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PUBLIC EXPENDITURES.

SPEECH OF MR. LETCHER, OF VIRGINIA,

In reply to Mr. Sherman, of Ohio; delivered in the House of Representatives, June 12, 1858.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: In the discussion which took place some days since between the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. SHERMAN) and myself, I then stated to the committee that I would seek some suitable occasion between that time and the close of this session of Congress to present my views fully on the interesting subject of government expenditures. His speech exhibited all the evidences of careful preparation, and is interspersed with tables of figures that must have cost him immense labor in their construction. Without a moment's preparation, and without even the advantage of hearing the entire speech, I was called upon by several of my political friends to reply. Under these circumstances, I entered into the debate, and amid constant interruptions from the gentleman himself, and several others, replied briefly to some of the leading positions which he had assumed. The speech, which was doubtless intended for general circulation, as a campaign document, preparatory to the elections that will take place this fall, demands, from its ability and ingenuity, a more elaborate reply than it was in my power then to make.

This speech, and others made in the latter part of this session, gives reason to believe that the questions which divided parties in other days are again to be revived. Since the adjustment of the Kansas controversy, and its removal from the congressional halls, gentlemen in this and the other end of the Capitol have directed their attention to subjects of more practical importance and of more immediate interest to the people. In the past two months our discussions have been mainly confined to questions within the range of legitimate congressional action. Questions of a financial character and bearing, the tariff and its revision, the disposition of the public lands and their proceeds, the comprehensive subject of internal improvements, the best mode of raising revenue to defray the expenses of the government and the purposes and objects to which it should be applied, and last, but by no means least in importance, our relations with foreign governments—these now furnish the topics for speeches, and claim from us that consideration which has been too long withheld from them, and too often directed to exciting sectional questions, mischievous in their tendency and ruinous to the peace, prosperity, and fraternity of the people who constitute the States and organized Territories of this great nation. These things indicate a return to the policy of the earlier and better days of the republic—those days in which representatives of the people legislated practically within the limits of the constitution, exhibiting that manly patriotism which embraced the whole Union and its interests and repudiated all attempts to interfere with the rights and institutions of the States. They recognised and acted upon the doctrine—the Union of the States is secure so long as the rights of the States are respected. I trust most sincerely that these indications are not deceptive, and that they presage a calm and happy future, when sectional controversy and strife shall be banished from the national councils.

The bill now under consideration proposes a loan of $15,000,000, which is absolutely necessary to enable the government to meet its obligations. The gentleman from Ohio admits the necessity of the measure—admits that the government must have the amount provided for in this bill, or the obligations incurred cannot be met as they mature. Yet, strange to says, he avows his opposition to the only feasible measure that has been or that can be presented to furnish the means required to sustain the credit of the government! After voting with a vast majority of his party friends to create this necessity—after a formal complaint that we would not increase the expenditures by voting $1,500,000 to the improvement of rivers and harbors in the Northwest—he now comes forward to resist the passage of a bill to furnish the means required to meet appropriations made by the two houses of Congress. The policy of that side of the House seems to be to vote expenditures, and then refuse the means to meet them—to impose burdens on the government, and then repudiate all the measures proposed for its relief. I anticipated such a result, and hence it was that I have on several occasions during the session proposed to engraft upon the bills a section providing for a loan sufficient to cover the expenditures provided for in each. It is my deliberate opinion now that such a section should have been engrafted upon all the appropriation bills, and then those who voted the expenditure would have been compelled to take the responsibility of providing the means to pay the sums appropriated. The House, however, did not concur in this opinion, and hence it is that many of the most liberal voters for expenditures of money will now refuse to give their support to this bill. If it shall fail, these appropriations must remain unsatisfied, until it shall please Congress to provide the necessary means. Neither the President nor the Secretary of the Treasury has authority or power to furnish the money for that purpose beyond the provision made by the treasury-note bill, and the accruing revenue from customs and lands.

The gentleman charges that on the 1st day of July last there was a surplus of $17,710,114 in the treasury, and that Congress has already granted $20,000,000 of treasury notes, making an aggregate sum of means of $37,710,114 in a single year, which, together with the current revenue, has all been expended by this profligate administration. These facts, in his opinion, make out a clear and undeniable case of extravagance against the party in power. Accompany me in the investigation of these facts, and we will ascertain the precise weight to be given to this charge.

The Secretary of the Treasury informs us in his annual report that the public debt amounted, on the 1st day of July last, to the sum of $29,060,386 90, and since that time the sum of $3,895,232 39 of the debt has been redeemed. This sum, then, is to be deducted from the surplus in the treasury at the date fixed by the gentleman from Ohio. Making this deduction, we have the sum of $13,814,881 61, instead of the sum with which we are charged in the account as stated by him; or, in other words, an error within a fraction of $4,000,000. Now, add the $20,000,000 of treasury notes authorized by the act of this session, and we have the gross sum of $33,814,881 61, instead of $37,710,114. Deduct the amount of the deficiency bills, stated by the gentleman to be $11,201,708, and we shall then have a balance of $22,613,173 61.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I ask whether the present administration can, with even a show of reason or justice, be held responsible, by its bitterest enemy, for the expenditure this year of a dollar beyond the amount of the deficiency bills, which we have passed? The remaining $22,613,173 61 is the unavoidable result of paying for the legislation of the last Congress, of which the gentleman from Ohio was a leading member. The Speaker of the House in that Congress belonged to the opposition. An opposition majority controlled and directed the legislation. A Committee of Ways and Means, opposition by two to one, reported the appropriation bills, and that opposition are responsible to the country for the expenditures of the present fiscal year, expiring on the 30th day of this month.

The gentleman then proceeds to give us the items that are embraced in the deficiency bills passed at the present session, and charges that the extravagance of the administration has rendered the passage of these deficiency bills necessary. He presents the following table of items, to which I invite the attention of the committee:

Sound duties by treaty with Denmark	$333,011
Printing deficiency already passed	341,188
Balance of printing deficiency for this year (estimated)	600,000
Miscellaneous	373,318
Army deficiency	7,925,000
Post Office deficiency	1,469,173
	11,041,690

The first item charged against the present administration, in the gentleman's table, is $333,011, for the sound duties, by treaty with Denmark. This treaty was negotiated by the last administration, and, as no appropriation was made to meet its stipulations, the duty was devolved upon the present Congress of furnishing the money required to fulfil its provisions. Can it be pretended that this item furnishes evidence to prove the extravagance of the present administration? Was it not our duty to execute that treaty fully, fairly, and justly, to the letter? There cannot be two opinions on that point. The next item is the printing deficiency of $341,188. The legislation of the last Congress imposed upon the country the debt for printing, and the duty of paying this debt has been devolved upon us. Will the gentleman pretend that the administration is in any sense, or to any extent, responsible for this expenditure? They had no agency in contracting the debt, but it came down to them as a burden imposed upon them by the republican House, over which N. P. Banks presided as Speaker. The next item is an "*estimated*" printing deficiency for this year of $600,000, which, if it is to be provided for, is needed to pay the debts entailed upon us mainly by the last House. Why was the printing ordered by the opposition? Did they not know when it was ordered that it would have to be paid for, and as it was ordered by the opposition—the gentleman's friends in the House—with what propriety can they now arraign us for providing the means to pay for it, if we shall be compelled to do so? Neither the administration nor its friends in this House can be held responsible for it. But will such a sum have to be paid? I apprehend not, as our action shows that we have only appropriated in the sundry civil bill the sum of $316,000 for this purpose. Here, then, is another error of the neat little sum of $284,000—no great amount to be sure, yet still worthy of a passing notice. Then we have an item, styled miscellaneous, of $373,318, which is intended to pay off obligations imposed upon us by the legislation of the last Congress. It is under this head that we find the appropriations for custom-houses, marine hospitals, and other public buildings, which cover the "*jobs and contracts*" to which he refers. I cannot suppose that the gentleman designs to impute dishonesty to the officers of the government, in connexion with the contracts for these buildings ordered by Congress. The contracts which have been made were made by the Fillmore and Pierce administrations, and not by the present administration. But for the opposition these buildings would not have been ordered by Congress, and I would really like to know what the gentleman from Galena [Mr. WASHBURNE] and from Detroit [Mr. HOWARD] and from Louisville [Mr. MARSHALL] and from Cleveland [Mr. WADE] think of this assault, coming from so distinguished an opposition leader. Let the gentleman and his friends shoulder the responsibility which legitimately attaches to them for the necessity which demanded this appropriation. The administration is in no just sense chargeable with it, and the country will so decide. Then we have the army deficiency of $7,925,000, paraded as another evidence of extravagance and profligacy. Was this expenditure necessary? I maintain that it was—that the public sentiment of the people, without distinction of party, demanded that the laws should be enforced in Utah. The President has executed this order of the people, and has brought the Mormons into subjection to the lawful authority of the government. A prudent forecast, a wise statesmanship, have controlled and directed the entire policy of the President towards these misguided people, and peace, quiet, order, and obedience to the laws have been secured without firing a gun or shedding a drop of human blood. Everywhere this result is hailed with satisfaction, and the sound, conservative men of the nation applauded the prudence, wisdom, firmness, and practical judgment which have been exhibited by the administration in the happy adjustment of this difficult and dangerous question. Let the gentleman from Ohio and his party friends make the issue that the President has done wrong—that the measures which he has adopted have been unwise and injudicious; let them, if they see fit, charge that he has wasted the public money, and they will find us ready to meet them and try the issues before the people. The respect and affection of the people for law and order, their settled and determined hostility to everything that wears the appearance of open resistance to the authority of a government to which we owe obedience, leaves no room for doubt as to their verdict whenever such issues shall be presented to them for their decision. We challenge the opposition to these issues. Will they, dare they meet us upon them? If they think we have spent more money than is necessary, we call upon them to specify the items of expenditure that are, in their judgment, extravagant. Withhold in future your wholesale charges, and give us the details. In the name of the tax-paying millions, I demand this of you. This sum, however, has been appropriated to support the army in Utah for the next year, and is therefore an advance—not a deficiency. The last item enumerated is, the deficiency for the Post Office Department, amounting to $1,469,173. Was not this expenditure required to carry out the legislation of the last Congress? New post routes were established, and mails could not be placed upon them without entailing expense upon the Treasury. To meet this expense we were compelled to provide the means in the deficiency bill, passed at the opening of the session. I imagine the gentleman, and nine-tenths of his friends in both houses, voted for the post-route bill; the execution of which made this expenditure unavoidable.

On this branch of the subject, I prove that the gentleman from Ohio has committed several very extraordinary errors—unintentional, I doubt not, but yet such errors as clearly demonstrate that implicit reliance should not be placed upon his calculations. The first error consists in charging the administration with the surplus in the Treasury on the first of July last, and withholding from it credit for the amount of the public debt, which it has paid out of it since that date. The second error consists in fixing the Sound duties, by treaty with Denmark, at $333,011, when the true sum is $408,731 44. The third error consists in estimating the balance of the printing deficiency for the year ending the 30th of this month at $600,000, while the civic appropriation bill shows that it is only $316,000. The fourth error consists in fixing the amount of the deficiency bills passed at this session at $11,041,690, when it should have been $9,704,209 89 for the first, and $341,189 58 for the printing bill, and $408,731 44 for the treaty with Denmark, making in the aggregate $10,454,130 91. Rather serious errors in a speech which was designed to be used as a text-book by the opposition in their war upon the administration!

I now come to his estimate of the expenditures for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1859. He makes a most startling exhibit, and works out an aggregate of expenditures for the next year of $92,143,202. And how is this monstrous result ascertained? In the first place, he informs us that the Secretary of the Treasury estimates the expenditures for the year named at $74,064,755, and then he adds the following items, amounting to $18,089,547:

Three new regiments	$4,289,547
Probable Post Office deficiencies over amount appropriated	2,500,000
Public buildings	1,700,000
Private bills (estimated)	1,000,000
Printing deficiency	600,000
Army deficiency, estimated to be same as last year	8,000,000

Not one cent has been appropriated for the three new regiments—the President having ascertained that they would not be needed for the service in Utah. In the regular post office appropriation bill we have appropriated for the Post Office Department, for the year 1859, the sum of $3,500,000, which exceeds the regular appropriation for the present year by the sum of $1,000,000. The Post Office Department drew from the treasury, for the year ending June 30, 1858, $3,969,173. Suppose the department should require the same amount for the year 1859, as we have provided in the regular appropriation bill for $3,500,000, we would only be called upon for the additional sum of $469,173. This, then, is an error of upwards of $2,000,000 in his estimate in regard to this single item. The regular appropriation bill contains all the sums necessary for public buildings, amounting to $3,104,600; and this, therefore, is likewise an erroneous estimate. We have been charged once by the gentleman with the printing deficiency of $600,000 in the expenditures of 1858, but, for some reason that he has not chosen to assign, he again charges us with it in the expenditures of the year 1859. And, finally, he estimates that the army deficiency for the year 1859 will amount to the round sum of $8,000,000. All these are conjectures, and, so far as their accuracy can be tested by existing facts, they are shown to be of the most unreliable character. That the gentleman himself is not satisfied with them is clearly manifest from his declaration that they "*may be over-estimated.*" I submit it to him to say, whether, from the facts now before him, he is not entirely satisfied that they are greatly "*over-estimated.*"

The gentleman then proceeds thus:

"Now, this sum of $92,000,000 does not include any of the following items of expenditure, and I wish gentlemen to add these, upon their own estimate, to this aggregate: For protecting works commenced on our numerous rivers and harbors, the lowest estimate of which is $1,500,000; and then there is your calendar of one thousand private bills demanding your attention. There is the pension bill for the old soldiers of the war of 1812, proposed by the gentleman from Tennessee, [Mr. SAVAGE,] requiring $8,000,000 per annum. There are the ten new war steamers, proposed by my friend from Virginia, [Mr. BROOCK,] $2,500,000. The French spoliation bill, urged so forcibly by the gentleman from Massachusetts, [Mr. DAVIS,] which, if passed, will require $5,000,000. The duties to be refunded on goods destroyed by fire—I do not know how much. Commutation to the heirs of revolutionary soldiers—I do not know how much. Claims growing out of Indian wars in Oregon and Washington, urged by the delegate from Oregon, and certified by an executive officer, $5,000,000. Then we have the Pacific railroad, a foretaste of the cost of which we have had in $1,000,000 expended already in the publication of the report of the surveys."

But two of the measures enumerated in this formidable list by the gentleman from Ohio have received the sanction of Congress—the addition of seven steamers for the navy, and for that purpose an appropriation of $1,200,000 has been embraced in the regular naval bill; and the amount necessary to pay the private claims allowed by Congress. What sum will be required for this latter purpose cannot now be determined, but I imagine it will exceed his estimate of $1,000,000. The bill to refund duties on goods destroyed by fire was defeated in the House before the gentleman's speech was delivered. Bear in mind the fact, that none of these measures have been recommended by the Departments or the President.

Having thus noticed the gentleman's estimates, I now desire to inquire whether he is not in favor of all the measures he has referred to, and whether he is not ready to give each and all his cordial and hearty approval? Are not his political associates, or, at any rate, an overwhelming majority of them, in favor of all these measures, and are they not ready to cast their votes in aid of their passage? Whatever may be the gentleman's individual position, I apprehend there can be little, if any, doubt as to the position of the larger portion of his political friends.

I now come to the estimates of the Secretary of the Treasury, and to the recommendations of the Committee of Ways and Means, made to Congress at the present session:

The Secretary estimates that of the appropriations for the year 1858, there will be expended during the year 1858		$16,546,559 38
Permanent and indefinite appropriations		$1,168,224 49
Add for collecting revenue from customs	1,150,000 00	
		2,318,224 49
Recommendations for the year 1859, as reported by the Committee of Ways and Means	52,295,048 22	
All other appropriations (estimated) at present session	3,000,000 00	
	55,295,048 22	
Of this sum there will be expended during the year 1860	15,000,000 00	
		40,295,048 22
		$58,196,831 09

When the gentleman from Ohio made his estimate of $92,000,000 as the expenditures for the year 1859, he was sadly mistaken in his calculations. Against his conjectural estimates I now oppose conjectural estimates of the Secretary of the Treasury; and it is palpable that the gentleman has been mistaken to the extent of only about $27,000,000. Is it to be wondered at that, with such errors as I have pointed out, the shrewd editor of the "New York Tribune," in his issue of the third of this month, in noticing the gentleman's speech, should have said: "We should have liked it much better if it had worn *no party aspect*, and had been undeniably *non-partisan* in its scope and bearings?"

I propose to examine into the estimates of the Secretary of the Treasury a little further, to show that he has exhibited sound judgment and practical knowledge of the duties of his office:

The annual estimates of appropriations submitted are		$50,312,943 13
Other estimates referred to the Committee of Ways and Means at various times during the session		3,909,917 91
		54,222,861 04

So much for the estimates of the Secretary. Now I present the regular appropriations for the service of the year 1859, amounting to $53,458,233 22.

Pension		$769,500 00
Indian, regular		1,358,104 49
Do supplemental		959,957 86
Do deficiency		339,595 00
Consular and diplomatic		912,120 00
Military Academy		182,804 00
Naval		14,508,354 23
Sundry civil		5,557,148 07
Legislative, executive, and judicial		6,134,093 61
Army		17,145,806 46
Mail steamer		960,750 00
Post Office		3,500,000 00
Collecting revenue from imports *permanent*, additional		1,150,000 00
		53,458,233 22
To which add:		
Treasury notes 1858	$20,000 00	
Manufacture of arms 1858	360,000 00	
Expenses investigating commissions 1858	35,000 00	
Treaty with Denmark 1858	408,731 44	
Deficiency in printing, &c 1858	341,189 58	
Do. for the year 1858	9,704,209 89	
Deaf, dumb, and blind, D. C. 1858	3,000 00	
Expenses investigating commission 1858	12,000 00	
Clerks in Oregon to register and receiver	7,000 00	
Running Texas boundary line 1859	80,000 00	
Incident to the loan of $20,000,000	5,000 00	
		10,976,130 91
		64,434,364 13
Estimate: Other appropriations, bills not printed and *indefinite*, including all private bills		3,565,635 87
		68,000,000 00

Thus we find the expenditures for the year ending June 30th, 1859, amount to the sum of $68,000,000, instead of $92,000,000, as estimated by the gentleman from Ohio. If the wishes of the President and Cabinet, and a large majority of the democratic members of Congress, could have prevailed, the expenditures would have fallen below this sum. The result, however, demonstrates most conclusively that the conjectural estimates of the gentleman from Ohio were not within millions of the true amount, and should cause the people to distrust all theoretical and imaginative calculations on subjects of so much importance to their welfare.

And, in this connexion, permit me to express my cordial approval of the sentiments imbodied by the President in his annual message, in which he declares that—

"An overflowing treasury has led to habits of prodigality and extravagance in our legislation. It has induced Congress to make large appropriations to objects for which they never would have provided had it been necessary to raise the amount of revenue required to meet them by increased taxation or by loans. We are now compelled to pause in our career, and to scrutinize our expenditures with the utmost vigilance; and in performing this duty, I pledge my co-operation to the extent of my constitutional competency.

"It ought to be observed at the same time that true public economy does not consist in withholding the means necessary to accomplish important national objects intrusted to us by the constitution, and especially such as may be necessary for the common defence. In the present crisis of the country it is our duty to confine our appropriations to objects of this character, unless in cases where justice to individuals may demand a different course. In all cases care ought to be taken that the money granted by Congress shall be faithfully and economically applied.

"Under the federal constitution, 'every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate shall, before it becomes a law, be approved and signed by the President; and, if not approved, he shall return it with his objections to that house in which it originated.' In order to perform this high and responsible duty, sufficient time must be allowed the President to read and examine every bill presented to him for approval. Unless this be afforded, the constitution becomes a dead letter in this particular; and even worse, it becomes a means of deception. Our constituents, seeing the President's approval and signature attached to each act of Congress, are induced to believe that he has actually performed this duty, when, in truth, nothing is, in many cases, more unfounded.

"From the practice of Congress, such an examination of each bill as the constitution requires has been rendered impossible. The most important business of each session is generally crowded into its last hours, and the alternative presented to the President is either to violate the constitutional duty which he owes to the people, and approve bills which, for want of time, it is impossible he should have examined, or, by his refusal to do this, subject the country and individuals to great loss and inconvenience.

"Besides, a practice has grown up of late years to legislate in appropriation bills at the last hours of the session on new and important subjects. This practice constrains the President either to suffer measures to become laws which he does not approve, or to incur the risk of stopping the wheels of the government by vetoing an appropriation bill. Formerly, such bills were confined to specific appropriations for carrying into effect existing laws and the well-established policy of the country, and little time was then required by the President for their examination."

Conservative men of all parties have expressed their approbation of these sentiments, and it should be cause of gratulation with all that the President has adhered to them with so much firmness and courage. His course at this session has saved millions of dollars that would have been uselessly expended. It has given to the country cleaner appropriation bills than we have heretofore had during my service in Congress. He has in this respect inaugurated a policy that will insure results important to sound legislation, and of lasting benefit to the people. It is a practical measure, well calculated to bring about a much-needed economy in public expenditures. For it he deserves the thanks of the people, and they will be gratefully accorded.

So true a friend to economy has the President shown himself, and so anxious is he to secure it in his administration of the government, that he has again, this day, in a special message, endeavored to impress upon Congress his views on this interesting subject. Who can fail to endorse these sentiments in his special message? Who can hesitate to accord to them his entire approval?

"Adversity teaches useful lessons to nations as well as individuals. The habit of extravagant expenditures fostered by a large surplus in the treasury must now be corrected, or the country will be involved in serious financial difficulties.

"Under any form of government extravagance in expenditure must be the natural consequence when those who authorize the expenditure feel no responsibility in providing the means of payment. Such had been for a number of years our condition previously to the late monetary revulsion in the country. Fortunately, at least for the cause of public economy, the case is now reversed; and to the extent of the appropriations, whatever these may be, engrafted on the different appropriation bills, as well as those made by private bills, over and above the estimates of the different departments, it will be necessary for Congress to provide the means of payment before their adjournment. Without this, the treasury will be exhausted before the first of January, and the public credit will be seriously impaired. This disgrace does not fall upon the country."

The gentleman, then, charges that the expenditures now are extravagant beyond all precedent, and that they are wholly inexcusable upon any fair ground. Before proceeding to reply to the views which he presents in this part of his argument, I desire to call attention to some historical facts that are important in this connexion, and which are indispensable to a correct judgment upon the issues he has tendered.

And, first, as to the number of States and organized Territories, and their area, in 1815; and the number of States and Territories, and their area, in 1858. At the former period we had eighteen States, covering an area of 504,412 square miles, and five organized Territories, (exclusive of the District of Columbia,) covering an area of 254,452 square miles. In 1858 we have thirty-two States, covering an area of 1,602,000 square miles, six organized Territories, (exclusive of the District of Columbia,) covering an area of 1,401,000 square miles. Besides this, we have the Mesilla Valley, embracing 78,000 square miles, and the Indian Territory, embracing 187,000 square miles. In 1815, therefore, the States and Territories covered 758,864 square miles, while in 1858 they cover 3,268,000 square miles, an area four times and one-third larger now than in 1815.

In 1815 the strength of our army was 10,000 men, while in 1856 its strength is 17,984 men.

In 1815 the navy comprised 968 officers, of all grades, (including marines.) In 1858 the officers had increased to 1,336. In 1815 the number of men cannot be ascertained, but, from the best evidence that can be obtained, the number was about 5,370. Now the number is 8,500. In 1816 we had 52 vessels, carrying 1,119 guns; 25 vessels with no armament; 4 bombs, and 11 gun-boats—making 92. In 1858 we have 10 ships-of-the-line, carrying 872 guns; 10 frigates, carrying 500 guns; 21 sloops-of-war, carrying 426 guns; 3 brigs, carrying 16 guns; 1 schooner, carrying 3 guns; 8 screw-steamers of the first class, carrying 268 guns; 6 of the second class, carrying 89 guns; 2 of the third class, carrying 11 guns; 3 side-wheel steamers of the first class, carrying 24 guns; 1 of the second class, carrying 6 guns; 2 of the third class, carrying 6 guns—making a total of 2,221 guns. Besides these there are two tenders for the screw-steamers, and one tender for the side-wheel steamers, and five permanent store and receiving ships.

Capt. Wright, of the Engineer Department, to whom I applied for information on the subject of fortifications, says:

"I am not aware of any records in this office giving the number of fortifications in the United States in 1815, and believe it would be a work of much labor and time to ascertain with certainty what the number was. Many of the works bearing the name of forts were merely improvised field works or batteries; while others, like those on Staten Island for the defence of the entrance to the harbor of New York, were State works."

As to the number of fortifications in 1858, Captain Wright says:

"There are at the present time under the charge of the Engineer Department 50 distinct permanent works of fortifications on the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts, and on the northern lake frontier, which are either completed or in course of construction. In addition to these, appropriations were made at the last regular session of Congress for ten additional works, on which little or nothing has been done toward the commencement."

The number of light-houses and light-vessels prior to 1815 was 49. In 1858 lights of all kinds, including beacon lights and light-vessels, existing and authorized to be built, number 602. About 33 have not been finished, but are in the course of construction.

In 1815 we had 99 collectors of the revenue, and 77 surveyors, and in 1821 we had 631 inferior officers in the revenue service. In 1858 the number of collectors is 116, and the number of surveyors 110, making 226. The number of inferior officers employed in the collection of the revenue is 3,088.

The number of land offices in 1815 was 19. The number in 1858 is 86.

The expenditure for the Indian service in 1815 amounted to $111,750. The same service now requires an expenditure of $4,158,430 39.

In 1815 the number of pensioners was estimated at 1,400, and the amount paid to them was $88,000. At this time the number has increased to 13,186, and $1,365,717 54 is now required for their payment.

These facts, thus presented, clearly show the condition and extent of our territory, the larger portion of which has been acquired since 1815, the period at which the gentleman sums up the annual expenditures on the third page of his speech. Since that time we have acquired the Floridas, Texas, New Mexico and California, and the Gadsden purchase. Under these circumstances, no fair or just comparison in regard to the expenditures can be instituted between the years 1815 and 1858. It would be about as fair and wise to institute a comparison between the expenditures of a child, and those of the full-grown man.

The gentleman is a recognised leader of his party, and to this position he is fairly entitled by his intelligence and character. He was a member of the last Congress, and I desire, as he is now preaching economy, to call his attention to some of the legislation of that Congress in which he participated, and for which he and his party, so far as the House is concerned, are responsible, to a great extent at least.

The submarine telegraph bill appropriated $70,000 per annum to that scheme until the interest on the investment should reach 6 per cent., and then $50,000 for twenty-five years. The company had the use of two of our best vessels and their crews. But six democrats voted for the bill.

On the proposition to pay $186,765 85 for books for members of Congress, only eleven democrats voted for it.

The appropriation of $100,000 for the Capitol dome was voted for by both parties, and therefore each party is responsible to the extent of the support given to it.

The bill creating a Lieutenant General, and increasing the pay of the officers and men in the army, was passed by the last Congress, and was most cordially supported by the opposition party in this House.

During the Thirty-fourth Congress, $16,022 was appropriated to pay per diem and mileage to Archer, Fouke, Turney, Reeder, Milliken, and Bennett, for contesting the seats of members returned to that Congress; and in all those cases the contests were decided against them. The yeas and nays show that the opposition are responsible for this expenditure.

During the same Congress river and harbor bills, footing up the sum of $745,000, were passed by the opposition and vetoed by President Pierce, greatly to the annoyance of the gentleman and his party. At the first session of the same Congress appropriations amounting to $3,188,739 were passed for forty-one custom-houses, court-houses, post offices, and marine hospitals. Of this number, only eleven were recommended by the administration. At the third session of the same Congress, appropriations for the same purpose were made to thirty-one buildings of a like kind, amounting to $2,084,000, only four of which had the recommendation of the administration.

During the same Congress appropriations amounting to the sum of $2,270,000 were made for the extension of the Capitol, the dome, and works of art. It was out of this appropriation for the Capitol extension, if I am rightly informed, that desks were purchased at $90 each, and chairs at $70 each, for the new hall of the House of Representatives.

The appropriations for the several items of the contingent fund for the House of Representatives for the Thirty-third Congress amounted to $903,100 56. The appropriations for the same objects for the Thirty-fourth Congress ran up, under the action of the opposition in this House, who had the majority, to the sum of $1,087,770, showing an increase in this branch of expenditure of $184,669 44.

At the last session of the Thirty-fourth Congress the Senate returned to this House the sundry civil bill with 103 amendments, covering appropriations to the amount of $3,771,816 45. It came to this House on the last night of the session, when we had no opportunity even to read the amendments in the House. On the recommendation of the Committee of Ways and Means, the House rejected all the amendments, and the bill and amendments thus rejected went to a committee of conference, who reported the next morning that the Senate should recede from amendments covering $713,256 01, and that the House should recede from its disagreement as to the residue. When the reading of the amendments was called for, Speaker Banks decided that they could not be read, and the House was brought to a vote on the adoption of the conference report—and thus, without any knowledge of what they were doing, the members voted away $3,058,560 44 of the public money, by 87 yeas to 67 nays. Of the 87 yeas, 58 belonged to the opposition.

If I had the time, I would refer to some of the votes on the Senate's amendments to the sundry civil bill at the present session. For the custom house and marine hospital amendments—for the amendment directing the payment to the State of Maine of usurious interest on money borrowed to carry on the Aroostook war—for the amendment appropriating to Gales & Seaton, $340,000 for the publication of the American State papers, and other amendments that might be enumerated, a decided majority of the yeas came from the opposition side of the House.

The gentleman complains that our foreign intercourse expenses have run up to an enormous figure. The gentleman evidently does not understand the subject. It will be recollected that awards paid under treaties and other payments of a like character are embraced in this expenditure. By way of illustration, I take the year ending June 30, 1849, when the appropriation for this object was $6,908,996 72, made under a democratic administration, and the year ending June 30, 1853, made under an opposition administration, when the appropriation was $950,871 36. In the former year $6,565,354 79 was used to fulfil treaty stipulations with the Mexican republic, the King of the Two Sicilies, and the republic of Peru, leaving a balance of $343,641 93. In the latter year only $297,155 57 was required to pay awards, leaving a balance of $653,715 75 for foreign intercourse proper—almost double the amounts used for this purpose in 1849. How will the gentleman explain this increase under opposition rule?

Sweeping charges of extravagance, such as the gentleman has indulged in, do not strike my mind as the most satisfactory mode of discussing this question. If the charges are well founded, it is an exceedingly easy matter for gentlemen to designate the items in the annual appropriations that are not justified by a proper regard for economy. If you are for reform, present your measures, let them be examined, and, if they are wise and just, you can rely upon our support to aid in their passage. If you are in earnest, you will do this; but, until it shall be done, you cannot convince the people of your sincerity. Cease your denunciations, give us the details, bring forward your measures of retrenchment and reform, and thus furnish practical evidence of your disposition to remedy what you consider existing evils in the administration of the government and in our system of legislation.

Another question which has attracted a large share of public attention is the proper disposition to be made of the public lands. It is undeniably true that the opposition in the North and Northwest, as a party, are committed to the policy of railroad grants. In the Thirty-fourth Congress, when the opposition had undisputed control in this House, the House Committee on Public Lands reported seven bills, making grants of alternate sections of land, six sections in width on each side of the respective roads, to the States of Iowa, Florida and Alabama, Alabama, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Mississippi, covering 13,686,304 acres. A like grant was also made to the Territory of Minnesota, which passed the Senate by ayes 32, noes 10. Of the ayes, 21 were democrats, 9 republicans, and 2 Fillmore-Americans. The 10 who voted in the negative were all democrats. When this bill came to the House, it was amended by a grant for Alabama, and as amended was passed by yeas 87, nays 80. Of the yeas, 60 were republicans, 18 democrats, and 9 Fillmore-Americans. Of the nays, 22 were republicans, 28 democrats, and 10 Fillmore-Americans. If I had time I would refer to the votes on such bills, on other occasions, to show that the opposition cannot be relied upon to husband the public lands, and so to manage them that they may be a source of revenue to the government. In my view, such dispositions of the public lands are wrong in principle, unjust to the old States, and of mischievous policy. Such grants build up monopolies, and monopolies are always prejudicial to individual interests and the equal rights of all.

In 1848 the opposition raised the cry of extravagance against the democratic party, and, in the then existing condition of the public mind, succeeded in obtaining possession of the Government. Taylor and Fillmore were elected to the presidency and vice presidency of the United States, and entered upon the discharge of their duties on the 4th of March, 1849. They came into power avowing their purpose to retrench expenditures and reform abuses which were alleged to exist under the administration of their predecessors; and the people were induced to believe that these great results would be attained. During the administration of Mr. Polk, the duty of carrying on the war with Mexico devolved upon him, and, as a necessary consequence, the annual expenditures were much larger than, under other circumstances, they would have been. In the four years his expenditures amounted (exclusive of the public debt) to $165,381,026 58—being an annual average expenditure of $41,345,256 59. In the four years of Taylor and Fillmore the expenditures (exclusive of the public debt) amounted to $165,683,650 48—being an annual average expenditure of $41,420,912 62. The whig administration, therefore, of Taylor and Fillmore, cost the people $75,656 04 a year more, in a time of profound peace, than the democratic administration of Polk cost them in a time of war. If such was the result in that instance, may we not reasonably anticipate a like result if the opposition shall succeed in the next presidential struggle? The same men who elected Taylor and Fillmore now constitute the body of the opposition arrayed against the present eminently patriotic administration.

It is known to this committee that during my entire service in this body I have labored zealously to reduce expenditures. So decided has been my public action on this subject that it has subjected me to the fierce denunciations of agents and all others interested in large expenditures of the public money. Indeed, many of my political associates in the House, whose views upon this subjected are more liberal than my own, not unfrequently complain of the course which a sense of duty to those I represent constrains me to pursue. While I have resisted all appropriations for custom-house, marine hospital, court-house, post office, territorial and district buildings which are now dotted over this District, the States and Territories, and in the construction of which millions of dollars have been most profligately dissipated, the opposition in this House at the last session of the last Congress succeeded in appropriating for these objects no less a sum than $5,445,651 48. The appropriations for these objects alone, during the Thirty-fourth Congress, amounted to the monstrous sum of $8,633,390 48!! The country will be astonished to learn that for the Capitol extension, the dome, and a few works of art, $4,970,000 have been appropriated since 1852. An enormous amount has also been appropriated to the aqueduct, that can only be told in millions. I have resisted all these things to the extent of my feeble ability, but who of the opposition has come to my aid? Now and then, some one of them has raised his voice in opposition, but it is undeniable that an overwhelming majority of that party has voted for them. The 19th amendment of the Senate to the civil bill at this session made appropriations for eleven custom-houses, in different parts of the country, and on agreeing to that amendment the vote was—yeas 50, (democrats 18, opposition 32,) nays 73, (democrats 51, opposition 22.) I have resisted the increase of salaries, and the multiplication of officers and government employees; and have, in all fair and honorable modes, endeavored to reduce the expenditures to the lowest practicable amount consistent with a proper regard to the public interest and an effective administration of the government.

Such has been my course as a representative of the people, and I now tender to the gentleman my cordial co-operation in all wise, just, and proper measures which he or his friends may propose for the reformation of abuses or the reduction of expenditures. I think the expenditures may be curtailed without detriment to the public service; that the number of officers may be diminished and many salaries reduced without prejudice or embarrassment to the prompt, intelligent, and faithful disposition of the public business. The gentleman will find this side of the House ready to second all efforts he may make to this end, and all he has to do is to introduce his measures at the earliest practicable moment. He has been rather dilatory heretofore, considering the magnitude and importance of the work before him, but still there is ample time during the next session to accomplish all