

# DIGEST OF THE SYSTEM OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT,

WITH A REVIEW OF THE

DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS CONNECTED  
WITH THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF NATIONAL, STATE,  
COUNTY AND TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT.

## NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

**T**HE GOVERNMENT of the United States is one of limited and specific powers, strictly outlined and defined by a written constitution. The constitution was adopted in 1787, and, with the amendments that have since been made, it forms the basis of the entire fabric of government under which we live. The constitution created three distinct branches of government, each of which is entirely separate and distinct from the others. They are the executive, legislative and judicial departments. The constitution specifically vests the executive power in the President, but all members of the cabinet are usually classed with the executive department; the legislative power is held by Congress, and the judicial authority is vested in the Supreme Court and various other courts which Congress has provided for in pursuance of the provisions of the constitution.

It has been the aim of these pages to explain each of these different branches of government, and to briefly review the duties and powers of the principal officials connected with each department.

The President and Vice-President are elected by popular vote, but the vote of each State is separate, so that a candidate may have a large majority of the aggregate popular vote of the country and yet fail to be elected. The Presidential election is held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, when Presidential electors are chosen in and for the various States, each State having as many electors as it has representatives in both branches of Congress. The electors are chosen by the ballots of the people of their States, and all the electors of a State constitute an electoral college. The electors meet in each State at the capital on the first Wednesday in December following a National election and vote for President and Vice-President, certificates of which are forwarded to the President of the Senate, at Washington, who, on the second Wednesday in February opens the certificates and counts the votes in the presence of both Houses of Congress and declares the result; and the final step is the inauguration, which takes place on the 4th of March. The law provides that if neither of the candidates have a majority then the House of Representatives shall elect a President from the three candidates receiving the highest electoral vote. In elections of this kind each State is entitled to only one vote, and two-thirds of the States form a quorum.

### PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

The President is the highest executive officer of the United States. He is elected for the term of four years, and receives a salary of \$50,000 per annum. He must be thirty-five years old or more, and a native-born citizen of the United States. The President is charged with a general supervision over the faithful execution of laws passed by Congress, and has supervision over all executive departments of the government. He appoints a Cabinet of eight officials who become the heads of the various departments, and these departments are intended to be managed and conducted as the President directs. The President is Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy. He has power to grant pardons and reprieves for all offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment; has power, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties. He nominates, and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints Ambassadors and other public Ministers and Consuls, all Judges of the United States courts, and all other executive officers of the United States, except in such cases where the appointments may be vested in the various "departments." When the Senate is not in session he can appoint, subject to its action when it reassembles. He has power, in certain extraordinary occasions, to call together both Houses of Congress, or either of them, in extra session; and is required from time to time to communicate with Congress, as to the state of the Union, and offer such suggestions or recommendations as he may deem proper. He is empowered to approve or veto all measures adopted by Congress, but it is provided that any measure may be passed over his veto by a two-thirds vote of Congress.

The President consults frequently with his Cabinet, and nearly all important official matters are discussed by that body. In case the office of President becomes vacant through the death, removal or resignation of the incumbent, the law provides that the office shall in turn be filled by the Vice-President, Secretary of State, and other Cabinet Ministers in regular order.

### VICE-PRESIDENT.

The Vice-President of the United States is elected for the term of four years, and receives a salary of \$10,000. In case of the death, removal or resignation of the President, the Vice-President succeeds him. The chief duty of the Vice-President is to act as the presiding officer of the Senate. He has no vote in the Senate, except in cases of a tie, or an equal division of the members of that body. The Vice-President administers the oath of office to the Senators.

### STATE DEPARTMENTS.

The head of this department is the Secretary of State, who is appointed by the President as a member of the Cabinet, and receives a salary of \$5,000 per year. The law provides that in case the office of President becomes vacant, through the death, removal or resignation of both the President and Vice-President, the Secretary of State assumes the duties of the Presidency. The Secretary of State may be said to be the official Secretary of the President, and countersigns all commissions issued by the President.

The Secretary of State is the head of the Department of State and is the chief diplomatic officer of the United States. In his department and under his supervision is conducted the public business relating to foreign affairs; to correspondence, commissions or instructions to or with public Ministers from the United States; or to negotiations with Ministers from foreign States; or to memorials or other applications from foreigners, or foreign public Ministers, or citizens of this country in foreign lands, or complications arising therefrom. The Secretary of State also has charge of all other business connected with foreign affairs, extradition matters and diplomatic officers; furnishing passports to vessels going to foreign countries, etc., and has charge of the Great Seal of the United States.

Connected with the Department of State and forming a part of it in the great work of performing and caring for the duties outlined are the following bureaus:

The **Diplomatic Bureau**, which looks after the affairs pertaining to foreign governments.

The **Consular Bureau**, correspondence with consulates.

The **Bureau of Indexes and Archives**, the duties of which are to open the official mails, prepare an abstract of the daily correspondence and an index of it, and superintend miscellaneous work of department.

The **Bureau of Accounts**, in which all of the finances of the department are looked after, such as the custody and disbursement of appropriations; also indemnity funds and bonds; also care of the building and property of the department, etc.

The **Bureau of Rolls and Library**, which is charged with the custody of treaties, rolls, public documents, etc.; has care of revolutionary archives, of international commissions, superintendence of library, etc.

The **Bureau of Statistics**, for the preparation of reports on commercial relations.

The chiefs of all of these bureaus receive \$2,100 per year. In addition to these there are connected with the State Department the offices of translator, at \$2,100 per year; assistant secretary, \$4,500; second assistant secretary, \$3,500; third assistant secretary, \$3,500; solicitor, \$3,500; chief clerk, \$2,750; clerk to Secretary of State, \$2,000; passport clerk, \$1,400. Besides these there are the various comptrollers, auditors, clerks and assistants, which number well up into the thousands.

### TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

This department was organized in 1789. The head of this department, known as the Secretary of the Treasury, is appointed by the President, is a member of the Cabinet, and receives a salary of \$8,000 per annum. The Treasury Department is one of the most important branches of the national government, as it has charge of the financial affairs of the government, custody of public funds, collection of revenue and maintenance of public credit. Among the many important duties devolving upon this department are the following: It attends to the collection of all internal revenues and duties on imports, and the prevention of frauds in these departments. All claims and demands, either by the United States or against them, and all the accounts in which the United States are interested, either as debtors or creditors, must be settled and adjusted in the Treasury Department. This department also includes the Bureau of the Mint, in which the government coin and moneys are manufactured. The Treasury Department authorizes the organization of national banks and has supervision over them; has charge of the coast surveys, the lighthouses, marine hospitals, etc. It has charge of all moneys belonging to the United States; designates depositories of public moneys, keeps a complete and accurate system of accounting, showing the receipts and disbursements of the Treasury, and makes reports at stated intervals showing the condition of public finances, public expenditures and the public debt.

There are a great many very important officials connected with the Treasury Department, chief among which are the following, viz.: Private secretary of the head of the department, at \$2,400 per year; three assistant secretaries, at \$4,500 each; chief clerk, \$3,000; chief of appointment division, \$2,750; chief of warrants division, \$2,750; chief of public moneys division, \$2,500; chief of customs division, \$2,700; acting chief of revenue marine division, \$2,500; chief of stationery division, \$2,500; chief of loans and currency division, \$2,500; chief of miscellaneous division, \$2,500; supervising special agent, \$2 per day; government actuary, \$1,800; supervising architect, \$4,500; steamboat inspector, \$3,500; chief Bureau of Statistics, \$3,000; life saving service superintendent, \$4,000; assistant, \$2,500; commissioner Bureau of Navigation, \$3,600; superintendent United States coast and geodetic survey, \$6,000; supervising surgeon-general marine hospital service, \$4,000; Bureau of Engraving and Printing, chief, \$4,500; assistant chief, \$2,250; superintendent engraving division, \$3,600.

The foregoing will serve to show many of the lines of work attended to in the Treasury Department, as the names of these offices explain the branch of work they are charged with attending to. There are a number of other important offices in the department that should be mentioned, among them being the following:

The **Solicitor of the Treasury**, or chief attorney, who receives \$4,500 per year for attending to the legal matters connected with the department.

The **Commissioner of Customs**, who receives \$4,000 per year and his deputy \$2,250, has charge of all accounts of the revenue from customs and disbursements, and for the building and repairing of custom houses.

The **Treasurer of the United States** receives \$6,000 per year, assistant treasurer \$3,000, and superintendent of national banks (Red. Div.) \$3,500. The treasurer receives and keeps the government funds, either at headquarters or in the Sub-Treasuries or government depositories, paying it out upon warrants drawn in accordance with the law, and pays all interest on the national debt.

The **Register of the Treasury** is paid a salary of \$4,000 per year, and his assistant \$2,250. The Register keeps the accounts of public expenditures and receipts; receives the returns and makes out the official statements of United States commerce and navigation; receives from first comptroller and Commissioner of Customs all accounts and vouchers acted on by them and files the same.

The **Comptroller of the Currency** receives \$5,000 per year and his deputy \$2,800. This bureau is charged with a general supervision of the national banks and matters connected with the issuing of paper money.

The **Director of the Mint** receives \$4,500 per annum, and is charged with a general supervision over all the coinage of the government.

**Comptrollers.** The first and second comptrollers are paid a salary of \$,000 per year, and each of their deputies receive \$2,700. The first comptroller revises and certifies the accounts of the civil and diplomatic service and public lands. The second comptroller revises and certifies the accounts of the army and navy and of the Pension and Indian Bureaus.

**Auditors.** There are six auditors connected with the Treasury Department, each of whom receives a salary of \$3,600 per year, and is allowed a deputy at a salary of \$2,250 per annum. No one auditor takes rank over another. The first auditor receives and adjusts the accounts of the revenue and disbursements, appropriations and expenditures on account of the civil list and under special acts of Congress, reporting the balances to the commissioners of the customs and first comptroller respectively for their decision. The second auditor devotes most of his attention to army affairs; looks after all the accounts relating to the pay, clothing and recruiting of the army; the arsenals, armories and ordnance; all accounts relating to the Indian Department; reports to the second comptroller. The third auditor has all accounts for sustenance of the army, military academy, military roads, fortifications, quartermaster's department, certain pensions, claims arising for military service previous to 1817; for all property lost in the military service; he reports also to the second comptroller. The fourth auditor also reports to the second comptroller, and attends to all accounts of the service connected with the navy. The fifth auditor reports to the first comptroller, and adjusts all accounts connected with the diplomatic service of the Department of State. The sixth auditor adjusts all accounts growing from the service of the Post Office Department.

### WAR DEPARTMENT.

The War Department was organized in August, 1789. The head of this department is known as the Secretary of War; is appointed by the President, and receives a salary of \$8,000 per annum. The War Department attends to the execution of all laws affecting the Regular Army, and carries out and performs such duties as may be provided for by law or directed by the President relative to military forces, military commissions and the warlike stores of the United States. In former years this department also had charge of Indian as well as military affairs, but this has been transferred to the Department of the Interior. The War Department is also required, among other duties, to maintain the signal service and provide for taking meteorological observations at various points on the continent, and give telegraphic notice of the

approach of storms. There is also maintained a Civil Engineering Department, through the aid of which is carried out such improvements in rivers and harbors as may be authorized by Congress. The Secretary of War also has supervision over the West Point Military Academy.

The private clerk for the head of the War Department is paid \$2,000 per year; assistant secretary, \$4,500; chief clerk, \$2,750. The most of the subordinates and assistants in the War Department, except those mentioned, are officers of the Regular Army, who are paid salaries and perquisites.

The Commanding General comes next to the Secretary, and receives a salary of \$7,500 per year. He looks after the arrangement of military forces, superintends the recruiting service and discipline of the army, orders courts-martial, and in a general sense is charged with seeing to the enforcement of the laws and regulations of the army. The Adjutant-General keeps the rolls and the orders issued. The Quartermaster-General has charge of the barracks and the supplies, etc., that may be required for the army. The Commissary-General is head of the Subsistence Department, and has supervision over the purchasing and issuing army rations. The Judge Advocate General is the head of the department of military justice. The Surgeon-General, as the name implies, looks after the affairs of the army relating to sick, wounded, hospital, etc. The Paymaster-General is the disbursing officer for the money required by the department. There is also the Ordnance office, controlling ordnance stores, arsenals, armories, the manufacture of arms, etc. The Topographical office has charge of all plats and drawings of all surveys made for military purposes. Besides these there are the Inspector-General; Department and departments devoted to war records, publications, etc.

In this connection it may be of interest to the general reader to refer briefly to a few facts concerning the Regular Army. The United States is divided for this purpose into a number of military districts. The head of each department receives his general instructions and orders from headquarters. The term of service in the Regular Army is five years. The pay of private soldiers at the start is \$13 per month and rations, and this is increased according to time of service, being \$21 per month and rations after twenty years' service. The pay of the officers is proportioned to their rank. Colonels receive \$4,500 per year; brigadier-generals, \$5,500; and major generals, \$7,500.

### NAVY DEPARTMENT.

The head of this department is the Secretary of the Navy, who is appointed by the President, and receives a salary of \$8,000 per annum. This department is charged with the duty of attending to the construction, armament, equipment and employment of vessels of war, as well as all other matters connected with naval affairs, and appropriations made therefor by Congress. The Secretary of the Navy has direct control of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland; issues orders to the commanders of the various squadrons; has general authority over the Marine Corps; and has control of all the several bureaus of the Navy Department.

There are a number of bureaus organized in the Navy Department for the purpose of more thoroughly handling the work, among the most important of which may be mentioned the following: Bureau of Steam Engineering; Bureau of Medicine and Surgery; Bureau of Navigation; Bureau of Provisions and Clothing; Bureau of Yards and Docks; Bureau of Ordnance; Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting; Bureau of Construction and Repair. Attached to this department are also officials or bureaus to attend to the following matters: Marine Barracks, Washington, D. C.; Museum of Hygiene; Naval Dispensary; Board of Inspection and Survey; Navy Supplies and Accounts; Naval Observatory; Hydrographic Office; Library and War Records; Naval Intelligence; Nautical Almanac, etc.

Rear-admirals in the Navy are paid \$6,000 per year; commodores, \$5,000; captains, \$4,500; lieutenant-commanders, \$3,000; medical directors (rank of captains), \$4,400; medical inspectors (rank of commanders), \$4,400; pay directors (rank of captains), \$4,400; pay inspectors (rank of commanders), \$4,400. In the Engineer Corps the chief engineers are also paid \$4,400 per year.

### POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

This is one of the most important branches of the National Government. Its head is the Postmaster-General, who is appointed by the President, and receives a salary of \$8,000 per annum. The Post Office Department has supervision over the execution of all laws passed by Congress affecting the postal service, and has general supervision over everything relating to the gathering, carrying and distribution of United States mails; superintends the distribution and disposal of all moneys belonging to, or appropriated for, the department; and the instruction of postal division over all persons in the postal service, with reference to their duties.

In providing for handling the general work of the Post Office Department it has been found necessary to create four bureaus, or offices, as they are termed, each of which is presided over by an assistant postmaster-general, who each receive \$4,000 per annum; are all subject to the direction and supervision of the head of the department. A review of these various bureaus and their principal officials, with the name of the office, will show very clearly the work handled by each.

The first assistant postmaster-general is allowed a chief clerk at \$2,000 per year; superintendent of post office supplies, \$2,000; superintendent free delivery division, \$3,000; chief division of salaries and allowances, \$2,200; superintendent money order system, \$3,500; superintendent Dead Letter Office, \$2,500; chief division of correspondence, \$1,800.

The second assistant postmaster-general has charge of a number of divisions, indicated by the following officials who are under his control: superintendent of railway adjustments, at \$2,000 per year; chief of inspection division, \$2,000; chief of mail equipment division, \$1,800; general superintendent railway mail service, \$3,500; superintendent foreign mails, \$3,000.

The third assistant postmaster-general has charge of the postage stamp division and the finance division. The chief of the former receives \$2,550 per annum, and of the latter \$2,000 per year.

The fourth assistant postmaster-general has control of a number of divisions, as indicated by the following officials who are under his supervision, viz.: Chief of the division of appointments, who is paid \$2,000 per annum; chief of the division of bonds and commissions, \$2,000; chief post office inspector, \$3,000; and the division of mail depositions.

Besides the various chiefs of divisions mentioned above there are connected with the Post Office Department a law clerk, at \$2,500 per year; appointment clerk, at \$1,800; assistant attorney-general, \$4,000; superintendent and disbursing clerk, \$2,100; and a topographer, at \$2,500 per annum.

### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

The Interior Department is under the immediate control of the Secretary of the Interior. He is appointed by the President, and receives a salary of \$8,000 per year. In this department, as the name implies, is conducted most of the public business relating to domestic or internal affairs, and, like most of the other executive departments, it is divided into a number of subdivisions and branches. The Secretary of the Interior is charged with a general supervision over public business connected with the following branches, viz.: 1st. The census of the United States. 2d. All matters connected with public lands. 3d. Everything relating to the Indians or Indian affairs. 4th. All matters concerning pensions or bounty lands. 5th. The issuance and filing of patents and caveats. 6th. The custody and distribution of publications. 7th. The compilation of statistics relating to educational matters in the various States.