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COLUMBIA TELESCOPE BY BULLARD & SWEENEY.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES. March 9, 1826.

Fortifications of the U. States.—The bill "making appropriation for certain fortifications of the United States," being under consideration; and Mr. Smith, of Mar. Having moved to strike out the appropriation of seventeen thousand dollars for the purchase of land and the right of way on Throgg's point in Long Island sound,—in support of the motion.

Mr. Dickerson, of New Jersey, observed: This little appropriation, for purchasing about fifty-two acres of land at Throgg's neck, at the expense of 17,000 dollars, which appears so harmless, involves consequences of the utmost importance to the country. It is to lead to the expenditure of at least a million and a half of dollars, to defend the harbor of New York against the approach of such ships of war as would venture through the whirlpools of Hellgate.

It also involves the question, whether it will not be possible to check the rage for fortifications, which has already cost us many millions of dollars, and it is to be attended with consequences much more to be dreaded than the loss of money.

If we are to construct the proposed fortifications at Throgg's neck and Wilkins' point, it will be utterly in vain to oppose the construction of others, however useless or expensive they may be.

Before we take this decisive step, it will be well to inquire what we have already done, and what is proposed to do, upon the subject of fortifications. No one will deny, but that certain important points on our maritime frontier should be well fortified; but the system, if carried to excess, becomes ruinous to the country.

Ten millions of dollars will construct as many fortifications as we ought to garrison, in war or peace; and we should construct no fortifications that are not necessary, unless we mean them for our enemies.

If we persevere in the plans adopted, our expenditures for fortifications will amount to four or five times that sum. Many members of Congress have viewed, with horror, the extravagant scheme of fortifying our frontiers, pursued since the late war, with as much ardor as if the enemy was approaching us. They have considered more than half the expenditures of these fortifications, as money worse than thrown away. They have made opposition to the measure, but they have not been sustained by their constituents; but, on the contrary, have been held up as the enemies of useful institutions. They have been borne down by the popularity of our late chief magistrate, with whom this scheme was known to be a favorite measure.

That the late president very honestly believed that the prosperity of the country would be promoted by the adoption of his stupendous scheme of fortifications, cannot be doubted. His efforts have been well meant; but he has egregiously mistaken the interest of the country.

As our ample revenues have enabled us to construct these fortifications, without resort to direct taxes, the people at large seem to have given themselves but little trouble upon the subject, but seemed disposed to yield to the wishes of a popular president, who, at his first election, came into office by the general assent of the predominant party, and, at his second, by the assent of all parties. Indeed, his last election was nearly unanimous. It is not to be presumed, that the favorite measures of a president, thus elected, are to be opposed by his cabinet, even if they had the disposition to do so, nor by the members of Congress, unless they are willing to render themselves unpopular.

An argument of the greatest force in favor of these fortifications, is, that they have been recommended and approved of by our scientific engineers. But, it should be recollected that these engineers are not consulted as to the policy of erecting them.—The plan of completely fortifying our maritime frontier, was adopted before the arrival of the distinguished foreigner now belonging to our engineer corps, and in whose science we justly place the most implicit confidence. Our engineers are called upon to devise the plans necessary for carrying into execution the scheme adopted, and that upon the most magnificent scale. This they have done, in part; without regard to the resources, policy, or interest of the country. These were not subjects for their consideration—but ought to be for the consideration of congress.

These engineers inform you, that a tunnel may be driven through the Alleghany mountains—that the waters of the Youghiogony, which ought to discharge themselves into the gulf of Mexico, may be made to pass through this tunnel, supply canals on this side the mountains, and discharge themselves into the Chesapeake.—They inform you what can be done, without saying what ought to be done. The decision upon that rests entirely with another body, who, alone, are responsible, so far as the United States are concerned.

The commencement of a new administration affords a favorable occasion for a new effort to check the rage for fortifications. It is not believed that the present chief magistrate is in favor of completing these fortifications, upon the magnificent scale of his predecessor—or, if he is, that his popularity is so overwhelming as to carry the measure through; inasmuch as he has not been elected to his office unanimously, or by a majority approaching to unanimity.

When the plan of 1821 of our proposed fortifications, was developed, by which we were to have, in addition to what we had had war fortifications that would cost 18 millions of dollars, and require for garrisons in time of war, thirty-eight thousand men, I rejoiced, because I believed it would create an alarm throughout the country, which would have checked the immense expenditures contemplated—but I was mistaken; for this development took place precisely when it was ascertained that Mr. Monroe had been re-elected by an almost unanimous vote. So far from giving a check to the prosecution of the plan, it seems to have created a new impetus in its favor, by holding up to the people of most of the states, a prospect of coming in for a due proportion of the expenditures for these establishments. The southern states are to have a large proportion of these expenditures—Virginia and Maryland to be gratified with the immense sums to be laid out at Old Point Comfort and the Rip Raps. New York, by the proposed erection of forts, to the amount of five or six millions of dollars; the eastern states to be provided for, but not so liberally; North Carolina, which never comes in for her proper share of public patronage, must be satisfied with two little forts, to cost two hundred thousand dollars. Pennsylvania is to have a very small division of the sum. It is to be the least important to that state. It must be observed that the plan of fortifications of 1821, embraces but a part of the system—even Fort Fayette and Fort Washington, are not included in it—nor does it include many other forts which have been built in the United States, and which must be rebuilt or repaired at a very great expense, to make this system of fortification uniform and complete.

By the plan of 1821, the proposed fortifications, in addition to those previously erected for the defence of our maritime frontier, are divided into three classes, to be erected at three different periods, as the country may be able to bear the expense. Those of the first class to cost eight millions, ten thousand and fifty-four dollars—to require for garrisons, in time of war 20,305 men, and in time of peace 2,540. The second class to cost 4,711,031 dollars, to require 8,015 men, in time of war, and 1,030 in peace. The third class to cost 5,073,070 and to require 7,042 men in war, and 1,120 in peace, to cost, in all, 17,795,055 dollars—say 18,000,000 dollars. To require in war 37,962—say 38,000 men, and in peace 4,690—say 5,000. By a report accompanying the president's message, of the 6th December last, we find estimates of additional works for defence of Boston harbor and Narragansett bay—for rafts to obstruct the channel between forts Monroe and Calhoun—fort at Craney Island—fort at New Port News—fort at Naseway shoal—fort at Thomas' point, and fort at Point Patience, not included in the estimates of 1821, to the amount of nearly two millions of dollars. So that this scheme of forts of 1821, as enlarged by the additions of 1825, is to cost nearly twenty millions of dollars, by the estimate submitted, which are several millions of dollars under what will be the real cost of these works; and this does not include the forts Fayette and Washington, completed since the late war, nor a great variety of forts erected previously to, and during the late war—as fort George, fort Preble, fort Constitution, fort Sewell, fort Independence, fort Warren, fort Walcott, fort Adams, fort Trumbull, fort Columbus, fort Lewis, fort Wood, fort Millin, fort McHenry, fort Severn, fort Pike, fort Niagara, fort Shelby, fort Wayne, fort Gratiot, fort Brown, fort Dearborn, fort Harrison, fort Nelson, fort Norfolk, fort Johnson, S. C. fort Johnson, N. C. fort Moultrie, fort Scott, fort Montgomery, fort Crawford, (Ala.) fort Charlotte, fort Hampton, fort Orange, fort Clarke, fort Edwards, fort Armstrong, and Fort Crawford, at Erie du Chen.—These forts are of so much importance,

that in the year 1817 they were all military stations, commanded by the different officers of our army, as appears by a report accompanying the president's message, of the 22d December, of that year. At that time 4,460 men were stationed at these forts. Many of them will no doubt be finally abandoned, but many of them must be repaired and garrisoned, to give them any thing like uniformity to the system, and will cost several millions of dollars.

Accuracy, as to the expense of works of such magnitude, could not be expected.—A man who builds knows that the estimates fall much below the actual cost. It is a matter of surprise that our engineers have been able to make their estimates with so near an approach to accuracy as they have; and yet I do not doubt those estimates will be found, in the average, twenty-five per cent. below what these fortifications will cost.

In the estimate of 1821, Old Point Comfort, now fortress Monroe, was to cost \$816,814 By an estimate, accompanying the president's message, of 4th of March, 1824, this fortress is to cost \$1,259,792

A difference of \$442,978 in this one work, which no doubt will be much increased before the work is completed.

The fort at the Rigolets, by estimate of 1821, to cost 264,517

By that of 1824 - 314,537

A difference of fifty thousand dollars.

The fort at Chef Menteur, by estimate, of 1821 260,517

By estimate of 1824 - 310,905

A difference of forty thousand dollars.

The fort at Pea Patch, by the estimate of 1821, to cost 258,000

By estimate in the president's message of 6th December last, 469,767

A difference of \$211,767; about 81 per cent.

The history of the fort at this place, called fort Delaware, may lead us to form some idea of what we may expect from other forts, by the time they are completed. Fort Delaware was calculated, in the first place, to be built upon a very large scale, to mount 212 guns; this plan was afterwards much reduced; and by the estimate of 1821, the whole expense of constructing the fort was fixed at 258,000 dollars. The work was then so far advanced, that no more than appropriated this sum for fort Delaware, and very wisely inserted in the law that it was to complete the fort. On the 7th May, 1822, however, to make it a little more complete, congress voted a further appropriation of 20,000 for fort Delaware. On the 3d March, 1823, they voted the further sum of 58,000 for this fort.

By a message of the president of the 4th March, 1824, it is stated that fort Delaware was begun in 1817; that up to 30th September, 1823, it had cost 369,478; and that there was wanting to complete the same, 10,236 dolls. in all 379,709 dolls.

In 1824, it was discovered that fort Delaware was so badly built, that its walls would fall, without the help of an enemy. To satisfy the public, Major Babcock, under whose superintendence the work was constructed, has been tried by a court martial, but not found guilty of any criminal neglect or ignorance.

On the 2d of March, 1825, a further appropriation is made for this fortification, of 71,879 dollars 50 cts.

By the president's message of 6th Dec. last, it appears that fort Delaware had cost, up to the 30th of September 1823, 431,872 dolls. 54 cts; and that there would be wanted to finish the same, 37,935 dolls. 20 cts. In all, 469,767 dolls. 74 cts. which, is 81 per cent. above the estimate of 1821; how much more will be wanted we are not yet informed.

All these circumstances and miscalculations can be explained satisfactorily, nor are they stated to throw any censure upon the engineer department, but to show that this system of fortifications is to cost much more than would appear, by the estimates submitted to us. At the Pea Patch, it is proposed to build fortifications on the opposite shores, to cost 317,257, as by estimate of 1821; but it is also contemplated to have two steam batteries there, and field works on the Jersey side and Delaware shore, not included in that estimate. Two miles below fort Delaware, there is a good landing on the Jersey side at Elsenburg—and on the Delaware side at Port Penn. And if these are defended, there are other points not far below, where an enemy may land in both states.

The expenditures for Fortifications, from 1791, to 1814, twenty years, amounted to \$4,415,405

Since that time, the following appropriations have been made for Fortifications:

1814, March 19th. - \$500,000

1815, March 3d. - 400,000

1815, December 21st, - 200,000

1816, April 20th, - 838,000

1817, March 3d, - 838,000

1819, February 15th, - 500,000
1820, April 14th, - 600,000
1821, March 3d, - 202,000
1822, May 7th, - 370,000
1823, March 3d, - 518,000
1824, April 20th, - 645,000
1825, March 2d, - 802,979

The estimates of 1821 amounted to 17,795,055

Money expended up to 30th September, 1825, upon the forts of the estimate of 1821, 3,605,000

To be expended under future appropriations 14,190,055

To which add for works contained in the statement of 6th December, 1825, not included in estimate of 1821, 1,933,057 16,145,123

\$27,183,500

If we add to this proper allowance for under estimates on the fortifications still to be furnished—for losses on contracts—for the guns and armaments for all these forts; and if we make allowance for the forts not mentioned in the estimates of 1821, but which must be rebuilt or repaired, our whole system of fortification will stand us in a sum not less than forty millions of dollars.

The men required for the forts mentioned in the plan of 1821, were in time of war 37,962, in peace 4,690. For the forts of Washington and Fayette, not mentioned in the plan of 1821, 1,600 men in time of war, and 200 in peace. For the forts mentioned in the estimate of 6th December, 1825, and not contained in the plan of 1821, 2,060 men in war and 250 in peace. To these add the requisite in 1817, many of which must again be occupied, if we make our system of fortifications complete upon our present magnificent plan, and we shall find that 50,000 men at least, will be wanted for our fortifications in time of war, and 8,000 in peace.

The first expense of all these forts, with their armaments, suppose them to cost 40 millions of dollars, the United States can bear. They can garrison these forts in time of peace—it will only require then to double our standing army. But what are we to do in case of war. Our extensive and magnificent system of fortifications? will then be our annoyance instead of defence. They must be well garrisoned, or they will fall into the hands of the enemy; if we have 50,000 men in garrisons, where are we to obtain men to fight in the field, at points not protected by the forts? If our men leave the forts, they will be taken by the enemy—if they do not, the country will be ravaged.

A large portion of our maritime fortifications must float; must move from place to place to meet the enemy. On land, our men must not be cooped up in forts, but must fight in the field. The works that are commenced, must be finished, unless it be discovered that they can be of no use, as that on Dauphin Island, the guns of which could not reach the channel it was meant to protect, or unless they are discovered to be beyond the bounds of the United States, as that at Rouse's Point.

This fort was to mount 300 guns. How much it cost the United States, I do not know—but 200,000 dollars were asked for advancing the work—when it was discovered to be on the British Territory. This created great consternation at the time, but I consider it a fortunate circumstance as otherwise we should have squandered nearly a million of dollars there. The British now own this fortification, but they have not had the folly to finish it, and probably never will have.

It is the direct and necessary tendency of this system of fortifications, to increase our standing army. The author of the system must have calculated upon a large peace establishment, as a part of his system.

We find, in his letter, when secretary of war, to Mr. Giles, of the 22d February, 1815, (published in the National Intelligencer of 13th January, 1821,) after comparing the situation of our country with that of other nations, he says, "from the view I have taken of the subject, I am of opinion that not less than 20,000 troops ought, for the present, to be retained in service." No more troops were wanted than those are wanted now, and although Mr. Monroe has no fear of such a peace establishment, I fear it more than I do all the enemies of the United States.

We are now called upon for another appropriation, to the amount of nearly a million of dollars, for fortifications; one item of which is seventeen thousand dollars, for the purchase of fifty-two acres of ground, at Throgg's Neck, on East river. This is a very small item, but very important in its consequences. The object is to build a fort on this point, and one opposite to it, at Wilkins' point, which, together, are to cost 928,000 dolls. and to require, for garrisons, in time of war, 2,878 men. This point is five or six miles east of Hellgate, which, itself, is a complete protection to the harbor of New York, on that side, against all the navy of the world. If we purchase these fifty-two acres, at the rate of 327 dollars per acre, except for a fortification, we waste the public money. It is said two or three acres of it are necessary for a light house. Let that be purchased under the light house bill—not under this. If we purchase Throgg's point, we shall next be called upon to purchase Wilkins' point, (which is opposite) probably at a much more extravagant rate. We are told that making this purchase is no pledge that the works are to be exacted. A very different language will be heard when we shall be called upon for appropriations for these forts—the estimates for building, which amount to nearly a million of dollars, but which, with their armaments, will cost nearly a million and a half of dollars. The senator from Maryland (Gen. Smith) has moved to strike out this item of the appropriation, and has shown, most conclusively, that to build the contemplated forts at Throgg's point and Wilkins' point, will be to throw away our money; that if enemies' vessels should have the rashness to approach New York, through the whirlpools of Hellgate, a six-gun battery, which could be erected in four days, near Mr. Gracie's house, opposite these whirlpools, would effectually check them—and the experience of that gentleman during the revolution, as well as late war, enables him to judge correctly upon this subject. Indeed, it is preposterous to fear, that a fleet sufficient to endanger the city of New York would ever find its way through the Narrows, if the Narrows were well fortified. When Sir James Wallace wished to pass this place, he was informed by his pilot that it would be an act of madness; that his ship would be lost; he clapt a pistol to the pilot's head, and told him to put his ship through, or he would blow his brains out—the pilot obeyed—the experiment succeeded. Other pilots, under similar circumstances, might make similar experiments. A man will attempt any thing, sooner than have his brains blown out.—After all that has been done, and all that possibly can be done, by permanent fortifications at the Narrows, to secure the harbor of New York, ships of war will more easily pass there than through Hellgate, as it now is.

These forts can be of no importance to New-York as a defence for their harbor; but they will be important to the country around them, as they will cause an expenditure of a million and a half of dollars there. But, New York ought to be satisfied with the expenditures which have taken place, for the safety of their harbor, independent of Throgg's Neck and Wilkins' point.

The forts built, and to be built, for the protection of New York, are, besides those at Throgg's Neck and Wilkins' point. Fort New Utrecht point to cost \$424,995
Fort Tompkins 485,988
Fort on Middle Ground 1,681,411
Fort on East Bank 1,681,411
Fort Fayette 318,375
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Besides Fort Columbus, Fort Lewis, Fort Wood, &c. &c. The debtor states were permitted, under an act of congress of 15th February, 1799, to appropriate the moneys which should have been paid into the United States' Treasury, to fortifying their harbors, under which New York expended 136,598 dolls. The importance of New York cannot be too highly estimated; but surely its interests have not been neglected.

When the gentleman from that state urge us to embark in a measure, that will probably end in building these useless forts at Throgg's Neck and Wilkins' Point, they ask too much; and I hope the motion of the senator from Maryland will prevail.

Morality in Negotiations.—We observe that Mr. Brougham has lately presented to the British parliament, a memorial of the prisoners in Newgate, complaining of publications against the Christian religion.

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