

# SCIENCE

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A NOTABLE OFFICIAL REPORT.

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IN our last issue we pointed out the urgency of an authoritative reply from the Naval Observatory to the criticisms on its management which have been uttered by parties entitled to the highest respect. We return to the subject to mention another point on which it is equally urgent that certain unfavorable impressions likely to be given by the annual report of the Observatory should be corrected. Precision and accuracy of statement are always expected in an official document, and there is no department of the government in whose reports this quality is more confidently looked for than in that of the Navy. If a report is circulated by this department containing statements likely to be misconstrued, an earnest desire that public confidence in the Navy shall not be impaired will lead us to call attention to the statements and ask that they be supported, or so changed as not to give rise to misconception. Especially is this the case with a paper from which astronomers the world over will draw conclusions as to the degree of precision aimed at in describing the operations of one of our scientific departments. We shall quote the passages we have in

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