

PREFACE.

By an act of Congress, approved March 2, 1877 (v. 19, c. 82, p. 268), authority was given for the appointment by the President of a commissioner, whose duty it should be to prepare and publish, subject to the examination and approval of the Secretary of State, "a new edition of the first volume of the Revised Statutes of the United States."

The jurisdiction of the commissioner was defined and limited by the statute. He was directed to incorporate into the text of the first edition of the statutes all the amendments made since the first day of December, eighteen hundred and seventy-three, including those made by the Forty-fourth Congress, with marginal references to the acts of amendment and to the decisions of the several courts of the United States, with like references to all the statutes passed in the same period, which, in the opinion of the commissioner, might in any manner affect or modify any of the provisions of the first edition of the Revised Statutes.

He was directed also to include in the new edition the Articles of Confederation, the Declaration of our National Independence, the Ordinance of Seventeen Hundred and Eighty-seven for the Government of the Northwestern Territory, and the Constitution of the United States, with foot-notes referring to the decisions of the Federal courts thereon. These papers were not printed with the first edition of the statutes.

This edition is not in any proper sense a new revision of the Statutes of the United States. The commissioner was not clothed with power to change the substance or to alter the language of the existing edition of the Revised Statutes, nor could he correct any errors or supply any omissions therein except as authorized by the several statutes of amendment. Of specific amendments, there are, however, several hundred, which have been incorporated with the text. The portions of the statutes repealed are printed in italics and included in brackets, and the new matter introduced is printed in the ordinary roman letter and also included in brackets.

So much of the work as affects the text of the present edition has been examined, under the direction of the Hon. William M. Evarts, Secretary of State, by Hon. Charles P. James, one of the commissioners by whom the first edition of the Revised Statutes was prepared.

The acts of Congress passed since the first edition of the Revised Statutes was issued, and affecting the text thereof, are referred to in the margin of the respective sections so affected.

In this edition, full, and, it is believed, complete notes of reference to the opinions of the Supreme Court of the United States will be found under the several paragraphs of the Constitution to which the opinions respectively relate, and reference is also made to

the small number of decisions which interpret or in any manner touch the Ordinance for the Government of the Northwestern Territory.

The Appendix contains the various statutes which provide for or relate to the "revision and consolidation of the statute laws of the United States," and also a cross index by which the various provisions of the Revised Statutes may be traced to the original enactments in the Statutes at Large.

In the preparation of the index, I have had the best assistance which I could command, and no labor has been avoided that could contribute in the least to the perfectness of the work. While it is not probable that the end sought has been attained, I indulge the hope that the character of the index may, in some reasonable degree, meet the expectation of Congress, the executive officers of the Government, the judiciary, and the profession generally.

The analytical index to the Constitution was prepared by W. J. McDonald, esq., late Chief Clerk of the United States Senate.

The historical notes to the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution are taken from a work entitled "The Organic Laws of the United States of America," prepared by Maj. Ben: Perley Poore, and printed by authority of Congress.

GEO. S. BOUTWELL,
Commissioner.

WASHINGTON, *September*, 1878.