, &c., &c., thus increasing the original value.

Nor is it any argument in our favor, so long as the original article given in exchange is exclusively of heathen labor, to say that, being civilized, our wants are much greater, in proportion to our numbers, than those of the aborigines, which causes a corresponding increase of importations in our favor, and consequently, of the revenue. This argument would simply amount to a confession, that we are the greatest consumers and non-producers; or, in the language of political economists, all our importations for the supply of our real and imaginary wants would, under such circumstances, be properly classified under the term of "*unproductive consumption*," which, according to a maxim in political economy, detracts from individual and national wealth, and the resources of the Government.

My main object, gentlemen, for introducing this subject, and for a cursory notice of a few of the facts and principles involved therein, is simply to guard in future against an improper and exclusive legislative action respecting our aborigines. That some action, so far as is feasible and practicable, should be had as speedily as possible by the Legislature, having for its object the general improvement of our aboriginal population, rendering them increasingly useful and profitable members of this Republic, no one of sound mind will deny. But there is equal, if not greater occasion, that Government action on such matters should begin nearer at home, right among ourselves. While the missionaries are, as a general thing, laboring among the aborigines, which is very proper, this Government should enact and enforce laws at home discountenancing idleness and highly encouraging industry; laws that will effectually provide for the training up of at least three-fourths of our youth with a practical knowledge of some mechanic art, or of some branch of industry that will be of utility. Our sons and daughters should be, as a general thing, trained up in and with such industrial habits, as a prominent part of their education, as will at once contribute to their physical development, their mental vigor, to the wealth of themselves and of the nation, and to the resources of the Government. This principle, this state of things, should be first generally cultivated among ourselves; and when it has firmly taken root, having become a fixed and admired principle among us, under sanction of law, then let it spread as rapidly and effectually among our aboriginal population as possible; let it practically, as well as by law, apply to them as far as the circle of our influence and power extends among them. We shall then be consistent exemplars to and teachers of them and Government will thereby be most blessedly co-operating with and effectually sustaining the missionaries of the Cross in their labors among them.

As a young nation, we need less tinsel and show, and more reality and stability, ere we can attain to real permanency and greatness. We must learn to abate our admiration of and honor for the exclusively external appearance, or any other futile condition or consideration; and we must learn to place a greater estimate on, and to attach more honor to, real merit, such as are the laudable products of the brain, the heart, and the hands.

I close this subject, gentlemen, by expressing the hope, that the time is not far distant, when our citizens generally, and especially all our wisest and most influential ones, will, as has been the case to a considerable extent, patriotically second and encourage every legislative and executive effort that may be employed, having for its object the dissemination and establishment of the aforesaid laudable principles throughout the length and breath of this Republic.

### Revenue.

The necessity of providing an adequate revenue for the purpose of meeting the current and contingent expenses, and for that liquidation of the claims against Government each year, is a subject that has been repeatedly urged upon you in my annual communications, as being indispensable to a healthy, vigorous and reputable administration of the government; and I regret to say that this and other important subjects have been deferred by the Legislature to within a few days of the close of their session, when the great pressure of business has invariably deferred them to each successive session, leaving the Administration each year greatly crippled and embarrassed its operations. I have been particular to cause the Secretary of the Treasury, at each session, not only to timely lay before you the aggregate amount of the receipts and disbursements of each preceding year, but a detailed statement of the exports and imports, as well as other statistics, which, from their very nature constitute for the most reliable data for the guidance of the Committee of Ways and Means in making the aforesaid provision with an accuracy almost amounting to certainty. In addition to the current expenses, and the liquidation of claims, it is indispensable requisite that means be provided for carrying on certain public works; the repairs of public buildings; the erection of new public buildings in each of our counties; and the more securely fortifying of some of our towns and settlements.

### Causes of Increased Expenses.

It is also my duty to invite your attention to the fact, that unless some change takes place very soon in the policy of such governments as continue to give every indication of their purpose to prosecute at all hazards the so-called emigration system on our coast, we shall have from some time to come, not a new source of expenses exactly – for we have been battling with the slave trade for its extinction in all its phases, at the expense of our lives and treasures, from the earliest period of our history here to the present – but an old source of expenses greatly increased, growing out of the duty and necessity of this Government to keep a sufficient local police employed and stationed at each of the principal points along our coast, to co-operate with our Coasta-guarda: and to employ a military force, when necessary, in order to prevent the more powerful native chiefs from stealing and selling the subjects of the less powerful ones to the so-called emigrant ships, and for the severe punishment of kidnapping chiefs, should they prove persistent after the proper pacific measures shall have been sufficiently employed. I see no other feasible plan, under the circumstances, for suppressing the illicit prosecution of the systems, with this concomitant abominations, on our coast and within our jurisdiction.

### The Tariff Reviewed.

In order, therefore, to meet the expenses to which I have made allusion, our tariff should be reviewed, and such alterations made in it, and resort should be had to such other means and sources for the increase of our revenue, as a sound policy shall dictate. I earnestly solicit, gentleman, that you give this subject your earliest attention. Whatever reasonable entrenchments of any of the existing expenses of government you may feel justified in making, will, if in my opinion just and proper, receive my cordial acquiescence.

I may also add, that the great number of orders drawn on the treasury, which of the necessity have been over two years, more or less, in circulation, and which through a great relief to the people under the then existing circumstances, have nevertheless greatly depressed us in our financial operations, have all been taken in and redeemed within the last three months, so far as this county is concerned, – excepting, perhaps, forty or fifty dollars. The circumstances which impelled the drawing of these orders no longer existing so strongly, I have fully concluded to act upon the principle in this county, and I instructed the Super-

intendents of the respective counties and settlements early this year to act similarly, of drawing no orders upon the treasuries, unless the means to honor them are in hand, so as to prevent their circulation as a kind of circulating medium; and that nothing be received at the Treasury Departments except such as Government can pay out and circulate as lawful available funds. This purpose, which is the only proper course, makes it increasingly necessary, that you should provide sufficient means in the treasury and in the sub-treasuries of the respective counties, so that the claims of our citizens, and of others, may be promptly met as they arise.

I hope to be able to transmit to you, in a very few days, the Report of the Auditors, whom I appointed this year, by your authorization, for the purpose of auditing the public accounts. I have the promise that it shall be submitted to me this week.

United States Frigate Niagara and Echo Slaves.

I have also to state, that the United States splendid steam frigate Niagara arrived in this port on the 8<sup>th</sup> ult., with about two hundred recaptives sent out by the United States Government, under a contract with the American Colonization Society. I will, in a special message during your present session, communicate with you fully on this subject.

French Emigration Scheme Denounced.

In my last annual message, I cursorily, yet sufficiently fully, under the circumstances, brought into review the emigration system as it had been prosecuted on our coast for the supply of foreign colonies with laborers. And I did not hesitate to express an unfavorable opinion of it, as being a system fraught with evil. And I invited your special attention to the propriety of so providing by law as would either put an end to it within our jurisdiction, or as would throw around it so many guards and checks as would prevent its illicit prosecution.

I also gave you all the necessary information respecting the arrival, entry, and proceedings of the *Regina Coeli*, Captain Simon, up to that date. The catastrophe of that unfortunate vessel's operations on our coast the facts and principles involved in her case from first to last; the unprincipled misrepresentations and downright untruths that have been ingeniously invented and put in circulation since she was forcibly and unlawfully taken out of this harbor and carried away by a French naval vessel; as also the great propriety of a proper vindication of the policy and reputation of the Government in the premises, seem to imperatively demand that a full, lucid and reliable history of the French emigration enterprise, as prosecuted on our coast during and from the year 1855 up to the present, based principally upon authentic documents, shall be submitted to you. And I shall, either by or without your special request, submit the same, with a special message, at a very early day of your session; a number of copies of which you will no doubt direct to be printed.

This is the more necessary, since the enemies of our race have, as usual, by their ingenious misrepresentations and eager indorsement of libelous statements made and circulated against us, respecting the policy of this Government in regard to the French emigration system, and particularly with reference to the operations of the *Reginal Coeli* within our jurisdiction, sought to inflict what they vainly thought and hoped would prove the finishing stroke, not only to the good reputation of the country and our race in general, but also to Liberia's very existence. In fact, they had pretty well succeeded in making false and unfavorable impressions concerning us, on the minds of some of the true and honest friends of our country and our race dwelling in foreign lands, who, in the honesty of their hearts, seek and desire to be correctly informed on the subject. We owe it as a duty to such gentlemen, wherever they are to be found in the Christian world, and it is a pleasure to us – others we care nothing for, they sink into contemptible insignificance in ours as well as in the estimation of the respectable portion of the Christian world – to spare no pains in affording all

necessary information on the subject, believing as we do, that if the base charges and false imputations that have been so ingeniously and malignantly made against us were substantiated, the mortification and grief of our friends abroad would be no less than ours.

Liberia never professed to be immaculate; to make such a profession would be to profess to be super-human; and yet we are willing that our policy and reputation should be as closely scrutinized as possible.

After the full and lucid explanations and facts contained in the contemplated history, are submitted to an enlightened Christian world, Liberia will be content to abide their verdict.

*Chevalier Caught in the Act of Buying Slaves, and Runs Away.*

During the last month, the notorious Chevalier arrived on our coast again in the Phoenix; and notwithstanding the very unpleasant and unsettled state of the difficulties growing out of the case of the Regina Coeli, he had the audacity to commence prosecuting what the laws of Liberia declare to be the slave trade, within our jurisdiction, and at the very places at which Captain Simon obtained him so-called emigrants, and the very point off which the mutiny occurred. The Superintendent at Cape Mount conveyed to me the information of his being on our coast, the second day after his arrival; and through the kindness of Commander J. Hunt, of Her Majesty's Sloop Alectro, who was most opportunely in this port, Col. F. Paine was conveyed up in search of the aggressor and found him anchored off Manna; and though he had been there only a few days, he had already bought nine slaves, and had them secured below. By the Chevalier's own confession, verbally as well as in writing, he had bought and paid for them as slaves. A consciousness of having committed a gross crime within our jurisdiction, so palpably demonstrated in the presence of British as well as Liberian officers, and all the circumstances entirely precluding the possibility – as had been in the case of the Regina Coeli – of inventing ingenious falsehoods of the complicity of the Liberian authorities, to shield his atrocities, and knowing that his engagement in the slave trade – which is declared by our laws, as well as those of several Christian nations, as being piracy – could not be other wise than condemned and punished by his own Government, he became so affrighted (for he trembled from head to foot) that a confession flowed spontaneously from his lips and pen, ere he recovered himself.

In case our only *Coasta guarda* had not been absent in England for repairs, the Phoenix would have been taken as a prize and brought to this port for trial, notwithstanding she would have likely been violently and unlawfully carried off, as was the case with the Regina Coeli. I will, in a special message, communicate with you more fully and definitely on this aggravated subject. I will simply add, however, that Chevalier, in his fright, weighed anchor and left that vicinity for parts as yet unknown.

I directed the Superintendent at Robertsport immediately on Col. Payne's return and report to me, to establish a local police of Americo-Liberians at each of the principal points between Grand Cape Mount and Gallinas, inclusive, to prevent any shipment of slaves, or communication with the vessel, provided she should continue in that vicinity; and also in the name of this Government to threaten the native chiefs with severe punishment this season for their co-operations in the illicit business, by a military force, if it should be found necessary.

*Liberia Appeals to the World.*

It is very much to be regretted, and it is an abominable shame, that this young and weak nation, which has every reason to husband its little means, and to employ them rather in the great and noble work of the moral and intellectual improvement of our aborigines, with a view of, as speedily as possibly, raising them to a perfect level with us, civilly and religiously, should be necessitated, year after year, to incur enormous expenses for the prevention of

heinous crimes attempted to be forced upon and among the very people we are thus trying to elevate by the subjects of a professedly Christian nation, simply because we are a young and weak nation; and yet with this very nation we are in treaty relations, the stipulations of which declare against and utterly condemn such abominable conduct. I have only to add on this subject, gentlemen, that when the history of this French Emigration System, as prosecuted within our jurisdiction, shall have been laid before you, giving minute description of the almost innumerable impositions that have been practiced upon us, the intolerable arrogance of naval officers, the many unprincipled misrepresentations that have been made of us by French emigration agents, you will agree with me that forbearance and partial silence, through national courtesy, are no longer virtues; that the time has fully come for us to speak out and to act out, with a fixed determination of putting a stop to the abominable system within our jurisdiction, at all hazards, though the actual or attempted accomplishment of this duty should cost us our lives, or result in our extermination.

We had, by far, better reconcile ourselves – and I both hope and feel assured that every Americo-Liberian, together with thousands of our aborigines, has fully resolved – to prefer extermination, to have the name of our dear Liberia blotted out from the catalogue of nations by the might of any nation more powerful than we are, and for our remembrance to cease forever on earth, than to submit longer to such arrogant impositions, or to tolerate the prosecution, within our jurisdiction, of an abominable system of human oppression, fraught as it is with principles so despicably intolerable to us as to have caused us to leave the land of our nativity, and with many privations, to seek an asylum upon these heathen shores.

The Emperor Deceived, and will Correct the Error when Informed.

I presume, gentlemen, that I will be considered almost unreasonably incredulous, when I assert that I cannot believe that His Imperial Majesty's Government will openly avow its approval of such conduct by its subjects, nor will it tacitly approve of it, by refusing to speak and act out in condemnation and punishment of its palpably aggressive subjects. It must be that the ingenious misrepresentations that have been made to His Imperial Majesty's Government, from time to time, and especially within this year, is the main, if not sole cause, of the delay of that redress being made to us, with those assurances which justice so reasonably demands. I am pleased to learn that the French commodore anticipates a visit to this city, and may be expected daily for adjustment of the difficulties of the Regina Coeli, &c., &c.; when I feel sure, that the superabundant evidence, incontrovertible in its nature, that will be afforded him of the truth of more than we have said and complained of, will satisfy His Imperial Majesty's Government of the misrepresentations that have been made to it by its subjects, and will induce that Government, whose magnanimity we would not, as yet, for a moment question, to take the proper view of and action on the matter. It is to the interest, and therefore is the policy of this Government, to cultivate the best feeling with all the civilized nations of the earth. We feel under many obligations to his Imperial Majesty's Government, for our early recognition, and for subsequent acts of kindness; and it is our fervent desire to cultivate the best feeling with that great nation, so far as is practicable without compromising our fixed principles.

Postal Convention with England Concluded.

I am happy to be able to inform you that Postal Convention, of which, I gave information last year, as being in course of negotiation between H. B. M. Government and this Republic, has been so far consummated as to only require now a formal ratification by the Senate, &c. It is a very liberal postal arrangement with us, and should be regarded as another evidence of the kind and generous feeling of H. B. M. Government towards us. G. Ralston, Esq., our Consul General at London, who was duly empowered to act in the premises on behalf of this

Government, transmitted a copy of the treaty early this year; and as stipulated to go into operation on the first of April last, and it was deemed imprudent to incur the expense of convening the Senate for the special purpose of its ratification, and as nothing was to be lost, but much gained, I allowed it to go into operation, with the assurance to Her Majesty's Government, that its stipulations would be strictly binding on this Government until its formal ratification by the Senate, at this session.

#### Treaty with Belgium

I have also to state, that the treaty, of which I gave intimation at your last session, that was being negotiated between this and His Belgian Majesty's Government was respectively signed in this city, last March by Louis Bols, Esq., on the part of the Belgian Government, and the Secretary of State on the part of this Government; both this and the Postal Convention will, at very early day, be submitted to the Senate for ratification.

#### Liberia Commercial Policy.

The gradual yet certain increase in the acquisition by our citizens of vessels of sufficient capacity, and their actual commencement to ply commercially between this and foreign civilized countries, will bring us to realize at an earlier day than was generally supposed, some of the great advantages that should and will accrue to us from our treaties of reciprocity. It is my opinion, that six years will not have elapsed before many colored gentlemen of capital and business tact, now residing in foreign lands, will not only turn their attention towards Liberia, but will become actually identified with her interest; and will be aroused to such action as will secure to them, by a commerce carried on in their own vessels plying between this Republic and foreign lands, a good share of the profits of the coast trade. And why should they not, as Liberians, or as the founders of new settlements on this continent, be numbered among the chief beneficiaries of the coast trade? And I further venture to express it as my firm belief, that if no untoward circumstance shall arise, it will be as common a thing before the expiration of the next then years, to ship cotton, coffee, sugar, syrup, and other commodities of this country, in Liberian bottoms, to foreign countries, as it is now for palm oil and camwood to be shipped in foreign bottoms. I am therefore decidedly of opinion, that this Government, in its commercial relations, should entertain and exercise as enlarged and liberal views as circumstances will possibly justify.

#### The Lark and Quail, Gifts of England.

Pursuant to a resolution of the Legislature at the last session, which was based upon information afforded in my last message, I succeeded after some difficulty, in despatching the schooner Lark from this port on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, to England, for repairs, under the promise so generously made by Her Majesty's Government. She arrived at Plymouth on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, and was condemned and pronounced unworthy or repairs, lat in August. I am happy in being able to inform you, that by advices received by the last mail from our Consul General at London, I am informed that Her Majesty's Government has been graciously pleased to present us a substitute, (the Quail,) of little larger capacity than the Lark; and it is intimated that her armament, as well as her general arrangement, will be superior in their adaptation for a *Costa-guarda* to those possessed by the Lark. I anticipate her arrival before your adjournment, when I will be pleased to communicate with you further on the subject.

There are several matters affecting our interests, both in Europe and in the United States, of which I could afford you some cheering intelligence; but prudence dictates that I forbear until they progress further. I may, however, have occasion to communicate with you on some of those subjects ere the close of your session.

I have the painful duty to perform of making allusion to the great loss our country has sustained this year in the decease of some of its prominent and useful citizens: among whom was Colonel J. B. McGill, for many years an able and faithful Senator, and who, as a Christian statesman, possessed the confidence and respect of all who knew him; also, Colonel Dickerson, of Sinou County, a man of sound judgment and of sterling character: these, with others, whom according to human views, we could illy spare, have been taken from us by the ruthless hand of death. These dispensations should properly impress and influence us during future life.

I close this communication, gentlemen, after assuring you that you shall have my cordial co-operation, so far as may be required, in the discharge of the duties of your session; which I hope will be performed to the satisfaction of your constituents, as well as in accordance with your own fervent desire.

Stephen Allen Benson.

Government House,

Monrovia, Dec. 9, 1858.

## Special Message to the Legislature

January 6, 1859

To the Honorable, the House of Representatives of the Republic of Liberia.

Gentlemen,

Pursuant to your Resolution of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Inst, requesting “if not incompatible with the interest of government, that the President afford the House of Representatives for their information, a detailed statement of the facts in connection with the mutiny on board the French emigration ship *Regina Coeli*, together with all and every other information relating to the French system of emigration as prosecuted on the Liberian Coast.” I have the honor to transmit herewith, a collation of facts and circumstances made by the Secretary of State from authentic documents on file in the state department, with such notes and comments by him, as will afford you a full and clear history of the matter, and consequently the desired information – By a perusal of these documents you will at once perceive how great has been the forbearance that has been exercised by this government, amidst repeated impositions and provocations practiced upon us by French emigration agents who were arrogantly supported by French Naval officers. A patient and unswerving opposition to any illicit prosecution of the enterprise within our Jurisdiction, I deemed to be most prudent and effectual course to put at end to it. Nothing could have been gained by precipitous action on the part of this well known young and weak nation, especially in this favored age of Christian and civilized enlightenment, when the moral sentiment and verdict world, should be regarded as more powerful than the armament of the greatest nation on earth.

H.I.M. Government, whose sense of honor and Justice we would not as yet for a moment question will not and cannot in my opinion for a moment countenance such a flagrant conduct in its officer and subjects, as is detailed in the accompanying collation, I still attribute the silence of that Government to our dispatches on the subject, and the delay of that redress and satisfaction which Justice seem so reasonably to demand, to the gross misrepresentations, that have been made to that government by its aggressive subjects. Let H.I.M. Government become once convinced that there have been palpable misrepresentations by its subjects, and that the accompanying collation, though correctly made, and is abundantly sufficient in itself – does not contain half of the arrogant impositions and wrongs

attempted, and really practiced by French subjects within our Jurisdiction, and that government so far famed, for high toned magnanimity, will promptly redress us for all the multiplied wrongs and impositions that have been practiced upon us by French naval and emigration ships. If that government should fail to do so I can only express my disappointment in the future. It were but reasonable for that government to give credulity to its own subjects, especially national officers, in preference to contradictory statements by foreigners. Any other civilized nation would perhaps do the same, and maintain its position until misrepresentations had become so palpable, as to render the position no longer honorably tenable, at least without instituting a prompt and fair investigation into the whole matter. And I doubt not, that whenever such inquiry and investigation to be instituted, as will lead to the awarding of the proper redress to us, with such assurances from that government of a non recurrence of the multiplied wrongs aforesaid, as shall at once relieve us of the painful annoyances of the last three or four years, and the heavy expense of maintaining a local police at points along this coast for the prevention of the evils among our aborigines, so fully detailed in this collation.

The Judicial proceedings in this City with reference to Captain Simon of the Regina Coeli, – the numerous depositions on file, and other evidence said to be corroborative against Capt. Simon, for prosecuting an illicit business within the Jurisdiction of this Republic in violation of repeated warnings to and equally repeated assurances given by him – are for the present omitted from this collation. In case you do not specially call for them, or otherwise make request, I am not inclined to give publicity to them, unless I find myself impelled to that course in the future.

Stephen A. Benson

House of Representatives

January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1859.

Resolved, that 100 copies of the message of the President called for by a Resolution of this House on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, inst., in reference to the mutiny on board the French emigration Ship “Regina Coeli,” and information on other matters in connection with the French system of emigration as prosecuted on the Liberian Coast, be printed for the use of this House, &c. &c.

Anthony W. Gardner,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Liberia.*

Department of State.

Monrovia, January 5, 1859.

To the President of Liberia.

In pursuance to your direction, I now proceed to collate from the documents on file in this department, a narration of facts in connection with the French System of emigration, so far as it regards its operation on the Liberian coast, and which will show the views entertained by this Government in reference thereto, and also show, that the Government of His Imperial Majesty have long since, been made acquainted with them.

It is absolutely necessary for the vindication of the honor of the Government and the people of Liberia, that this course be adopted. The English and American public, from representations made to the French Government by some of its subjects, – directly interested in supplying French colonies with laborers from Africa, – are made to believe, that for a consideration paid to this Government, it has encouraged and fostered this French system of emigration, by its participation and complicity.

Notwithstanding the well known fact, that the accursed system of slavery has ceased to exist on the Liberian coast, through the vigilance and at the expense, (to say nothing of the loss of life) of this Government and people of Liberia, yet the false and libelous statements

so industriously circulated as to the complicity of the Liberian Government in kidnapping the aborigines of the country, and sending them on board a French ship by violence and fraud, from their homes and families, to eke out a miserable and fearful existence in a French colony, may find credence among many friends of humanity, and among many of Liberia's best defenders. It is necessary then, that we place ourselves in a position of defense, and present to the civilized world a plain and faithful history of matters and things in connection with the French system of emigration as prosecuted on the Liberian coast.

About the middle of the year 1855, M. Chevalier or another French emigration agent, made his appearance on the Coast of Liberia in a Steamer. He visited New Sess, Tradetown and other parts of the Liberian coast – the inducements held out by him for emigrants caused several native towns in the New Sess country to be sacked, many of the inhabitants of which were made prisoners and sent off to him as emigrants. About 40 of the inhabitants of those pillaged towns, who made their escape, consisting of men, women and children, fled to authorities at Buchanan, Grand Bassa, and were assigned by the superintendent of the country a suitable and safe place contiguous to Buchanan at which to locate where many of them are still residing. In 1856, M. Chevalier again visited the coast of Liberia ostensibly for the purpose of procuring *free* laborers from the aboriginal inhabitants. He was accompanied by a French Officer, who, it was reported, was placed on board M. Chevalier's vessel by the French Government, to prevent fraud in the procurement of emigrants. On his arrival at this port, M. Chevalier reported himself to the authorities, and was by them informed of the requirements of the law regulating "Navigation, Commerce and Revenue." He remained in board some two days, proposing for a consideration, to arrange with government to be allowed the privilege of establishing a permanent commercial and emigration depot at Tradetown point, and in endeavoring to convince authorities that the law did contemplate a transient business like the one he was engaged in. That the merchandize aboard his vessel was to be given as presents to whomsoever would assist him in collecting emigrants. He was informed most plainly, that no emigration depots would be allowed within our Jurisdiction and that the law required of him and all others not to take persons from Liberia unless they were furnished with passports from the Secretary of State. This requisition was the more urgently insisted upon, in view of the known selfishness and rapacity of the native chieftains, who for the sake of gain, would not hesitate, as had been demonstrated during his voyage of the preceding year, to seize upon inoffensive men, women and children and send them off from their homes without the least compunction of feeling – and be compelling M. Chevalier to procure passports, the Government would know if the emigration was free of constrained.

After many evasions and subterfuges M. Chevalier proceeded down the coast without having made known his intentions in regard to the requirements of the Government. It may be proper to remark in this connection, that the authorities here would certainly have taken decided steps to insure M. Chevalier's compliance with the law whilst on the Liberian coast, if it had not been argued, that the French officer of Marine who accompanied M. Chevalier, would consider it his duty to see that no French subject violated the laws of Liberia – a State with which his Government was upon terms of amity.

This was not an unreasonable conclusion to arrive at. A French merchant vessel leaves a port in France for Liberia – her business is unique in its character, and in the prosecuting of it, liable to much injustice and wrong. The Government of France knowing this, and also, that its subjects were not more honest than the citizens and subjects of other countries, and would not be apt to care much for the principle and honor when they conflict with the dictates of an avaricious hears – places on board said vessel one of its officer, who is, it is reasonable to suppose entirely free from any pecuniary interest in the expedition for the procu-

ration of free laborers – to prevent any wrong or injustice being done, and to see that no laws or regulations are trampled upon in the attainment of the object of the voyage. It will be seen in the sequel how egregiously the Liberian authorities were deceived in their estimate of the presence of the French Marine officer on board the vessel of M. Chevalier.

There is no law in Liberia to prevent its citizens from leaving it for other parts, but it is required however, that a public notice of ten days shall be given of the intention to leave, before a passport can be obtained from the Secretary of State. This is a measure of precaution to protect creditors from absconding debtors.

M. Chevalier anchored off New Cessors and Tradetown and invited some of the native Chiefs to an interview. It is not definitely known what passed at this conference, but the confusion and dismay which seem to have paralyzed many of the weak and less powerful chieftains clearly showed that war, rapine and murder were to follow in the footsteps of M. Chevalier. The unfortunate people flocked to the authorities at Grand Bassa for protection, and many of them are living now near the settlements in that Country, having flown from their homes and the association which made life dear to them, to escape being kidnapped and carried off to satisfy the wants of M. Chevalier. A few Americo-Liberians who were trading on the beach at New Cessors and Tradetown witnessed scenes on this occasion which made them shudder. The poor kidnapped creatures were brought down to the beach strongly secured with cords, put into canoes, thus bound and carried off on board the French vessel, and she hurried off towards the south coast before intelligence could be conveyed here of her movements, and steps taken to bring her to account.

The poor unfortunates would call on their Americo-Liberian friends (traders) for protection – they done all they could to get them released – they remonstrated with those who had them in charge – but all to no purpose – the cupidity of the native chiefs and the wants of M. Chevalier must be satisfied even at the cost of bleeding humanity – the destruction of villages and of rapine and murder.

It was after this fashion that M. Chevalier proceeded to collect his Free laborers. It may be asked where was the French Marine Officer at the times this outrageous wrong and injustice were being perpetrated? He was on board M. Chevalier's ship, and if any part of his time was spent on the deck of that vessel, he must have known that the poor Africans were carried on board strongly secured with cords and that their fearful countenances bespoke everything but satisfaction.

It was left to the humane and Christian world to review and make up a verdict upon the character of this Conscientious French Officer. M. Chevalier as before intimated did not return to Monrovia and consequently complied with none of the requisitions of the law, but immediately after filing his vessel with a dissatisfied, oppressed and enslaved number of poor unfortunate inoffensive natives, left the coast.

From all parts between Monrovia and Cape Palmas, complaints poured in to the Government of the wrongs and injustice of M. Chevalier, and the natives of the country looked and expected protection from the laws of Liberia.

Under these circumstances – so painful and revolting to the feelings of the people of Liberia, the Government issued Proclamation, copy of which here follows, as the only course to pursue, that presented a possibility of preventing a repetition of the wrongs of M. Chevalier.

Proclamation.

“Whereas Mr. Chevalier, in behalf of His Imperial Majesty's Government of France has recently come to this coast for the ostensible purpose of procuring Labourers for French Guyana by offering, as inducements, the sum of seven French Dollars, to each Labourer that will emigrate in his ships, a promise of kind treatment, and a free passage back to his origi-

nal home, which inducements have created considerable dissatisfaction and disquietude among the native tribes of the coast, where the majority of said labourers so emigrating are taken, giving rise to multifarious complaints, which have been presented to this Government, and which have awakened on its part no ordinary concern and interest; and whereas this Government is desirous of maintaining inviolate its principles of laws and justice of protecting the rights of its citizens and promoting in every possible manner their interest, peace and tranquility; Therefore – Be it known to all whom it may concern that masters of vessels are prohibited from taking on board passage to any individual residing within this Republic without a passport from the Secretary of State, unless to be landed within this Republic, under penalty of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars; and that vessels carrying or intending to carry away emigrant must come to this port with their emigrants on board to obtain passports, in order that an opportunity may be afforded this Government ascertaining whether the emigration be free or constrained.”

All violations of the above law regulating passports will be visited with the utmost penalty thereunto annexed.

Done at Monrovia this twenty-fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and fifty six and the Republic the Ninth. Stephen A. Benson.

By the President, (signed) D.B. Warner, Secretary of State.”

After M. Chevalier’s departure from the Boat, time and opportunity were afforded to ascertain the precise condition of matters the aborigines of the country, after the excitement among them, growing out of the kidnapping measures of the chiefs to supply his demand for laborers. The excitement apparently, had in a measure, subsided. The natives had received assurances from the Government, that steps would be taken to prevent a repetition of the deplorable scenes they had passed through. Tho’ their minds became somewhat relieved, they were still suspicious of each other. They looked for the villages they had lived in – searched for the missing portions of their families who had fled to the Liberian settlements, or been carried off by M. Chevalier – their property squandered – indeed destruction had come upon them, and they feared every one, and every man’s hand was raised to strike his neighbor. Repeated assurances of the Government of Liberia, somewhat, gave confidence to them, and their attention was turned to their ordinary avocations. But for the ready interest and interference of the Liberian authorities, the countries of New Cesters and Tradetown would have become the theaters of the most deadly strife, which it would have required an expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars to quell, to say nothing of the utter destruction of legitimate trade in those parts. This is but a sketch of the actual condition of affairs at those places at the time.

The plans adopted by the French for the procurement of emigrants on our coast having become a matter of much serious importance, involving even the very existence of the Republic as a free state, and all that the people thereof hold most sacred – it became a matter of most earnest consideration with the Government, as to the best course to pursue, to obviate, in future such lamentable occurrences. The Government of Liberia did not for a moment believe that the Government of His Imperial Majesty would sanction the course of M. Chevalier, no such a course in any other person acting under the authority of the French Flag. Indeed, the Treaty subsisting between the two Governments was a guarantee that such would not be the case.

In March 1857 M. Chevalier returned to the Liberian Coast in continuation of his system for the procurement of free laborers. He not only had a French officer of Marine on board his vessel (Phoenix) as before, but he was accompanied by the French Steam Ship of War “Euphrate” Commander Laporterie. On your arrival at Cape Mount last March, you found M. Chevalier there with his Ship, – having arrived two days previously – prosecuting

the same business between Cape Mount and Gallinas (both inclusive,) and had refused to allow a boat sent off from the settlement of Robertsport to board him. Captain Cooper, by your direction, dispatched Midshipmen Harris of the "Lark" to M. Chevalier's Ship with your compliments, to inform him that it was legally and indispensable requisite that he touch at Monrovia and procure of the Secretary of State passports for all emigrants obtained within the jurisdiction of the Republic, as also to settle the duties accruing on all merchandize landed or disposed of by him within the same. You also addressed him a note to that effect by the same conveyance; with all of which he assured you there would be a faithful compliance by him. In about ten minutes after Midshipman Harris left the emigrant ship, and when about a hundred yards distant from her, he espied and overhauled a canoe near to, and making for said ship, with a man on board securely board with cords, whom Mr. Harris released and carried on board the "Lark;" and whom, you subsequently brought to this city on your return in the "Lark." This man reported that he had been unexpectedly seized on shore that morning at Sugaree – distant only five miles from Robertsport – bound with cords, thrown into a canoe, and was being involuntarily taken to Mr. Chevalier as an emigrant. He was incessant in his expressions of gratitude to his rescuers. Mr. Chevalier preceded you by some four or five days to Monrovia, and had left before you returned. On his arrival here he called on the authorities, and they complained of his violating the law on his last voyage; and they again made known the requirements of the law regulating Commerce Navigation and Revenue and the provisions of the law regulating Passports.

Mr. Chevalier strongly contended that the Government of Liberia had no just grounds for the issuing of the Proclamation in connection with his operations on the coast – that he had not done or caused to be done any wrong, or committed any injustice whatever, and that all such information coming to Monrovia was fabricated by evil minded persons. Nothing was to be gained in a controversy with M. Chevalier, and it was hoped that the presence of a French National vessel would deter him from again violating the laws of Liberia, and prevent a recurrence of the lamentable and deeply regretted disturbances among the aborigines of the Country, which so indelibly marked his former visits to the coast. It was, however, soon ascertained, that M. Chevalier would have a strong and powerful support in Commander Laporterie, in any future violations of Liberian laws, instead of finding in him a ready and willing agent to see that the laws of Liberia were respected and adhered to, especially by subjects of his own country, with which this Government is on terms of peace and friendship. It was, and is now, a deep source of regret to find Commander Laporterie giving encouragement and support to M. Chevalier in his unjustifiable pretensions, to carry out his own system for the procurement of emigrants on the Liberia coast, without caring whether the laws of Liberia were violated or not. There can be no doubt but that M. Chevalier claimed the interference of Commander Laporterie against being compelled by the Liberian authorities to submit to the operation of the law regulating Navigation, Commerce, and Revenue, and the requirements of the law regulating Passports, and hence a communication addressed by him to this government, through the French Consul.

Here is a literal translation of the communication.

"Note to the Consular Agent at Monrovia. The fiscal and other claims which the authorities at Monrovia have issued with reference to Captain Chevalier, give rise to the following observations.

It does not appear that Mr. Chevalier ought to acquiesce in any payment whatever of ad valorem duties on the merchandize of exchange, since they are not for the purpose of commercial operations with the natives. He offers them as gifts to those who facilitate his business of enlistment, and at first cost; both remain on board without communicating with the shore, and besides, this use of goods being subordinate to the enlistment is essential.

The Hon. Secretary of State would have assumed the right of placing on board of the “Phoenix” a fiscal agent and an officer for inspecting the engagements on the coast pertaining to the Republic of Liberia.

M. Chevalier operating under the inspection of a French administrative Agent who is, himself placed under the control of the Commander of one of His Majesty’s vessels, that would be to subject to suspicion that which France is accustomed to see respected.

He does not appear to have any thing else to do in this matter than to furnish to the Secretary of State written assurance that those ships, operating on this coast, in engaging free labourers renounce the liberty of bartering or of prosecuting any other commercial operation thereon.

Captain Chevalier consents to this, and the mandatories or proxies of the Commander-in-chief adhere to it. This ought to satisfy the question.

To desire to make Captain Chevalier pay duties in advance would evidently be to impose upon him a most burdensome security.

In effect, the only means which they point out to him of entering their waters, if he has room there, is to return to Monrovia and settle with the Collectors.

1<sup>st</sup>. What establishment would now assure him of reimbursement if he shall not have found sale for his merchandize of the Liberian Coast?

2<sup>nd</sup>. Is it right that a vessel having on board a hundred men whose daily expenses are considerable, should lose so much time in meeting a provision altogether exceptional, since habitually, when duties are exacted arrangements are made for collecting them at a place nearest the point of debarkation. By right there is no fraud where there is not an impossibility of proving a misdemeanor.

M. Chevalier would not be able even to apply to the Republic itself in case of dispute with the Treasury; he would be obliged then to abide the exigencies, this is the more inadmissible, since he has on board his vessel an Agent of the French Government, who will be always careful to establish the morality of the operations of our emigrant ships.

In relation to the passports which the Republic of Liberia intend to require of the free labourers who engage themselves with us, I have but one remark to make, that is, that whenever there are Liberian authorities, it becomes them to adopt means of police; for if they do not themselves violate the right of nations no one will have to oppose them.

M. Chevalier ought then to abstain from engaging emigrants wherever there really exists a constituted Liberian power, unless the Captain does not submit to the authority of the Law of Liberia on this matter.

I think that many native chiefs whom they wish to consider as Liberians at Monrovia, formally deny that honor, should be insisted upon; which gives occasion of asking the Hon. Secretary of State what are the limits which the Republic claims as its own in order that we may be able to direct our actions knowingly. Finally, in expressing to the Secretary of State every sentiment of good will that I should have addressed to the President of the Republic at Cape Mount, on behalf of His Honor The French Commander-in-Chief, the Consular agent is requested to cause the Hon. Secretary of State to understand that he has not observed exact reciprocity in desiring to consider at this time emigrant vessels as Commercial ships, when they have all along been regarded as transports of the State according to the declaration of the Collector of Monrovia.

This explanation then need only be maintained, to avoid, perhaps, debates and difficulties; always vexed between two countries which have many reasons to continue on terms of cordiality and good will.

The Commander of the “Euphrate.” (signed) M. Laporterie.

The Consular Agent of France, at Monrovia, Messurado Roads, March 1857.”

In reading the above note of Commander Laporterie we are seriously impressed, and reminded that the views and wants of others, however selfish in their nature they may be, must be met, even at the sacrifice of law, principle and honor.

This fact is prominently brought to our notice in the person of the Commander of a ship of war, belonging to a nation with which we are united by Treaty stipulations, and from which we have on several occasions received marks of sympathy and friendship. In almost every line of this note, there appears a studied intention to insult and wound the feelings of the Government and people of Liberia. Hitherto we have been taught to believe that the French people, of all others, were the most courteous. If Commander Laporterie found that the laws of Liberia were too stringent in their effect, and that they bore rather detrimentally upon the operations of M. Chevalier, it certainly would have been more courteous in him, and perhaps his duty, to discuss those points which appeared to him objectionable, and endeavor to obtain some concession, or to develop a plan which would be less inconvenient to Mr. Chevalier, and at the same time not derogatory to the honor of the Government in conceding it. Apart from the offensive tone, there is nothing in the note but that clearly indicates an intention to violate the laws of Liberia.

In the very outset, he says "that Mr. Chevalier ought not to acquiesce in any payment whatever of advalorem duties on the merchandize of exchange since they are not for the purpose of commercial operations with the natives." We may not stop here, to show the futility of this reasoning, no that the introduction of merchandize into Liberia by M. Chevalier was clearly for the object of gain, and greatly to his advantage, if he had the privilege of introducing them; but we wish to notice the arrogance of the French Commander in assuming to himself the right of interpreting our laws, and declaring what shall be done, and what shall not be done in the jurisdiction of Liberia. The Republic of Liberia is acknowledged to be a sovereign and independent State, and entitled to the rights and privileges of the most powerful nation. It has then, in common with other nations, enact laws and to adopt regulations to suit its circumstances without consulting or knowing if they will be agreeable to others or not. It is sufficient that the Government and People of Liberia know that such laws and regulations are necessary for their interest and security, and that they do not conflict with international law. The Government of France, and every other Government, holds it an inherent right – a sacred privilege, to enact such laws as circumstances point out, for its advantage and protection, and no one has the right to complain about them. Those who do not like their operation, need not place themselves under their influence. If the laws of Liberia are unfavorable to M. Chevalier, it would be manly in him, and more to his honor to keep clear of their action. It strikes us also, that Commander Laporterie could find much more honorable employment, than that of encouraging the violation of our laws, and offering unprovoked insults to a Government, because of its weakness and its reluctance to assume a hostile attitude toward him, – an employment no doubt, that suits him, better than any other. All along, the people of Liberia, have believed that their strength consisted in their very weakness – but it is left to this accomplished Commander to teach them another lesson.

Nothing further need be said in this connection. M. Chevalier under the protection of the guns of Commander Laporterie continued for a time on the Liberian coast, in utter violation of its laws and in part consummated the object of his voyage.

The Secretary of State through the French Consul replied to Commander Laporterie – a copy of which here follows.

"Department of State.  
Monrovia, March 20, 1857.  
Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of a Despatch, addressed to you by the Commander of His Imperial Majesty's Steamer "Euphrate" which you transmitted to me with your note No. 1, dated March 19.

To the Despatch I beg to reply in general terms, without confining myself to a reiteration, in regular order, of the queries and propositions therein contained.

First – The Law regulating the Commerce and Revenue of this Republic are plain and explicit, requiring that all vessels coming with in the territories of the Republic and trading at ports of entry – of which there are five – shall pay a duty of six *per centum advalorem* on the amount of sales; and in case such vessels wish to trade coast wise, they are required to enter the whole of their cargoes, and pay a duty of eight per centum on their prime coast; obtaining at the same time, assurance from the comptroller of Customs that a draw-back of duties shall be allowed on all such parts of said cargoes as are not sold within the limits of this Republic; ardent spirits and wines excepted. Further, every trade vessel is required, on entering at the Custom House, to deposit her papers in the office of the Representative of the national to which she belongs, in the absence of such a Representative the papers must be deposited at the Custom House of the port she enters; which arrangement renders it necessary that such vessel having prosecuted a coast-wise trade, should return to the port she first entered. These provisions apply to all vessels importing goods into the territory of the Republic for the purpose of any kind of exchange whatever.

The case of the "Phoenix" does not furnish an exception; for the bestowing of Merchandize upon those who are of service in facilitating the prosecution of our business, whatever it be is, to all intents and purposes, bartering such merchandize; the bestowing of the goods being in consideration of the rendering of services.

Secondly, In regard to the Passports, I beg to say, as such a scheme of emigration as that being prosecuted by Mr. Chevalier was not contemplated by this Government, the Legislature has made no provisions for the furnishing of passports to persons wishing to leave the Republic, at any other place than at Monrovia, nor by any other individual than the Secretary of State.

Thirdly, The limits of the territory claimed by this Republic are included between the Shebar on the North-West and Grand Cess of the South-east. In cases where direct purchase of any intermediate points has not been effected by this Government, the Chiefs of Headmen of said points, by treaty stipulations, ceded to this Government political jurisdiction over those points.

It is a matter of very deep regret to this Government that from an expressed desire on its part of carrying out the provisions of its Commerce and Revenue Law, by placing an inspecting office on board of vessels trading on this coast, there should be inferred a disposition to call in question the honor and dignity of the national to which such vessels belong; and that the absence of a regularly established police along the Liberian coast, to afford facilities to an isolated and singular scheme, should be regarding as an infringement of the laws of nations. It is certainly not consonant to the laws of nations that one Government should, for the sake of its own convenience, infringe upon the rights of another.

It is the earnest hope of this Government that this matter will be settled satisfactorily to all concerned, without involving the necessity of any protracted debate on the subject.

Please to assure the Commander that this Government entertain the most friendly feelings toward himself and those whom he represents, and is sincerely, disposed to render them any service not incompatible with the laws of this Republic.

However much this Government may be disposed to favour the French Government, it is not within my competency, no do I suppose it is within that of the Executive to confer such favours as shall involve an infraction of the laws.

With distinguished consideration, Your obt Servant (Signed) D.B. Warner.  
His Im. M's Consul. Monrovia, Liberia.”

We repeat the opinion, that the Government of His Imperial Majesty will not approve the course of Commander Laporterie and M. Chevalier in the flagrant violation of the laws of Liberia, and we hope that it will show its disapprobation of such conduct in terms so unequivocal as to relieve the minds of the Government and people of Liberia as to any future cause of complaint in this respect.

This is an age of freedom, and men and nations demand the right to act and speak, and the civilized world will not acknowledge that might makes right independently of what is honorable and just. Justice must be the standard by which nations shall be governed, and it matters not if a nation is weak and unable to cope in strength with another, yet if the weaker is in the right, the opinion of the world will do justice to it.

Liberia is awake to its interests. The people very well know that it is their best policy to cultivate the most friendly feeling, and enjoy the good will of all nations. Liberia is in its infancy, and needs the kind sympathies of Christendom, and the Government of Liberia will not intentionally do or act in any manner which would afford just cause for censure or condemnations. It is to the interest of Liberia that the people of every county should be encouraged to have intercourse with us – it is from this source, as much as from any other, that we hope to obtain a character as a national worthy to be honored and respected.

The Americo-Liberians came to this their Father-land to raise and build up a civilized and Christian state. After surmounting many difficulties, they succeeded in planting on these shores permanent civilized communities. These communities are surrounded by innumerable numbers of heathen, and it is hoped that they will eventually be brought to adopt habit of civilization. Many hundreds of the aboriginals have already been induced to abandon their superstitious rites and ceremonies, and to conform to the habits of civilized life.

The better to accomplish the purpose for which Liberia was established, it was deemed of the first importance to obtain from other Governments a recognition for it, as a Sovereign and independent State. We owe eternal gratitude to those magnanimous Governments who so nobly came forward and extended to us the hand of recognition; among the first to do us this honor was the Government of France.

The Government and people of Liberia are not only under obligations to France in this respect, but they have received from her otherwise, important material aid. For the many favors shown us by France, Liberia will ever entertain grateful recollections.

In the natural course of things, unpleasant circumstances will, at times, transpire, notwithstanding every care and diligence may be used to prevent such occurrences – and very often before the true character of the differences are understood, unfavorable impressions are made, and perhaps, disagreeable consequences have ensued. A Nation as magnanimous as that of France, will not be found withdrawing its good will and friendship for Liberia, as long as she proves true to herself, and when it is informed of the true nature of the causes of which we complain, and the reasonableness of them, we feel assured, that it will promptly see that all proper justice is rendered to us, with assurances, that there will not be a repetition of such offenses, at least, by persons acting under the authority of the French Flag. Finding that M. Chevalier was not restrained by Commander Laporterie, and that he was continuing to create disturbances among the natives in those sections of the country which he selected to procure free laborers, and the complaints coming in from a number of the less powerful chiefs, describing a sad and distressed state of affairs among them, growing out of the kidnapping system of the more powerful chiefs to procure labourers to supply the wants of M. Chevalier and seeking at the hand of Government protection for themselves, their families and their property; the Government adopted the only course which presented a

possibility of a repetition of such lamentable occurrences, without resorting to measures which would have been regarded as hostile, which was, to communicate direct to the Government of His Imperial Majesty and solicit of it, its interference. It is hoped and believed that this system will not be continued on the coast of Liberia. No acknowledgement however, has been received of the note to the French Government. The following is a copy of the communication made to that Government.  
Incomplete!

## Annual Message to the Legislature December 9, 1859

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

In making this communication to you, at the opening of your regular annual session, it is very proper that I should introduce it with a devout acknowledgment of the mercies of our Heavenly Father, whose superintending care has watched over and graciously conducted this young nation through the vicissitudes of another year.

Our seasons have been favorable. The soil has very bountifully rewarded the hand of industry. Commerce has manifestly increased. With few exceptions, among some of the native clans, peace predominates. Our foreign relations may be regarded as tranquil. And though a contagion visited this county this year, and threatened great destruction in its strides among the aborigines, and some four or five of our settlements, yet, excepting New Georgia, the mortality has been less than what was anticipated soon after it made its appearance. And to day, I am happy to be able to express the fact, already known to you, that a spirit of intelligent, manly industry, and of independence, obtains within the Republic, to a degree beyond that of any former period in the history of Liberia.

Convened as you are, from all parts of the Republic, to commence, under so favorable circumstances, the first session of the incumbency with which you were invested last May by the free and enlightened suffrage of your fellow citizens, there is much at present, as well as in the prospect, to encourage you in your work of legislation, which your knowledge of the wants of your respective Counties, as well as of the general government, will, I doubt not, enable you to do creditably and advantageously to the country.

I have striven, so far as reasonably practicable, to carry out the laws enacted at the last Session of the Legislature. Immediately after the close of the session, I directed the boundary lines of the Corporation of the City of Robertsport to be fixed, in conformity to the Act reducing its area, and directed the lands lying contiguously thereto, to be laid off in farm lots for original volunteers and immigrants; which has been done to the general satisfaction. I have not been able to make a visit there in person this year, but I am officially, as well as otherwise informed, that the settlement is manifestly improving, and promises not to be second, very soon, to any of our sea-board settlements, in may respects.

The aborigines of that section of the country, though apparently submissive to the laws of the Republic, and their deportment to a very great extent is respectful and loyal, are nevertheless distracted at times more or less by tribal or clannish misunderstandings; and from rumors and threats to engage, and now and then their actual engagement, in retaliatory or aggressive acts, so that we are not seldom disappointed in realizing our cherished desire to preserve undisturbed peace and friendship, with their concomitant blessings among them.

It is my purpose this dry season, provided your session is not necessarily protracted too long, to have the barricades of the towns in the Cape Mount section of country demolished;

and to threaten with severe punishment the first who may attempt a reconstruction. And as, in order to do this – though I do not anticipate any resistance, and it is my purpose to avoid if possible every thing like actual hostilities – it may be necessary to employ a small force, I have to request that you pass a resolution of authorization, and that you make sufficient appropriation for that purpose, provided it is your opinion that the act entitled “An Act to maintain peace and enforce order on the highways to the interior,” approved January 31, 1859, does not confer the requisite authorization. There are also several barricades in the New Sess Country, which I intend ordering and compelling to be similarly demolished this dry season, for which I have to ask a similar provision.

It is gratifying to me to be able to inform you, that Mr. Superintendent Gibson, of the County of Maryland, succeeded, at my direction, during the late visit of the *Quail* (last month) to that county, in bringing measurably to a satisfactory adjustment the long standing difficulty of perhaps ten years, that existed between the Po River and Padee tribes near Gar-roway. The former who, some ten years ago, forcibly ejected the latter from the section of land occupied by them by assignment of the *then* government of State of Maryland, and who had so obstinately refused to yield it up again to the peaceable and rightful possession of the Padees, now solicit of the Superintendent a grant of land from government, to which they have promised to peaceably remove, and to yield up the usurped domain, so soon as the solicited assignment is made. At the request of Mr. Superintendent Gibson, I have directed Captain Cooper, of the *Quail*, to so arrange as to be present there, about the middle of this month, as to facilitate and enforce the consummation of that object.

In the absence of a government vessel this year until early in July, I could not conveniently visit the leeward counties and settlements until the middle of that month; having left this city for that purpose on the 14<sup>th</sup> of that month, and returned on the 23d of August. I not only visited most of our sea-board civilized settlements, but in company with Mr. Superintendent Gibson and other prominent citizens, visit many of the principal sea-board towns of our aborigines; and at some of the places at which I did not land, I had very satisfactory interviews with the chiefs on board: and I am happy to be able to say, that, with only one exception, their intelligence, together with their respect for and loyalty to this their government, far surpassed my most sanguine expectations. I was much pleased to witness the various clans commendably striving to rival each other in demonstrations of confidence, loyalty and respect; and that a feeling of identity of interest with us so generally obtained among them. Never before had my visit to your aborigines been so pleasant; nor had I ever before been so much encouraged by so general a progress in assimilation to us. In my visits to the three leeward counties as aforesaid, it was manifest that their interest and progress were greatly retarded for want of immigration. I had hoped, that before this time there would have been a more general distribution of immigrants to the several Counties, so as to afford sufficient numerical force in each county, to safely occupy the rich lands lying more interiorward. This is the great *desideratum* in the three counties of Grand Bassa, Sinoe and Maryland. A few good companies of industrious immigrants, settled near or a few miles beyond the head of navigation of the St. John’s and Sinoe rivers, and a few good companies to commence and sustain an agricultural settlement on the banks of the fine river Cavally, in Maryland County, would be to Liberia, as a whole, a most judicious and beneficial distribution and assignment.

The finances of the government would allow a very few of the public enterprises to be carried out, for which appropriation was made at the last Session; such as the State Prison up the St. Paul’s river, the repairs of and additions to the Court houses in Bassa, Sinoe and Maryland Counties, &c., &c., toward which nothing of importance has been done; and it will be well to renew the appropriations this year, so that I may be fully authorized to prose-

cute during the year, such as the state of the finances will justify, especially for the prosecution to completion of the Representative Hall, commenced about two and a half months ago. The road authorized to be constructed from the St. Paul's river to Careysburg would have been completed before this, but for impediments of an imprudent and offensive nature, of which and their connections, it is earnestly hoped there will not be recurrence. So soon as government is relieved a little of the expense of erecting the Representative Hall, the road will be constructed at once.

Commencing with the month of March, the Small Pox, for about five months, raged somewhat frightfully in this City, and in three or four of the settlements on the St. Paul's river, as well among the aborigines of this county; and though the mortality – excepting at New Georgia and among the aborigines – has not been as great as was at first anticipated, yet it far exceeded that resulting from the same malady in our communities, at any previous time. The Legislature at the last session having abrogated all the city charters of this Republic, left them without any municipal organization, which has been the cause of much inconvenience and detriment to the people during the year. In the absence of that prompt and efficient action in providing means and adopting measures to which our citizens ought to have been influenced in their respective municipalities, by the great first law of nature, *self preservation*, I found it necessary and consequently assumed the responsibility of appropriating and expending between three and four hundred dollars from the public Treasury, to assist in arresting the malady in its spread in our communities, of which I have to solicit an expression your approval by an appropriation therefor.

The Attorney General has given it as his official opinion, that the several city charters, and the subsequent acts, making grants of money to the City Corporations, together with the acts annulling those charters, have repealed, and consequently nullified, the old statute, which, antecedent to any city incorporations by Charter, made provision for, and enjoined, the respective municipal organizations, throughout the Republic, by ballot on the first Tuesday of each October.

This will make it necessary, that you either resuscitate the old statute, or enact an improved system of municipal operation, with a reduced number of officers, so as at once to secure a more efficient and less expensive organization. Unless the charters you may grant in the future shall provide for and enjoin municipal organizations to operate with more efficiency and less Administrative and Legislative expense than heretofore under the lately repealed Charters, they had better by far operate under the aforesaid old Statute.

I have striven to have carried out, as speedily as could be under the circumstances, the law levying taxes upon the taxable citizens of this Republic. The law cannot be fully put in operation until early 1860. This does not arise from any opposition on the part of the people, but from the great quantity of printing and other labor that was necessary to be done under the provisions of the act, after the assessment had been returned from the several Counties and Settlements to the Treasury Department.

I am pleased to say that the citizens of this Republic, with very few (if any) exceptions, have cordially acquiesced in the measure by manifesting a pride to pay their taxes. In this they have discovered a magnanimity and patriotism never excelled in that way by the citizens of any republican government. The aborigines generally hail the measure with joy, pleasure and pride. As the kind as well as quantity of their tax was left to my discretion, I simply imposed a capitation tax of one dollar on each taxable male; and so soon as I can get the entire system that I have devised for its collection properly organized and put in operation, which will not be until early 1860, I anticipate a respectable income from that source.

Whoever may regard the idea as ridiculous and chimerical, I am free to confess my firm belief, that, by power management, they will promptly pay their taxes, with becoming cheerfulness and patriotism.

The townships within the Republic, with very few exceptions, are amply provided with schools. Yet it is my purpose, so soon as the taxation law begins to operate successfully among the aborigines, to establish under the provisions of an existing law at least one common school in each county – the number to be increased in the future as circumstances may justify – for the special, though not exclusive, tuition of Native youths. If they be known as government schools, specially established for their benefit, and the services of efficient teachers are secured, I am sanguine that they will be well attended by youths as well as middle aged persons. And since they will pay their taxes cheerfully, and otherwise contribute to the support of the government, and to a considerable degree no longer feel an estrangement from, but identified with us, it seems but the reasonable duty of government, to at least make this commencement for their education and training, which will at once increase our claim upon them, and their attachment and respect for us as one people, having one common interest.

I shall transmit to you, within a day or two, a copy of the communication I received in September from the Trustees of Donations in the United States, respecting, and responsive to the documents which accompanied the Act entitled “An Act Amendatory to the act entitled” An act incorporating Liberia College and the supplement thereto,” approved March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1859, which by implication provided that it should be transmitted to the respective Boards of Trustees of Donations and of Liberia College, for their reception or rejection. In that document you will find the decision of the former, together with the reasons and arguments upon which it is based, explicitly and respectfully set forth. I shall transmit at the same time a copy of the Preamble and Resolution adopted in this city September 19, 1859, by the Board of Trustees of Liberia College, concurring in the aforesaid opinion of the Board of Trustees of Donations; and I shall transmit, also, a memorial of much interest, from the Board of Trustees of Liberia College, respecting Liberia College, which I received on the 6<sup>th</sup> inst.

Regarding as I do, the subject to which these important documents relate, as being of vast importance, I shall transmit them at a very early day, with such a special message, as I deem their importance demands.

The Agricultural interest of the Republic is making encouraging progress. There has been more produced and exported by the Americo-Liberians during the last year, than in the entire previous history of Liberia, comprising a period of nearly forty years. And it is very manifest to all who have visited the plantations this season, that there will be a large increase this year over the last. The counties of Montserrado and Grand Bassa are especially progressing praise-worthily in such pursuits; and I have no doubt that their example will influence other sections of the Republic to similar industrial pursuits: pursuits that constitute the basis of wealth, comfort, and independence, and which, as an auxiliary, are second to none, in promoting the intellectual, moral and religious interest of a nation. I have already directed measures to be adopted for the procurement of several barrels of the best cotton seeds this month at Cape Mount and vicinity, to be distributed among the native chiefs along our coast for cultivation the ensuing season, commencing in March; and I am happy to be able to say that the subject of the cultivation of cotton is very well received by the chiefs all along our coast; and it is at the earnest request of many of them that the seed will be procured and distributed. It however remains yet to be seen, as to whether cotton cultivation will prove more profit than, or even equally so, to the making of palm oil, and the cultivation of sugar cane, coffee, rice and other exportable articles. The cultivation of cotton in

Liberia to any extent other than for home consumption will depend on this issue. Should the issue declare in favor of cotton, millions of pound will be exported from Liberia annually within the next fifteen years, otherwise a very few thousand pounds. In this connection, it should state for your information, that the Manchester Cotton Supply Association has kindly tendered through its secretary to Gerard Ralston Esq., our Consul General at London, the sum of fifty pounds, of the amount of which I gave information at the last Session, as having been appropriated by that Association to be awarded as premiums for four years for the encouragement of cotton cultivation in Liberia, which amount is subject to order. And I am further advised by Mr. Consul General Ralston, that the five Medals of bronze and silver from the same source and for the same purpose, have also been tendered to him, which he will forward by the Rev. J. S. Payne, expected to arrive this month.

Our commerce, though as yet small – the result of a non-development of the inexhaustible resources of our county – must increase in proportion to the increase in the production, by agriculture and manufacture, of exportable articles by our citizens.

We have had it demonstrated during the year, that our exchange with foreigners is not to be restricted in the future to a few products of heathen labor; but also the products of civilized skill and energy, which are being brought into increasing practice daily. Nor can, nor will, nor shall, there be any abatement henceforth in this respect, so long as so genial a sun, continues to shine upon so prolific a soil, in so delightful a climate, as we have in the Republic of Liberia. The increase of commerce through industrial pursuits, will necessarily bring Liberian bottoms correspondingly into requisition, to ply between this and foreign countries. Foreseeing this, I advocated nearly four years ago, the policy of entering into treaties of friendship, commerce and navigation, with as many of the civilized donations of the earth as would negotiate with us on terms of reciprocity. By reciprocity, I do not mean granting to foreigners equal commercial or other privileges in Liberia with our own citizens, but granting them only such privileges in Liberia, as a sound policy shall dictate, upon condition that similar privileges be reciprocated to our citizens by the other contracting party; the policy of which I knew would be soon manifest, in the advantages that would accrue to us proportionally to the rapid development of the vast resources of this country.

Several leading nations of Europe have indulged in no hesitancy in treating with us on terms of perfect reciprocity – the privileges reciprocally guaranteed are not, however in some of the cases as restricted as we have desired.

With the United States of America, where so much of our produce finds with increasing demand, so ready a market; the nation with which we anticipated to sustain, by conventional law, early and definite commercial relations, has up to date stood aloof from us in that respect. And yet with becoming modesty, which should for a reasonable time be the policy of a young nation in such cases, we have hitherto practically placed her citizens on an equal footing with those of the most favored nation; which as yet has not been reciprocated us, as is manifest in the case of the Liberia brig *E.N. Roye*, on making her first trip to the United States this year under the Liberian Flag. This is a subject that should claim your attention at this session. Not that I would advise the speedy adoption and enforcement of retaliatory measures; as a young nation we can gain nothing by manifesting such impetuosity of spirit. Yet, as the Congress of the United States have vested the President with power, in the absence of subsisting treaties, to treat the subjects and property of such nation on the principle of reciprocity, it may not be amiss for you to consider the propriety of investing the administrative powers of this Republic with similar authority. As regard the United States, I do not doubt for a moment, that all we claim in that respect will be granted, so soon as the subject is properly introduced to the notice of that Government, and sufficient time is had for the proper action. If there were no higher motives to influence that government – an opinion I

would not for a moment entertain, that of self-interest, (Liberian shipping to the United States bring not more than one twenty-fifth of United States shipping visiting our waters – would bring about very soon that reciprocity, for which this government so respectfully, reasonably and justly asks.

So far as report has reached me from the Treasury Department, I learned that the act passed last session, entitled “An Act to amend an act entitled “an Act of duties on imports,” approved 14 January. 1859 has operated very well in facilitating the liquidation of claims against the government, as well as in meeting the current and contingent expenses.

I regret that I cannot, as yet, recommend a reduction in the tariff; of this however and other matters respecting the finances, you will be better prepared to judge and act upon, after you shall have received the full annual report that will be transmitted to you in a few days by the Secretary of the Treasury.

The revenue arising from direct taxation cannot be considerable, since one fourth per centum only is levied upon real estate; consequently its [sic] cannot be relied on as a source of much relief.

The assessment and taxes of the Americo-Liberians in the respective counties stand thus:

MONTSERRADO COUNTY				
	Val. Real Estate	Tax	Poll	Aggregate
	\$357,837	\$902.80	\$639.44	\$1,542.24
GRAND BASSA COUNTY				
	Val. Real Estate	Tax	Poll	Aggregate
	\$209,970	\$572.99	\$68.22	\$641.21
MARYLAND COUNTY				
	Val. Real Estate	Tax	Poll	Aggregate
	\$54,562	\$572.99	\$101.09	\$243.34
SINOE COUNTY				
	Val. Real Estate	Tax	Poll	Aggregate
	<u>\$19,348</u>	<u>\$50.22</u>	<u>\$166.30</u>	<u>\$216.52</u>
Total	\$641,717	\$1,668.26	\$975.05	\$2,643.31

The Report furnished me from the Treasury Department states, that the receipts into the Public Treasury for the fiscal year ending 30 September, 1859, were	\$46,612.08
Disbursements for same year	\$46,166.43
Excess of Receipts	\$445.65
Receipt for the year ending 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept. 1859, were	\$46,612.08
Receipt for the year ending 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept. 1858 were	<u>\$40,426.47</u>
	\$6,185.61
Thus exhibiting an excess of receipts over the preceding year of	\$6,185.61
Disbursements for the year ending 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept. 1859, were	\$46,166.43
Disbursements for the year ending 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept. 1858, were	<u>\$37,375.95</u>
	\$8,790.48

Thus showing an excess of disbursements over the preceding year of \$8790.48, which excess I have been informed by the officers of the Treasury Department has been principally applied in liquidation of claims against the government.

As before intimated, the proper details will be embraced in the report of Secretary of the Treasury for the fiscal year, which I have directed him to submit to you at an early day of your session.

There were several bills presented for my approval on the previous, as well as the actual day of the close of the last Session, to some of which I could not consistently or legally give my approval. I will refer at present only to the one upon which so many misconstructions have been placed, and which has caused some labored misrepresentations of Executive action in the premises, engendering, especially the early and middle part of this year, a degree of political agitation in the County of Maryland that was not of the most pleasant nature. The Caption of the bill reads thus;

“A resolution to allow Maryland County two additional Representatives until the taking of the Census in said County.” Then follow the preamble of the resolution, citing the opinion of the Supreme Court, officially given at its last session, in which it is declared, as the doctrine of the Constitution of this Republic, “that all Counties admitted to this Republic are entitled each to one Representative only, until the census shall have been taken, and it shall appear by such Census to be Constitutionally entitled to more.” Which, as you will readily perceive, is in direct opposition to the Caption above cited. And, strange to say, the preamble, in continuation, declares in the very next lines, the difficulty amounting to impracticability, of taking the census of that county at present, and renders this impracticability, as a sufficient excuse, and authorization for abrogating or suspending a constitutional requisition – as the resolution immediately following the preamble was intended, and purports to do – which Constitutional requisition, as explained and set at rest by the Supreme Court, had just been cited and admitted in the foregoing part of the preamble, as genuinely authoritative.

Next follows the resolution, authorizing and directing the inhabitants of that county to elect three representatives at the biennial election that was held in May 1859, and requesting the Executive to have the Census of that County taken as soon thereafter as possible.

As before stated, this preamble and resolution with others, were presented for my approval on the afternoon of the day preceding the one on which the Session closed; thus, as you perceive, not allowing me sufficient time for its thorough examination and formal return with my objections. With my then and present convictions respecting the Constitutionality of that resolution, no consideration on earth would have induced me to give my approval to it under the circumstances. The opinion of the Supreme Court on questions of law, whether Statute, Constitutional or Conventional, is paramount to that emanating from any other source or department in Liberia. The opinion of this court having just been obtained, declaring that unlawful, for which the Legislature by a subsequent act made provision, it is unreasonable to suppose that I, who upon my induction solemnly swore to support the constitution and laws of this Republic and all my official acts, would give my official approval to a law declared by its own preamble, as well as by the supreme competent department, to be in violation of our fundamental law. In my instructions to the Superintendent of that County, respecting the subject of three representatives, I directed him to adhere unswervingly to the opinion of the Supreme Court in any directions he might give for the guidance of the people of that County at the then ensuing election. I exceedingly regret, gentlemen, that the proper Constitutional course, recommended in my Message to the Legislature in April 1857, failed by one vote in the lower house of being adopted at that session by the necessary two third vote. Had the Legislature then provided for so amending the constitution as to have legalized the three representatives for that County for the lower house, the matter would have been set at rest long ago, and much unpleasant, as well as unprofitable discussion, misrepresentation and political agitation, would have been obviated. I am decidedly of opinion, that the Legislature ought to either promptly take the Constitutional course for granting that county the three representatives – which they deserve, and ought to have had long ago – if in earnest about the matter, or plainly tell them that they are opposed to their having them, and cease further action. The subject should be regarded as of too much vital importance to be

trifled with. It has been agitated already too unnecessarily long, and some of the people of that county, though not as yet able to understand where the blame really lies, are beginning to think seriously that they are being trifled with; and as it is not known to what this matter may lead through bad advice and political intrigue, sound patriotic discretion dictates, that the subject should be promptly, fairly and honorably disposed of.

This year has been remarkable for the arrival of intelligent and enterprising persons of color from the United States, and for the indications of desire, so general on the part of the free colored people of North America to emigrate to Africa, for the purpose of changing their condition, and of assisting to build up in this their father-land a respectable civilized colored nationality.

Among the most eminent of these, is Dr. M.R. Delany, who arrived here about the middle of July, *enroute* for Yoruba, or the great Niger Valley, as one of a corps of gentlemen, designated as the "Niger Valley exploring company," with a view of selecting suitable locality for the formation of a settlement or colony, by Emigration of persons of color from the U.S. and the Canadas.

The Doctor made a very favorable impression during his stay of two or more months in Liberia. He is regarded as a gentleman admirably adapted, mentally and physically, for the prosecution of so highly interesting a mission.

My having been necessitated to leave on a visit to the leeward in two days after his arrival, and not having returned before he had left this City for Yoruba, I was prevented from holding such interview, and having such consultation with him, as was mutually desired.

No Liberian of intelligence and patriotism can feel indifferent as to the object, and what will be the result of their mission. Whatever may have been, and is still the prejudice of the free people of color of the United States and the Canadas, against the American Colonization Society; however strongly they may have impugned the motives and principals of that Society, to which Liberians feel so very grateful, the feeling seems now to be generally obtaining among them, that as descendants of Africa, we are one people and have a common destiny. And that the feeling is cordially reciprocated by a vast majority of Liberians, is fully documented by the history of Liberia.

If Dr. Delany and many more of the free colored people of North America should prefer, and decide upon settling in that section of our fatherland as an asylum from oppression, and from the unreasonable withering prejudice of what is styled the dominant race, as well as for the purpose of introducing and inculcating the principles of civilization and Christianity into the very heart of Africa, we should bid them *God Speed*.

Should they ever prefer and conclude to operate entirely independent of us – I doubt however that this is their policy – I would have no fears that their enterprise would detract very materially from the interest of Liberia. I have never doubted, that the future will prove the assertion correct, that a majority of the free colored people of North America will emigrate to Liberia and make it their cherished home, especially as our interior offers to them every advantage that if not more than, Yoruba can possible afford.

By communications, under date of May and July of this year, received from Dr. Pinney, Cor. Sec. N.Y.S. Col. Society [Corresponding Secretary of the New York State Colonization Society], I was informed that that Society had contracted with the enterprising firm of Johnson, Turpin & Dunbar to have constructed for them a small steamer of about Seventy two tons burthen, which they contemplate employing upon our coast mainly as a packet.

The Society was the more induced to take interest in the enterprise, because of the great facilities it will afford to the government and people of Liberia, particularly since the British Mail Packets now touch at Palmas instead of at this port. I have learned since that date, that

she was launched on the 13 Sept. and it was contemplated to have her ready for sea by the first of November.

In an interview recently had with the members of that firm, they suggested and even expressed a wish, that this government would grant them a liberal contract for statedly carrying the mails, touching at designated points along our coast. And it has also been suggested to me, that the contract could be made to embrace the privilege of putting a revenue officer on board, and for her to ply statedly the entire extent of our coast. I have also been advised, that anticipating such a contract with this government, she will likely have a suitable gun mounted forward, adopting her for such service.

I deem it unnecessary, gentlemen, to employ an argument in commendation of the enterprise; or to convince you of the wisdom of that policy that will not hesitate to so far accede to the proposition of that enterprising company as will under a well digested arrangement, assist them in establishing and successfully conducting so desirable and highly important an enterprise.

Such an arrangement would constitute her the most efficient *guarda costa* we have as yet employed, because she could be depended on to statedly present at designated points of our coast, at once preventing a violation of our revenue law, and the success of any secret attempts to revive the slave trade.

In fact such are the rapidity of the current, and adverseness of the wind at certain season of the year, on that part of our coast lying below or eastward of Cape Palmas, as to preclude the possibility of any other but a steam vessel performing efficient revenue service down there. I have therefore to request, that you authorize a contract with that company, under such restrictions as you may think proper, for carrying the mails and for the performance of revenue service, &c., &c., through the medium aforesaid: and that you duly make appropriation therefore.

I am happy to be able to state for your information, that our foreign relations are tranquil, and with very little exception, satisfactory. No communication has been received from the Imperial Government of France since the close of the last legislative session. Consequently, the vexatious questions, and difficulties growing out of the *Regina Coeli* case last year, are not yet formally disposed of. I may communicate to you further on this subject, before the close of your session.

The schooner *Quail*, “an armed vessel of one hundred and twenty-three tons,” which is the noble gift of H. B. M. Government, of which I gave information in my last annual message, arrived in this port on the 29th of June, 44 days passage from Plymouth, England. She is a fine little vessel, admirably adapted in every respect for a *Guarda Coasta*. This, gentlemen, as you are aware, is the second gift of a naval vessel to this government by the government of Her Britannic Majesty. I am sure that the government and people of Liberia, without an exception, are most sincerely grateful to Her Majesty’s Government, for an act at once so magnanimous and benevolent; and I doubt not that you will, as the representatives of the people, embody in a suitable resolution an expression of their warmest feelings of gratitude.

The gift is the more appreciated, because made to us at a time when the most strenuous efforts were being made in foreign countries to alienate H.M. Government from us, and to lessen its confidence in and respect for us, by charging upon the government and chief men of Liberia, a complicity in the nefarious slave trade; than which if true, nothing would in the estimation of H.M. Government, more effectually stamp infamy upon our national character, and thus alienate that magnanimous nation from us, which under God seems as yet to be our only practical national co-laborer in the elevation of our race. The gift of the *Quail* at a juncture, when every argument had just been brought into requisition, and every effort employed

against us by our enemies and maligners, in order to effect our national disgrace and ruin, should, and will always be regarded as one of the great seals of our moral triumph over our enemies. A seal of our innocence affixed by one of the greatest, wisest, strongest and richest governments in the world. Much praise is due to Mr. Consul General Ralston, at London, and Mr. Consul T.W. Fox, Jr., Plymouth, for the zeal, attention and taste with which they supervised the repair, outfit and dispatch of the *Quail*. Mr. Ralston, in letters to me this year, wrote in the highest terms of Mr. Consul Fox, who had the immediate superintendence of our every interest in Plymouth during the repair, outfit and dispatch of the vessel. And I am happy to be able to say, that Lieutenant Monger has confirmed, since his arrival, all that Mr. Ralston has written in respect to the excellency and efficiency of Mr. Consul Fox.

I have to inform you that ratified copies of the Belgian treaty, and of the Postal Convention with Her Britannic Majesty's Government, have been exchanged at London by Mr. Consul General Ralston, which he has advised me, will be transmitted in the care of the Rev. J.S. Payne, who is expected to arrive at Palmas in this month's Mail.

The Government of His Belgian Majesty has within the year, established a consulate in this city, and has been pleased to confer the appointment on the Hon. J. J. Roberts, who has been duly recognized by this government; and I doubt not that the appointment of this distinguished gentlemen will tend to increasingly strengthen the relations of amity, that have so happily subsisted hitherto, between the two Governments. During the year, the Rev. John Seys has been by his government confirmed in the function of the United States Consulate in this City, and has been respectfully recognized by this government.

I feel unwilling to close this communication without paying a tribute of respect, however imperfect, to the memory of the late Judge John H. Cheeseman, of the County of Grand Bassa, who, with the Hon. J.T. Neyle, Member elect from that County to the House of Representatives, was drowned in the month of June, while attempting to cross the St. John's river.

Seldom has there been more grief manifested in Liberia on the occasion of one's death, than was instanced in that of Judge Cheeseman. He was highly esteemed as a gentleman of talent and piety, and his loss is very deeply felt by Church and State.

I close this communication, gentlemen, after assuring you of my cordial co-operation with you, so far as may be required, in the discharge of the business of the session, which I hope will be performed to the satisfaction of your constituents, as well as in accordance with your own cherished desire.

Stephen A. Benson.

Government House,

Monrovia, Dec. 9, 1859.

## Annual Message to the Legislature December 3, 1860

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

Your last and highly commendable short session afforded me the necessary time to have prosecuted, before the termination of the dry season, the purpose which I signified to you in my last annual message, "of effecting, during the last dry season, a demolition of the barricades of some of our aborigines, especially at Cape Mount and New Cess; and of establishing peace among them, as far as could be, on a permanent basis." I am pleased to say, that my expectations were more than met, without the least hostile demonstration; and the fruits

have been eminently manifested in the unusual and profitable increase of our commerce during the past year.

There are one or two chiefs living in the interior, some distance north of Cape Mount, whose misunderstandings remain yet to be adjusted, which, for want of time, could not be attended to last dries. But as they are anxious for government interposition, and have sent several solicitations, I apprehend no difficulty in having them all arranged early in the dries, provided the Superintendent at Robertsport shall not have previously succeeded. In fact, though there are some minor misunderstands among several clans along the coast, yet the only case that seems to have particularly assumed such an aspect as now to require prompt action on the part of this government, is the misunderstanding and hostile relations subsisting between the *Po River* and *Padae* people, living thirty or forty miles to the north-west of Cape Palmas, to which, and especially the obligations of the government to the latter, growing out of treaty stipulations, I have more than once invited your attention. The efforts of which I made mention in my last annual message, that were being employed by the Superintendent of Maryland County, and the bright prospect he then had of success in adjusting the difficulties between those tribes, (the former having promised to remove to their own domain,) have all proved abortive; and I am informed that the impression of the leading men of that County is that nothing short of the employment of force will effect that object, which they regard as indispensable. I have therefore to request, that if what you may learn in addition on this subject, from the representatives from that County now present, be such as to justify it, you will authorize the coercive removal of the aggressors, and that you make appropriation sufficient for employing the requisite military force.

Should you deem it necessary to employ a force for the purpose aforesaid, it will no doubt be the means also of quieting two or three factious tribes in that vicinity, and of putting an effectual stop to the cruel, heathenish practice of administering the poison of saucy wood, which still obtains among some of the aborigines living in the vicinity of our settlements in that County. Several cases of a most revolting nature occurred this year, for which the perpetrators should be punished. The time has come when such homicidal practices by natives living (at least) within the vicinity of our settlements, should be promptly checked. If this government has the right and power to stop it, (which I presume no one will deny,) then it becomes a moral duty, and the neglect of such a duty involves moral delinquency and national guilt.

I am gratified to be able to state, that this new Representative Hall, commenced the latter part of last year, is now completed, at a cost of \$4,389, and is acknowledged to be the best public building in the Republic. The second story has been laid off into commodious public offices, which saves the expense of the rent of two buildings for that purpose, to which government was previously subjected.

The spirit of agricultural industry has increased most encouragingly. Several of the leading articles of domestic provisions have never in the history of Liberia been more abundant and cheap, than they were the last, and have been the present year. And the production of exportable articles by our civilized communities this year, will be more than two hundred per cent. in advance of the preceding year. It affords me pleasure to say that the National Fair, instituted a few years ago by your patriotism and wisdom, has, as was but reasonable to suppose, largely contributed to the industrial interest of the Republic. It is an institution which every intelligent patriot will ever duly appreciate; and institution in which the great masses – particularly the laboring classes of our citizens – take the liveliest interest, because they regard it particularly as their own; one at which they can (though occupying an humble position in life) honorably demonstrate their manliness and patriotism, by an exhibition of samples of what they are doing, not only for the comfort of themselves and families, but

also for the substantial prosperity of Liberia. And I cordially endorse the very judicious and patriotic sentiment of the respected chairman of the intelligent Adjudicating Committee of the last Fair, – “*That every cent expended on the National Fair yields to Liberia a thousand fold.*” Much is due to several warm friends of Liberia in the United States, for contributing, so liberally in facilitating the development of the productive industry of this Republic, by the timely supply of machinery, &c., &c., on very accommodating terms.

I have already intimated that there has been a manifest increase during the year in our commerce, at an advance of nearly fifty per cent. over the preceding year. This has arisen from the increased production by our aborigines, as well as civilized communities. While the former have unusually devoted themselves to the production of palm oil, dye-woods, cotton cloths, &c., the latter have been equally diligent in the production of sugar, syrup, molasses and coffee. And though the quantity may as yet be regarded as comparatively small, yet the annual increase is very encouraging. And if government should continue to be so fortunate in its efforts for the preservation of peace and the suppression of the slave trade among the aborigines, there is no doubt that their devotion to legitimate industrial pursuits will most gratifyingly increase with each succeeding year.

By reference to statistics in the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, it will be seen that more than fifty per cent of the commerce of this Republic is carried on with the United States of America. Considering that Liberia is the offspring of American benevolence, and the fact that we have brought with us to these shores the language, religion, and to some extent the customs and manners of that people, it were natural to suppose that the avenues to the development of our commerce, so far as foreign instrumentality was expected to operate, would first emanate from and lead to that country. And it cannot be denied that Liberia has striven earnestly, and struggled hard, during the entire length of time we have existed as a sovereign state, to establish and perpetuate that comity, that international and commercial intercourse of reciprocity, so indispensable for successfully promoting the commercial interest of the citizens of both nations. These efforts on the part of this government, instead of being seconded in a spirit of just reciprocity by that government, have, up to this date, been treated indifferently, if not contemptuously, either by silence to the appeals of this government, or by an indirect assurance, that while the administration of that government entertains the best feeling toward Liberia, and would be happy to do whatever it consistently can to promote our national interests, finds it impracticable and impolite, in the present agitated state of that country on the all-absorbing “peculiar institution” question, to treat with us fully as sovereign state, or even to temporarily regulate the commercial intercourse of the citizens of the two countries, under the act of Congress which invests the President of that Republic with the prerogative, in the absence of treaties subsisting with any government, to admit and treat the citizens and vessels of such nation, within the jurisdiction of the United States, on terms of reciprocity.

It is for you to determine at this session, if after its close it can be regarded any longer as politic, or even just, for this government to accord such commercial privileges to citizens of the United States, as are accorded to citizens of the most favored nations with which we have treaties of friendship and commerce, based upon principles of reciprocity, when the United States Government refused to accord to us similar privileges. Can this government any longer, in justice to itself, to its citizens, and to those nations with which we have treaties of reciprocity, consistently recognize the pursuit of such a policy of commercial intercourse with the United States as virtually prevents our citizens, in their own vessels, from profitably participating in the commerce of that country, and throws open our ports and line of sea coast to the citizens and ships of that nation, for an unrestricted and profitable trade within the jurisdiction of this Republic?

Infant and feeble nation as we are, and emanating from them, it was to be expected that the magnanimity of that government would have voluntarily consented to accord to us, in our struggle for national life amidst great difficulties, commercial privileges more favorable than those received from us. It is impossible for Liberian merchants, in their own vessels, to succeed in honest competition in the United States, under the great pressure of existing discriminating duties.

Agreeably to your resolution, approved January 14, 1860, a contract for one year has been entered into between the Secretary of the Treasury and the owners of the steamer *Seth Grosvenor*; to go into effect the 1<sup>st</sup> of January proximo, for monthly, and when practicable, semi-monthly, cruises from this port to the river San Pedro, touching at the ports of entry and the principal intermediate points, each trip up and down the coast, to convey the mails, also government officers, troops and property, when required, and to assist in guarding our line of coast against infractions of the navigation, commerce and revenue laws of this Republic, and especially the revival of the nefarious slave trade. I will not here attempt to enumerate the items of service stipulated to be rendered, as a copy of the contract, if desired, will be transmitted to you. In consideration of the service stipulated to be rendered, the government has agreed to pay them the sum of three thousand dollars per annum; government reserving to itself the privilege of abrogating the contract, provided the line of British Mail Steamers should, at any time during the year, cease to touch at Cape Palmas. *The Quail* will be kept, during the year, cruising for the same purpose, mostly between this port and Shebar, our northwestern boundary. This has become highly necessary, since the vigilance and late success of American cruisers, in making captures on the south coast have resulted in the attempt to revive that piratical traffic, *the slave trade*; on our coast.

On the 2d of November, and within four hours after the receipt of the dispatch from Mr. Superintendent Stryker, of Cape Mount, informing me of the fact, I dispatched the *Quail* to Gallinas and Solyma, in search of a slaver reported to have been cursing off those notorious slave marts of past days, and had been seen for a week or more, running into land each afternoon and going to sea in the morning. The *Quail* was ordered to call *via* Cape Mount, and take up Mr. Superintendent Stryker to Gallinas and Solyma, whom I had instructed to land and visit the chiefs, of whom and the places at which it was reported slaves were being accumulated; and to gather all the information he could as to the fact, and to threaten the chiefs with severe punishment if a slave was permitted to be shipped from that region. The Superintendent had interviews with the principal chiefs: Prince Manna, of Gallinas, professed to know nothing about the slaver, except from report. He said that he had permitted none to land or operate in Gallinas territory. The chiefs of Solyma acknowledged that a number of doubloons had been landed from the vessel, which had proceeded to the leeward to be back in a week or two; but that they never intended to pay a farthing of the money they had received; that they never intended a slave to be shipped off from there, because they knew it would bring on them chastisement by this government. The Superintendent learned that some few Spaniards had been landed from the vessel and were on shore, secreted up some of the rivers, and he reported to me soon after the result of his mission.

I immediately, under the date of 12<sup>th</sup> November, wrote to Prince Manna, in positive terms, that he *was* implicated in the matter, and his pleading ignorance amounted to nothing; that the Spaniards, and such slaves, if any, as may have been accumulated, must be given up to the Commissioners; and in the event of his refusing to do so, or allowing a slave to be shipped off from that region, he would be severely punished, and perhaps driven entirely out of that country by a military force, which this government would feel compelled, in such case to, employ.

That part of our coast shall be diligently guarded, especially until that vessel has been either captured or left our coast. And Prince Manna and other chiefs will be held accountable for any implication or delinquency in the present as well as future cases. He must be taught, by whatever means will prove most effectual, the obligations of allegiance he is under to this government. Had the affair not occurred within a few days of your session, I would have sent up a sufficient force and brought those Spaniards down. My reason for presenting this matter in detail to you, is simply that you may be cognizant of a case that may be attempted to be repeated within the jurisdiction of this Republic more than once within the next twelve months, and to invite your attention to the propriety of making a sufficient appropriation, and authorizing the raising of a sufficient force, military or otherwise, in the rainy or dry season, for the purpose of demanding and arresting such pirates in future, upon a moment's warning of Liberia's soil being polluted by such incarnate demons. Prompt, and when necessary, summary action on shore, both with the chiefs and foreign slavers, will be the only effectual means of causing a cessation of future piratical visits to our coast.

I have repeatedly invited the attention of the Legislature to the necessity of providing a criminal code of laws for this Republic. Until within the last eighteen months, the criminal law of England, so far as was applicable to our republican form of government, was in general use. But since that period it has been decided by the judges that the criminal law of England is not enforceable in this Republic, since there is no existing statute adopting it as a part of our laws.

The House of Representatives did, in 1858, adopt a resolution, appointing three gentlemen to draft a criminal code; but the resolution being the exclusive action of the House, could not be regarded as law, and consequently the gentlemen designated declined serving. It will greatly endanger the security of life, property and liberty, in this Republic, to defer this matter any longer. I recommend the immediate adoption of the criminal law of the United States, or of England, so far as applicable to our condition – at least until a criminal code can be drafted, for which I hope you will make provision without delay.

The Journals of the Senate and House of Representatives, commencing from the Declaration of Independence, up to your last session, have been, during the year, corrected and legibly transcribed, in excellent substantial books, in conformity to your resolution, approved February 24, 1859, authorizing and requesting the same. I shall be pleased to have you appoint a committee for their inspection.

I shall transmit to you, in a day or two, a communication from the State Department, inviting your attention to the equal, if not paramount, propriety of authorizing an immediate transcription, in permanent books, of the old Colonial records and documents of interest, which will embrace a period of about a quarter of a century. Those records have been, for years, in a very shattered condition, and will, in a few more years, be entirely lost to us, if not transcribed very soon; the loss of which would be deeply lamented throughout the future of Liberia.

Nothing to my knowledge has occurred during the year, to interrupt the tranquility of our foreign relations. In view of the great anxiety and expense to which this infant State was subjected, (at least for three or four years,) immediately after the Declaration of our Independence, which trouble and expense grew mainly, if not entirely, out of misrepresentations made to foreign governments, respecting the policy of this infant State in matters, which affected the interest of their citizens, I have striven earnestly during my entire administration to prevent, as far as I could, even the possibility of misrepresentation; and I am pleased to say, that excepting the misstatements in the Regina Coeli's case, which have been long since

corrected, and the policy and character to this government satisfactorily vindicated, this government has succeeded in its cherished desire.

No honorable means will be neglected during my future administration to cultivate, strengthen and perpetuate the most friendly feelings in our foreign relations; and if I should be thwarted, it will only be by a well studied plan of mischievous misrepresentation which may be for a time beyond my control.

I feel unwilling to close this communication without an allusion to the sad loss Liberia has sustained during the year, in the death of the Hon. A. D. Williams, ex Vice President of this Republic, and at the time of his death Superintendent at Robertsport; as also of the Hon. ex Senator John Hanson, Senator M. A. Rand, of Grand Bassa County, and Hon. Judge Hansford, of Sinou County. The loss of those faithful and patriotic public servants is very severely felt in Liberia. In fact, the rapid passing away annually of our leading men, would almost depress us beyond endurance, if we were not so encouragingly relieved by the brilliant genius, and the moral and patriotic characteristics, manifested by a respectable number of young men, either born or raised up among us, who, I have no doubt, will by the blessing of a benign Providence, be fully prepared, in due time, to occupy our places, and acquit themselves honorably and creditably as public functionaries.

I close this communication, gentlemen, with the assurance that you shall have my cordial co-operation, as far as may be required, in the discharge of the duties of this session.

Stephen Allen Benson.

Government House,

Monrovia, December 5, 1860

## Annual Message to the Legislature

December 7, 1861

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

The revolution of another year has brought us to the period, when it becomes my duty to inform you of the state of the country, and to recommend for your adoption, measures for its welfare. Though the year has been one of a very eventful character to us in general, as a nation, and in many instances, in particular, as individuals, yet we have abundant cause to recognize with grateful hearts, the innumerable evidences of Divine favor that has been attendant upon us, by and through which we have been thus far safely led through great and many national difficulties and dangers, and are enabled to meet on this occasion under circumstances so encouragingly favorable.

Within a fortnight, after the close of your last session the military force authorized to be employed for the adjustment of misunderstanding between the Poes and Padaes, and for the punishment of the former, in case of persistent obstinacy, was put on foot, consisting of between three and four hundred men, who succeeded in fully accomplishing; within five weeks from the enlistment, to disbandment, all that was reasonably desired. The injured tribe received redress, and was reinstated upon its domain. The aggressive tribes were punished. A good understanding was had between the hostile tribes. Intercourse opened in every direction. And the civilized portion of the inhabitants of Maryland County would have since felt more security for their lives and property, and the greater degrees of assurance – by proper management – of future peace and prosperity, than at any pervious period, were it not for some untoward occurrences which took place this year, tending greatly to revive the

tribal feuds that had been so happily allayed throughout the republic by this government, which I shall make known to you more fully before closing this document, and which cause alone prevents our interchange of congratulations this day on the country being in a state of perfect tranquility.

The arrangement entered into by this government with the American Colonization Society, which went practically into effect the first day of this year, by which the supervision, control, support, &c., &c., of recaptured Africans that had been, during the previous year, and those that should be sent to and landed in Liberia by direction of the United States government, devolved upon this government, as also the law growing out of that arrangement, passed at the last legislative session, have operated as well as could be reasonable expected under the circumstances.

There will be such amendments and additions recommended to be made to the act during this session, as experience may have suggested during the year.

I exceedingly regret, that the unavoidable delay in timely placing this government in possession of the necessary means to enable me to have the receptacles for recaptured Africans erected and completed in the several counties, and to meet other expenses connected with them, has prevented me as yet from inaugurating and prosecuting the system of training for them originally contemplated, and for which provision, by law, was made at the last legislative session.

It was not until the 22d of June, that notice was received by this Government from the Financial Secretary of the American Colonization Society of an amount being in hand for which we could draw. And that amount, together with the consignments of merchandise received in December and March, were barely sufficient to pay to our citizens the amount due to them for two quarters board and clothing of recaptives, to say nothing of the many other expenses incurred on their account which had to be met. However, with what means could be spared from the Public Treasury, efforts were made and are still in progress for the consummation of that cherished object, as speedily as circumstances will allow.

A contract has been entered to erect one of the receptacles on the road leading from Whiteplains to Careysburg, about equidistant from each place, and on an area equaling two square miles, selected by Mr. Superintendent Pexton and Dr. Laing, the cost of which is to be five thousand dollars; and I have no doubt, from the very reliable and enterprising character of the contractor, that if not retarded for want of means he will soon prosecute it to completion.

The one commenced before the transfer, by the American Colonization Society's Agent, about six miles up the St. John's river, Grand Bassa County, has been retarded by the same cause. It has been raised, however, and is now being shut in. It also has a fine location, and an extensive area of land in connection therewith.

Though similar directions were given to the Superintendent of Sinoe County to prosecute the work on the one designed for that count, yet he has found it impracticable to make equal progress, owing in part to deficiency of mechanics in that country. So soon as government shall have sufficient means at command to justify it, mechanics will be employed and sent down for that purpose. The forgoing circumstances, which were no doubt unavoidable in the United States as well as in Liberia, necessitated me to direct the recaptives to be judiciously apprenticed out at the June term of the Probate Court – government continuing to tender the full amount appropriated and other provisions made for them by law, up to the expiration of the year from the date of landing.

It is very gratifying to me to be able to say that I have been, and am, from personal observation as well as from the Commissioners' report, highly pleased with the humane feeling and great interest manifested generally by your citizens in behalf of the recaptured Afri-

cans, in which, should there be no abatement, and I do not believe there will be, we shall most gratifyingly realize in due time our most cherished desire, the complete civilization and Christianizing of those people, who are and most continue to be incorporated with us in the body politic. And here it affords me a great pleasure, to be able to bear testimony to the courtesy and business like demeanor of the United States' Agent for Liberated Africans in all his official intercourse during the year with this government. While he has unswervingly guarded the interests of his government in the prosecution of the duties of his office, and his integrity has been the admiration of all capable of appreciating merit, he has striven in every justifiable manner to render his official intercourse agreeable. A complete report, statistical and otherwise, on the Recaptured Africans for the year, will be presented you by the State Department in a day or two, which I indulge the hope, when published, will prove satisfactory to the country and to all the others concerned.

#### Education.

The deficiency in the revenue during the year compelled me to restrict the increase of Public Schools to a few that were established for the special benefit of the recaptives.

#### College.

The causes which for the last two or three years have led to a delay in the erection of the College buildings, have been removed the latter part of last year. That building has since, under the indefatigable supervision of its able President, been progressing and at this time is, I learn, approximating completion.

#### Agriculture.

I am pleased to be able to say, that there has been a marked advance in our Agricultural interest during the year. From inquiries and investigations I have made, I am satisfied that the Sugar and Coffee crops of the year are a hundred per cent. advance on those of the preceding year.

There has been progress in the quality as well as the quantity of those and other articles. Domestic provisions, than during the year, have never been more cheap and abundant in Liberia. The fact, that the great influx within a year of a receptive African population equaling early one-third the number of our entire civilized citizens, has not raised the price of any article of domestic bread-stuff; that those articles have been as abundant and cheap this year, even during the usually scarcest season of the year, as at any previous time in the history of Liberia, clearly demonstrate the progress of the country in that important branch of industry.

This feature of progress, demonstrative of the capacity of the country by the productive industry of its citizens to sustain so large a population suddenly thrown upon it, is particularly interesting at this juncture, when, from events that have been during the year and are now occurring in the United States, we may reasonably expect ere long an annual influx of a larger colored population from that country than at any previous time. A great and rapid emigration to this country, which is, in our opinion, clearly indicated to be their destined homes, and which events, beyond human control, now transpiring, and will, until the consummation of that object, continue to transpire in the western hemisphere, particularly in the United States, will in due time most assuredly bring to pass, either voluntarily or involuntarily on the part of all concerned dwelling there.

For the accommodation of our Farmers, and in order to give an increased stimulus to Agriculture, I have directed the Secretary of the Treasury to order from the United States a number of Sugar Mills and their fixtures, which I have no doubt will arrive in February or March.

I have assumed the responsibility of making an expenditure from the Public Treasury for the purpose of collecting such articles for, and transporting to the International Exhibition to be held at London, 1862, as I hope will secure to Liberia a respectable representation on that grand occasion. The great excitement, growing out of the late attempt to revive the nefarious slave-trade within our jurisdiction, in which all the communities in Liberia have been kept for the last four months, has prevented the procuring of more than about one sixth of what would have been procured otherwise. I will direct the Secretary of the Treasury to transmit to you an estimate of the amount necessary for that purpose, of which I have to solicit your approval by making the necessary appropriation.

You will perceive by the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, which he will transmit in a day or two, that the revenue of the year has been inconsiderable, scarcely more than half of that of the preceding year. This falling off resulted in some degree from the civil war waging in the United States, but mainly from the efforts so strenuously made this year to revive the slave-trade in Liberia. This fact prevents me as yet from recommending appropriations to be made for prosecuting public enterprises, some of which I regard to a very great extent as indispensable: such as fortifications and defenses, repairs and erections of public buildings, interior settlements, internal improvements, with special reference to the facilitation of transportation; and the best adapted measures for effectually civilizing and making reliably loyal, the hundreds of thousands of aborigines residing within the jurisdiction of this republic &c., &c.

I shall communicate to you in a few days on this subject, and suggest a plan by which, if seconded by the wonted patriotism of our fellow-citizens, we may readily overcome the most formidable of those barriers, and be able to prosecute during next year the most of those very important enterprises, which to a great extent I regard necessary to our progressive national existence.

The question of our right of political jurisdiction over the Gallinas and some of the adjoining points, which was raised the latter part of last year by Her B. M. Government, and the circumstances which grew out of the same, were duly laid before the Legislature at their last session, so far as the matter had then progressed. Copies of such correspondence as has been subsequently had on that subject, I herewith present for your information, by which you will perceive that the question during the year had assumed a somewhat serious aspect.

I do not believe half a dozen persons could be found in Liberia, previous to the latter part of last year, who had the slightest impression that Her B. M. or any other foreign Government entertained the least doubt, that the Gallinas and the adjacent points, extending – with the exception of a small strip – to the Shebar, had been acquired under such *bona-fide* title as invested this government with full sovereignty over them. The liberal donations made to this government, some ten or twelve years ago, by British and American Philanthropists, for the express purpose of extinguishing the native title to those old slave marts, especially Gallinas, and of investing this government by their acquisition with the necessary sovereignty to legalize its action in the suppression of the slave-trade; the proclamation and annual message of my predecessor nearly eleven years ago announcing the acquisition of that territory from the native chiefs by *bona-fide* title, and proclaiming the extension of Liberian sovereignty and law over the same there: – the visit of my predecessor to England, in 1852, mainly for the purpose of explaining and finally settling those and other territorial questions; the authoritative publication of the legislative enactment passed some eight or ten years ago, fixing the present boundaries of this republic, which enactment is to be found in the state pamphlet containing the fundamental, conventional, and statute law of this republic, together with other facts I forbear to mention; harmonized to remove every vestige of belief from the minds of the government and people of Liberia, that any foreign government entertained

a doubt of our possessing, and consequently having a right to exercise sovereignty over that territory.

You will perceive by the documents just presented, that Commodore Edmonstone, the commodore and senior officer of Her B. M.'s ships and vessels stationed on the west coast of Africa station, has respectfully notified me by the mail, the Commander Douglas of Her B. M.'s ship "Espoir," has been directed to communicate with me, in a few days, for the purpose of examining our title deeds to the territory in question, which examination had been declined by Capt. Heneage of Her B. M.'s ship "Falcon," when he visited this port in July, and communicated with me on the same subject by direction of the Commodore. And as the Commodore has most courteously promised me the pleasure and honor of a visit early next year, I have no doubt that from the *bona-fide* titles to said territory in our possession, and the fact, of which he will be able fully to satisfy himself during his visit, that the calling in question of our right of jurisdiction over that territory has been within the last twelve months, productive of evils most blasting to the moral, civil, Religious, and industrial interests of this young but rising republic; that it has in one year undone what of good it has required ten years to effect, and that if persisted in, it will sap the very foundation of our national existence; he will be so impressed by these deplorable events, under which we are now individually and nationally suffering as to be induced to make such just and magnanimous representation to Her B. M. Government, as will, without delay, cause this matter to be set perfectly at rest for the future, and thus allow us, in our national weakness, to resume our wonted progressive march, in faithful fulfillment of weakness, to resume our wonted progressive march, in faithful fulfillment of our great and responsible mission to this Savage country, which mission has been solemnly imposed on us by the Great and Just Arbiter of nations.

I now proceed, as previously intimated, to state the causes of the almost unprecedented outbreak of predatory wars this year among the aboriginal tribes within the jurisdiction of this republic, especially in that part of this county extending from the east bank of the St. Paul's river, northward to, and beyond Gallinas.

The opinion expressed in my last annual message, that the vigilance of the British and American cruisers in suppressing the slave-traders on the south coast, would result in strenuous efforts to revive it at the old slave marts on the Liberian coast, has been fully verified, as will appear by the following detailed statement, and the documents herewith presented.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, I received a communication from R. L. Stryker, Esq., Superintendent at Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount, transmitting a note from Prince Mannah, Chief of Gallinas, written for him by a British trader residing there, conveying the intelligence of a Spanish slaver being at Gallinas bar, and that he regarded it his duty to give notice thereof to Government according to promise. When those notes were received, the *Quail* was on a cruise as low down as Cape Palmas, and would not be due at this port, for eight or ten days. So soon as she arrived and could be got in readiness, she proceeded to Gallinas, where she arrived on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May. The Commander of the *Quail* having been satisfied by testimony obtained on shore, corroborative of the information previously given this government by Prince Mannah, of the vessel being a slaver, and that she had distributed cash and goods for the purpose of accumulating a number of slaves within a given time, seized the vessel, which had entered the river, and whose name on the stern had been effaced with paint, as a prize, intending to bring her to his port for adjudication.

The bar and surf having meantime become unusually rough, and continued to for nearly a week, rendering communication with the shore extremely hazardous, so much so as to have resulted in the loss of Capt. Monger and a seaman, who were drowned in attempting to cross Gallinas bar, and all the *Quail's* boats having been so far wrecked and injured by land-

ing or attempting to land, as to measurably unfit them for use, a prize-crew of thirteen men under an officer was left in charge of the prize, and the *Quail* proceeded down to this port for boats and facilities for getting the prize out of the bar; but wind and current being strongly adverse, she did not arrive here until the 10<sup>th</sup> of June (seven days.) On the 12<sup>th</sup> of June she was dispatched with the necessary facilities, and arrived at Gallinas, via Robertsport, on the afternoon of the 13<sup>th</sup>.

H. B. M. S. *Torch*, Capt. Smith, Senior Officer of this division, having, as I learn, received intelligence of a slaver being there, had arrived on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup>; and as he asserts, not having seen the Liberian flag flying on board the prize, and not being cognizant of her being in possession of a Liberian prize-crew, the Captain had sent in boats in command of his Lieutenant before the *Quail* had reached port and anchored. The British lieutenant and crew, after boarding the prize, communicated with Capt. Smith of the *Torch*, who ordered her to be burned, and she was thus destroyed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, which gave rise to the correspondence between Captain Smith and Benedict, copies of which I herewith present, by which it will be seen that the commander of the *Torch* expressed his disapproval of the act of his lieutenant in taking possession of the prize after ascertaining that she was a prize to the Liberian government schooner *Quail*. Though the act was, as he stated, done without his knowledge and approval, yet it having been committed, he concluded to direct her to be destroyed, as aforesaid. The motive by which he was to an extent actuated in deciding upon the latter course he hoped the government of Liberia would appreciate, as it was intended thereby to relieve the government of Liberia from any unpleasant misunderstanding with the Spanish government, he in the name of his government assuming the responsibility in the matter.

The officers and crew of the slaver having been attacked by the African fever, disabling them to travel by land to Monrovia, and rendering it imprudent to risk their lives by embarkation, it was thought advisable by Lieutenant Carney, as most accordant with humanity, to allow them about a week previously, at their own urgent request, to go to Sierra Leone by inland water route, so as to secure medical attention, &c. &c., under the supervision of the Spanish consul at that place. On the return of the *Quail* from Gallinas and my receipt of Commander Benedict's report, I immediately transmitted to H. B. M. Government through our Consul General at London, a dispatch, a copy of which I herewith present.

This bold attempt on the part of the Spaniards to revive the slave-trade at Gallinas in November, 1860, and May, 1861, and, as I will soon bring to your notice, the attack made on the *Quail* in this harbor on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September by a Spanish vessel-of-war, all of which spread with greatest rapidity among the aborigines within the entire jurisdiction of this Republic, revived the hope, almost amounting to a certainty, in the old slave-dealing chiefs who still survive, that the slave-trade would be forcibly revived by foreigners in our jurisdiction, and they were strengthened in their belief by misjudging the policy of H. B. M. Government, misconstruing the action of Capt. Smith of H. M. ship *Torch* in this harbor last December, and his subsequent action with the Liberian prize at Gallinas in June, as amounting in effect to H. M. Government positively denying the right and authority of this government to suppress the slave-trade at Gallinas and other points claimed as within the jurisdiction of Liberia; and those old-slave dealers, who have been checked for years by this government from prosecuting the slave-trade, concluded that they could revive and prosecute it with impunity.

These untoward circumstances have led, during the year, to the revival of the old predatory wars among the tribes and clans, commencing from above Gallinas and extending down beyond the S. E. bank of the St. Paul's river, a distance of over a hundred miles, and extending a considerable distance interiorward. That extent of country has been in a state of war

for the last four months, creating an almost incessant scene of excitement in all our settlements. Hundreds of aboriginal refugees in this county have within the last four months fled from their homes, abandoned plantations and other property, and sought in our settlements protection from captivity for the slave market. Our citizens residing in the rural districts of the St. Paul's and at Careysburg, and up the Mesurado river, have been taxed during the year with the shelter, support, and protection of hundreds of men, women and children, from the interior, who had thus to make their escape from the accursed slave-dealer. Chiefs and tribes who had been for many years previously loyal, among whom the missionaries of the Cross had commenced operating encouragingly – tribes which had to a great extent lost hope of seeing the slave-trade revived again, and were praised worthily devoting themselves to legitimate avocations, have been thus tempted to resume, within the last four months, their old practice of man-stealing, spreading devastation among the weaker tribes almost in contiguity to our most interior settlements. Such have been a few of the results within the year, of the attempts to forcibly revive the slave-trade within the jurisdiction of this Republic; and they are facts so well known throughout this county in particular, and Liberia in general, as that I need not further describe them.

On the return of the Quail from Harper, Maryland county, in the month of August with the mail, I received intelligence in the shape of rumor, that a Spanish steam vessel-of-war was fitting up at Fernando Po, to be sent up by the Spanish authorities of that place, for the purpose of sinking or capturing the Quail, and of demanding satisfaction of the Liberian authorities at Monrovia for capturing and confiscating the cargo of a Spanish store-ship that was bound to Fernando Po, and had from stress of weather put into the port of Monrovia.

Immediately on Commander Benedict's return from Gallinas in June, and report of what had transpired, knowing well the effect it would have on the natives, I gave direction for suitable carriages to be made, and for every cannon at Fort Norris and within the corporation of Monrovia that could be sued to advantage, to be mounted. This and other defensive preparations were vigorously prosecuted to temporary completion within two and a half months from the date of issuing the order. It is proper that I should here acknowledge the efficient service of Capt. Reid Cooper, who superintended the works, and of Henry Cooper, for the very satisfactory manner in which he performed the mechanical labor.

On the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, three days after the former, I received intelligence kindly afforded unofficially by a United States naval vessel direct from Fernando Po, that the report was current there, that a Spanish war-steamer was taking in coal, and was to have left the day succeeding the departure of the American vessel from that port, under instructions from the Governor of Fernando Po, to sink or capture the *Quail*. Though few, if any, men of intelligence in Liberia, could persuade themselves at the time, that such a highly disreputable and anti-civilized course would be adopted in this enlightened age, at least until the aggrieved had adopted the proper course for obtaining correct information respecting the supposed cause of grievance, and being fully satisfied of the existence of a just cause of complaint, had, in the proper manner, asked of this government the proper redress, which this government will always take the greatest pleasure in respectfully tendering to any government or people, whenever a clear case of aggression or wrong is made out against it; yet I thought it not amiss, upon the receipt of corroborative intelligence, to prosecute with increasing vigor the directions I had given, and the efforts that had actually commenced a couple of months previously, to place ourselves in a better condition, to protect and defend, to the utmost of our ability, this city and harbor from aggression. And I am pleased to be able to say, that the citizens almost generally responded most cordially by voluntarily co-operating. And I am pleased to be able to further say, that our citizens residing in the several counties, upon hearing of the rumored threat, and knowing the effect the bare threat would

have upon such aborigines living in the respective counties as favored the revival of the slave-trade, turned out voluntarily in their respective townships, made carriages, mounted their unmounted guns, cleared off scores of acres of forest land contiguous to their mounted guns, cleared off scores of areas of forest land contiguous to their respective townships, and made such other preparations-the best they couldn't mainly voluntarily, for the defense of their respective townships and counties as reflect great credit upon them.

Having been satisfied that circumstances justified it, and that our patriotic citizens who had voluntarily turned out so generally upon my requisition, and without any charge for compensation upon government, to stand guard and perform other duty, should be relieved, I placed a squad of men on actual service for that purpose, and stationed them at Fort Norris under the immediate command of Capt. J. W. Clark, and general supervision of Lieut. Col. Smith, about a week before the attack was made upon the *Quail* in this harbor, with the intention of continuing them in service so long as it should appear necessary: the propriety of which will somewhat appear, when I shall have informed you, that on the afternoon of the first of September, a steamer was espied by the officer in command of Fort Norris, coming up from the southward, and then abreast this Cape, she bore off somewhat to the westward, and in three or four hours she was out of sight, standing up to the northward and westward; kroomen from this place pulled off in canoes and attempted to board her, but were prevented. They reported that she wore an ensign resembling the Spanish flag.

Nothing more was seen or heard of this steamer, until on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, where she made her appearance, bearing the Spanish flag, came in harbour, and anchored not very far from the *Quail*, whose boat immediately boarded her, and ascertained her to be, as was expected, a Spanish steam vessel of war, just from Sierra Leone. I present herewith the report of Commander Benedict of what transpired on what morning, as also the depositions of the captain and mate of the American barque *Edward*, then in harbor, corroborative of that report, by which you will be more accurately informed of the most shameful aggressive conduct of that Spanish steamer, whose Commander had professed only an hour previously to have come on a friendly visit, and had manifested every courtesy to Lieutenant Carney. The documents will also briefly acquaint you of the gallant defense made by Commander Benedict, he having in a very short time completely repulsed the aggressor, but inflicting such serious damages, as necessitated his speedy departure for Sierra Leone. For the very noble valor displayed on that occasion, Commander Benedict and the officers and crew of the *Quail* have merited the high praise and admiration of the Government and people of Liberia.

From the foregoing statements, you will perceive that a crisis has been force upon us, as serious as any in the history of Liberia the entire matter has narrowed down to a question of life or death with us, of national and individual existence or extinction. To fold up our arms, and pusillanimously permit the slave trade to be forced upon us, will result in our certain and irrecoverable ruin as a people. But by battling with it with a cool but firm determination, though under a full consciousness of your physical weakness, and the many other disadvantages under which we labor, yet, trusting in God, and regarding life itself but a small sacrifice, if necessary to sustain the great principle and blessing of human freedom, we may survive the shock, and yet succeed in our cherished purpose, even the perpetuity of the Government, and our highly prized institutions upon the firm and honorable basis of virtue.

I cannot, until I learn otherwise, officially, believe that H. C. M. Government of Spain authorized or will sanction the aggressive act committed in this harbor by the *Ceres*, as aforesaid; and this opinion, so far as I have been able to learn, generally obtains in Liberia. I have directed this unpleasant matter to be respectfully brought to the notice of H. C. M. Government with the least possible delay. And I as firmly believe, as I strongly wish that

many months will not have elapsed before I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that the matter has had a fair, honorable and mutually satisfactory adjustment; especially as I was officially advised by the last mail, that H. B. M. Government had, in compliance with the request of this Government, kindly offered its mediation in the unpleasant affair, and had respectfully requested H. C. M. Government to consent to the proposition; which I have no doubt will be readily acceded to, in case that Government should recognize the existence of a complaint against this Government that cannot be peacefully adjusted by themselves since justice is all that should be mutually desired by the parties concerned.

I have great satisfaction in informing you that H. B. M. S. *Torch*, Capt. Smith, arrived in this harbor on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of October, having been kindly dispatched by His Excellency Governor Hill of Sierra Leone, to obtain correct information from, and to confer with me, respecting the Spanish aggressions that had been committed in this harbor, and the probability of their continuance as was currently reported; she left for Sierra Leone on the following day. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, her B. M. Ship *Falcon*, Capt. Heneage, arrived in this port under instructions from Her. B. M. Government, on a similar mission, and to specially convey to this Government the sympathy and friendly feeling of Her M. Government. She remained in this port fifteen days, during which time her accomplished commander and officers, by their courteous intercourse, elicited the unfeigned respect and admiration of this community. These tokens of kindness and sympathy from Her B. M. Government, are but a continuation of the innumerable acts of magnanimity of which Liberia has been the beneficiary, dating from the first year of the founding of the colony of Liberia up to the present.

Before concluding this communication to you, it is proper that I should state, that there are other matters respecting our domestic affairs, such as the progress of the interior settlement, the bridges on the Careysburg road, &c., &c., which I will communicate to you in a special message. Suffice to say for the present, that the interior settlement is gradually progressing, and the bridges which have been retarded until late by the heavy rains, are likely to be completed, I am informed, before the close of your session.

It only remains now for me to reassure you of my purpose cordially to co-operate with you in the dispatch of the very weighty and responsible duties of this session, which I doubt not, under Divine Guidance, will be discharged beneficially to the country, and creditably to yourselves.

Stephen Allen Benson.  
Government House,  
Monrovia, *Dec 7*, 1861

## Annual Message to the Legislature December 5, 1862

*To the honorable the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Republic of Liberia:*

Gentlemen: Nearly nine months absence from the Republic this year, and having returned only a few days previously to the opening of your session, have rendered me almost entirely dependent on my constitutional substitute, for data, on the home affairs of our common country, which I have not had sufficient time to consider, and put in that shape, by amplification, as we have mutually desired. I shall, therefore, make communication to you from time to time during the session, on such matters as I shall deem promotive of the interests of the country.

I have first to invite the attention of the Legislature to the manifold disturbances and outrages committed by the Little Sess Fishermen. The peace and quietude of our leeward coast have been sadly disturbed by them during the past year. They have been accused of not only having made war upon, and killed several of the Niffaw people, without reasonable cause, as was ascertained by the Secretary of the Treasury during his visit of investigation to the leeward this year, but have also monopolized all the portering business along the coast, such as the shipping and unshipping of goods, and the usual services performed by Kroomen on board of trading ships. Fishermen connected with other tribes are compelled to forego the benefits which they would derive from such employment, through fear of the treachery, jealousy, and ill will of the Little Sess Fishermen, who are very numerous, and live on nearly every part of our coast as adventurers. I indulge the hope that the Legislature will, during the present session, devise some plan by which the turbulence of this tribe may be restrained, so that order and peace may again be restored along the coast.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, the Government schooner Quail arrived from the leeward counties, bringing with her the Commissioners appointed under the act passed at your last session, authorizing the appointment of Commissioners to select a site in the interior for the seat of Government.

Notwithstanding the dry season was far advanced, they were nevertheless commissioned, and sent on their mission. After an absence of seventeen days, they returned to this city, having in their tour selected two sites in the vicinity of Bees' Mountain in the rear of the Junk country, either one of which will, they think meet the object contemplated.

Intelligence was received on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April of the return to the Gallinas, in another vessel, of the captain of Spanish slave schooner Bueneventura Cubana, which was seized in that river by the Quail, June, 1861, and which was subsequently wrested from her by H. B. M. S. Torch. The object of the return of the Spanish captain to the Gallinas, was to procure the slaves purchased with the cargo brought out in the Bueneventura Cubana. The advice boat, steamer Seth Grosvernor, was immediately dispatched to the Gallinas, with the Secretary of the Treasury in her, with instructions to arrest, seize, and bring to this city for adjudication and trial, all vessels and persons that he might find there engaged in the slave trade. His visit resulted in an interview with Prince Manna, the native Chief of Gallinas, who was warned that he would be severely punished if he permitted the slaver to take off a single slave from the Gallinas. As the steamer passed out of the Gallinas river, a glimpse of the Spanish vessel was descried wide in the offing. I am happy to be able to inform the Legislature that the two voyages of the Spanish captain to your coast for a cargo of slaves, were entirely frustrated through the vigilance of this Government, and that every exertion will be used to prevent the native chiefs living within our jurisdiction from holding out inducements to the slave dealer to approach our coast.

The educational interest has had and will continue to have special attention. The common day schools authorized at the last session to be increased and put into operation in each county, were established as early as the several School Committees could engage teachers and procure books. They number in the aggregate sixteen schools, to be increased by the number to be established in Grand Bassa County. Books are very much needed.

Notwithstanding the long and almost unprecedented dry season this year, occasioning the loss of a large number of early crops of grain, and the resowing of others, succeeded suddenly by a heavy and incessant rainy season, causing great damage to the maturing implantations of various products, especially to those of cotton, scores of acres of which were destroyed; yet the agricultural interest is of an encouraging character, admitting of a fair comparison with that of last year. The sugar cane crops increased on the St. Paul's and the quantity augmented by that grown in the leeward counties. It affords me much pleasure to

be able to say that the people of Liberia are paying more attention than ever to the cultivation of the soil, and to the rich products which so readily find a market in foreign countries.

The Government has, during the year, imported six sugar mills, which have been judiciously distributed among the several counties; and it is the intention to import others for the convenience of our farmers, so soon as it shall be practicable.

The actual revenue of the country is insufficient to meet the demands of Government sine so many public enterprises have been put on foot. The report of the Secretary of the Treasury will clearly demonstrate this. I invite the special attention of the Legislature to this subject; and I shall be happy to meet their wishes in any reasonable measures they may adopt for increasing the revenue of the country.

The receipts from all sources, including recaptive African funds during the fiscal year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1862, were

\$138,016.42

Total amount of disbursements for the same time was

\$138,499.29

I will add in this connection, that it is my firm purpose during the remaining year of my incumbency to employ every effort to liquidate all demands now against, and such as may be incurred up to the close of the fiscal year by Government, in order that my successor may, on his induction, be relieved of unpleasant pecuniary embarrassments. To effect this, retrenchment will be indispensable; and as a consequence several public enterprises must cease, until that object shall have been secured.

And I have to earnestly request that you will cause your appropriation for the fiscal year to harmonize with this policy.

Under the appropriation made at your last session, with a view to develop the iron resources in the vicinity of Careysburg, advances have been made from the Treasury to Charles Deputie, Esq., of Careysburg, who has succeeded, it is said, in demonstrating that the iron ore near that settlement is of superior quality. Samples of the iron smelted from the ore has been submitted to the Government. No formal report, however, has as yet been received from him to enable the Government to determine upon the propriety of making further advances for that object.

Specimens of ore found on the little Cape Mount river by Mr. J. G. J. Barbour, and by him forwarded to the United States to be tested, were, on examination, said to be a rich quality of coal. See *Liberia Herald*, August 6, 1862.

A revision of some of the judiciary acts is very necessary, in order to define more clearly the jurisdiction of the courts. The Attorney General will readily designate to you those conflicting laws, which, as long as they remain, will keep up a conflict between the superior and inferior courts.

Abraham Hanson, Esq., was received September 2, 1862, and acknowledged as the United States Commercial agent for Monrovia.

By virtue of a resolution adopted by the Legislature of Liberia at their last session, granting the President of Liberia leave of absence from the Republic during the year 1862, or longer, should he deem it necessary for the restoration of his health, and vesting him with special authority, during his absence, to enter into any arrangements, and to transact any business he might deem promotive of the interest of Liberia, I embarked from this place on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, for Europe via Harper, and arrived in Liverpool on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April.

Before leaving Liberia, I had determined that I would extend my visit to the United States within a few weeks after my arrival in England, provided my progress in the dispatch of the more important public business in Europe, and letters I might receive in England from the United States should justify it. The many difficulties, and at times sore humiliations we had long been subject to in the enforcement of our commercial, revenue, and navigation laws, and in our attempts to suppress the nefarious foreign traffic in human flesh and blood

with the aborigines within our jurisdiction, rendered the definite and permanent adjustment with H. M. government of our territorial claims and boundaries, of paramount importance. Consequently, though I received several letters in Europe from the United States, urging me to extend my visit to that country, and I felt as certain then as I do now, that I would have had a cordial reception by numerous friends and acquaintances there, and that becoming courtesy would have been accorded by the officials of that Republic, yet, I could not see that much good would have resulted from my visit in the present unhappy state of affairs there. I therefore felt unwilling to defer the adjustment of the more important business in England, in order to make a visit of doubtful utility to the United States, especially as my business there could be transacted equally as well by correspondence from England.

In less than a fortnight after my arrival in England, I presented in person to H. M. Minister of Foreign Affairs, and respectfully pressed the same by argument, a memorandum of the several matters I wished to adjust, and have a clear understanding between the two Governments, before my departure from England.

The first subject was the full recognition of our territorial claims, and fixing the boundaries, especially of that part of our territory lying conterminously with territory claimed by H. M. Government. I shall transmit to you on the 8<sup>th</sup> instant copies of the correspondence, with explanatory remarks on the action I had with H. M. Government on that subject during my absence, by which it will appear that H. M. Government having magnanimously acknowledged the just claims of the Government of Liberia to the territory comprehended between the San Pedro river on the southeast, to the river Shebar on the northwest, with the understanding, however, that the northwest boundary cannot be definitively described and laid down, until a survey of the river Jong, and ascertainment shall have been thereby made, whether its course and extent interiorward are sufficient to give us a northwestern boundary of some sixty miles interiorward, otherwise a line as you will see delineated on the map which accompanied the despatch of July 5<sup>th</sup>, from the foreign office, is to run due north from its head to complete the sixty miles.

A report of the survey fixing this definite northwestern boundary was expected from the Governor of Sierra Leone, in October; and I had hoped, and signified the same to H. M. Government, that it would have arrived timely to have had it accurately laid down by H. M. Government on an authentic map, before my embarkation, so that I might be able to bear home with me in that form the evidence of a correct and definite adjustment of our northwestern boundary, which would have rendered extinct the last vestige of a possibility of future misunderstandings between the two Governments growing out of questions of political jurisdiction in that direction. H. M. Minister of Foreign Affairs was absent on the continent a few days previously to and up to the day of my leaving London to embark at Liverpool, having been detained there as I learned by stress of weather. I have directed Consul General Ralston to bring the subject to his lordship's notice as early as possible after his return to London, a report on which I am confidently expecting by the mail to arrive this month.

The second subject introduced in the memorandum, was that H. M. Government assume all responsibility toward the Spanish Government, not only for the destruction of the Spanish slaver *Beuneventura Cubana* in 1861, by H. M. S. *Torch*, but also of the original capture made by the Liberian Government schooner *Quail*, since the action for the commander of the *Torch* prevented the prize from being brought to the proper port for formal adjudication.

Third. That such an apology be tendered for the conduct of the Commander of H. M. S. *Torch*, as H. M. Government might think justly due to the Government of Liberia; and that such prize money be tendered to the captors – the officers and crew of the *Quail* – as H. M. Government might regard justly due them.

The fourth subject contained in the memorandum was, notification to H. M. Government, that the Government of Liberia intended the passage of a law that would restrict the operations of all foreign vessels within our jurisdiction to the xi ports of entry now, and others that may be hereafter constituted; and that a reasonable time would be allowed before the commencement of its enforcement. In introducing this latter subject, no doubt was intimated by me of our perfect right to make the restriction. The position was reasonably assumed of our perfect right to do so. But as H. M. subjects had for sometime previous to you declaration of independence, traded indiscriminately on the coast, which has continued under regulations ordained by the Government of Liberia since the declaration of independence in 1847, courtesy rendered it not amiss to acquaint H.M. Government of the contemplated restriction. I was particularly induced to adopt this course, in order to obviate in the future, if possible, the sore humiliations inflicted on us at times by H. M. cruisers, when attempting to enforce our navigation, revenue, and commercial laws. These humiliations at any time, and under any circumstances, have been sorely grievous to us, and highly detrimental to our interests; among other evils, causing us to lose prestige with the aborigines residing within our dominions, whom we are endeavoring to bring under the influence of law and order, and to thoroughly identify with us in a common body politic.

By reference to copies of correspondence and statements of interviews I had with H. H. Government during my absence, which I hope to be able to transmit to you on the 8<sup>th</sup> instant, you will perceive that the several matters embodied in the memorandum have, to a considerable extent, been met in a just and generous spirit by H. M. Government, so that the adjustment of them may be regarded upon the whole as having so far resulted satisfactorily. And it affords me great pleasure to be able to add, that H. M. Minister for Foreign Affairs was pleased to express in person every assurance of the best feelings of H. M Government, as well as of himself individually, for the welfare and success of Liberia.

Having, after the lapse of a few months in England, become convinced of the improbability of extending my visit to the United States, I addressed a dispatch to that Government in July, proposing the negotiation of a treaty between the two Governments. The subsequent correspondence and action on that subject, resulted in the conclusion of a treaty between the two Governments, which was dully signed in London on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October, by Hon. C. F. Adams, United States Minister to the Court of St. James, (specially authorized,) and myself. As this treaty (and if required explanatory documents of it) will be transmitted in a day or two to the Senate for ratification. I need say no more at present on that subject than I regard the treaty as being very fair and satisfactory. And though the Government of the United States did not favor stipulating by treaty on the subject of emigration to Liberia, nor respecting recaptured Africans, but preferred those subjects being left open to future circumstances, and acts of Congress, and contracts that may in future be based upon such acts of Congress, yet wished of the Administration, and of their favorable impression toward Liberia in connection with those subjects. Recaptured Africans taken on this coast by American cruisers, will, as usual, be brought to Liberia.

Respecting the destination of the vast majority of colored persons (African descent) in the United States, I feel no uneasiness whatever. I have not a particle of doubt that there will be a great and voluntary emigration of them to Liberia, and Liberia wishes and will accept none other than those who will come voluntarily. Various circumstances rapidly converging to a point will ere long cause a greater influx of them than perhaps it will be considered prudent to admit within a given time. I feel no less certain now than I felt years ago, that our Anglo-Saxon friends in America have been, are, and will become increasingly dependent on Liberia, as affording the only satisfactory home as yet for those whom they have of late strangely charged with being the cause of the lamentable sanguinary contest now waging in

that great country; at least as much so as Liberia is dependent on them for the encouragement of immigration hither.

The truth that Africa for a long time, at least, will prove the only place to which they can move to find a satisfactory home, will increasingly force itself upon both colored and white, until it shall become irresistible. Liberia can gain nothing by impatience on this subject. The basis of our national and individual progress, respect, and influence having been greatly expanded and deepened by the treaty recently negotiated with the United States Government, let our citizens nerve up, and exert every power of body and mind, that they may with a becoming manly spirit render our country increasingly attractive by their industry and progress in the pursuit of civilized life, and we need entertain no fears that we shall not have sufficient voluntary immigration in the future.

Pursuant to the resolution of the Legislature passed at the last session, providing for the appointment of Commissioners from this Government to present to the colored people of the United States the advantages and claims of Liberia, I appointed as such at an early day as was practicable, J. D. Johnson, Esq., and professors Crummell and Blyden, who have informed me, from time to time, by letter, that they were zealously prosecuting their mission in the United States.

Their absence as yet from home, and not having received their formal reports, I am disappointed in being able to communicate the substance of them to you at the opening of your session. I have no doubt their reports will be supplied timely to enable me to transmit them to you before the close of this month.

I have specially to acknowledge the efficient services of J. D. Johnson, Esq., who was commissioned early this year; and before he entered upon the duties of a Commissioner to the colored people of the United States, to afford all necessary information respecting Liberia to the Government of the United States, preparatory to their recognition of the independence of this Republic, which services no doubt contributed much to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

After ascertaining the improbability of extending my visit to the United States, I commissioned the Hon. J. J. Roberts, in June, who purposed leaving England for America, early in July, vesting him with full authority to amicably adjust all accounts and business matters between the American Colonization Society and this Government, especially those respecting recaptive Africans landed here within the last two-and-a-half years, so that our Commissioner might be able to present on his return a correct and satisfactory statement of items, and of the balance due this Government up to the date of adjustment.

I was very desirous that this should have been done to enable me to place the Secretary of the Treasury in possession of it in a completed form, timely for his annual report.

The Secretary of the Treasury to whom I have transmitted the Commissioner's report will inform you that the object of the mission has not been secured.

The fourth quarter's payment to be made by the United States Government on account of recaptive Africans is yet delayed in consequence of alleged omissions in the certificates issued in favor of this Government by the United States Agent for liberated Africans. I am informed by the Secretary of State that the necessary measures have been adopted months ago to supply the main mission, and I have no doubt that the matter will be satisfactorily settled in a short time.

Before and after leaving home this year, I indulged the hope that the civil war in the United States would have subsided ere this, which would have afforded me an opportunity – though a subordinate consideration – or procuring very cheaply while abroad all the arms and munitions of war we would likely require for many years. But as this has not been the

case, and there is at present no very pressing need of them, I have deferred the procuring of them to a more favorable time.

I have, however, instructed our agent in the United States to purchase conditionally, as you will perceive by the copies of the letter of instructions, and description of the vessel, which I will transmit it in a day or two for your approval, a small steamer not exceeding two hundred tons, and with heavier and more complete armament than that of the Quail. I have authorized him in case he shall procure her to make the necessary arrangements and expenditures for sending her out without delay, to arrive, if possible, before the close of April ensuing; for all which I have to ask an adequate appropriation.

While in England I contracted for, at the suggestion of the Secretary of the Treasury, two light-house lamps and fixtures, for the light-house of this place, and of Harper.

The lamps are to be out in all of this month, and are said to possess every important modern improvement. The Secretary of the Treasury will transmit to you an estimate of their cost and charges, for which I have to ask an adequate appropriation.

Very soon after my arrival in England, and subsequently thereto, I had conferences and correspondence with a gentleman of high character and respectability in London, Mr. Henry Pinkus, who was desirous of organizing an institution, to be styled the London and Liberian Banking and Commercial Institution. The object contemplated by this institution, you will find, to a great extent, set forth in the copies of correspondence I had with, and documents from him, which I will in a few days transmit to you. I recommend that no conclusive nor even definite action be taken on the application for a charter until the arrival of the Hon. J. J. Roberts, to whom, as the contemplated chief manager of the interests of the institution in Liberia, I requested Mr. Pinkus (owing to the pressure of the duties upon me at the time) to make all further communication on the subject, so that he might be able to afford the Legislature all necessary information on the subject that may not be contained in the correspondence and documents aforesaid; and which I shall transmit, simply that you be able to give the subject as much as thought as possible before consummating action thereon. You will find my own views (which have since undergone no change) embodied to some extent in my correspondence with him. And when ever I have hesitated to give a definite expression approval to any special propels, it was simply, as you will perceive, because I was unwilling to commit myself on any important point upon which, for want of more time for reflection, my mind was not clear.

Upon the whole, I think very highly of the contemplated institution, and believe that it can be organized and conducted under a charter, in a manner that it will prove safe and highly beneficial to Liberia, and satisfactorily remunerative to the investors.

Considering the ready employment that such a company will proffer to successive companies of emigrants, whose arrival in the future may reasonably be expected in great numbers, the facility and accommodation it will afford to the mercantile and agricultural interests of the country; in a word, the great impetus it will give to every branch of industry, and to the rapid development of the resources of the country, which cannot be done effectively without skill and capital, I cannot regard such an institution, guardedly, yet liberally chartered, otherwise than the great desideratum; and I cannot hesitate to believe, that you will whenever you shall take action on the subject, meet the wishes of the directors in a just, liberal, and enlightened spirit. I shall no doubt have occasion to communicate with you more definitely on this subject.

Upon inquiry, I ascertained that I could have made arrangements in England to have a pier or break-water built out one-eighth or one-sixth of a mile in Montserrado roads, on terms not very pressing. But I was unwilling to, and consequently did not, negotiate such an arrangement, involving so large an expenditure in the absence of legislative opinion on the

subject. I am in possession of plan and estimates, which, if desired, I will lay before the Legislature for their consideration.

Liberia's contribution this year to the International Exhibition at London, though humble, yet did not fail in interest.

The enlightened minds and good sense of Her Majesty's Commissioners, as well as of the jurors and the British public, did not expect a display of exquisite genius in the Liberian court. They expected to see raw materials-samples of commodities that could be made highly available to the two countries by commercial interchange. I am happy to be able to say, from general testimony, that they were not disappointed in their expectations of which I am of opinion you will have no doubt, when the report of our Commissioners shall have been received.

I feel unwilling to close this communication to you, without expressing my gratitude to a gracious Providence for the preservation of my health, and for granting me favor while abroad, and a safe return to my country.

The authorities of the several European countries which I had the honor and pleasure of visiting, have placed Liberia under many courteous, respectful and friendly obligations, by reason of the attentions and high considerations accorded to the representatives of this Republic during his visit, and for the very unfeigned interest they have manifested for the general success and prosperity of Liberia.

With several of those powers treaties have been negotiated this year, which will be presented to the Senate this session for ratification, and others are being negotiated which may arrive timely to secure ratification also at this session. You will permit me to add, that the respectful attention of the civilized powers of the earth is now attracted towards Liberia with more scrutiny and friendly solicitude than ever before; and that our destiny is now under God to a great extent in our hands; and that I feel sure that the wisdom, moderation, and self-respect, not only of the several Departments of this Government, but of the loyal citizens of this Republic, will fully demonstrate in future, that the Government and people of Liberia were not unworthy of the respect, confidence, and good will of those great civilized Christian nations.

It only remains for me to assure the Legislature that I will cordially co-operate with them during their session, in every honorable measure that shall tend to demonstrate and secure this cherished object.

Stephen A. Benson.

Government House,

Monrovia, Dec. 5, 1862

## Annual Message to the Legislature December 5, 1863

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

In meeting you at this session of the National Council, during which my administration of the affairs of this Republic for the last eight years will close, I am prompted by the dictates of propriety to restrict this last annual message mainly to showing the state of the country in its various interests, from which my successor may derive sufficient data to assist him in deciding on and shaping the course of his policy at the commencement of his administrative term, on the 4<sup>th</sup> proximo.

### Relations with the Natives.

Owing to circumstances which have transpired at the seat of government this year, I deemed it imprudent to absent myself, as I fully intended the early part of this year, for the purpose of giving my personal attention to rectifying matters with the aborigines, the entire extent of our coast. I however adopted the best means at my command for that purpose, the Honorable Messrs. Drayton and Harmon having spent some time in August and September as Commissioners in settling native difficulties in Maryland county, in which they met my expectations.

In Sinoe and Bassa counties, and Marshall, Carysburg, and Roberstport of Montserrado county, the respective Superintendents have been, with very little exception, equally successful in adjusting matters with the aborigines, and in keeping the country in a state of quietude. I am however apprehensive that when the enforcement of the law commences which restricts the foreign trade to ports of entry, there will be some manifestations of dissatisfaction for awhile by the coast tribes, which I have no doubt will subside in due time if the proper policy shall be pursued. The most sanguinary disturbances have prevailed this year in that part of our territory lying between Solyma and Shebar. Those disturbances would have been quelled by a military force early this year had pacific measures failed, but for the unexpected obstructions put in our way by H. B. M. Government since my return from Europe, by hesitating to recognize the Shebar as our Northwestern boundary, and by expressing, to say the least of it a desire that we would not, before they had recognized our right of jurisdiction, employ a military force for the purpose of bringing them to loyalty and order, especially as British commerce would likely be injured thereby.

### Education.

I did not regard it this year prudent nor practicable to expend more than half the appropriation for common schools made at the last session. One reason for which was, that the citizens had paid no direct tax for two years, and as I was winding up the affairs of my administration, I wished to leave my successor as little pecuniarily encumbered as possible. 2d. I thought then and think now, our citizens ought to begin to manifest more patriotism, by showing more liberality in contributing to the education of their children. The common schools have, however, progressed this year as encouragingly as could be reasonable expected under the circumstances. I have incidentally learned that Liberia college went into operation last January. As I have not been advised of its commencement, proceedings nor examinations, I am unable to make even a reliable cursory allusion to it, farther than to say, that it is the almost universal regret in Liberia that the college buildings had not been erected either in one of the rural districts of the St. Paul's river, or at Carysburg.

### Agriculture.

The progress in Agriculture this year had been very gratifying – the increase in some of the main exportable articles, say sugar and coffee, within the last nine years, has been as 50 to 1, or 5,000 per cent., and that of those of exclusive domestic use has been almost equally as unprecedentedly great. This is specially gratifying, when it is remembered that ten years ago, not more than one out of ten of our citizens could be induced to believe in the practicability, that Liberia could produce sugar, coffee, cocoa, &c., to compete in price in foreign markets with those produced by other countries. Now there is not one out of fifty to be found who will express a doubt that the cultivation of these articles in the most profitable investment they can make of their time and capital, and that Liberia can be made to compete with any country on earth in quantity, quality, and price, and that she is encouragingly progressing to that point.

### Coal and Iron.

I will transmit to you, without delay, the report of Mr. Barbour, who has been engaged a few weeks this year, under appropriation of the Legislature, for the purpose of ascertaining the reality of the existence of coal in the Golah country, interior of Cape Mount. I will transmit also the report of Mr. C. Deputi, for whom appropriation was made to enable him to experiment, with a view of ultimately developing the iron resources of Carysburg and vicinity.

### Recaptured Africans.

The Secretary of State will transmit to you his report on the Recaptured Africans, who were landed in this Republic under the auspices of the U. S. Government, in 1860 and 1861. It may not, however, be amiss for me to briefly remark that the progress these people have made in conforming to civilized life has exceeded our most sanguine expectations. Fortunately, most of them were young and had not acquired fixed habits. This, united with the good treatment, advice and encouragement which, as a general thing, they have received from their guardians, coupled with the very kind and efficient supervision of the United States Agent of Liberated Africans, has greatly tended to inspire them with love for and confidence in the government and people of Liberia, and an intense desire exists to be not only like us, but to be like us on equal terms, in a common body politic.

### Receptacles.

The receptacles originally for Recaptive Africans have been erected in three of the counties of this Republic, and are completed, excepting two locks and other fastenings. They are said to be fine buildings, and though we may not have occasion to use them for the purpose originally intended, yet they and additional ones will no doubt be much needed within a comparatively short time. Erected as they are in healthy districts, contiguous to fertile lands abounding in timber and other building material, they will no doubt admirably serve the purpose of accommodating during acclimature, the thousands of emigrants who will soon find their way to these shores. The total cost of the three substantial buildings, erected in 1860-63 for the direct and indirect use of Recaptive Africans, is \$21,448.81.

The one erected at Sinoe is a little below the falls, the terminus of canoe and boat navigation, said to be sixteen miles from seaboard. It is a fine selection of country, and as it is intended to form a settlement at that point, and as that county greatly needs emigrants, it is very desirable, and I hope that many emigrants will soon find their way there.

The new interior settlement (Finley) at the mountain region of Grand Bassa, and situated about eighteen miles (direct) from the seaboard and the settlements of Buchanan and Edina, has so far progressed as to be prepared to receive a large number of emigrants. Half the distance from Edina and Buchanan can be traveled in boats or canoes on the St. John's river.

A good road has been made the remaining distance from the head of navigation; and a number of bridges, at considerable expense, have been constructed. That part of the site at which the receptacle and volunteer houses are built is not more than a mile from the St. John's river. And though far from being the greatest elevation in that extensively hilly and mountainous region, is supposed to be from 500 to 600 feet above the level of the sea, which is visible from the settlement. That entire section of country is very fertile, well timbered, and abounds in other excellent building materials. The arrival as yet of no emigrants for that place has been a very great disappointment to the people of that county. The receptacle built at Bexley, in that county is on the St. John's river, about seven miles interior of Buchanan and Edina. It was commenced in 1860, (procuring materials,) for the use of Recaptive Africans, by the Agent of the American Colonization Society, before the Recaptive African's affairs were transferred to this government. It has a fine tract of land in connection with it.

The receptacle in this county (Montserrado) is on the road leading from the St. Paul's river at White Plains to Carysburg and is situated about equi-distant. Our citizens are settling along that road rapidly. I have directed that one-half of the lands on that road be reserved for emigrants, and the other half to be sold on account of government, in the usual way.

I succeeded this year in having the farms of our citizens at Robertsport laid off up in the country. That contemplated rural settlement is between the Bomar river and so-called lake. It is a beautiful and fertile section of country.

I had hoped that before this time such would have been the extent of emigration of persons of color from the United States to this country, as that the fine banks of the Cavalla river, in Maryland county, would have been occupied by organized civilized communities. I hope the time is not distant when so very desirable an enterprise shall have commenced.

#### Quail.

The Liberian Government schooner Quail needs thorough repairing.

#### Finances

The present indebtedness of the Government is thus represented by the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury:

#### The Debits are –

Individual accounts	\$ 8,885.07
Estates	13,452.52
Debits	9,978.41
Total	32,316.00

#### The Credits are –

Individual accounts	\$7,309.60
Estates	534.80
Deposits	22.00
Total	7,866.40

Indebtedness of Government to September 30, 1863	24,449.60
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The indebtedness is more than balanced in favor of Government by the amount of taxes and military fines due Government, which cannot amount to less than \$30,000. The Secretary of the Treasury will, at a very early day of your session, transmit to you, according to law, his accounts, which will, I have no doubt, lucidly represent the financial state of the country. Notwithstanding his incumbency comprises a period of very little more than seven months, and he has had to perform very much work in the department that should have been attended to long before his incumbency, and innumerable obstacles have been premeditatedly and boldly thrown in his way to check his progress in bringing up the accounts, and he has been subjected to many impositions and annoyances in this city, yet I have endeavored to encourage him in his arduous duties; and I am pleased to be able to say that he has labored day and night with a fortitude, manliness and principle that reflects great credit upon him, and which, I trust, will be duly considered and rewarded by you. I earnestly solicit a very careful perusal of his report, and such action thereon as will tend to correct in future such most manifestly delinquent, audacious, and felonious conduct as is set forth therein. I also solicit, in his behalf, an early and thorough examination of his accounts, especially those respecting the Recaptive African business.

#### The Seat of Government.

It will be your duty to seriously consider it if be any longer safe to the liberties of the people generally of this Republic, and consequently advisable, to continue the seat of this Govern-