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Noyes, Theodore

The Presidents and the
National Capital.



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With best regards of Theodore W. Noyes

THE PRESIDENTS AND THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

BY
THEODORE W. NOYES

READ BEFORE THE COLUMBIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
MARCH 21, 1916

Reprinted from the
RECORDS OF THE COLUMBIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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THE PRESIDENTS AND THE NATIONAL
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THE PRESIDENTS AND THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.

BY THEODORE W. NOYES.

(Read before the Society, March 21, 1916.)

As the scientist reconstructs a prehistoric animal on the basis of the discovery of a few scattered bones, so one may deduce, with more or less accuracy, the general course of the capital's history from the references to it in the messages of successive Presidents. A composite view of these presidential thoughts concerning the capital pictures in miniature the achievements and hardships, the hopes and fears of the nation's city.

All the early Presidents were in touch with the capital community and interested in its welfare. George Washington's personal interest in it was notable and conspicuous. The Federal city was as "the apple of his eye." John Adams's wish, suggested in the first presidential message delivered in the new National Capital, that Washington had lived to see the city as the seat of government, has met and will meet the sympathetic and assenting response of all Americans.

It was an old custom of the local legislature of the city formally to thank each President at the close of his term for what he had done for the capital, and of the retiring President to make personal and often complimentary response. Among these replies of record are those made by Madison, Jackson and Fillmore.

President James Madison said on his retirement, March 4, 1817:

"I am much indebted to the citizens of Washington, in whose behalf you speak, for the expressions of regard and re-

spect addressed to me. These sentiments are the more valuable to me, as my long residence among them has made me well acquainted with their many titles to my esteem, at the same time that it has enabled them to mark more particularly the course of my public and personal conduct. Their partiality has greatly overrated both. But they do no more than justice to my honest zeal in the service of my country, and to my friendly dispositions toward this city and its inhabitants. I have ever regarded the selection for the national metropolis, made by its great founder, as propitious to the national welfare; and, although I could not rival my immediate predecessor, in the aids he afforded, I was not less sincere in my desires for its growth and improvement. The ultimate good flowing from the disaster which at a moment clouded its prospects [its partial burning by the British in 1814] is a gratifying compensation to those on whom it fell, and is among the proofs of that spirit in the American people, as a free people, which, rising above adverse events, and even converting them into sources of advantage, is the true safeguard against dangers of every sort. On the point of a final departure from Washington, I pray its citizens to be assured that every expression of their kindness will be held in lively remembrance, with cordial wishes for their collective prosperity and individual happiness."

On President Jackson's retirement the municipal authorities in their address thanked him for the interest he had always manifested in the affairs of the city and expressed their earnest hopes that in his retirement to private life he might live to enjoy many years of uninterrupted happiness in the repose so necessary and so desirable after his long service in the various perilous, responsible and honorable employments which had been confided to him by the American people.

Jackson replied that he deserved their thanks rather for what he had intended to do than for what he had done; nothing could be more gratifying to him than

this mark of respect; he reciprocated their kind feeling and presented to the citizens of Washington through them his best regards and prayers for their happiness both here and hereafter. He then bade them an affectionate farewell.

President Fillmore, in his response to the city councils, said that he could not take his departure from their delightful city, where he had always been treated with so much kindness and consideration, without feeling a pang of regret at the severance of so many social ties which had been to him a source of unalloyed happiness.

As late as Buchanan's term the municipal authorities took their formal farewell of the President. If Lincoln had lived his pithy, pointed response to the address of the city fathers on his retirement would doubtless have been a classic. He had formed the habit of delivering the weightiest national utterances in the course of brief familiar replies to addresses by the city's mayor or to serenading citizens. For example, when he first came to Washington, in response to an address of the mayor and a day later in reply to a serenade he uttered his few historic words of earnest reassurance and appeal to the distrustful and rebellious south, words full of pathos and moving power. And at the end, after Lee's surrender, when he was serenaded at the White House, in response to calls for a speech he suggested that we had fairly captured the tune of "Dixie" and asked the band to play it. (See *Star*, April 10, 1865.)

Presidents of later date may not have mingled so intimately with the community. They may not have held the people of the city personally in the same regard, but they have on the whole been considerate and helpful, many of them much more practically helpful than some of their predecessors of the early days.

Since the adoption of the present form of govern-

ment, under which the Commissioners have in effect authority to report every year to Congress, opportunity is given for Presidents to shift the responsibility for making local recommendations entirely upon the Commissioners. This opportunity has not, however, been seized. In most instances the President has helpfully backed the Commissioners in their most important recommendations or in some special projects which he himself has favored.

Every predecessor of President Wilson has in a message to Congress indicated his interest in and expressed some thought concerning the nation's city. Let us imagine the faces of the Presidents to pass in succession before us as in a moving picture film—some familiar, some strange—all smooth shaven “before the war” except for rudimentary side whiskers in some portraitures of John Quincy Adams, and all bearded or mustached since Lincoln's time except Johnson, McKinley and Wilson. And as the Presidents pass before our eyes let us imagine each as expressing in turn a sentiment concerning the capital, which shall be the essence of his representations on this subject in his messages to Congress.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

The first President did much, wrote many letters, but said little in his formal messages to Congress in relation to the city which he created and which was named after him. In his third annual address, October 25, 1791, he declares that the district of ten-miles-square for the permanent seat of government has been fixed and announced by proclamation.

“A city has also been laid out . . . and as there is a prospect, favored by the rate of sales which have already taken place, of ample funds for carrying on the necessary public buildings there is every expectation of their due progress.”

In a letter to Congress, January 8, 1796, he announces that he has accepted "the grants of money and of land" in connection with the permanent seat of government and says:

"I have no doubt if the remaining resources are properly cherished so as to prevent the loss of property by hasty and numerous sales that all the buildings required for the accommodation of the government of the United States may be completed in season *without aid from the federal Treasury.*"

He proposes a national university at Washington.

JOHN ADAMS.

In his fourth annual address, November 22, 1800, the first delivered in Washington, as the permanent seat of government, Adams congratulated Congress "on the prospect of a residence *not to be changed.*"

"It is with you to consider whether the local powers over the District of Columbia, vested by the Constitution in the Congress of the United States, shall be immediately exercised. If in your opinion this *important* trust ought now to be executed you cannot fail while performing it to take into view the future probable situation of the territory for the happiness of which you are about to provide. You will consider it as the capital of a great nation, advancing with unexampled rapidity in arts, in commerce, in wealth and in population, and possessing in itself those energies and resources which if not thrown away or lamentably misdirected will secure to it a long course of prosperity and self-government."

In his reply to an address of the Senate, November 26, 1800, he says:

"It is my fervent prayer that in this city the foundations of wisdom may be always opened and the streams of eloquence forever flow. Here may the youth of this extensive country forever look up without disappointment not only to the monu-

ments and memorials of the dead, but to the example of the living *in the members of Congress and officers of government*, for finished models of all those virtues, graces, talents and accomplishments which constitute the dignity of human nature and lay the only foundation for the prosperity or duration of empires.”

Probably the foundations of wisdom in accordance with the petition of President Adams have at the capital been always opened; certainly streams of eloquence here forever flow. And one has only to scrutinize and attentively consider “the members of Congress and officers of government” who now grace the nation’s city to appreciate how thoroughly President Adams’s fervent wish has been met that these officials should be to the nation’s youth “examples” and “finished models of all those virtues, graces, talents and accomplishments which constitute the dignity of human nature and lay the only foundation for the prosperity or duration of empires.”

But while both branches of President Adams’s petition—that for considerate legislation for Washington as “the capital of a great nation” and that for Congress to serve as a finished model of all the virtues and graces—are reasonably met by the national legislature in this year of our Lord, 1916, it is to be noted that for four fifths of a century members of Congress paid much more attention to the second than to the first petition, woefully neglecting the capital’s legislative needs and apparently assuming that the capital’s privilege of profiting by the uplifting influence of their example constituted satisfaction in full of their constitutional obligation to the city.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

In his message to Congress, January 11, 1802, Jefferson protests against the hasty forced sale of the lots

donated to the government. He recognizes "a residuary interest of the city" in these lots, pointing out that if wisely handled they would not only meet the national requirements, but would "insure a considerable surplus to the city to be employed for its improvement." He added:

"If indulgence for the fund can be admitted they will probably form a resource of great and permanent value, and their embarrassments have been produced only by overstrained exertion to provide accommodations for the government of the Union."

Like Washington, Jefferson was anxious that the heritage, so to speak, of the ward of the nation in gifts of land and money should not be wasted by its injudicious national guardian. Unfortunately, too little heed was paid to these admonitions, and the foundation was thereby laid for the evils subsequently imposed upon the District through national mishandling of its finances.

Jefferson suggests also a national establishment for education founded on an endowment of lands.

In his message, January 24, 1803, Jefferson records the fact that the marshal of the District of Columbia has, as directed by law, caused a jail to be built (in part) in the city of Washington, and reports that "the portion actually completed has rendered the situation of the persons confined there much more comfortable and secure than it has been heretofore." The first municipal improvement which figures in a President's message is thus the jail.

JAMES MADISON.

Madison advocated forcibly and repeatedly George Washington's project, indorsed by Jefferson, of a national university at the capital, "the expense of

which," he suggests, in 1810, "might be defrayed or reimbursed out of the vacant grounds which have accrued to the nation within those limits." In 1815 he said:

"Such an institution claims the patronage of Congress as a monument of their solicitude for the advancement of knowledge, without which the blessings of liberty cannot be fully enjoyed or long preserved; as a model instructive in the formation of other seminaries; as a nursery of enlightened preceptors, and as a central resort of youth and genius from every part of the country, diffusing on their return examples of those national feelings, those liberal sentiments and those congenial manners which contribute cement to our Union and strength to the great political fabric of which that is the foundation."

Madison's views concerning the political status of the District are set forth in the *Federalist*, but are not repeated in his messages.

JAMES MONROE.

In his first message (1817) Monroe called attention to the unfinished condition of the Capitol and other public buildings and said:

"The time seems to have arrived when this subject may be deemed worthy the attention of Congress on a scale adequate to national purposes. . . . Most nations have taken an interest and a pride in the improvement and ornament of their metropolis, and none were more conspicuous in this respect than the ancient republics. The policy which dictated the establishment of a permanent residence for the National Government and the spirit in which it was commenced and has been prosecuted show that such improvement was thought worthy the attention of this nation."

Monroe not only vigorously advocated the material

development and adornment of the city and rebuked neglect of the capital and the lack of national sentiment and national pride which caused it, but he also gave sympathetic consideration to the political disability of the people of Washington, and to the status of the men of the city.

After eighteen years of life the subject of government in the District became the text of presidential recommendation. In his second annual message, November 16, 1818, Monroe says:

“The situation of this District, it is thought, requires the attention of Congress. By the Constitution the power of legislation is exclusively vested in the Congress of the United States. In the exercise of this power, *in which the people have no participation*, Congress legislates in all cases directly on the local concerns of the District. As this is a *departure*, for a special purpose, *from the general principles of our system*, it may merit consideration whether an arrangement *better adapted to the principles* of our government and to the particular interests of the people may not be devised which will neither *infringe the Constitution* nor affect the object which the provision in question was intended to secure. The growing population, already considerable, and the increasing business of the District, which, it is believed, already interferes with the deliberations of Congress on great national concerns, furnish additional motives for recommending this subject to your consideration.”

Monroe touches, in his last as in his first message, on the improvement of the capital's material condition. In his eighth annual message, December 7, 1824, he says:

“It is thought that attention is also due to the improvement of this city. The communication between the public buildings and in various other parts and the grounds around these buildings require it. It is presumed also that the com-

pletion of the canal from the Tiber to the Eastern branch would have a very salutary effect. Great exertions have been made and expenses incurred by the citizens in improvements of various kinds, but those which are suggested belong exclusively to the government, or are of a nature to require expenditures beyond their resources. The *public lots* which are still for sale would, it is not doubted, be more than adequate to these purposes.”

(Monroe, December 6, 1824, transmitted to the House a complete statement of the lots belonging to the United States which have been sold, etc., etc., and the purpose to which the money received therefor has been applied.)

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Adams was personally interested in Washington on educational and scientific lines. In his first message (1825) he referred to Washington's earnest and repeated recommendation of the establishment of a seminary of learning here, and said:

“In surveying the city which has been honored with his name he would have seen the spot of earth which he had destined and bequeathed to the use and benefit of his country as the site for a university, still bare and barren.”

He refers also to the proposed monument to Washington in the capital, which had been ordered by Congress. In later messages he notes the beginning and completion of a penitentiary here, and suggests suitable regulations for its government.

ANDREW JACKSON.

Jackson showed strong personal interest in Washington—in the material improvement of the city; in the construction of a bridge across the Potomac; in recommending codification of its obsolete or obso-

lescent overlapping and contradictory laws; and in urging the extension of equitable political rights consistent with the Constitution. He alluded to these topics repeatedly in his messages. In his second annual message, December 6, 1830, he says:

“Your attention is respectfully invited to the situation of the District of Columbia. Placed by the Constitution under the exclusive jurisdiction and control of Congress, this District is certainly entitled to a much greater share of its consideration than it has yet received. There is a want of uniformity in its laws, particularly in those of a penal character, which increases the expense of their administration and subjects the people to all the inconveniences which result from the operation of different codes in so small a territory. On different sides of the Potomac the same offense is punishable in unequal degrees, and the peculiarities of many of the early laws of Maryland and Virginia remain in force, notwithstanding their repugnance in some cases to the improvements which have superseded them in those states.”

Jackson was thus the first of the Presidents to call attention to the lack of uniformity in the capital's laws and, in fact, to suggest their codification. He made further reference to this subject in his third annual message, December 6, 1831. These early recommendations suggest what has been attempted and in comparatively recent years in part accomplished in codification of the District laws through the coöperation of the Board of Trade, the Bar Association and the local judges, and culminating in congressional enactment.

Jackson was also the first of the Presidents to urge specifically representation of the District in Congress by an elected delegate, an experiment made later under the territorial form of government of the 70's. He refers to this subject in his messages of 1830, 1831 and 1835.

1830—"Besides a remedy for these evils which is loudly called for it is respectfully submitted whether a provision authorizing the election of a delegate to represent the wants of the citizens of this District on the floor of Congress is not due to them and to the character of our government. No portion of our citizens should be without a practical enjoyment of the principles of freedom, and there is none more important than that which cultivates a proper relation between the government and the governed. Imperfect as this must be in this case, yet it is believed that it would be greatly improved by representation in Congress with the same privileges that are allowed to the other territories of the United States."

1831—"I deem it my duty again to call your attention to the condition of the District of Columbia. It was doubtless wise in the framers of our Constitution to place the people of this District under the jurisdiction of the general government, but to accomplish the objects they had in view it is not necessary that this people should be deprived of all the privileges of self-government. Independently of the difficulty of inducing the representatives of distant states to turn their attention to projects of laws which are not of the highest interest to their constituents, they are not individually, nor in Congress collectively, well qualified to legislate over the local concerns of this District. Consequently its interests are much neglected and the people are almost afraid to present their grievances, lest a body in which they are not represented and which feels little sympathy in their local relations should in its attempt to make laws for them do more harm than good. Governed by the laws of the states whence they were severed, the two shores of the Potomac within the ten miles square have different penal codes—not the present codes of Virginia and Maryland, but such as existed in those states at the time of the cession to the United States. As Congress will not form a new code, and as the people of the District cannot make one for themselves, they are virtually under two governments. Is it not just to allow them at least a delegate to Congress, if not a local legislature, to make laws for the District, subject to the approval or rejection of Congress? I earnestly recom-

mend the extension to them of every political right which their interests require and which may be compatible with the Constitution." 1835.—"I earnestly recommend the extension of every political right to the citizens of this District which their true interests require, and which does not conflict with the provisions of the Constitution. It is believed that the laws for the government of the District require revision and amendment, and that much good may be done by modifying the penal code so as to give uniformity to its provisions."

In his messages of 1832, 1834 and 1836 Jackson showed his deep personal interest in the subject of a bridge across the Potomac river at Washington, which was built during his administration.

During Jackson's administration the District went into bankruptcy financially and Congress came to its relief on the basis of Senator Southard's report and on the recommendation of President Jackson, who in his seventh annual message, December 7, 1835, said:

"It is my duty to call the particular attention of Congress to the present condition of the District of Columbia. From whatever cause the great depression has arisen which now exists in the pecuniary concerns of this District, it is proper that its situation should be fully understood and such relief or remedies provided as are consistent with the powers of Congress."

MARTIN VAN BUREN.

Van Buren repeats Jackson's recommendations of wise and considerate treatment of the subject of laws for the District, calls attention to the lack of uniformity in these laws and urges a "liberal and even generous attention to the interests of the District and a thorough and careful revision of its local government." (First annual message, December 5, 1837.)

There is also referred to in one of Van Buren's mes-

sages the subject of "a plan and estimate for the improvement of Pennsylvania Avenue west of the President's square, and for the construction of a stone bridge across Rock creek, etc."

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.

Harrison took up the question of the political status of the Washingtonian, referred to by Monroe and Van Buren and specifically treated by Jackson, and discussed it sympathetically and earnestly.

Inaugural address, March 4, 1841:

"Amongst the other duties of a delicate character which the President is called upon to perform is the supervision of the government of the territories of the United States. Those of them which are destined to become members of our great political family are compensated by their rapid progress from infancy to manhood for the partial and temporary deprivation of their political rights. It is in this District only where American citizens are to be found who, under a settled policy, are deprived of many important political privileges without any inspiring hope as to the future. Their only consolation under circumstances of such deprivation is that of the devoted exterior guards of the camp—that their sufferings secure tranquility and safety within. Are there any of their countrymen who would subject them to greater sacrifices, to any other humiliations than those essentially necessary to the security of the object for which they were thus separated from their fellow-citizens? Are their rights alone not to be guaranteed by the application of those great principles upon which all our constitutions are founded? We are told by the greatest of British orators and statesmen that at the commencement of the war of the revolution the most stupid men in England spoke of 'their American subjects.' Are there, indeed, citizens of any of our states who have dreamed of their subjects in the District of Columbia? Such dreams can never be realized by any agency of mine. The people of the District

of Columbia are not the subjects of the people of the United States, but free American citizens. Being in the latter condition when the Constitution was formed, no words used in that instrument could have been intended to deprive them of that character. If there is anything in the great principle of unalienable rights so emphatically insisted upon in our Declaration of Independence, they could neither make, nor the United States accept, a surrender of their liberties and become the subjects—in other words, the slaves—of their former fellow-citizens. If this be true—and it will scarcely be denied by any one who has a correct idea of his own rights as an American citizen—the grant to Congress of exclusive jurisdiction in the District of Columbia can be interpreted, so far as respects the aggregate people of the United States, as meaning nothing more than to allow to Congress the controlling power necessary to afford a free and safe exercise of the functions assigned to the general government by the Constitution. In all other respects the legislation of Congress should be adapted to their peculiar positions and wants and be conformable with their deliberate opinions of their own interests.”

JOHN TYLER.

Tyler, in his message of 1841, first suggests that Congress should contribute toward the expense of an efficient police, and in 1844 he recommends that Congress organize “an asylum for the insane who may be found from time to time sojourning within the District.” His message of 1843 contained the first “glittering generality” recommendation—that is, one which calls upon Congress for serious and favorable consideration of the ward of the nation, but makes no specific recommendation upon which Congress is asked to act.

“Appointed by the Constitution its exclusive legislators, and forming in this particular the only anomaly in our system of government—of the legislative body being elected by others than those for whose advantage they are to legislate—

you will feel a superadded obligation to look well into their condition and leave no cause for complaint or regret. The seat of government of our associated republics cannot but be regarded as worthy of your parental care.”

JAMES K. POLK.

In his first message (1845) Polk says :

“The people of this District have no legislative body of their own and must confide their local as well as their general interests to representatives in whose election they have no voice and over whose official conduct they have no control. Each member of the national legislature should consider himself as their immediate representative and should be the more ready to give attention to their interests and wants because he is not responsible to them. I recommend that a liberal and generous spirit may characterize your measures in relation to them. I shall be ever disposed to show a proper regard for their wishes and within constitutional limits shall at all times cheerfully coöperate with you for the advancement of their welfare.”

ZACHARY TAYLOR.

In his first and only message (1849) Taylor said :

“Among the duties assigned by the Constitution to the general government is one of local and limited application, but not on that account the less obligatory. I allude to the trust committed to Congress as the exclusive legislator and sole guardian of the interests of the District of Columbia. I beg to commend these interests to your kind attention. As the national metropolis the city of Washington must be an object of general interest ; and founded, as it was, under the auspices of him whose immortal name it bears, its claims to the fostering care of Congress present themselves with additional strength. Whatever can contribute to its prosperity must enlist the feelings of its constitutional guardians and command their favorable consideration.”

MILLARD FILLMORE.

Fillmore, in his first message, said:

“This District, which has neither vote nor voice in your deliberations, looks to you for protection and aid, and I commend all its wants to your favorable consideration, with a full confidence that you will meet them, not only with justice, but with liberality. It should be borne in mind that in this city, laid out by Washington and consecrated by his name, is located the capital of our nation, the emblem of our Union and the symbol of our greatness. Here also are situated all the public buildings necessary for the use of the government, and all these are exempt from taxation. It should be the pride of Americans to render this place attractive to the people of the whole republic and convenient and safe for the transaction of the public business and the preservation of the public records. The government should therefore bear a liberal proportion of the burdens of all necessary and useful improvements.”

Thus Fillmore, in 1850, makes a well-worded general recommendation of consideration for the capital, urges that “the government should bear a liberal proportion of the burden of all necessary and useful improvements” and specifically that Congress should make provision of “an abundant supply of pure water.” He repeats the recommendation concerning water supply in 1852 and 1853. In the latter year the Meigs report on water supply was submitted. In 1852 Fillmore also added to his water supply proposition the recommendation of the construction of suitable bridges across the Potomac to replace those then recently destroyed by high water, of appropriations for grading and paving streets and avenues and embellishing the public grounds and of favorable consideration for the charitable institutions of the District.

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

Pierce pushes along (1853) the insane asylum project suggested by Tyler, the water supply project suggested by Fillmore and (1855) the codification project first suggested by Jackson, and recommends to the care of Congress not only the District's "material, but also its *moral* interests, including *education*." In renewing in 1854 previous recommendations concerning objects of deep interest to the District, he said:

"Many of these objects partake largely of a national character and are important independently of their relation to the prosperity of the only considerable organized community in the Union entirely unrepresented in Congress."

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Buchanan's references to the District consist almost entirely of "glittering generality" recommendations in 1857, '58, '59 and '60. In 1858 he transmitted to Congress a message with a report of the Attorney-General on the vote of the District on a proposed codification of the laws of the District, including his proclamation in accordance with which the election was held. (See *Star*, February 16, 1858, for result of code election: Washington and Georgetown, vote for code, 1,506; against code, 3,448. From *Star*:

"The vote upon the new code yesterday was not a large one, the unpleasant nature of the walking, doubtless, deterring many from visiting the polls.") 1857—"Without a representative on the floor of Congress, they have for this very reason peculiar claims upon our just regard. To this I know from my long acquaintance with them they are well entitled." 1858—"As the residence of Congress and the executive departments of the government, we cannot fail to feel a deep concern in its welfare. This is heightened by the high character and the

peaceful and orderly conduct of its resident inhabitants." 1859—"Surely the city bearing the name of Washington and destined, I trust, for ages to be the capital of our united, free and prosperous confederacy, has strong claims on our favorable regard."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Lincoln touched in the way of favorable recommendations upon the re-retrocession of the Virginia portion of the ten miles square, the abolition of slavery in the District, legislation for railroads to the city and local benevolent institutions. His reference to retrocession is contained in his first annual message, 1861, and is in the following words:

"The present insurrection shows, I think, that the extension of this District across the Potomac at the time of establishing the capital here was eminently wise, and consequently that the relinquishment of that portion of it which lies within the state of Virginia was unwise and dangerous. I submit for your consideration the expediency of regaining that part of the District and the restoration of the original boundaries thereof through negotiation with the state of Virginia."

In the same message he refers to the hardships endured by the city as the result of civil war, as follows:

"I recommend to the favorable consideration of Congress the interests of the District of Columbia. The insurrection has been the cause of much suffering and sacrifice to its inhabitants, and as they have no representative in Congress that body should not overlook their just claims upon the government."

Additional favorable recommendations by Lincoln (April 16, 1862) touched upon minor amendments to the act providing compensated emancipation of slaves in the District (January 21, 1863); relating to and urging the construction of certain railroads concen-

trating upon the city of Washington and (1863 and 1864) commending the local benevolent institutions to the government's generous and fostering care.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

Johnson (1866) repeats Jackson's recommendation of a territorial delegate in Congress for the District and argues for it; and in a message (January 5, 1867) vetoing an act to regulate the elective franchise in the District of Columbia which provided for unqualified negro suffrage in the District, though special elections held in Washington and Georgetown had shown an almost unanimous vote against such suffrage, he discusses elaborately and interestingly the political status of the Washingtonian. (The local referendum vote, which showed only 35 in favor of the measure in Washington and one in Georgetown, had not been authorized by Congress, and Johnson's veto was overruled and the bill became a law, notwithstanding the veto, on the day on which it was returned to Congress.) Johnson's argument is especially strong in urging that Congress, in acting as local legislature, should take into consideration and as far as possible give effect to the wishes of the people of the District. It breathes the same spirit as President William Henry Harrison's inaugural of 1841.

ULYSSES S. GRANT.

Grant, in 1871-72 and '73, briefly commends the territorial government of the District under act of Congress, February 21, 1871, and urges that Congress bear its just share of the expense of carrying out a judicious system of improvements. In 1873, for instance, he said:

“Under the very efficient management of the governor and

the board of public works of this District the city of Washington is rapidly assuming the appearance of the capital of which the nation may well be proud. From being a most unsightly place three years ago, disagreeable to pass through in summer in consequence of the dust arising from unpaved streets and almost impassable in the winter from the mud, it is now one of the most sightly cities in the country and can boast of being the best paved. The work has been done systematically, the plans, grades, location of sewer, water and gas mains being determined upon before the work was commenced, thus securing permanency when completed. I question whether so much has ever been accomplished before in any American city for the same expenditure. The government having large reservations in the city and the nation at large having an interest in their capital, I recommend a liberal policy toward the District of Columbia and that the government should bear its just share of the expense of these improvements. Every citizen visiting the capital feels a pride in its growing beauty and that he, too, is part owner in the investments made here."

Grant was strongly of the opinion that Washington was naturally, and should be developed as, a national educational center. In 1873 he said:

"I would suggest to Congress the propriety of promoting the establishment in this District of an institution of learning or university of the highest class by the donation of land. There is no place better suited for such an institution than the National Capital. There is no other place in which every citizen is so directly interested."

In 1874, in transmitting the report of the Commissioners appointed under the act of June 20, 1874, to wind up the affairs of the District government, he says:

"In my opinion the District of Columbia should be regarded as the *grounds* of the National Capital in which the entire people are interested. I do not allude to this to urge

generous appropriations to the District, but to draw the attention of Congress in framing a law for the government of the District to the magnificent scale on which the city was planned by the founders of the government; the manner in which for ornamental purposes the reservations, streets and avenues were laid out and the proportion of the property actually possessed by the general government. I think the proportion of the expenses of the government and improvements to be borne by the general government, the cities of Washington and Georgetown, and the county should be carefully and equitably defined."

These brief references from Grant's messages call attention to the fact that in his administration an important chapter of District history was written; the territorial government lived and died; the first (temporary) commission government went into operation. Grant's message of 1874 puts in definite shape the proposition concerning the financial relations of nation and capital upon which the organic act of 1878 is based. Grant was a man of deeds rather than words, but in both respects he was one of the most vigorous and effective champions of the Capital city among the Presidents.

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES.

Hayes (1877) earnestly urges a permanent adjustment by Congress of the financial relations between the United States and the District. He says:

"The capital of the United States belongs to the nation, and it is natural that the American people should take pride in the seat of their national government and desire it to be an ornament to the country. Much has been done to render it healthful, convenient and attractive. But much remains to be done which its permanent inhabitants are not able and ought not to be expected to do. To impose upon them a large proportion of the cost required for public improvements

which are in a great measure planned and executed for the convenience of the government and of the many thousands of visitors from all parts of the country who temporarily reside at the capital of the nation is an evident injustice. Special attention is asked by the Commissioners of the District in their report, which is herewith transmitted, to the importance of a permanent adjustment by Congress of the financial relations between the United States and the District involving the regular annual contributions by the United States of its just proportion of the expenses of the District government and of the outlay for all needed public improvements and such measures of relief from the burden of taxation now resting upon the people of the District as in the wisdom of Congress may be deemed just."

Again, in 1878, he says:

"The relative expenditures by the United States and the District for local purposes are contrasted, showing that the expenditures by the people of the District greatly exceed those of the general government. The exhibit is made in connection with estimates for the requisite repair of the defective pavements and sewers of the city, which is a work of immediate necessity; and in the same connection a plan is presented for the permanent funding of the outstanding securities of the District."

Another important project vigorously and repeatedly (1877, 1878, 1879, 1880) recommended by Hayes is that of reclamation of the Potomac flats. He also commends the suggestion of the organization of a board of charities, liberal appropriations for the public schools and for benevolent, reformatory and penal institutions of the District, for an increased water supply and for removal from their existing locations of the railroad depots. In 1879 he said:

"The cause of popular education in the District of Columbia is surely entitled to the same consideration at the hands of

the national government as in the several states and territories to which munificent grants of the public lands have been made for the endowment of schools and universities.”

In 1880 he said:

“The acts of Congress from time to time donating public lands to the several states and territories in aid of educational interests have proved to be wise measures of public policy resulting in great and lasting benefit. It would seem to be a matter of simple justice to extend the benefits of this legislation, the wisdom of which has been so fully vindicated by experience, to the District of Columbia.”

Most of Hayes’ recommendations repeat and urge upon the attention of Congress recommendations made in the reports of the District Commissioners, and on the points above noted the Commissioners’ reports, particularly that of 1878, should be carefully noted, especially in relation to the discussion of the financial relations of the District and the national government and of national aid to local education.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR.

Arthur (1881–1884) briefly recommends reclamation of the Potomac flats, abolition of grade crossings and relocation of steam railroad depots and erection of a suitable building for District offices. In 1882 he said:

“I hope that however numerous and urgent may be the demands upon your attention the interests of this District will not be forgotten. The denial to its residents of the great right of suffrage in all its relations to national, state and municipal action imposes upon Congress the duty of affording them the best administration which its wisdom can devise.”

GROVER CLEVELAND.

Cleveland (1885–1888) briefly recommends legislation eliminating grade crossings, for the construction

of a District government building, for codification of the District laws and clothing the Commissioners "with the power to make within fixed limitation police regulations. I believe this power granted and carefully guarded would tend to subserve the good order of the municipality."

BENJAMIN HARRISON.

Harrison (1889-1892) recommends the enactment of stringent restriction and limitation upon the liquor traffic, and the enactment of an adequate law relating to crimes against chastity.

WILLIAM MCKINLEY.

The great local feature of McKinley's messages is the centennial anniversary of the founding of the city of Washington as permanent capital of the United States. The appointment of a committee and an appropriation for this purpose were urged by him in 1898; the subject was further treated, and in the same connection the memorial bridge project was advocated in the message of 1899; and there is a final reference to the centennial celebration in the message of 1900. Concerning the memorial bridge he said, in 1899:

"Congress at its last session appropriated \$5,000 'to enable the chief of engineers of the army to continue the examination of the subject and to make or secure designs, calculations and estimates for a memorial bridge from the most convenient point of the Naval Observatory grounds or adjacent thereto across the Potomac river to the most convenient point of the Arlington estate property.' In accordance with the provision of this act the chief of engineers has selected four eminent bridge engineers to submit competitive designs for a bridge combining the elements of strength and durability and such architectural embellishment and ornamentation as will fitly apply to the dedication, 'a memorial to American patriotism.'

The designs are now being prepared and as soon as completed will be submitted to Congress by the Secretary of War. The proposed bridge will be a convenience to all the people from every part of the country who visit the national cemetery and an ornament to the capital of the nation and forever stand as a monument to American patriotism. I do not doubt that Congress will give to the enterprise still further proof of its favor and approval."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Roosevelt's recommendations in messages regular and special (1902-1909) concerning District affairs had with one exception reference to social and economic legislation and many of them were obviously not conceived so much to meet local needs as for the national benefit, using the national power of legislation for the capital to secure the passage of experimental laws which might serve as a model for the states of the Union in which the actual conditions existed which this legislation was primarily intended to meet. Of this character are Roosevelt's recommendations concerning labor legislation in general, severe child labor and factory inspection laws and legislative prohibition against the working of married women in factories. Other recommendations like those for juvenile courts, public playgrounds, improvement of housing conditions, industrial and technical education in the schools, etc., while proposed primarily in their national aspect, are of great importance to Washington also. In transmitting the report of the jail and workhouse commission to Congress, Roosevelt gives vigorous and effective indorsement to their recommendations. The exception to the rule that Roosevelt's local recommendations have had reference to social and economic legislation of a desirable and helpful character is in his indorse-

ment of the Reynolds report recommending a change in the form of the District's government.

WILLIAM H. TAFT.

In his first annual message (December 7, 1909), Taft vigorously urged upon the attention of Congress conditions at the District jail. He said:

“The Congress has taken action . . . to the extent of appropriating funds and enacting the necessary legislation for the establishment of a workhouse and reformatory. No action, however, has been taken by the Congress with respect to the jail, the conditions of which are still antiquated and insanitary. I earnestly recommend the passage of a sufficient appropriation to enable a thorough remodeling of that institution to be made without delay. It is a reproach to the National Capital that almost under the shadow of the Capitol dome prisoners should be confined in a building destitute of the ordinary decent appliances requisite to cleanliness and sanitary conditions.”

It has been noted that the first reference in a presidential message to a local municipal institution was to the jail by Thomas Jefferson. This institution should continue to be a subject of reference by the successive Presidents of to-day until the evil conditions in respect to it are cured.

In his second message (December 6, 1910), Taft goes thoroughly and thoughtfully into practical recommendations designed to promote the city's welfare.

He commends as “good” and “not extravagant” the municipal government of the District of Columbia; but holds that the fact that Washington is governed by Congress and that the citizens have no direct control through popular elections in District matters properly subjects the government to inquiry and criticism by its citizens manifested through the public press and other-

wise and that "*such criticism should command the careful attention of Congress.*" (In other words: Since Congress has exclusive power of legislation and the people of the city are unrepresented in it, Congress in exercising this power should give careful attention to public opinion, to the views and wishes of these unrepresented constituents and legislate in local concerns in the light of this public opinion, giving to it the fullest and fairest consideration before action. See Harrison and Johnson to same effect. This is sound doctrine and applies as forcibly to the executive in making local appointments as to Congress in legislating.) Taft makes no recommendation of a change in local government unless the enlargement of the powers of the Commissioners by restoring to them control of the public schools and conferring upon them the powers of a public service commission (both of which Taft specifically urges) are to be construed as such changes.

Taft shows in many ways the deep interest in the development of the capital's park system, which he and Mrs. Taft have manifested, especially in connection with Potomac speedway and park. In the interest of greater efficiency and economy in the work and of greater harmony in park development, he recommends that the jurisdiction of the office of public buildings and grounds be extended over all the parks and public grounds of the District of Columbia; and to prevent encroachments upon the park area that the erection of any permanent structure thereon be prohibited except by specific authority of Congress. He recommends the extension of Washington's park system across the Potomac, so as to include the land in Virginia "which lies along the Potomac river above the railroad bridge and across the Potomac, including Arlington cemetery, Fort Myer, the government experiment farm, the

village of Rosslyn and the palisades of the Potomac, reaching to where the old District line intersects the river." He urges the elimination of notorious Willow Tree alley and the substitution for it of a little park and playground as the first step in a campaign against "centers in the interior squares where the very poor and the criminal classes as well huddled together in filth and noisome surroundings," and for the substitution in place of "these nuclei of disease and suffering and vice" of "small parks as breathing places and model tenements." In respect to the finances of the city Taft recommends the enactment of the so-called Judson bill "which will insure the gradual extinguishment of the District's debt, while at the same time requiring that the many permanent improvements needed to complete a fitting capital city shall be carried on from year to year and at a proper rate of progress with funds derived from the rapidly increasing revenues."

These specific recommendations above stated are in pursuance of a broad general policy in respect to the capital which Taft puts in the following words:

"Washington is the capital of the nation and its maintenance as a great and beautiful city under national control every lover of his country has much at heart; and it should present in every way a model in respect of economy of expenditure, of sanitation, of tenement reform, of thorough public instruction, of the proper regulation of public utilities, of sensible and extended charities, of the proper care of criminals and of youth needing reform, of healthful playgrounds and opportunity for popular recreation and of a beautiful system of parks."

Taft's suggestions have a wide scope, including wise and economical government, and the health, schooling, morals and external attractiveness of the capital.

In his message of December 19, 1912, Taft renews

several of his 1910 recommendations. He opposes franchise and elective government in Washington, saying:

“The truth is this is a city governed by a popular body, to wit, the Congress of the United States, selected from the people of the United States who own Washington. The people who come here to live do so with the knowledge of the origin of the city and the restrictions, and therefore voluntarily give up the privilege of living in a city governed by popular vote. Washington is so unique in its origin and in its use for housing and localizing the sovereignty of the nation that the people who live here must regard its peculiar character and must be content to subject themselves to the control of a body selected by all the people of all the nation.”

He suggests extension of the Commissioners' power to make police regulations, vigorously indorses park extension on the L'Enfant plan, new department buildings and the union of Potomac Park, Rock Creek Park and Soldiers' Home grounds. The Lincoln Memorial and a memorial bridge from the base of the Lincoln Monument to Arlington, would, he says, be an appropriate and symbolic expression of the Union of the North and South at the Capital of the Nation.

AN ARSENAL OF FACTS FOR CITY'S DEFENSE.

These presidential thoughts concerning Washington not only constitute an interesting record of what has been done, but a treasury and arsenal of facts, figures and opinions of value in reaching a wise conclusion as to what shall be done to develop and to promote the welfare of the capital. There is to be found in the messages the suggestion of the beginnings and various stages of development of nearly every great project, material or political, affecting the capital. For instance, from the time of Washington, Adams, Jeffer-

son and Monroe, sidelights are thrown on the circumstances surrounding the creation of the capital by the nation, the responsibility of the nation for its city, and the financial relations of nation and capital in the National Capital partnership; first in discussion of the wise disposition of the capital's land endowment; then in Jackson's time, in connection with the city's bankruptcy of 1835, in the attempt of the people of the city to perform unaided the nation's task of capital development; and then under Grant and Hayes, in the wise readjustments created by the acts of 1874 and 1878. (See Senator Southard's report in Jackson's administration and in connection with Jackson's sympathetic reference to the city's financial condition and needs.)

FINANCIAL RELATIONS OF NATION AND CAPITAL.

Washington and Jefferson urged vigorously and repeatedly the wise conservation of the capital's resources, especially its land endowment, out of which the public buildings were to be erected and the city developed and improved. Said Washington:

"I have no doubt if the remaining resources are properly cherished so as to prevent the loss of property by hasty and numerous sales, that all the buildings required for the accommodation of the government of the United States may be completed in season *without aid from the national treasury.*"

Said Jefferson:

"The lots in the city . . . are deemed not only equal to the indemnification of the public, but *to insure a considerable surplus to the city to be employed for its improvement*, provided they are offered for sale only in sufficient numbers to meet the existing demand. . . . These sums would require sales so far beyond the actual demand of the market that it is

apprehended that the whole property may be thereby sacrificed and *the residuary interest of the city entirely lost*. . . . If indulgence for the funds can be admitted, they will probably form a *resource of great and permanent value*, and *these embarrassments have been produced only by overstrained exertions to provide accommodations for the government of the Union.*”

Said Monroe in urging national liberality in capital development:

“Great exertions have been made and expenses incurred by the citizens in improvements of various kinds; but those which are suggested belong exclusively to the government, or are of a nature to require expenditures beyond their resources. The public lots which are still for sale would, it is not doubted, be more than adequate to these purposes.”

Said Jackson in suggesting sympathetic consideration of the financial conditions of the capital, which had bankrupted itself in the attempt to perform unaided the nation’s task of capital-making:

“From whatever cause the great depression has arisen which now exists in the pecuniary concerns of the District, it is proper that its situation should be fully understood and such relief or remedies provided as are consistent with the powers of Congress.”

Van Buren said:

“I am well aware of the various subjects of greater magnitude and immediate interest that press themselves on the consideration of Congress, but I believe that there is not one that appeals more directly to its justice than a *liberal and even generous* attention to the interests of the District of Columbia.”

Said Fillmore concerning the capital, urging that its needs be met, “not only with justice, but with liberality”:

“Here also are situated all the public buildings necessary for the use of the government, and *all these are exempt from taxation*. It should be the pride of Americans to render this place attractive to the people of the whole republic and convenient and safe for the transaction of the public business and the preservation of the public records. *The government should therefore bear a liberal proportion of the burdens of all necessary and useful improvements.*”

Said Lincoln:

“The insurrection has been the cause of much sacrifice and suffering to its inhabitants, and as they have no representative in Congress that body should not overlook their just claims upon the government.”

Said Grant (1871):

“Under the direction of the territorial officers a system of improvements has been inaugurated by means of which Washington is rapidly becoming a city worthy of the nation’s capital. The citizens of the District having voluntarily taxed themselves to a large amount for the purpose of contributing to the adornment of the seat of government, I recommend liberal appropriations on the part of Congress in order that the government may bear its just share of the expense of carrying out a judicious system of improvements;” (1872) “The nation, being a large owner of property in the city, should bear with the citizens of the District its just share of the expense of these improvements;” (1873) “The government, having large reservations in the city and the nation at large having an interest in their capital, I recommend a liberal policy toward the District of Columbia, and that the government should bear its just share of the expense of these improvements. Every citizen visiting the capital feels a pride in its growing beauty and that he, too, is part owner in the investments made here;” (1874) “I think the proportion of the expenses of the government and improvements to be borne by the general government, the cities of Washington and Georgetown and the county should be carefully and equitably defined.”

Said Hayes (1877):

“The capital of the United States belongs to the nation, and it is natural that the American people should take pride in the seat of their national government and desire it to be an ornament to the country. Much has been done to render it healthful, convenient and attractive but much remains to be done which its permanent inhabitants are not able and ought not to be expected to do. To impose upon them a large proportion of the cost required for public improvements, which are in a great measure planned and executed for the convenience of the government and of the many thousands of visitors from all parts of the country who temporarily reside at the capital of the nation, is an evident injustice. Special attention is asked by the Commissioners of the District . . . to the importance of a permanent adjustment by Congress of the financial relations between the United States and the District, involving the regular annual contribution by the United States of its just proportion of the expenses of the District government and of the outlay for all needed public improvements and such measures of relief from the burden of taxation now resting upon the people of the District as in the wisdom of Congress may be deemed just;” (1878) “The relative expenditures by the United States and the District for local purposes are contrasted, showing that the expenditures by the people of the District greatly exceed those of the general government.”

Taft (1910) urged financial legislation for the District, “which will insure the gradual extinguishment of the District’s debt while at the same time requiring that the many permanent improvements needed to complete a fitting capital city shall be carried on from year to year and at a proper rate of progress with funds derived from the rapidly increasing revenues.”

WASHINGTON AS AN EDUCATIONAL CENTER.

Concerning Washington as the site of a national university and as a natural educational center of the re-

public, George Washington in his messages as well as in his letters and his will, Jefferson and Madison in messages, Monroe in his letter commending Columbian College, John Quincy Adams, Grant and Hayes have put themselves vigorously on record. These men did not assent for a moment to the doctrine propounded not long ago through influences hostile to the capital that Washington is not a natural educational center even for the District of Columbia, and that Johns Hopkins and the University of Virginia suffice to meet the local needs of higher education. [See messages (George Washington), vol. 1, pages 66 and 202; (Jefferson), vol. 1, pages 409-410; (Madison), vol. 1, pages 485, 568, 576.

See also messages Pierce (1858), concerning "Moral interests, including education"; Grant (1873), University with land grant at Washington; Hayes (1877 to 1879), Land grants, etc., to public education in Washington.]

MISCELLANEOUS MUNICIPAL CONCERNS.

A few other recommendations for the material welfare of the District are distributed as follows among the Presidents: Jail—Jefferson, Roosevelt, Taft. Codification of laws—Jackson (1830, etc.), Van Buren (1837), Pierce (1855), Buchanan (1858), Cleveland (1886, 1888). Potomac bridges—Jackson (1832, 1834 and 1836), Fillmore (1852), Cleveland (1886), McKinley (1899), Taft (1912). Water supply—Fillmore (1850, 1852, 1853), Pierce (1853), Hayes (1880). Insane Asylum—Tyler (1843), Pierce (1853). Police—Tyler (1841). Reclamation of Potomac flats—Hayes (1877 to 1880). Public improvements, streets, public grounds, canals, etc.—Monroe (1824), Fillmore (1852), Grant (1873, etc.). Charitable institutions—Fillmore

(1852), Lincoln (1863-4), Hayes (1878). Board of charities—Hayes (1877). Railroads in Washington—Lincoln (1861), Hayes (1878), Arthur (1881). New District building—Arthur (1884), Cleveland (1886). Liquor laws—Cleveland (1885 to 1888), Harrison (1889 to 1892). Sewerage commission—Harrison (1889). National Capital centennial—McKinley (1898, 1899, 1900). Social and economic legislation—Roosevelt, Taft. Park extension—Taft.

THE PRESIDENTS AND THE PEOPLE OF WASHINGTON.

The Presidents have not neglected to consider the welfare either of the national city, with its streets, parks, buildings and monuments, or of the people composing the real city, the National Capital community. And in thinking wisely and sympathetically concerning this community they have planned to meet not only the people's moral and intellectual needs, but to satisfy so far as the national interests permit their political rights as American citizens. It is only of late years that the monstrous doctrine is propounded that the national interest requires that 350,000 or half a million or a million of Americans at the seat of government shall be forever de-Americanized, remaining perpetual aliens so far as representation in the legislative and executive branches of government is concerned, and less than aliens (the Supreme Court has said) in their relation to the judicial branch of the national government.

Concerning the government of the District and the political rights of its people are the references of Monroe (1818), Jackson (1830, 1831 and 1835), Van Buren, William Henry Harrison (1841), Johnson (1866), Grant (1871, 1872, 1873, 1874), Hayes (1877 to 1880, inclusive), Cleveland (concerning police regula-

tions) 1886, Roosevelt (transmitting Reynolds report), 1908, and Taft (in opposition to local franchise), 1912. In the same connection are to be considered the local referendum vote under Buchanan (1858), and Johnson's veto message (1866), discussing the right of the people of the capital to cast a referendum vote which should be respected by Congress.

PECULIAR POLITICAL RELATION AND OBLIGATION OF
NATION TO CAPITAL.

Practically all of the Presidents either by word or act or both declare that the fact that the District is governed by a legislature which it has not chosen and in which it is not even fractionally represented, imposes upon this legislature a peculiar obligation of sympathetic consideration of the District's welfare, compelling, according to some of the Presidents, the careful ascertainment and the scrupulous carrying out of the reasonable wishes concerning its own local affairs of the unrepresented community itself.

The thought that the constitutional power of exclusive legislation conferred upon Congress imposes a special and peculiar obligation is expressed in varying forms of words by many Presidents. For example, Van Buren (1837) said:

“Your attention has heretofore been frequently called to the affairs of the District of Columbia and I should not again ask it did not their entire dependence on Congress give them a constant claim upon its notice. Separated by the Constitution from the rest of the Union, limited in extent and aided by no legislature of its own, it would seem to be a spot where a wise and uniform system of local government might have been easily adopted. This District has, however, unfortunately been left to linger behind the rest of the Union.”

Polk (1845) said:

“The people of this District have no legislative body of their own and must confide their local as well as their general interests to representatives in whose election they have no voice and over whose official conduct they have no control. Each member of the national legislature should consider himself as their immediate representative and should be the more ready to give attention to their interests and wants because he is not responsible to them. I recommend that a liberal and generous spirit may characterize your measures in relation to them. I shall be ever disposed to show a proper regard for their wishes and within constitutional limits shall at all times cheerfully coöperate with you for the advancement of their welfare.”

Fillmore (1849) said:

“This District which has neither vote nor voice in your deliberations looks to you for protection and aid and I commend all its wants to your favorable consideration with a full confidence that you will meet them not only with justice but with liberality.”

Buchanan (1857) said:

“Without a representative on the floor of Congress they have for this very reason peculiar claims upon our just regard.”

Lincoln (1861) said:

“I recommend to the favorable consideration of Congress the interests of the District of Columbia. The insurrection has been the cause of much suffering and sacrifice to its inhabitants and as they have no representative in Congress that body should not overlook their just claims upon the government.”

Hayes (1879):

“The Constitution having invested Congress with supreme and exclusive jurisdiction over the District of Columbia its

citizens must of necessity look to Congress alone for all needful legislation affecting their interests; and as the territory of this District is the common property of the people of the United States who equally with its resident citizens are interested in the prosperity of their capital, I cannot doubt that you will be amply sustained by the general voice of the country in any measure you may adopt for this purpose."

Harrison (1889):

"The interests of the people of the District of Columbia should not be lost sight of in the pressure for measures affecting the whole country. Having no legislature of its own, either municipal or general, its people must look to Congress for the regulation of all those concerns that in the states are the subject of local control. Our whole people have an interest that the National Capital should be made attractive and beautiful and, above all, that its repute for social order should be well maintained."

POLITICAL CONSIDERATION BASED ON NATIONAL PRIDE.

In the preceding quotations Hayes and Harrison combined with their pleas for fair play to the unrepresented District appeals to the national pride in the capital. Similar appeals are scattered through the messages of the Presidents, even in administrations prior to the period when the nation began to make the capital physically a worthy object of national pride. John Adams urged Congress in legislating for it to "consider it as the capital of a great nation, advancing with unexampled rapidity in arts, in commerce, in wealth and in population." In urging public building development "on a scale adequate to national purposes," Monroe declared:

"Most nations have taken an interest and a pride in the improvement and ornament of their metropolis, and none were more conspicuous in this respect than the ancient repub-

lies. The policy which dictated the establishment of a permanent residence for the national government and the spirit in which it was commenced and has been prosecuted show that such improvement was thought worthy the attention of this nation."

Zachary Taylor (1849) said:

"As the national metropolis the city of Washington must be an object of general interest; and founded as it was, under the auspices of him whose immortal name it bears, its claims to the fostering care of Congress present themselves with additional strength. Whatever can contribute to its prosperity must enlist the feelings of its constitutional guardians and command their favorable consideration."

Fillmore (1850) said:

"It should be borne in mind that in this city, laid out by Washington and consecrated by his name, is located the capital of our nation, the emblem of our union and the symbol of our greatness. It should be the pride of Americans to render this place attractive to the people of the whole republic."

Buchanan (1858-9) said:

"As the residence of Congress and the executive departments we can not fail to feel a deep concern in its welfare. . . . Surely the city bearing the name of Washington, and destined, I trust, for ages to be the capital of our united, free and prosperous, confederacy, has strong claims on our favorable regard."

Grant (1873) said:

"The city of Washington is rapidly assuming the appearance of a capital of which the nation may well be proud. From being a most unsightly place three years ago . . . it is now one of the most sightly cities in the country and can boast of being the best paved. . . . Every citizen visiting the capital feels a pride in its growing beauty, and that he, too, is part owner in the investments made here."

Hayes (1877) said:

“The capital of the United States belongs to the nation, and it is natural that the American people should take pride in the seat of their national government and desire it to be an ornament to the country. Much has been done to render it healthful, convenient and attractive, but much remains to be done which its permanent inhabitants are not able and ought not to be expected to do.”

McKinley (1898), concerning the Washington centennial:

“On the 17th of November, 1800, the national Congress met here for the first time and assumed exclusive control of the federal district and city. This interesting event assumes all the more significance when we recall the circumstances attending the choosing of the site, the naming of the capital in honor of the father of his country, and the interest taken by him in the adoption of plans for its future development on a magnificent scale. These original plans have been wrought out with a constant progress and a signal success even beyond anything their framers could have foreseen. The people of the country are justly proud of the distinctive beauty and government of the capital, and of the rare instruments of science and education which here find their natural home. (1900) The transfer of the government to this city is a fact of great historical interest. Among the people there is a feeling of genuine pride in the capital of the republic.”

Roosevelt (1902):

“The city should be a model in all respects for all the cities of the country.” (1904) “That the National Capital should be made a model for other municipalities is an ideal which appeals to all patriotic citizens everywhere, and such a special commission might map out and organize the city’s future development, in lines of civic social service, just as Maj. L’Enfant and the recent park commissions planned the arrangement of the streets and parks.”

Taft (1910) :

“Washington is the capital of the nation and its maintenance as a great and beautiful city every lover of his country has much at heart, and it should present in every way a model, etc.”

PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE.

Some Presidents have urged that the peculiar obligation upon this legislature, not chosen by the District, thus generally recognized, is to act in respect to local legislation precisely as if it had been so chosen; that is, it should represent in such legislation reasonable public opinion among its capital constituents, carefully ascertaining not only local needs but local public opinion and meeting those needs in a manner conforming to that local sentiment so far as the national interest permits. (For example, having ascertained how much money should be raised by local taxation for capital maintenance, to permit the taxpayers to raise the money in the way which they find most desirable and least burdensome. If the community wishes to raise the bulk of its tax money by a tax on realty and only a little by the tax on personalty, and desires to raise none of it by a tax on the intangible personalty of individuals, the tax legislation by Congress should be so framed, since it would be so shaped if the chosen representatives of local public opinion were enacting the legislation.)

The first President to urge specifically the application of the injunction, “Put yourself in his place,” to legislation for the District by a legislature not chosen by it was William Henry Harrison in his inaugural address. He said (1841) :

“The people of the District of Columbia are not the subjects of the people of the United States, but free American citizens. Being in the latter condition when the Constitution

was framed, no words used in that instrument could have been intended to deprive them of that character. If there is anything in the great principle of inalienable rights so emphatically insisted upon in our Declaration of Independence they could neither make, nor the United States accept, a surrender of their liberty and become the subjects—in other words the slaves—of their former fellow citizens. If this be true—and it will scarcely be denied by any one who has a correct idea of his own rights as an American citizen—the grant to Congress of exclusive jurisdiction in the District of Columbia can be interpreted, so far as respects the aggregate people of the United States, as meaning nothing more than to allow to Congress the controlling power necessary to accord a free and safe exercise of the functions assigned to the general government by the Constitution. *In all other respects the legislation of Congress should be adapted to their peculiar position and wants and be conformable with their deliberate opinions of their own interests.*”

In a veto message (1867), every word of which should be read and studied, President Johnson elaborated this doctrine, saying in part:

“It should also be remembered that in legislating for the District of Columbia under the federal Constitution the relation of Congress to its inhabitants is analogous to that of a legislature to the people of the state under their own local constitution. It does not, therefore, seem to be asking too much that in matters pertaining to the District Congress should have a like respect for the will and interest of its inhabitants as is entertained by a state legislature for the wishes and prosperity of those for whom they legislate. The spirit of our Constitution and the genius of our government require that in regard to any law which is to affect and have a permanent bearing upon a people their will should exert at least a reasonable influence upon those who are acting in the capacity of their legislators. . . . Nor does it accord with our republican ideas that the principle of self-government should lose its force when applied to the residents of the District

merely because their legislators are not like those of the states, responsible through the ballot to the people for whom they are the law-making power. . . . While, indeed, the residents of the seat of government are not citizens of any state and are not, therefore, allowed a voice in the electoral college or representation in the councils of the nation, they are, nevertheless, American citizens, entitled as such to every guaranty of the Constitution, to every benefit of the laws and to every right which pertains to citizens of our common country. *In all matters, then, affecting their domestic affairs the spirit of our democratic form of government demands that their wishes should be consulted and respected* and they taught to feel that although not permitted practically to participate in national concerns they are nevertheless under a paternal government regardful of their rights, mindful of their wants and solicitous for their prosperity. *It was evidently contemplated that all local questions would be left to their decision* at least to an extent that would not be incompatible with the object for which Congress was granted exclusive legislation over the seat of government. . . . As a general rule sound policy requires that the legislature should yield to the wishes of the people, when not inconsistent with the Constitution and the laws. The measures suited to one community might not be well adapted to the condition of another; *and the persons best qualified to determine such questions are those whose interests are to be directly affected by any proposed law.*"

President Taft in substance indorses this doctrine in his message of 1910, in which he holds that the fact that Washington is governed by Congress and that the citizens have no direct control through popular election in District matters properly subjects the government to inquiry and criticism by its citizens and that "such criticism should command the careful attention of Congress."

Some of the Presidents in pointing out the obligation imposed by existing legal conditions have treated these conditions as unchangeable. Other Presidents have in-

dicated that as the population, resources and other conditions of the local community changed there would be changes in its political relations to the nation. Some have thought that the change would be in increased representation in municipal government. Others have insisted upon representation in the national government to the extent that the population, intelligence and resources warranted as an equitable and inalienable right of the local community. Before the District attained a population equal to that which in a state called for one representative in the House, these Presidents urged that the District should be represented in Congress by a territorial delegate on grounds which in consistency would give it full representation when the population and the other conditions of representation in the states had been secured.

NATIONAL REPRESENTATION FOR THE WASHINGTONIAN.

Monroe's suggestion of 1818 was of a change from government of the District by a Congress "in which the people have no participation" involving "a departure for a special purpose from the general principles of our system" to "an arrangement better adapted to the principles of our government and to the particular interests of the people . . . which will neither infringe the Constitution nor affect the object which the provision in question was intended to secure."

Monroe's suggestion in effect urges either legislation on local concerns by a legislature other than Congress in which the District shall be represented or by a Congress in which the District shall have representation.

Jackson vigorously and repeatedly (1830, 1831 and 1835) urged representation of the District in Congress. Since the District had not the population which was

entitled to one representative in the House, he recommended that this representation should be by territorial delegate; or else in "a local legislature to make laws for the District subject to the approval or rejection of Congress."

The grounds on which he urges this representation are broad enough to cover full-fledged representation in Congress when the essential conditions of population, resources and intelligence exist in the District, and when that representation is made compatible with the constitution either by amendment or by judicial decision that such amendment is unnecessary.

He says (1830) that such representation for the District is

"due to the character of our government. No portion of our citizens should be without a practical enjoyment of the principles of freedom and there is none more important than that which cultivates a proper relation between the governors and the governed."

In 1831 he declares:

"It was doubtless wise in the framers of our Constitution to place the people of the District under the jurisdiction of the general government. But to accomplish the objects they had in view it is not necessary that this people should be deprived of all the privileges of self-government. . . . Is it not just to allow them at least a delegate to Congress if not a local legislature to make laws for the District subject to the approval or rejection of Congress? *I earnestly recommend* the extension to them of *every* political right which their interests require and which may be compatible with the Constitution."

Andrew Johnson (1866) renewed Jackson's specific recommendation on grounds which would give the District full-fledged representation in Congress when its population and other conditions entitled it to such representation. Johnson said:

“The District of Columbia under existing laws is not entitled to that representation in the national councils which from our earliest history has been uniformly accorded to each territory established from time to time within our limits. It maintains peculiar relations to Congress, to whom the Constitution has granted the power of exercising exclusive legislation over the seat of government. Our fellow citizens residing in the District whose interests are thus confided to the special guardianship of Congress exceed in number the population of several of our territories and no just reason is perceived why a delegate of their choice should not be admitted to a seat in the House of Representatives. No move seems so appropriate and effectual of enabling them to make known their peculiar conditions and wants and of securing the local legislation adapted to them.”

In a veto message in 1867, Johnson sketched briefly and interestingly the political history of the District, saying:

“The great object of placing the seat of government under the exclusive legislation of Congress was to secure the entire independence of the general government from undue state influence and to enable it to discharge without danger of interruption or infringement of its authority the high functions for which it was created by the people. . . . While the residents of the seat of government are not citizens of any state and are not, therefore, allowed a voice in the electoral college or representation in the councils of the nation, they are, nevertheless, American citizens, entitled as such to every guaranty of the Constitution, to every benefit of the laws, and to every right which pertains to the citizens of our common country. . . . It was evidently contemplated that all local questions would be left to their decision at least to an extent that would not be incompatible with the object for which Congress was granted exclusive legislation over the seat of government. When the Constitution was yet under consideration it was assumed by Mr. Madison that its inhabitants would be allowed ‘a municipal legislature for local purposes,

derived from their own suffrage.' When for the first time Congress in the year 1800 assembled at Washington President Adams in his speech at its opening reminded the two houses that it was for them to consider whether the local powers over the District of Columbia, vested by the Constitution in the Congress of the United States, should be immediately exercised, and he asked them to 'consider it as the capital of a great nation, advancing with unexampled rapidity in arts, in commerce, in wealth and in population.' . . . Three years had not elapsed when Congress was called upon to determine the propriety of retroceding to Maryland and Virginia the jurisdiction of the territory which they had respectively relinquished to the government of the United States. It was urged on the one hand that exclusive jurisdiction was not necessary or useful to the government; that it deprived the inhabitants of the District of their political rights; that much of the time of Congress was consumed in legislation pertaining to it; that its government was expensive; that Congress was not competent to legislate for the District, because the members were strangers to its local concerns, and that it was an example of a government without representation—an experiment dangerous to the liberties of the states. On the other hand, it was held, among other reasons, and successfully, that the Constitution, the acts of cession of Virginia and Maryland and the act of Congress accepting the grant all contemplated the exercise of exclusive legislation by Congress, and that its usefulness if not its necessity was inferred from the inconvenience which was felt for want of it by the Congress of the confederation; that the people themselves, who, it was said, had been deprived of their political rights, had not complained and did not desire a retrocession; *that the evil might be remedied by giving them a representation in Congress when the District should become sufficiently populous*, and in the meantime a local legislature; that if the inhabitants had not political rights they had great political influence; that the trouble and expense of legislating for the District would not be great, but would diminish and might in a great measure be avoided by a local legislature, and that

Congress could not retrocede the inhabitants without their consent. Continuing to live substantially under the laws that existed at the time of their cession, and such changes only having been made as were suggested by themselves, the people of the District have not sought by a local legislature that which has generally been willingly conceded by the Congress of the nation."

In Grant's administration the District asked for and was given a territorial form of government and during the same administration Congress took it away.

Since 1880 the District has had a population greater than that which in a state is entitled to one representative in the House, and its population is now greater than that of six states. Conditions and tendencies indicate that it will attain superiority in population over a few other states which now exceed it.

If, on the principles laid down by Monroe, Jackson, Johnson and Grant, congressional representation should be given to the District, such representation would give to the District voting representatives and senators in Congress, and not merely a voteless territorial delegate. An amendment to the Constitution giving the capital community this just representation has been shaped for consideration by Congress and the state legislatures.

The last two Presidents who have discussed the political status of the Washingtonian have not favored any increase of his political privileges. Roosevelt endorsed the Reynolds scheme of the substitution of a single executive head for the three Commissioners, and of the abrogation of the local residence requirement for eligibility to appointment, thus proposing to destroy the only remaining vestige of even indirect representation now enjoyed by the Washingtonian in his local government. Taft thought citizens waived their politi-

cal rights by voluntarily coming here to live, knowing the conditions.

WHAT WASHINGTON THINKS OF THE PRESIDENTS.

Coupled with these references to what Presidents have thought and said of Washington are scattered suggestions of what Washington (or Washingtonians) have thought and said of some Presidents. The city's opinion concerning the President was expressed during many administrations, as we have seen, by resolution of the municipal legislature concerning the retiring President. That this expression of opinion was not perfunctory is suggested by Van Buren's experience, whose resolution of thanks was vetoed by Mayor Seaton on the ground that Van Buren had been no friend of the District and had done nothing for which he should be thanked.

During President Taft's administration two dinners, tendered by the citizens of Washington and cordially accepted by the President, gave the opportunity of conference and exchange of opinions, and this custom, inaugurated by President Taft, may, if continued by his successors, take the place with advantage to everybody in interest of the formal interchange of addresses of the early days.

Though the capital community is voteless the opinions of Washingtonians concerning public men are not without weight and influence. It is a cosmopolitan city, with the national legislature as its local legislature. The opportunity is afforded to study and compare the men of brains and action of the nation. There is much in the conditions to make the Washingtonian judgment upon public men intelligent and influenced by a minimum of bias. There is also opportunity of effectively expressing these opinions. Representatives of every

subdivision of America are here in Washington. As Washingtonians they absorb the local sentiment and impart it to a greater or less degree to the communities which they represent or from which they come. Especially is this true of the newspaper representatives of American states and cities at the capital. These are as a rule men of brains, experience and sound judgment. They are generally retained here for long periods. What they come to think as Washingtonians of public men is reflected, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, all over the United States.

Summarizing, the relations between Presidents and Washingtonians have been cordial and marked by reciprocal regard. The President, though not a part of the municipal corporation which directly manages local executive concerns, is, as the appointive power of the official heads of this corporation and through his veto, an important factor in the exclusive legislative power of Congress in respect to the capital. These powers of the President are coupled with duties and responsibilities and in most administrations this fact has been duly recognized.

The relations of Washington to the representatives of the federal government have as a rule been closer and more cordial with the executive than with the legislative branch. With Congress there has been too often misunderstanding, reciprocal misjudgment and re-primination; though on all vital questions Congress has in the end treated the nation's city with wisdom and fairness, and will undoubtedly continue to do so to the end of the chapter. The President of the United States can do no finer thing than to use the powers and opportunities of his position to bring together the members of the National Capital partnership in vigorous, cordial co-operation for the city's wholesome develop-

ment. There is no limit to what can be done in the wise upbuilding of the nation's city, if the national and local partners will work harmoniously and earnestly together in its interest, and in fulfillment of their constitutional obligation.

This skeleton summary of what the Presidents have said and done concerning Washington shows that out of the mouth of the first man of the republic in successive administrations have come at one time or another every representation concerning the nation's obligation toward its capital and concerning neglects or violations of that obligation, and every complaint of grievances unjustly suffered and every petition for their equitable redress, which when voiced by the Washingtonian himself have too often caused him to be denounced as an impudent, mercenary and mendacious mendicant.

The effect of this showing of presidential thought and action should be to shame every statesman, from President down, who either disdainfully neglects or from some petty personal motive is actively hostile to the nation's city. If Washington and Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln and Grant could, without stooping and without loss of dignity, interest themselves actively in the concerns of the nation's city, no statesman of to-day is too great to perform faithfully his obligations under the Constitution to legislate thoughtfully, wisely and sympathetically for the unrepresented National Capital.

THE CAPITAL'S IDEAL PRESIDENT.

The ideal President in his relations to the National Capital will combine the characteristics of many of his predecessors. He will bless the capital with friendly, helpful acts, like Washington, Jefferson, Jackson and Grant. He will cheer and strengthen the capital com-

munity by sympathetic words of sound and just doctrine like William Henry Harrison and Andrew Johnson. As a representative of the unrepresented District he will act toward the helpless community on the principle of "Put Yourself in His Place," giving full expression within the lines of reason to the views and wishes of the unrepresented community.

He will thus ascertain and carry out local sentiment in respect to local affairs on the principles laid down by William Henry Harrison and Andrew Johnson. He will be as eager to advance Washington's material and æsthetic development as Taft, as anxious for sociological reforms as Roosevelt. He will press the development of Washington as an educational center with the zeal of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, John Quincy Adams, Grant and Hayes. He will be as considerate of the Washingtonian's political rights and privileges in harmony with the Constitution as Madison, Jackson, William Henry Harrison and Grant.

Stimulated by the spirit and inspired by the example of the ideal President, the whole nation will follow his wise and patriotic policy of fostering the nation's city. Washingtonians will cease all petty wrangling among themselves, will sacrifice personal prejudices in the public interest and will labor for the city's welfare in harmonious and effective coöperation.

Americans, both inside and outside of Washington, will stand shoulder to shoulder in patriotic promotion of the National Capital.

The material city will become more attractive, more healthful, more prosperous. Intellectually the capital will wonderfully develop as an educational, literary, musical and artistic center. Morally the nation's city will respond to every form of wholesome uplift.

The nation will not be so absorbed in the material

Washington as to neglect the Washingtonian. Catching the inspiration of the most enlightened of our Presidents, Americans will recognize that its men and not its piles of stone and brick constitute the real city; that even a higher obligation is due to the animate than to the inanimate Washington, to the men of the capital than to its buildings and streets, its parks and monuments.

These quotations of words of the Presidents suggest that there is no nobler task for any public man than to identify himself in some conspicuous way with the up-building of the nation's city. The opportunities are not, by any means, exhausted of winning a place in the nation's annals by the side of the great men whom I have quoted. There is room for every one of us—whether in the White House or in Congress or in the ranks of unofficial Washingtonians—to build for himself a notable and enduring monument as a creator of the newer and greater Washington.

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