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## SPEECH

OF  
HON. ZACHARIAH CHANDLER,  
OF MICHIGAN.

In the Senate of the U. S. Feb. 17, 1859.

The Senate having resumed the consideration of the bill making appropriation to facilitate the acquisition of Cuba by negotiation—

Mr. CHANDLER said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: This is a most extraordinary proposition to be presented to the Congress of the United States, at this time. With a Treasury bankrupt, and the Government borrowing money to pay its daily expenses, and no efficient remedy proposed for that state of things; with your great national works in the North-west going to decay, and no money to repair them; without harbors of refuge for your commerce, and no money to erect them; with a national debt of \$70,000,000 which is increasing in a time of profound peace at the rate of \$30,000,000 per annum, the Senate of the United States is started by a proposition to borrow \$30,000,000. And for what, sir? To pay just claims against this Government, which have long been deferred? No, sir; you have no money for any such purpose as that. Is it to repair your national works on the northwestern lakes, to repair your harbors, to rebuild your light-houses? No, sir; you have no money for that. Is it to build a railroad to the Pacific, connecting the eastern and western slopes of this continent by bands of iron, and opening the vast interior of the continent to settlement? No, sir; you say that is unconstitutional. What, then, do you propose to do with this \$30,000,000? Is it to purchase the Island of Cuba?—

No, sir; for you are already advised in advance that Spain will not sell the island. More, sir; you are advised in advance that she will take a proposition for its purchase as a national insult, to be rejected with scorn and contempt. The action of her Cortes and of her Government, on the reception of the President's message, proves this beyond all controversy.

What, then, I ask again, do you propose to do with this \$30,000,000? I ask any friend of the measure what he proposes to do with the money? The question is absurd. There is no man, or child, who does not know for what purpose this \$30,000,000 is intended. It is a great corruption fund for bribery, and for bribery only. It is a proposition worthy of its author; it is a proposition worthy of the writer of the Ostend manifesto; a proposition worthy of the brigand; worthy of James Buchanan; but it is unworthy of the President of the United States; it is a proposition disgraceful to be made to the Congress of the United States.

Again I ask, what do you propose to do with the money? Is it intended that this grand corruption fund shall be used in the purchase of foreign ministers and ministers of State and high Spanish officials? Is this what the friends of the measure would have us believe it to be? Such, possibly, a small portion will be found to be infinitesimally small. There are other, and, in the estimation of some, more important, objects to be attained by the use of this money.

The Democratic party is damaged, badly damaged at the North. Its principles are gone, and even its occupation of public plunder is gone, for there is nothing left to steal, your Treasury is bankrupt, and there is no hope of replenishing it before the presidential contest of 1860. In this emergency something must be done for the Democratic party, and here is the proposition to do it. A new issue is to be raised to call off the attention of the country from past extravagant expenditures and present bankruptcy. Cuba is to be the cry in the next presidential election, and \$30,000,000 is to be the inducement to cry loud and long. This is a mere clap-net proposition to go into the canvass of 1860; and the friends of this measure have no more idea of purchasing Cuba under it than I have of buying it on my private account. They are to go before the country upon this cry of Cuba, and upon it they hope to float into power again in 1860. Vain, fallacious hope. Forty Cubas and \$300,000,000 as a bribery and corruption fund, would not save the Democratic party from that annihilation which the Almighty has decreed.

But, sir, let us examine this proposition in its practical effects upon our constituency. I propose to take a practical view of it. I propose, before we go into a speculation of this kind, to ascertain whether it will pay. The computation which I am about to present, was made before Oregon was admitted, which has one member of the House of Representatives, and this fact would vary my figures a few dollars; but a few dollars only. Of this \$30,000,000 bribery fund, each congressional district will pay \$127,118

64. The State of Michigan, under the present representation, according to the census of 1850, having four members, will pay \$508,474 56. But the population of Michigan has more than doubled since 1850, and she is now entitled, according to her population, to eight Representatives; and will, in 1860, be entitled to eight, at a ratio of one hundred and twenty-five thousand people to a Representative; so that her present proportion would be according to proper apportionment, \$1,016,949 12, the interest upon which, at six per cent. per annum, would be \$61,016 94. I name six per cent., because if you go into any such wild scheme as this, borrowing money to buy islands, you will find your national credit below par, according to the present rate of interest; and I believe six per cent. is the lowest rate at which you can borrow money if you conclude to go into this filibustering proposition for the campaign of 1860. I say, then, you propose to mortgage my State of Michigan for \$1,016,949, and compel her people to pay an annual tax of \$61,016. Before I vote this mortgage, and this perpetual annual tax upon the people of Michigan, I desire to consult my constituents; and after I have consulted them, even if they should make up their minds that this was a wise scheme, I should tell them upon that point I differ from them.

But, sir, this is not all. You propose to authorize the President to purchase the Island of Cuba for any price he may see fit. It is true the Senator from Ohio, [Mr. Pugh,] has offered an amendment placing a limit on the price, but it has not been adopted, and if it were I do not suppose it would have any effect on the negotiation. What would President Buchanan care for \$50,000,000, more or less, to accomplish his darling scheme?—Give him this \$30,000,000 to start with and he will pay two hundred and fifty, or any other number of millions that it may suit his whim to pay. I care not for your limit—he will not regard it, I will, however, take as the basis of my calculation the lowest price named as the sum which Spain will consent to accept for Cuba; to wit: \$200,000,000. Two hundred million seems to be considered, on all hands, as the minimum price.—What the maximum may be, I know not. I take as the basis of my calculation the minimum of \$200,000,000. If that be the amount, each congressional district in the United States would pay \$847,454, and the State of Michigan, as at present represented under the census of 1850, would pay \$3,389,816; but, as I have already stated, her population has more than doubled since the last census, and is rapidly increasing, so that her present proportion would be \$6,779,632. Upon this sum the annual perpetual interest would be \$406,777 92. I call it perpetual, for no sane man believes that, if this debt be created, it will ever be paid in the world. It is but the commencement of an irredeemable debt. I say, then you propose to mortgage the State of Michigan for \$6,779,632, and to compel her to pay a perpetual annual tax of \$406,777 92.

Sir, before I vote for any such scheme as that, I want authority from home; and I advise the Senator from Ohio to listen to his constituents before he votes for any such scheme. My word for it, if he has not heard from them, he will in 1861.

Mr. PUGH. I will take care of my constituents; let the Senator take care of his own.

Mr. CHANDLER. The State of Ohio will have to pay, of this purchase money, \$17,896,534, the perpetual annual tax of which, on that State, will be \$1,073,791. Of the \$30,000,000 appropriated by this bill, Ohio will pay \$2,669,478, the annual interest on which, at six per cent., will be \$160,168. The Senator says he will take care of that. I trust he will; and I can assure him that if he does not, the people of Ohio will.

Now, let us admit for the sake of the argument, that this proposition is brought forward in good faith and will be successfully terminated, what does the State of Michigan gain, what does the State of Ohio gain, what do any of the northwestern States gain by the purchase of the Island of Cuba? I know something of Cuba, something of its soil, something of its climate, something of its people, their manners and customs, something of their religion, something of their crimes. I spent a winter in the interior of the Island of Cuba a few years since, and can therefore speak from personal knowledge. I differ in my views from the honorable Senator from Louisiana, [Mr. Benjamin.] My personal observation does not accord with his theories. Much of the soil of the island is rich and exceedingly productive; but it is no way comparable to the prairies and bottom-lands of the Great West. You can go into almost any of your Territories and select an equal number of acres and you will have a more valuable State than you can possibly make out of Cuba. You have hundreds of millions of acres of land to which you can extinguish the Indian title for a song, and obtain better lands and create better States than you will ever make out of Cuba.

The Island of Cuba contains nineteen million three hundred and fifty thousand acres, and you propose to pay for it \$200,000,000; or in other words, you propose to pay for the Island of Cuba more than ten dollars an acre for every acre of land on it, and then you do not acquire a s-

ere. You are selling infinitely better lands, and have millions upon millions of them, for \$1.25; and yet you propose to tax the people of the United States to pay ten dollars an acre for land that you do not get when you pay the money.

I notice by the report of the honorable Senator from Louisiana, [Mr. Slidell,] that Cuba contains, at this time, a population of one million nine thousand and sixty inhabitants, including negroes, old men, and small children. You propose to pay nearly two hundred dollars a head for every man, woman, child and negro on the island, and then you do not own one of them. You propose to pay \$200,000,000—for what? For the right to govern one million of the refuse of the earth. You propose to pay \$200,000,000 to bring in a population that you would reject with scorn if they were now to apply for admission into the Union free of all expense.

Do you think that proposition will pay? Do you think it will commend itself to the people of the Northwest? Do you think it will commend itself to the people of this Union? What do you get after you pay your \$200,000,000? You acquire the right to build fortifications; to send an army to Cuba; to govern it; to create a navy to protect it; to expend through all time, from twenty-five to a hundred millions per annum, to take care of it. That is all you get. Do you think it will pay? But, as I said before, I know something of the people of this island, and something of their manners and customs.

The white population consists chiefly of creoles or native-born Cubans. Of the slave population I should think a large majority are native-born Africans. The honorable Senator from Louisiana [Mr. Benjamin] spoke the other day of the great mortality among the slaves of Cuba. If he meant to apply his remarks on that point to the creole slaves, he made a vast mistake; for I never in my life saw a more healthy set of persons than the creole slaves of Cuba. They are not half so hard worked, they are better fed, they live longer than the slaves of Louisiana; and they are not as cruelly treated. This remark was made to me over and over again, "Give me anything but a Yankee master. He do not want an American master. He is energetic, he drives, he works his negroes; but the creoles are so nortly indolent themselves, that they allow their negroes to do pretty much what they please. If the Senator meant his remark to apply to the Africans, it was, perhaps correct. At the time I was upon the island, the mortality of the native Africans was estimated thus: one fifth of all shipped from the coast of Africa died upon the passage; one fifth more committed suicide within the first year after they were landed on the island; one fifth more died the first year in the process of acclimation, because they were unaccustomed to toil, unaccustomed to that mode of living.—Consequently, three fifth of the entire exportation from the coast of Africa were lost in one year from the date of their exportation. In regard to the remaining two fifths, however, after becoming acclimated, they live as long as creole negroes. It will be seen that three fifths being destroyed the first year, in order to get an average of any length of time, you must rate a long life to the rest, unless you shorten the duration, perhaps to the time the Senator mentioned; but the lives of the creole negroes are as long as those of any other people in the world.

Now, as to the white population: they are ignorant, vicious, and priest-ridden. Prior to the administration of General Tacón, there was not a crime on the calendar which had not its fixed value in the Island of Cuba. I had at one time the tariff of crime there, but at the present moment I only recollect a single item.—The price of assassination was two ounces of gold, or thirty-four dollars a head! You could have any man assassinated for thirty-four dollars before the administration of Tacón; and I was informed by many old Cubans you could scarcely walk out in the streets of Havana in the morning without finding one or more dead bodies, the result of the last night's assassinations and robberies. My own experience is, that the gibbet was a common sight—the gibbet, with the human skull rattling in the wind, at the corner of four roads, or at some place where a crime had been committed and the murderer met his fate.

On the accession of Tacón to office, he increased the army to twenty thousand men, and did establish, as the honorable Senator from Louisiana [Mr. Benjamin] said, an absolute military despotism, which exists there to this day. But it was not as the Senator said to prevent insurrection; it was to prevent crime, and that only; and if that military despotism had not been established, and had not been ruled with an iron hand, Cuba would be to-day what it was before the administration of Tacón. As I said before, the people are ignorant and vicious. They will not labor, and they will resort to any shifts of crime to obtain subsistence.—Bribery is universal, from the Governor General, who receives two ounces of gold per head for every slave landed on the island. Let a slave trader land a single negro without paying his two ounces of gold, that negro will be wrested from him within three days. Two ounces of gold per head is the regular established bribe for every slave landed on the Island of Cuba, and it is done as publicly as almost any other transaction there. I went into

the barracks at Havana, and saw eleven hundred slaves within three days from the time of their landing there from the coast of Africa. They were landed within ten miles of the Moro Castle, and marched directly up to Havana, and placed in the barracks for sale publicly, under the very eye of the Captain General.—Everybody was talking about it, and the ship that brought them over, lay as quietly in the harbor of Havana as any merchant ship. If you had seen, as I did, those eleven hundred miserable wretches, you would not be surprised at the mortality among them. The laws of Spain are to-day as severe against the slave trade as those of the United States; nevertheless, slaves are continually imported there, and it is done because the Captain General is bribed. It is a well known fact, that every Captain General of Cuba acquires an immense fortune in two or three years, and it is from the slave trade and that alone. From the judge on the bench, from the priest in the pulpit, to the lowest tide-waiter, bribery is the rule, and there are no exceptions. You cannot remove the dead body of your friend from the Island of Cuba without bribing the priest, bribing the captain of the Partero, bribing the judge, and bribing the custom-house officer, through whose hand it passes. I know that, because I have had to pay the bribes.

Is not this a beautiful population to bring into the Union as a State—a beautiful population to take rank with the old States of this Union? But, sir, this is not all. The Catholic religion rules Supreme in the Island of Cuba; no other religion is tolerated. Even the rites of a Christian burial are denied upon that island. The people are superstitious and vicious; and they are bigots as well. They are devout Catholics. The Catholic Church is true to Spain; the Catholic Church is true to despotism, and the people there to a man, are true to the Church. If the honorable Senator from Louisiana has seen hundreds, or if he has seen one hundred Cubans who were pausing for liberty, as he asserts, he has seen every one that that island produced. There are a few creole Cubans, who have been educated in the United States, that are intelligent, that care nothing about their church, who are anxious to get their hands into the Treasury. They are anxious for plunder; they are anxious for positions where they can receive bribes. True patriotism does not exist on the Island of Cuba. They love the very chains that bind them. They love their church; they love this very military despotism of which complaint is made. The men of whom the Senator from Louisiana speaks, are men the majority of whom have been banished from the island. Where was the declaration of independence which he brought before us written? Who wrote it? Where was it adopted? In my opinion, it was adopted in some tavern in New Orleans. The people of Cuba never adopted a declaration of independence. What was the fate of the gallant Crittenden when he went to Cuba to help to rescue them from oppression? What became of that young man and the fifty associates who were with him, when they went there with arms in their hands prepared to shed their blood for the redemption of the Island of Cuba? Where, then, were the patriots who were thirsting for freedom? If there was one on the island he kept himself pretty well out of sight; and that gallant young man, ten minutes before he suffered death, wrote a letter to a friend in the United States, saying: "I did not come here to plunder; I came here in good faith to aid these people in acquiring their freedom; I supposed they were thirsting for liberty; but I have been deceived. My time has come." In a postscript he added: "I will die like a man."

Where were the liberty-thirsting Cubans then, when as gallant a soul as ever lived on the face of this earth went to his last account because he sympathized with "gallant, suffering" Cubans? Sir, the gallantry is not there. There is no such thing as a love of liberty there.—Do you want these people in your Union? Are you prepared to pay \$200,000,000 to bring such a set of criminals into this Union? Do you propose to keep an army of twenty thousand men in a climate where they will be decimated every year, to govern that island? That is what Spain has so, and that is what you will have to do, if you mean to keep the people from cutting each other's throats.—You will have to keep up a navy there to protect your possession, if you get it.—You must spend from fifteen to twenty million dollars a year to govern the island; and in addition to that, you propose to place a perpetual annual tax of \$12,000,000 upon the people of the United States for the purchase. I ask Senators whether they consider that a game that will pay!

Suppose you get the island: what will you do with it? Your people cannot live there. The impression has gone abroad that in the interior of the Island of Cuba the climate is cool and healthy; but such is not the fact. Tropical diseases always rage there at certain seasons of the year, and the foreign population is usually decimated every year. You cannot even sleep on a mattress, during the winter, on that island. The heat is so intense that you are obliged to forego the luxury of a mattress, and sleep in a hammock or upon canvas. Besides, there are certain other luxuries that I wish to call to the atten-

tion of northern men who may propose to go there. You are compelled to sleep under mosquito bars all the year round; and if you do not find scorpions in your boots in the morning, you will be more fortunate than I was. Lizards run about in every direction; worms annoy you at every turn. This is a beautiful place to emigrate to! And yet you propose to pay \$200,000,000 for the island. In my opinion, it is not a paying investment.

But, sir, as I said before, this bill is not to buy the island of Cuba, for you are advised in advance that you cannot get it. This is a mere electioneering scheme for 1860. It is to be one of the planks in the Democratic platform in 1860; and I propose very briefly to review a certain other plank which you have in that platform, as it has only two left—this one is not yet in; you have destroyed all your old platforms; they are utterly annihilated.—Even the Cincinnati platform of tender years has ceased to be; and I am not surprised that that platform has been destroyed. There never was a sound plank in it. It is said that everything was left "perfectly free, subject to the Constitution of the United States;" but the knowing ones in that convention were perfectly aware at that time that the Constitution of the United States was virtually subverted by a decision which the Supreme Court dared not then make, and whose final enunciation depended upon the result of that election. If President Buchanan had not been elected, the Dred Scott decision would not have been made. I propose now to spend a very little time in examining this last new platform of the Democratic party. The Supreme Court of the United States was merciful in its work of destruction. The Cincinnati platform was built precisely as boys build cob-houses—to see who could first knock them down; and the missile which the Supreme Court threw at the Cincinnati platform, which destroyed it, and which will virtually overturn the Constitution of the United States when it becomes the law; that very missile was itself a Democratic platform, which the Democratic leaders made great haste to mount; and at the North they found it large enough. There was but one plank to it, but it would hold all the Democratic party there. They had become infinitesimally small and few in number before that last new platform, and are growing beautifully less day by day.

I insist that the Dred Scott decision—for it is needless for me to say that it is to that I allude—is the only Democratic platform that now exists; and if any man throughout this broad land, who holds a Government office of any value whatever, doubts it, let him try the experiment. Let him say that he does not consider the Dred Scott decision the Democratic platform, does not consider it binding on him, and my word for it, he will be shorter by a head within three days after the announcement. Sir, it is the Democratic platform; it is the party test. Any man who does not swear allegiance to the Dred Scott decision is no Democrat. I hold in my hand an exposition of that decision, from a Democratic newspaper published in the city of Washington, which I believe is universally admitted to be good Democratic authority. It is more than that; the newspaper to which I allude distills the pure essence, the very essential oil of Democracy. I allude to the Union newspaper of this city, some of whose articles are understood to be written by the President of the United States and to be supervised by his Cabinet, and to send forth the perfectly pure Democratic doctrine. I believe that when this pure Democratic opinion of the Supreme Court, and said that he would construe the Constitution for himself; that he was sworn to do it. I, sir, shall do the same thing. I have sworn to support the Constitution of the United States, and I have sworn to support it as the fathers made it, and not as the Supreme Court has altered it, and I never will swear allegiance to that.—But I am not quite through with the Union article. It says further:

"The protection of property being next to that of person, the most important object of all good government, and property in slaves being recognized by the Constitution of the United States as well as originally by all the old thirteen States, we have never doubted that the emancipation of slaves in those States where it previously existed, by an arbitrary act of the Legislature, was a gross violation of the rights of property."

There you have it declared that abolition of slavery in seven of the old thirteen States was unconstitutional, and, according to the Dred Scott decision, it was. I ask any man of common sense—I will not ask a lawyer; I am no lawyer myself—but I ask any man of common sense, if he believes that the old thirteen States, seven of which intended to abolish slavery within a very few years, would have adopted a Constitution which prohibited them from doing the very act which they contemplated doing instantly? I ask any man if he believes for a single moment that the Representatives of those seven States that intended immediately to abolish slavery within their borders, would ever have assented to a Constitution which prohibited them from doing the very act which they proposed to do? No, sir, the proposition is absurd; and the judges of the Supreme Court themselves did not believe it when they uttered it.—No man of common sense can believe it. It is not so.

But, sir, monstrous as is this proposition, monstrous as is the article which I

read, if the Dred Scott decision be law it is all true; and it is a mere question of time when every State of this Union will become a slave State. If the honorable Senator from Louisiana, or any other man, should see fit to take a thousand negroes into the State of Michigan after that decision shall have become the law, I defy any power short of a revolution in this Government to prevent him, or take them from him. But, sir, it is not law, it is not common sense; yet this Dred Scott decision is the only platform of the Democratic party at the present time—the only issue before the country. I beg pardon; there is another issue, not yet perfected, and that is this \$30,000,000 bribery and corruption fund. That is to be another plank in the Democratic platform. These two planks, the Dred Scott decision and Cuba, are to be the platform that is to float the party into power if it ever arrives there; the Dred Scott decision and the \$30,000,000 loan, with, perhaps, the honorable Senator from Virginia [Mr. Hunter] astride of them; and with that platform and that candidate, the Democratic party will march to certain defeat.

But, sir, as this measure at the present time is a financial question, I propose very briefly to allude to the financial condition of the country. I look upon this as the practical method of judging of its merits. I hold in my hand a letter written by a very distinguished man, at present connected with this Government, dated March 1, 1852, and addressed to a committee of Baltimore. It is signed "James Buchanan." It says:

"We must inscribe upon our banners, a sound regard for the reserved rights of the States, a strict construction of the Constitution, a denial to Congress of all powers not clearly granted by that instrument, and a rigid economy in public expenditures."

"These expenditures have now reached the enormous sum of \$50,000,000 per annum, and unless arrested in their advance by the strong arm of the Democracy of the country, may, in the course of a few years, reach \$100,000,000."

Well, sir, "the strong arm of the Democracy" has been managing our affairs ever since. The President of the United States was then mistaken a few millions as to the expenditures; for the entire expenditures of 1852, including payment of the public debt, was only \$44,491,447; but let him have the advantage of his own figures. The strong arm of the Democracy has had charge of this Government from that time to the present, and we have already reached the point that he prophesied we might reach in a few years—\$100,000,000 of expenditure. It was demoted to my entire satisfaction, and, I believe, to the satisfaction of the Senate, by the honorable Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. Crittenden,] the other day, that \$100,000,000 would not pay the expenses of Government for this year.—I propose a change; I propose that we try some other hand at economizing the expenses of this Government. But let me go on with the letter. Its writer says further:

"The appropriation of money to accomplish great national objects, sanctioned by the constitution, ought to be on a scale commensurate with our power and resources as a nation; but its expenditure ought to be conducted under the guidance of enlightened economy and strict responsibility. I am convinced that our expenses might be considerably reduced, below the present standard, not only without detriment, but with positive advantage both to the Government and to the people."

If the expenditures could then be reduced below \$50,000,000 with advantage to the Government and the people, what can be done now? Is there any reason why our expenditures should be greater now than they were in 1852? There is no reason except that money may be used for purposes of corruption; and I propose to examine into some of these corruptions now and here. This letter says further:

"An excessive and lavish expenditure of public money, though in itself highly pernicious, is as nothing when compared with the disastrous influence it may exert upon the character of our free institutions. A strong tendency towards extravagance is the great political evil of the present day; and this ought to be firmly resisted."

Sir, I propose to resist it with all the firmness God has given me. Now, let us look a little into the expenditures of this Government. I hold in my hand an official document of the Senate, printed at the last session, giving the receipts and expenditures of the Government from its formation to 1857; I desire to present a doctrine in fact, it is to be offensive not only to the people of the North, but of the South likewise. But, sir, to the article. In the Union of November 17, 1857, appeared a long article, prepared with great care, evidently intended as a lasting exposition of the position of the Democratic party. It says:

"Slaves were recognized as property in the British colonies of North America, by the Government of Great Britain, by the colonial laws, and by the Constitution of the United States. Under those sanctions, vested rights have accrued to the amount of some \$1,500,000,000. It is, therefore, the duty of Congress and the State Legislatures to protect that property."

"The Constitution declares that the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States." Every citizen of one State coming into another State, has, therefore, a right to the protection of his person and that property which is recognized as such by the Constitution of the United States; any law of a State to the contrary, notwithstanding. So far from any State having a right to deprive