

# SUPPLEMENT.

**SPEECH**  
OF  
**Hon. Thomas J. Wood,**  
**Delivered at Rensselaer, July**  
**22, 1854, on Accepting the**  
**Democrat Nomination**  
**for Congress.**

**A Rendering of Account by a**  
**Faithful Public Servant.**

**FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:**—I truly thank you for a re-nomination to Congress. I have worked hard to perform the duties of a Representative, many and laborious as they are, and your approval today gives me new hope for the future. A faithful public servant can always find a friendly hand at home, though jealous and malicious men dog his footsteps in the pathways of duty. During my few months of public service I have felt I was your agent, entrusted with power to represent you in the halls of Congress, and I tell you I have done so to the best of my humble ability. No citizen of my district has failed to hear from me upon any business he wrote me about, and every call made upon me has had respectful attention. If re-elected I promise the people the same unwavering devotion to their interest, and I shall continue to be the same faithful representative.

The business of Congress has rapidly increased in the last few years. Great commercial and inter-State questions, involving vast sums of money, are constantly before Congress, and only men of integrity can safely deal with them. While in Congress I saw the necessity of two political parties of nearly equal power. Two political parties are necessary to pure and stable government. This government could not live long without them, and the great business interests of the people from their government could not be safely handled without opposing parties. You know it would not be safe for the country to allow only one party in Congress. Political parties are checks and balances upon each other. Then, if two parties are necessary to deal fairly with great business questions, necessary to honest government, necessary to a pure public service—I ask why is one party continued in power and the other kept out? Party control of the government should alternate every few years. This would keep both parties upon good behavior, and keep both familiar with the working and practice of the government. It is true patriotism for the people to order a change in the party control of public affairs.

The Republican party has been in power twenty-four years, and during this long period the young men have grown to command the Democratic party. There is no reason why they should not be trusted with public affairs. They have no bad record to look back upon, and they would give the country a grand administration. I tell you,

**A CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION IS NECESSARY.**

A change of President will not bring reform and break down dishonest practices. A Republican President is powerless unless he makes a change in the office-holding element of the party. This he dare not do. If he did, he would lose the support of the party managers and invite their relentless hostility against all his measures of reform. He could not be successful. The hundred thousand office-holders have managed his canvas, worked for his election and gave their money for his triumph. Will he reward them by turning them out? No. Nine-tenths of them will remain to cover corrupt transactions and lay plans for new ones. Very often we hear of some theft of the public money. The disbursing officer of the Post-office Department was lately discovered to be guilty of embezzlement of the public money, which ran back to 1881. His steals amount to over \$74,000. His salary was \$2,400 per year, yet he went into expensive society, drove fine trotters and entertained liberally. This was known and talked about for years, yet he was allowed to go on in this way, embezzling the people's money every day of his fast life, without inquiry or objection. This official had no settlement with the Treasury Department since 1881, and his accounts had never been audited or kept up. What do you say of this kind of administration? Do the people want public business conducted in this loose way?

Senator Ingalls, a Republican Senator from the State of Kansas, said of this case in the United States Senate, that there must be some radical defect in the keeping of departmental accounts, which permitted a series of peculations to go on for years undiscovered. I call your attention to a dispatch in the New York *Star* on this scandalous case:

WATERSIDE, June 23.—Burnside stole the proceeds of sales of waste paper, carpets, matting, furniture, and other Government property of which he had the control as custodian, clearing \$75,000 at least. The records of his accounts show that the stealings of between \$40,000 and \$50,000 in cash was discovered there was no suspicion of other stealings. A prominent official says that Burnside was under the same regulations for insuring accountability and honesty as all the other officers there, and that was as to him. None of the robberies and frauds now coming to light, except perhaps, in the case of Morgan of the State Department, whose death made an example of him, were discovered through the police vigilance, but merely through accidental circumstances on the outside. Senator Hale's proposal looking to an enquiry into frauds in the departments is well enough if it doesn't mean the smothering of facts. The Meline investigation of the Burnside frauds was suspended, and the subsequent one by a Senate Committee carefully abstained from going into deep water. Exposure, not suppression, is needed.

This scandal was followed by numerous corrupt practices in the Navy Department, implicating divers officials. The extent of these embezzlements will not be known to the public until new men examine the books and inventory the property. In the Treasury Department you find a shortage of over \$12,000 in the accounts of Mr. Morgan, who died about four months ago. His peculations had been going on a long time, and no business accounting was ever had of his books. These embezzlements create grave suspicion that the whole Department is filled by corrupt men; and one will not overrule the accounts of the other, or even ask for a balance sheet for years.

What did the Secretary of the Treasury himself do in the last ten years? How did he handle the idle millions of money in the Treasury, collected from all the people by over-taxation? He used it to benefit Wall Street jobbers every time they called for aid. Whenever a panic was threatened in Wall street, through stock gambling, the Secretary telegraphs the street bankers that he will unlock the Treasury vaults to benefit them, and the gambling operators go on with confidence. After the Secretary sends his telegram, the New York press comes out next morning with head lines,

"Confidence in Wall Street is restored. The Secretary of the Treasury telegraphs aid in case of emergency." Is the public treasury to be open to stock gamblers and speculators that a panic in the street may be averted? Is the public treasury to be open to any bank or to any person to uphold wild speculation and preserve from downfall this immoral and corrupting hell of finance?

I fear the truth in these Government Departments is not known. We do not know how the accounts do stand in the Treasury Department, but if what I have stated is an index, they are bad enough. You will remember that it came out in a discussion in the United States Senate a short time ago, that there was a shortage in the Treasury accounts of a large sum—I think over fifty millions of dollars, and it was then justified as an unavoidable shortage! There has been no investigation of the Treasury accounts for twenty-four years, during which many billions of money have passed through the public Treasury; and we know not the naked truth, but I venture the shortage will reach many more than fifty millions when the books are overhauled. The little frauds and speculations leaking outside may be the evidence of swelling corruption inside. I am led to believe the shortage may be a great sum. The officials of the party responsible for these will not make them known to the world. You might elect a Republican President and continue to do so, but these frauds and thefts of the public money will not be made known to the people by any of them, for the reason, they would destroy the party. I regret to tell you that, in Washington, the saving of the party from all harm is more important than the saving of your money or the honor and purity of the Government; and this condition always arises from a long continuance of one party power.

The Secretary of the Navy is not clear of improper conduct. He received about \$300,000 from the sale of the iron and debris of broken up ships, and deposited it in the Treasury, subject to his own check. He deposited it as he would his own money in a bank, and not to the credit of the Government. This was not a creditable transaction by a chief cabinet officer, and when this high cabinet officer did this bold thing, can we say the great numbers of officials under him have done better than he? What conclusions must fair-minded people draw from all this actual and circumstantial evidence? Would not most men think there is something bad behind it all?

Now, go over to the Attorney-General's office, another cabinet officer, and you will find hardly any conduct above suspicion. Indeed, my friends, so grave were the doubts of official honesty that an investigation was conducted during the entire session of Congress, and so far it has revealed that over \$200,000 was thrown away on the Star Route prosecutions in a reckless manner. Exorbitant attorneys' fees were paid—from \$30,000 to \$65,000 each—for a few months' work, and no good result whatever. Everybody knows that the Star Route scoundrels stole many millions of dollars, and escaped just punishment through corruption and bribery—a disgrace to the government. These Star Routes were projected and carried out through the Post-office Department, and this enormous stealing went on for years under the eye of the Administration, and nothing was done to stop it before Dorsey and Brady and other pernicious rascals got away with several millions of the public money. What kind of official integrity is this, that allows many millions of your money to be stolen under the eaves of one of the principal Departments of this Government? No Department ought to be heard to plead ignorance of such colossal theft. It is a loose, not to say criminal, way of conducting the public business, to allow millions to be stolen in a series of years without detection. It is well known now that a part of this stolen money was used in Indiana to corrupt the voter, under the name of "Dorsey's soap," in 1880.

After these men got away with their **STOLEN MILLIONS**, what did they care for the Attorney-General? He made a great blow about it, flourished trumpets before the people, but no hing was done. Not one scoundrel convicted—not one. It is charged upon a show of evidence that the prosecution connived with the defendants. Oh, my friends, this is all rotten business, and the people ought to clean out the house. If my party were in the house I would say "clean it out." It is said these scoundrels are hunted down. Can you tell me one that was convicted and punished? Every time one was caught, they let him go. If one of them is convicted he is soon pardoned out. They are all together, and do not intend to hurt one another. Why, the smell of official corruption was so strong at Washington that a Republican Senate was compelled to appoint an investigating committee to work all summer to investigate all the Departments of the Government. You may believe there is grave suspicion of bad corruption in the several Departments, or a Republican Senate would not, out of decency, appoint such a committee. What a spectacle! Every Department of this great Government to be investigated. The news was flashed over the wires to all nations that every Department of this great Republic is to be investigated. Has the party in power given our country this kind of a reputation among the nations of the earth? What is this to go down into history? What an example to young men who must soon take control of public affairs? Investigations generally fail. They are avoided in a thousand cunning ways. The remedy is to clean out the great house. Burn the field to kill the chin-chugs.

The Surgeon-General's office is utterly bad. One Dr. Wales and his subordinates embezzled over \$60,000, and no one called him to account. The Secretary said he thought something was wrong with Wales, but he was well recommended and therefore let him alone to steal. The idea that a cabinet officer of the Government, having suspicion of the dishonesty of his appointee, permits him to remain because he was well recommended! Is that a good excuse? Should I permit a man to steal because he was highly recommended? This will not do. It looks like connivance with the subordinate by the chief officer of the Naval Department.

Now step over to the Department of the Interior. This has charge of the public lands. The public land frauds tower over all others in audacity and magnitude. It has been going on for years. Could these schemes have ever found lodgment in an honest Department? The present Secretary, I believe, is an honest man, but what can he do with bad subordinates conniving against him? The land office officials all over the West are in league with scoundrels. They have been going on for years. They could not begin in an honest Department, but once begun, the new head of the Department is filled by corrupt men; and one will not overrule the accounts of the other, or even ask for a balance sheet for years.

What did the Secretary of the Treasury himself do in the last ten years? How did he handle the idle millions of money in the Treasury, collected from all the people by over-taxation? He used it to benefit Wall Street jobbers every time they called for aid. Whenever a panic was threatened in Wall street, through stock gambling, the Secretary telegraphs the street bankers that he will unlock the Treasury vaults to benefit them, and the gambling operators go on with confidence. After the Secretary sends his telegram, the New York press comes out next morning with head lines,

the books. It would be the work of a lifetime. The hundreds and thousands of subordinates in the several Departments are among the guilty ones, who hold over Administration after Administration. There is no remedy here but to turn them out. They will not be turned out unless the people change the Administration. There are pending before the land office over six hundred thousand land claims, covering seventy-five millions of acres of the public domain. No one knows how many of these are fraudulent, but it is estimated on known facts, that about one-half are base frauds upon the Government. One corporation obtained 14,000 acres of fine timber land in California, and it turns out to be a base fraud upon the Government. Does any man believe that any person or corporation could obtain such a body of valuable land by fraud from an honest Department? Does any man believe that such colossal frauds could be carried on, such robbery of the public domain go on for years, without detection, in any honest Department? They could not germinate and grow under any honest and careful Administration.

**WHAT HAS THE DEMOCRATIC HOUSE DONE?**

for the country? It undertook to make theft and peculation impossible by cutting down to the lowest the appropriations. It reduced them nearly forty millions of dollars. Plentiful appropriations are cause for embellement. It began the work of building a navy by appropriating money to construct and arm steel cruisers to be used to protect our commerce and baffle an enemy's ships, which no Republican Congress ever tried to do in the last twenty years. It forfeited the following land grants made, every one of them, by Republican Congresses:

	Acres.
Gulf and Ship Canal Railroad.....	632,900
Tuscaloosa and Mobile Railroad.....	688,000
Coosa and Tennessee Railroad.....	140,000
Savannah and Albany Railroad.....	900,000
New Orleans and State Line Railroad.....	129,200
St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad.....	1,072,024
Oregon Central Railroad.....	14,920,880
California and Oregon Railroad.....	1,130,880
Atlantic and Pacific Railroad.....	2,126,525
Sioux City and Saint Paul Railroad.....	16,000,000
Total.....	37,211,504

The following bills are on the House Calendar:

	Acres.
New Orleans Baton Rouge and Vicksburg Railroad.....	903,218
Oregon and California Railroad.....	3,701,700
Marquette, Houghton and Ontonagon Railroad.....	627,200
Ontonagon and Brule River Railroad.....	232,848
Marquette and State Line Railroad.....	540,848
Northern Pacific Railroad.....	20,000,000
Southern Pacific, of California.....	7,500,000
Total.....	37,211,504

"The above are simply a few specimens. There is not a State or Territory in this broad Union which does not contain scores, even hundreds, of men who hold tracts of land as large as those noted.

"Concerning the railroad grants, those colossal monuments to corruption and robbery, it is impossible to speak with patience of the men and party responsible for them. I was informed the other day by a gentleman who served in the Thirty-seventh Congress, that 300,000,000 acres of land were granted to railroad corporations within twenty years.

"Since the beginning of the present Congress no less than thirty bills have been introduced declaring the land granted to railroads forfeited. Mr. Holman's bill is the most sweeping and therefore best calculated to do justice to an outraged people. Should it pass, the railroad corporations of America will be compelled to disgorge 100,000,000 acres of the best land in America, which they hold in defiance of law, decency and justice."

I give an extract from the speech of Mr. Love, of New Jersey, in the House in June last:

**Table showing grants of lands to corporations to aid in the construction of railroads.**

Corporations.	Date of act.	Acres.
Union Pacific Railroad Company.	July 1, 1862	12,000,000
Central Branch Union Pacific.	July 1, 1862	187,488
Kansas Pacific.	July 1, 1862	6,000,000
Union Pacific, successor to Denver Pacific.	Mar. 3, 1869	1,000,100
Central Pacific.	July 1, 1862	8,000,000
Central Pacific, successor to Western Pacific.	July 2, 1864	1,100,000
Pacific.	Mar. 3, 1865	1,100,000
Burlington and Mississippi.	July 2, 1864	2,441,000
Southern City and Pacific.	July 2, 1864	60,000
Northern Pacific.	July 2, 1864	47,000,000
Oregon Branch of Central Pacific.	July 25, 1866	3,000,000
Oregon and California.	July 25, 1866	3,500,000
Atlantic and Pacific.	July 27, 1866	42,000,000
Southern Pacific.	July 25, 1866	6,000,000
Southern Pacific Branch Line.	Mar. 3, 1871	3,520,000
Oregon Central.	May 4, 1870	1,500,000
To corporations.....		137,208,688
To States.....		53,490,263
Total.....		190,698,951

"These grants aggregate 300,000 square miles, or over 190,000,000 acres of land, an area so vast that great empires dwarf in the contrast. Out of this vast domain you could carve 240 States of the extent of Rhode Island, with her 1,250 square miles; 150 States of the size of Delaware, with her 2,000 square miles; seven States like Pennsylvania, with her 45,215 square miles; four and one-half times as large as all the New England States (Maine, 33,040 square miles; New Hampshire, 9,305 square miles; Vermont, 9,565 square miles; Massachusetts, 8,315 square miles; Rhode Island, 1,250 square miles; Connecticut, 4,990 square miles), 66,465; three times as large as the great States of New York (49,170 square miles), Pennsylvania (45,215 square miles), and New Jersey (7,815 square miles), 102,200; one and a half times as large as the great German Empire, with 208,624 square miles; nearly three times as large as Great Britain and Ireland, which have 121,571 square miles, and nearly equal in extent to the thirteen original States, which only contain 325,065 square miles."

Will the Republican voters of this country approve their party by another vote this fall in the face of this shameful disclosure? Can the poor man, the humble citizen for whose homestead the public lands are held, approve the party that has permitted such shameful waste of the public domain? My Republican friends, soon you and your children will have no free homes in this country if you will continue your party in power much longer. Will you not approve my effort to restore these lands to the Government? Will not the people approve me and my party in the work to save the public lands for homesteads for the people and their children? God helping me, I will labor to preserve the public lands for homesteads for the poor of our land. I would hold for them the actual settler. Give the

**LABORING POOR A FREE HOMESTEAD,** and make them live for their country. Nothing makes a man love his country more than a free homestead on her precious domain. Give the poor a farm and make them firm friends to its institutions. I voted with my party to abolish the timber culture laws, so as to prevent one person from acquiring two or three large farms, and thus rapidly absorbing the public lands, taking them from our children. What hope have your children and mine for a free home under the Republican policy of wasting the public lands? Foreign landlords and barons are taking our best lands from American children. See the blocks of farms owned by English syndicates. Did this ever happen under Democratic policy? It is the best lands they have got. They do not improve or cultivate the soil; they are held for speculation. Foreign capital invested in blocks of as fine lands as Heaven covers, to make expensive homes for the children of America! No

party ought to live an hour in the face of this anti-American waste of our children's homes. When I look over the map of the great West, and see the wide stretch of beautiful and fertile lands, I feel a swelling pride that the poor boys and girls growing up had a free home there, to live upon and build up for themselves and the country. I turned to the public records and I find nearly all in sight absorbed by corporations and foreign syndicates. I confess my disappointment. I said this is indefensible; shame does not describe it. I said it means no free homes for the young of our land. In the last twenty years, cattle-raising companies have fenced the public domain wholly without any authority of law, enclosing miles upon miles of open territory. This resulted in nullifying the Homestead laws, as actual settlers were driven away and shot like wild beasts if they happened to be in or near the enclosure, by these land sharks and robbers. The House passed a bill making the fencing of public land a crime punishable by severe penalties. How any watchful Administration could permit these outrages to go on without protest or interference is incomprehensible.