37TH CONGRESS, 3d Session. } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. { Ex. Doc. No. 38.

BUREAU OF STATISTICS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

IN ANSWER TO

Resolution of the House of the 12th instant, relative to the expediency of establishing a Bureau of Statistics in connexion with the Department of the Interior.

JANUARY 20, 1863.—Read, referred to the Committee on Commerce, and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 19, 1863.

SIR: In compliance with a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 12th instant, that the Secretary of the Interior be requested to report to that house, if by him deemed expedient, a plan for the establishment of a Bureau of Statistics, in connexion with the Department of the Interior, I have the honor to report that, being convinced of the urgent necessity of the establishment of the contemplated bureau, I have taken leave to prepare a bill, herewith presented, which best develops the plan I would propose.

It will be perceived by the bill that it is proposed that the Commissioner shall superintend the completion of the present census, and, by virtue of his office, superintend that business hereafter. That part of the bill is, however, in brackets, and if Congress shall think it unwise to place the census under the control of the Commissioner of Statistics, the part in brackets can, without destroying the harmony of the bill, be omitted. I am the more inclined to include the census in the bill, because, by so doing, there will be the increase of but one officer, viz, the clerk of the Commissioner; and, with the exception of his salary, and the increased stationery and printing, there will be occasioned very little, if any, additional expense to the government. The clerical force necessarily employed in this department can be made available for all the necessary purposes of the Commissioner.

The salary of the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury is $4,000, and the Commissioner of Statistics should be paid a like sum.

Connecting the census with the Bureau of Statistics will afford the greatest facilities for correctly ascertaining the real data of the country. The tables which a Bureau of Statistics must necessarily compile will always be formed, in this case, with the special view to the progression of the country; and they may, indeed, be so carefully framed and kept up as to show, almost yearly, the growth of the country in every department of production, as well as in population.

AUTHENTICATED U.S. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION GPO

It seems, in this view, that it will materially lessen the decade expense of the census proper.

The importance of the proposed bureau cannot, in my opinion, be overestimated. In the present peril of the country the minds of many of the most patriotic citizens are depressed with gloomy apprehensions of impending national bankruptcy and ruin. Let the people be truly informed of the vast resources of that portion of the nation now grappling with the rebellion—the value of its commerce, its enormous agricultural product, the as yet comparatively untouched wealth of individuals, and, more than all, that we have one million of acres of silver and gold, some portion of which, now being wrought, yields ten thousand dollars from one ton of its ore; that in these precious metals and other valuable minerals the nation has more wealth than all the earth beside—then despondency will be dissipated, and replaced by confidence and hope; and with an unalterable determination to preserve the nation for the enjoyment of these treasures and blessings, renewed energy will be given to our councils and arms.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. P. USHER, *Secretary.*

Hon. G. A. GROW,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

AN ACT to establish a Bureau of Statistics.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That there is hereby established in the Department of the Interior a Bureau of Statistics, the general design and duties of which shall be [to superintend the census,] to acquire and to diffuse among the people of the United States authentic and useful information on the internal and foreign commerce; the channels of trade, natural and artificial; the material industry, products, property, mineral and other resources; the educational, literary, moneyed, charitable, religious, and penal institutions; the expenditures, revenues, and taxation; and the mortality, pauperism, insanity, and crime of the United States, and the several States, and of foreign countries; and shall perform such other duties as may be by authority imposed.

And to facilitate the acquisition of the information designed by this act, the heads of departments and chiefs of bureaus, the collectors of the customs, and regents of the Smithsonian Institute, shall furnish all the desired information within their knowledge or under their control: *Provided,* That heads of departments shall not give information, nor suffer the same to be given by chiefs of bureaus under their control, if, in the opinion of such heads of departments, the same would be injurious to the public service. The Secretary of State shall furnish such facilities as he may deem proper, for obtaining any information desired by said bureau from any of the ministers or consuls of the United States in foreign countries.

Be it further enacted, That there shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, a Commissioner of Statistics, who shall be the chief executive officer of the Bureau of Statistics, who shall hold his office by a tenure similar to that of other civil officers appointed by the President, and who shall receive compensation at the rate received by the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, to be paid from the funds appropriated for completing the census, and from which shall also be paid the necessary expenses of collecting, arranging, and diffusing the statistical information obtained as aforesaid, to be duly audited by the Secretary of the Interior.

[*Be it further enacted,* That the Commissioner of Statistics shall take charge of and control the present census to its completion, and shall supervise and

control, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, all subsequent censuses to be hereafter taken pursuant to law.]

There shall be a suitable chief clerk appointed by said Commissioner of Statistics, with the consent of the Secretary of the Interior, with a salary of $, removable at pleasure by said Commissioner; and said Commissioner and clerk shall, before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, each take and subscribe the oath now required by law to be taken by officers of the United States.

For the necessary discharge of the duties hereby devolved on said Bureau of Statistics, the Secretary of the Interior, from time to time, on request of the Commissioner of Statistics, shall detail such number of competent clerks to the required service in that bureau as may be necessary.

The statistical collections made by said bureau shall be kept duly classified in a separate library, and shall not be removed therefrom.

[The office of Superintendent of the Census is hereby abolished.]

Be it further enacted, That the Commissioner of Statistics shall annually present a condensed report in writing, to the President and Congress, of the information acquired by said bureau during the preceding year, and the source whence derived. And he may also publish, in convenient form for general distribution, during the year, such information acquired on specific subjects as may be useful. He may receive and send through the mails, free of charge, all matter pertaining to the business of the bureau.