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# THE NATIONAL BUDGET

*By the*

**HON. JOSEPH G. CANNON**



*(From Harper's Magazine, October, 1919)*

*The Hon. Joseph G. Cannon, with forty-five years' service in the House of Representatives, thirty years a member of the Committee on Appropriations, ten years as chairman of that committee, and eight years as Speaker of the House, has had a greater and more varied experience in government budget-making than any other American.*

*He has been called a progressive and a reactionary. His political experiences range from the Lincoln-Douglas debates to helping prepare the biggest war budget ever made by any government in history; from having his name on the same ballot with Abraham Lincoln in 1860 to a refusal of the Democratic leaders of his district to name a candidate to oppose him in 1918.*



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THE Prodigal Son was a liberal spender and the fatted calf was killed to make a feast when he returned to his father's house, but he was not put in charge of the family purse. That was left in control of the elder son, who continued to work in the field and create income. Modern civilization has followed that rule in family and in Government budgets, because income is the first item in every budget and the one item which we can not do without. We can not be spenders until we have become producers. My wife and I tried budget-making when we began house-keeping, regulating family expenditures by my small income. She spent the money, but I had to first get the money to be spent. We got along fairly well, but made one mistake. We raised a pig to increase our assets, but I took so much interest in that pig, feeding it, scratching its back to hear it grunt its satisfaction, and conversing with it, until by the time it was grown big and fat I could not turn it into our winter's meat. That pig became a liability instead of an asset. There are a lot of people who make the same mistake in Government budgets and forget the real purpose in raising a pig. They become so much absorbed in their ambitions and efforts that they forget the purpose behind their efforts; and the liabilities they create are the liabilities of the people who pay the taxes. It is not surprising that the people sometimes get an idea

that a government pig is not very different from the golden calf which the Children of Israel worshiped, instead of a source of food supply.

The Federal Government was not established as a money-making enterprise, but the expenditures must be regulated by the income, and the income comes out of the pockets of the people in the form of taxes. The only part of the Federal Government that has the power to tax the people is Congress, and all revenue bills must originate in the House of Representatives. The makers of the Constitution were somewhat explicit about that and insisted that Congress should control the national purse or national budget, which covers both taxation and expenditure. Franklin thought that the purse should be controlled by the House, because the Representatives were to be elected by direct vote of the people and for short terms; but Madison suggested that the power of amendment should be given to the Senate so that it might "diminish" an extravagant budget by the House. Senator Smoot recently said in debate that once during his 18 years' service the Senate had reduced an appropriation passed by the House, and only once.

President Washington addressed all his messages on the budget to the House, and so did President Adams; and from the beginning of the Government down to the present the estimates of Government expenditures have been sent to the House, and there have originated all tax bills and all appropriation bills. The Representatives are the men who have to bear the responsibility for unpopular taxes and are the first to feel the weight of the voters' dissatisfaction. They get kicked out whenever the people think too much has been taken out of their pockets for a Government budget.

They have to suffer for their sins of omission as well as their sins of commission when they permit some other part of the Government to make an objectionable budget.

The American people do not yet appreciate the cost of the war with Germany. The appropriations made by the Sixty-fifth Congress amounted to \$42,000,000,000, and the bills which failed March 4, and have been enacted by the Sixty-sixth Congress, carrying appropriations for this fiscal year and chargeable to the Sixty-fifth Congress, increased the total to \$45,000,000,000, or more than the entire disbursements of the Federal Government from the first inauguration of George Washington to the second inauguration of Woodrow Wilson. The appropriations made by that one Congress were greater than the entire wealth of the American people in the census year 1880. The Government disbursed more than \$33,000,000,000 in the two years from the beginning of the war; or double the gold production of the world in the 400 years since Columbus discovered this continent; four times the amount of gold money stock in the world to-day; eight times the gold in this country, and one and one-half times the total resources of all the national banks. Congress authorized Government loans of \$31,000,000,000 and an annual tax levy of \$6,000,000,000, and there is considerable complaint of high taxes, but the executive departments continue to estimate peace expenditures on a war basis just as though gold grew like mushrooms in the Treasury cellar and bank notes budded like leaves on the trees in springtime.

Col. Sellers was not more optimistic about his "eye water" than are some of our would-be budget makers over their plans to make the world good and happy by

the expenditure of public money and develop new Government functions to swell the Government pay roll. A good many camels got their noses under the tent during the war emergency, and they are now crowding their bodies in with an appeal to Congress that they be consecrated as "the Government's own" to be hereafter looked upon as were the sacred elephants of Siam. They are spreading propaganda, much of it at Government expense, to create public sentiment in favor of their permanent adoption; and a great many people try to apply the old proverb that public money is like holy water, free to all who seek salvation. There is not a war activity, except fighting, or a war-time appropriation that has been willingly surrendered. The executive departments want to continue their control of all the great agencies that were taken over by the Government to help win the war, even to that of the "conservation of waste," and I have received letters from prominent business men and bankers urging an appropriation for this function of educating the people to save rags and old iron. They appear to be unconscious that they are as socialistic in their recommendations as those who want the Government to own the railroads, telegraphs, and other great organizations of industrial endeavor. A member of the President's Cabinet also recommends this appropriation, and the Secretary of the Treasury sent it to Congress as an official estimate of necessary Government expenditures. Government spending is like private spending, and it is advisable to keep the purse strings in the hands of others than the spenders. The situation is serious enough as it touches the billions we have already spent, but there are also the con-

tinuing contracts and obligations to the soldiers and their families.

The interest on the public debt will amount to more than \$1,000,000,000 a year. There will be the nest-egg for our future national budget for each year, and when to it is added the Navy egg, the Army egg, the pension egg, and all the other eggs made necessary by the war and planned by the executive departments, the nest will be equal to that of the goose that laid the golden eggs, and call for four or five billion dollars a year in taxes. We were all willing and glad to pay any kind of taxes to win the war, but as we get away from the war the people will, I fear, feel the burden of taxation more than the benefits derived from the war. That has been the history after other wars, and even now petitions are pouring in on Congress to repeal many taxes levied only a few months ago.

It requires no Jeremiah to see considerable grumbling about future budgets. The executive departments spend the money, but they can not create a dollar of revenue, not even by borrowing without the authority of Congress. Some very bright and enterprising people appear to lose sight of this division of functions, and that it is taxation to secure revenue that raises Cain among the people. The taxpayers don't pay much attention to the spending until they think that too much money is taken out of their pockets to pay the bills. Then they begin to keep tab on their Representatives who vote the taxes; and they know that they elect Representatives every two years. The makers of the Constitution had this in mind when they provided that the Representatives should be elected every two years, that Congress should make no

appropriation for the support of armies for longer than two years, and that no money should be drawn from the Treasury except in consequence of appropriations made by law—by Congress. The fathers planned to keep the taxing power close to the people and not permit it to be exercised very long without the Representatives having to be reelected. All the checks lead right to the Members of the House, and they are held responsible for excessive taxes whether they originate them or consent to them when made elsewhere. So, when we create a national budget committee we had better keep it pretty close to the House, which is the part of the Government that is closest to the people and on which the people have a short string to bring under rein. Otherwise there may be trouble.

I know that the British Government has a budget committee, but I have an impression that the House of Commons comes pretty near being the Government over there. The British Cabinet is formed by the leader of the majority in the House of Commons, and when he loses his majority the cabinet goes out with him and a new Government is formed. It is about the same as though the leader of the majority in the House of Representatives should dictate to the President the men who should compose his Cabinet. Such a change would involve reducing the President to a dignified automaton who would be compelled to take orders from the leader of the House of Representatives, and it would make the Senate as harmless as is the House of Lords. The House would be the Government in fact, and all others connected with the Government would take orders from the leaders of the House.

Just think of President Wilson, after the rejection of his appeal to his countrymen for a Democratic majority in Congress last November, sitting in the White House waiting for the Hon. James R. Mann, then the Republican leader of the House, to send word that, in obedience to the will of the people, he had selected a new Cabinet; and then have Mr. Mann drive up to the White House and hand the President a list of Republicans to fill every place in his Cabinet. But, under the British system, that is just what would have happened last November after the election which reversed the majority in the House. We should not have had to wait a year for the constitutional meeting of the new Congress, nor for the President to call an extra session at his pleasure. The new Congress would have been summoned at once and the change would have run throughout the Government with an entirely new set of advisers for the President to leave in control while he journeyed to Paris to participate in the peace conference. In fact, he might not have been permitted to go to France as the chief representative of the United States. Lloyd-George had a general election in England before he became the chief representative at the peace conference. This may appear like a far-fetched illustration, but it fits the suggestion that we should follow the British system in handling appropriations for the support of the Government and all its varied functions.

I say this without criticism of the British budget plan; for as I read the report of the select committee on national expenditures of the House of Commons, the so-called budget committee was created to keep control of Government expenditures and Government

policies in Parliament, and not permit one department of the Government or one committee of the House of Commons to inaugurate a new policy by way of an appropriation. That is a wise plan and it is what we had in Congress until within the last 30 years. But under our present plan of distributing appropriation bills to half a dozen committees of the House and as many more in the Senate, we have opened the door for executive officers to formulate policies. They ask for appropriations for new departures, present these to committees that devote all their attention to those departments, get appropriations recommended and passed which present the camel's nose for new policies created by law and requiring continuing appropriations forever afterwards. The Members of Congress who are not on these committees know little about the bills, but follow the committee having jurisdiction on the theory that the committee is the best judge of the matter because it has investigated it. They see only the camel's nose. The body of the camel does not appear until later, when it comes into the House with the claim that it has been authorized by law and is fully entitled to future appropriations with which to develop the new policy. The multifarious duties of the Members of Congress in considering 25,000 bills justifies them in following the committees having jurisdiction, but this tendency of the executive departments to formulate Government policies without regard to their conflict with other policies of other departments, and without consideration of the revenues, is the one great embarrassment in the present plan. Government policies should be made by Congress, not by the executive officers, whose function is to administer the law, not make the law. And in inaugurating new

Government policies Congress should consider them apart from appropriation bills.

Our Constitution placed the national purse in the hands of Congress and largely in the House; and for the first 75 years of its existence the House had a budget committee—the Committee on Ways and Means. That committee reported both revenue bills and appropriation bills. It had jurisdiction over taxation and expenditure, and its majority represented the majority of the House which represented the majority vote of the country at the last preceding election. That was something like the plan in the House of Commons, for if the House majority offended the people in taxation or expenditure it would be brought to book at the next election. The Committee on Ways and Means considered the needs of the Government in appropriations and then framed tax bills to produce the necessary revenue. It planned to cut the garment according to the cloth, for the people did not like either a surplus or a deficit in the Federal Treasury. The responsibility was centered in one committee, which might well have been called a budget committee, and that plan prevailed until after the Civil War. Then the House created a Committee on Appropriations to consider the details of estimates from the executive department, while the Committee on Ways and Means continued to report tax bills; but the two committees worked together balancing appropriations and revenues. Thaddeus Stevens, of Pennsylvania, who had been chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, became the first chairman of the Committee on Appropriations from choice, and he applied to that committee the knowledge he had gained in preparing both revenue and appropriation bills.

The budget was carefully considered to guard against having the majority of the House turned out and a new majority given control to reverse revenue policies. This plan of having two committees handle the Government budget continued for 20 years and the annual appropriations were kept below \$400,000,000, notwithstanding the debts of the Civil War, paying the interest on the public debt and reducing the principal by one-half. Then in 1885 there came the change by distributing the appropriation bills to half a dozen committees, to develop new Government policies on appropriation bills that had to be passed to prevent the Government from embarrassment. That change is often spoken of as a reform, but it appeared to me at the time as revenge on one of the ablest and most courageous men who ever sat in the House of Representatives. The purpose, not much disguised at the time, was to cripple the power of Samuel J. Randall and humiliate him for what was called party treachery, though he had never subscribed to the policy which his party adopted.

Samuel J. Randall was chairman of the Committee on Appropriations and William R. Morrison, of Illinois, was chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means in the Forty-eighth Congress, elected in 1882. They were both strong men and both earnest Democrats, but they held divergent views on the tariff question. Randall had always been a protection Democrat, while Morrison was more in harmony with the Southern wing of the party in favor of free trade. Randall had been Speaker of the House in the Forty-fourth, Forty-fifth, and Forty-sixth Congresses, and might have been Speaker of the House in the Forty-eighth Congress, when the Democrats again came into

control after losing the Forty-seventh Congress, if he had been willing to compromise his tariff views and adopt the free-trade declarations of his party in the platforms of 1876 and 1880. It was an open secret when the House met to organize in December, 1883, that the Georgia delegation had sent a message to Randall offering him their support for Speaker on condition that he would appoint as members of the Committee on Ways and Means Democrats who were in harmony with the Democratic platform declaration of a tariff for revenue only; and that Gen. Rosecrans acted as messenger for the California delegation offering support on the same terms. But Randall would make no terms to secure the Speakership again, and he was defeated by John G. Carlisle, of Kentucky. Under the custom of seniority in committee assignments Randall became chairman of the Committee on Appropriations because he had been the leader of the minority on that committee in the Republican Forty-seventh Congress. Morrison was appointed chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, and there began the trouble. Randall was the most forceful man on the floor, notwithstanding the position of Morrison as chairman of Ways and Means made him the nominal leader of the House.

When Morrison reported his celebrated horizontal tariff reduction bill to the House, Randall, true to his long record and his State, led a considerable Democratic faction in opposition. That was one of the most interesting factional contests I ever saw in the House. A score or more of Democrats from New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois followed Randall and voted with the Republicans to strike out the enacting clause, and the bill was defeated by a

good majority in a Democratic House. It raised Cain among the Democrats not only in the House but throughout the country; but notwithstanding the ex-coriation of the insurgents, the Democratic national convention, held in Chicago a few months later, in 1884, modified the platform by declaring that any change in the tariff laws should "be regardful of labor and capital invested." Randall and his followers, no doubt, compelled that change in the party platform, and it was on that platform Mr. Cleveland was elected, but after the election and inauguration of the first Democratic President since the Civil War he went back to the old tariff-for-revenue-only policy that was a tradition with the party.

The Democrats again controlled the House in the Forty-ninth Congress and Carlisle was again elected Speaker. We knew that the party leaders, including the President, had a rod in pickle for Randall, and it was rumored that he would lose the chairmanship of Appropriations as punishment for defeating the Morrison bill. That would have continued the split in the Democratic Party, for Randall was a fighter and not entirely dependent on position for his following. His courage, ability, and experience made him a leader regardless of the position he held. Speaker Carlisle was too good a politician, too fair a man, and had too much regard for the traditions of the House to listen to such advice. There was no committee on committees then. Carlisle was a Speaker of the old order and appointed all the committees, assigning both Democrats and Republicans, and the Member who did not like his assignment could lump it and bite his thumb to his heart's content without disturbing John G. Carlisle. He presided over the House as Clay and Blaine

and Randall had presided before him and as Reed presided after him; but he was a good politician, recognized the personal power of Randall, and did not propose to quarrel with him and have his party suffer another tariff defeat in the House of its friends. Randall was again named as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, but Morrison had his revenge in the distribution of the appropriations. He introduced a rule at the beginning of the session, which was reported by the Committee on Rules and adopted by the House, giving jurisdiction of appropriations as well as legislation for the various departments of government to the Committees on Military Affairs, Naval Affairs, Post Offices, Agriculture, Indian Affairs, and Foreign Affairs. The members of President Cleveland's Cabinet supported Morrison's plan to not only humiliate Randall but to curb his power, and I have sometimes thought they were shrewder than they were credited with being and that they saw the advantage to the executive departments as well as the punishment of Randall in the change. It was the beginning of executive interference in legislation which has led to executive dominance in legislation for appropriations to meet the demands of the spenders instead of the demands of the taxpayers. Thomas B. Reed, then the Republican leader in the House, supported the new rule, but some years later, after experience as Speaker, he admitted to me that his judgment had been at fault on that occasion. It was political revenge, not well-considered political reform, and it has led to extravagance in appropriation of the people's money.

Mr. Fitzgerald, chairman of the Committee on Appropriations for six years, made a forceful speech two

years ago, comparing the 12-year period 1875-86 with the 12-year period 1901-12; the increase in regular appropriations had been 292.5 per cent—four times the rate of increase in population, three and a half times the rate of increase in wealth, and larger than the rate of increase in any other department of our domestic life. Mr. Fitzgerald expressed the opinion that these large increases in public expenditures had been due to the change of the rules of the House which distributed the appropriation bills to half a dozen committees instead of having one committee act as an auditing body to keep the expenditures within the revenues. I am inclined to agree with Mr. Fitzgerald's conclusions that the distribution of the jurisdiction over appropriations was a big incentive to extravagance and the more careless appropriation of public money. I don't mean to suggest that the other committees are consciously extravagant and wasteful, but when one set of men is making appropriations for the Army, another for the Navy, and others for particular functions of the Government, it naturally leads to a gimlet-hole view of Government finances. The Committee on Appropriations in the old days had to have all the estimates of all the executive departments on the table, and it had to consider the demands of each in its relation to the whole and to the revenues to meet the expenditures. Chairman Sherley, of the last Committee on Appropriations, for some years favored a budget committee, but in the closing days of Congress, February 28, he made a speech in which he took the position that any commission making recommendations for a budget must be subject to the control of Congress "and not to the administrative branch of the Government," and that the House, "which, after all,

is the real guardian of the liberties of the people, because it represents at short periods of time the popular will of the people, must take its true place in determining what shall be done and what shall not be done in respect to the great questions which confront this country and the world." Like the British committee on budget, Mr. Sherley insisted that Congress and the popular House of Congress should make the policies of the Government.

We have only one executive elected by the people and responsible to them. That is the President, but he has half a million people in the civil service under him—it was nearly a million during the war with Germany, and we are having some difficulty in securing consent of the executive departments for its reduction to the prewar figures of 500,000. Creating offices is the easiest thing in the world; abolishing offices is the hardest thing in the world. With the railroads under Government control, there are 2,000,000 more people added to the civil list, and with the telegraph and telephone employees added, the civil-service army has been almost as large as the military forces put into the field for the war with Germany. This great aggregation may be, and often is, directed by the heads of the executive departments to bring pressure on Congress for new and extraordinary appropriations and the initiation of new policies. The distribution of the appropriation bills in the House helps the departments to bring pressure on the special committees having jurisdiction, and when they fail with one committee to try another. We have given so much latitude to the departments that they now presume to prepare legislation and insist on its adoption by Con-

gress without amendment of any kind; and, having prepared such legislation, they sometimes interpret it in administration in a way that surprises even the members of committees who reported and defended it on the floor.

None of these executive officials are responsible to the people or can be called to account by the voters. They are appointed by the President or by the heads of departments or selected by the Civil Service Commission, and when they make mistakes in recommending and preparing legislation which Congress adopts Congress alone is held responsible.

I have found executives—members of the Cabinet, bureau chiefs, and subordinate officials, including commissioners—very human in wanting what they want when they want it and without regard to the revenues or the demands of other departments. They are specialists and each devotes his whole attention to his one specialty as though it were the universe. There are many very bright and clever men among them, and they are all energetic in their own fields of endeavor, but Congress has to look at the whole Government together. Their enthusiasm is commendable, but not conclusive. They are also like other people, imitative, and when one conceives an idea for a new government function the others jump in and also want the same function, with the result too often of half a dozen rival functions in as many different departments. This is one of the most wasteful features of the distribution of appropriation bills. We had an example of it when the Post Office appropriation bill was before the House last winter. The Postmaster General recommended that he be given a large appropriation for building and operating airplanes when we

have a surplus of airplanes and operators in the Army and also in the Navy with rivalry and friction between them. He also recommended a large appropriation for the construction of post roads when the Department of Agriculture has control of millions of money appropriated by Congress to aid the States in building roads, with a road division that appears to have become efficient. But the Postmaster General wanted to duplicate this important Government function. The Post Office Committee wrote his recommendations into the Post Office appropriation bill. The House by a substantial majority refused these appropriations because they were duplications of service performed by other departments, but the Senate adopted the Postmaster General's recommendations and the House concurred rather than let the Post Office appropriation bill fail; but only after the transfer of jurisdiction of the appropriation of \$200,000,000 for post roads to the Department of Agriculture, which has control of other good-road funds, and prevented the most extravagant duplication of Government service that was ever proposed. Such duplications have been occurring from year to year under the present distribution of appropriations, because the committees reporting the legislation do not have time to go over the whole history of what has been authorized and done by other departments, but accept the recommendations of department heads who desire to inaugurate new policies or duplicate those of other departments.

When Congress adopts a new national policy it should be presented in a specific bill and carefully considered, and not as an amendment to an appropriation bill which must be enacted to provide funds for continuing the regular functions of a department of

the Government. I regret to say that much of the most extravagant legislation has been secured in this way of amendment to emergency appropriation bills. The distribution of appropriation bills has developed this haphazard legislation more than anything else I can recall, because the bills reported from these committees now combine legislation and appropriation. In the old days we did not have this embarrassment. The Committee on Military Affairs prepared legislation for the Army, and the Committee on Appropriations reported the appropriations for the Army; the law and the appropriations were kept separate, as they should be to avoid confusion and also to avoid writing new policies into the law on appropriation bills with little or no consideration, the appropriations as a whole being the one great object before Congress. What is true of the legislation reported by the Committee on Military Affairs is true of that reported from the other committees that have the power to report appropriations, such as the Committee on Agriculture, the Committee on Naval Affairs, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Indian Affairs, the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, and the Committee on Rivers and Harbors. They all combine legislation and appropriations and sometimes in a way to have the legislation little understood and even disguised from the average member; but whatever the objections to it, they must be waived to secure the appropriation for the Government function of the department.

Any budget committee appointed by the Executive would not materially differ in its functions from that performed by the Secretary of the Treasury, who, under an old act of Congress, is required to transmit

to Congress all the estimates for Government expenditures before Congress assembles, and with them estimates of the revenues. That is a budget function conferred on the Secretary of the Treasury as complete as any that I have seen proposed in which the Executive has any part. But what does the Secretary of the Treasury do? He, or often a clerk, simply transmits to Congress every estimate made by any of the departments, when, and as often as they make them, until it is a common thing to have supplementary estimates come in all through a session of Congress and then followed by deficiency estimates until it requires the services of a body of expert accountants to figure out the estimates of the different departments in one session of Congress. The Treasury Department, instead of being a clearing-house for the estimates of expenditures and revenue to meet them, is simply a pneumatic tube to hustle along to Congress all the estimates of expenditure anybody in any of the executive departments thinks desirable. Would any budget commission appointed by the Executive change this extravagant method of conducting the public business?

Reform is a much-abused word in Government affairs. When I hear men talk about Government reform I am sometimes reminded of a newspaper waif I read many years ago:

I'm thankful that the sun and moon  
Are both hung up so high  
That no pretentious hand can stretch  
And pull them from the sky.  
If they were not, I have no doubt  
But some reforming ass  
Would recommend to take them down  
And light the world with gas.

I admit that the Government has many valuable experts who give their time to special investigations; but

some years ago it was a standing joke that one of the most modest clubs in Washington was the most expensive club in the world, because all the Government experts and many not in the Government service were members of that club and it became an exchange for ideas for new plans of Government expenditure and enlargement of the Government budget. The Government experts know little or nothing about how revenues are secured, and they have no hesitancy about working up all sorts of schemes for spending public money on the theory that Uncle Sam has an inexhaustible and independent income. I have met all kinds of experts in the Committee on Appropriations and have sometimes voted for what they asked, and afterward concluded that I had been hypnotized by their enthusiasm and confidence in making two blades of grass grow where one had grown before, for the harvest was not materially changed by the appropriation.

But I have some impressive memories of Government experts who did not understand the art of propaganda. There was Prof. Langley, for many years secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. He was a great scientist and one of the most modest men about asking for Government help that I ever met. About 20 years ago, when I was chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, Prof. Langley was before the committee, and after he had presented his estimates to the subcommittee I asked if there was anything else he would like to present to the committee.

“Yes, Mr. Chairman; I would like to have \$10,000 to experiment in building a flying machine,” said the professor.

“Great Heavens!” I exclaimed. “A flying machine to ride up in the air?”

“Yes,” he replied. “I don’t wonder at your question because you have not given the subject any investigation. But is not a bird heavier than air? Is not the eagle who soars in the sunlight and above the clouds heavier than air; and don’t you think we could devise a machine by which the human animal can navigate the air?”

He did not have to argue or make elaborate explanations. The subcommittee agreed to the appropriation, the full committee accepted the recommendation, and the House and Senate made the appropriation; and I was more ridiculed and abused for “wasting the people’s money” on flying machines than for any other appropriation I reported while chairman of that committee. I was cartooned as Mother Shipton riding through the air on a broom, and was given no end of notoriety because of that modest appropriation. Prof. Langley built his machine, took it down the Potomac and made it fly, but he was too old to operate it himself, and his assistant was too timid, especially with a bevy of newspaper correspondents hovering about to record the failure, and the flying machine, after a very short flight, tumbled into the river. The gasolene engine had not been fully developed and Langley failed, but the Wright brothers took up the same principle and, with a better engine, made flying not only a possibility but developed it into a pastime. They did more. They took the old Langley machine from its place in the National Museum and made it fly over the national capital to let the Congress see that it had not thrown away that \$10,000 which was appropriated to

help Prof. Langley experiment with a flying machine. But Langley was an exception among Government experts, especially in his modesty about asking for big Government appropriations, and my confidence in him made me more lenient in considering the extravagant prospectuses of others.

The promotion and encouragement of agriculture is one of the enthusiasms of the present time and has been growing ever since the distribution of the appropriation bills. Before that "reform" the Committee on Agriculture reported legislation and the Committee on Appropriations reported the appropriations for the Bureau of Agriculture. In 1881 this appropriation was \$250,000, and it was considered ample, but within 10 years the bureau had become a department and the appropriation increased to \$3,000,000. Last year Congress appropriated \$27,000,000 for the activities of the Department of Agriculture and gave another appropriation of \$11,000,000 for the stimulation of agriculture for war emergencies, making a total of \$38,000,000 for the encouragement of farming four times that of 10 years ago—and the average yield of cereals per acre is less now than then. This appropriation for the Department of Agriculture is constantly growing. This year it is \$34,000,000, and with the good-roads appropriations which are handled by the department added, its annual disbursements amount to about \$70,000,000. The experts are continually crying for more and spreading propaganda to extend their work, even to teach the farmers' wives how to cook and make butter.

There is one recommendation of the select committee on national expenditures of the British House of

Commons that is worth considering. That committee in its report says that "the Treasury could not exercise its powers of control if it is itself a spending department," and it recommended that the old-age pensions control be transferred to some other department. But when we created the Bureau of War Risk Insurance, which is to be one of the greatest spending bureaus of the Government, it was placed under the Treasury Department; and, partly by law and partly by Executive order, the Secretary of the Treasury has become the controller of greater expenditures than any other administrative department to divert his attention from the function of looking after Government finances and checking up all expenditures. The President placed the control of the railroads in the hands of the Secretary of the Treasury, and Congress, under advice from the Treasury Department, has given it control of war-risk insurance, of public buildings, the Coast Guard, the Public Health Service, and other spending bureaus.

Several new Government policies have been adopted through the efforts of these bureaus under the stress of war. One is an appropriation of \$11,000,000 for the establishment of hospitals for soldiers—and others—under the control of the Public Health Service, notwithstanding the reports of the Surgeon Generals of the Army and Navy that they had ample hospital facilities for all the soldiers. Here is another duplication of service under the impulse to take care of the soldiers, and a new Government policy by making it permanent for civilians; and the extension of the Public Health Service, which is the greatest mushroom growth in the Government, reaching out to con-

trol the health of all the people and become a national dispensary and clinic at the expense of the Federal Treasury with an army of doctors prescribing calomel and castor oil to 100,000,000 people without even looking at their tongues.

Another new policy was grafted last year on the Army appropriation bill, making an appropriation of about \$3,000,000 for the cooperation of the Federal Government with the States in the control of vice diseases. This was also placed under the direction of the Public Health Service. It may or may not have been a good war policy; but it was adopted, not as a separate measure, but as an amendment to the bill to appropriate \$10,000,000,000 for the Army in the emergency of war, making an appropriation to be controlled by a bureau under the Treasury Department. But, in addition to the irregular way of making the appropriation, there was the manufactured emotionalism for protecting the boys from greater dangers than those of battle, with alleged statistics to show that our boys were not fit to fight because of their vices. There was little debate on this "war measure" because no member was prepared to dispute the statistics and be charged with defending vice; and Congress gave the Public Health Service \$3,000,000 and arbitrary power over all people who approached an Army camp, and also over interstate travel. This new policy came in answer to the agitation as to whether the American boys were fit to fight, and that agitation appears like a nightmare, since the boys showed to the whole world their fitness for fighting at Verdun, at St. Mihiel, and in the Argonne, when they drove back the Germans and won the war. The Provost Marshal General's report also discredits

the statistics of the health experts by showing that of the millions of boys examined by the Army surgeons only 1 per cent of those rejected as unfit for fighting were rejected because of vice disease, and that only one in a thousand of those examined was disqualified by reason of vice. Consciously or ignorantly, the health experts slandered our American boys, but they got \$3,000,000 and established an autocratic power over all the people under the stress of war. They are trying to make this power permanent since the armistice, and, strange to say, the one voice raised against it in the last session was that of the only woman who ever held a seat and a vote in Congress. Where men feared to be misunderstood by opposing this new policy, a refined woman stepped into the arena to do battle and discuss a question which is barred from good society. Miss Rankin fought the paragraph, secured an amendment cutting off a part of the arbitrary power of the experts, and won the admiration of all Members of the House by the way she laid aside mock modesty to discuss frankly and intelligently the questions involved in the control of vice disease.

Some of our reformers are unconscious revolutionists, and some of the advocates of the budget system are of that order. They want to strike out the "government of the people" and the "government by the people" from Lincoln's celebrated phrase, and retain only "a government for the people." They are the reactionaries I most fear because they are going back toward the centralization and bureaucracy that long ago disappeared from the world except in Russia and Germany, where it recently went down in a crash of anarchy. We want no such "reform" in this country.

When we create a budget commission we should keep it in Congress and as far as possible in the House of Representatives, which is directly responsible to the people on the basis of population. If we leave any part of it to the Executive we shall only exaggerate the present embarrassments. The electorate will continue to hold the Representatives responsible for the budget, whatever power they surrender to the Executive. The heads of the departments want to make the budget of expenditures and compel Congress to levy taxes according to their plans for expenditure. The Pharaohs had that kind of a budget system, and so has the Czars of Russia. It was not the system embodied in the American Constitution. The President recently vetoed the sundry civil appropriation bill which carries appropriations for almost every department of the Government, because the appropriation for one function was not as large as the chief of the bureau desired, although it was more than double the official estimates submitted to Congress for that bureau; and because the bill put a limitation on the amount that might be paid in high salaries to the employees of the bureau; notwithstanding the fact that Congress from the beginning has provided by law what the salaries of the President and all other officers of the Government should be. These developments are all away from the budget plans of those who prepared the Constitution, and when Congress consents to the Executive making the budget it will have surrendered the most important part of a representative government, and put this country back where it was when the shot at Lexington was "heard 'round the world." Taxation without representation brought this Nation into being, and I think we had better stick

pretty close to the Constitution with its division of powers well defined and the taxing power close to the people.

I believe that the House of Representatives should have one committee with jurisdiction over appropriations, and that the House should stand firmly for its budget, because it is the one branch of Congress to which the Constitution committed this responsibility and the one which the people hold responsible for the budget, which includes taxation as well as expenditure.

