

and for unworthy purposes ; and in this way much of the city debt, and also a large proportion of the annual expenses of the City Government have been brought about. Cases of individual corruption were indicated to the Committee, but they did not feel themselves at liberty under the order of the Convention, to investigate them, because it would have involved more time than was deemed necessary to bestow, in establishing by official testimony that which is so currently reported, and we think, with just foundation, believed.

Economy in government is at all times a commendable virtue ; at the present it rises to a point of importance never before felt by our people. It is an essential necessity to save us from pecuniary suffering, if not from hopeless bankruptcy. But in the midst of this startling condition of things, the sad experience comes home to us that economy in the use of public money, is a virtue seldom cultivated, and still more rarely practiced.

The hands of those controlling city affairs, judging from past records, know no restraint, and seem lost to the virtue of economy. Where the public treasury is open to the cupidity of the unscrupulous, and not guarded by moral integrity there is little hope for the tax payer.

The Mayor and City Council, by ordinance approved September 25th, 1865, provided for the appointment of Commissioners, who were authorized to adopt plans, and proceed to the erection of the new City Hall ; and the same ordinance directs the Commissioners of Finance to issue five hundred thousand dollars of city bonds, and dispose of them at market rates, and apply the proceeds to this purpose.

The Eleventh Section of this Ordinance required that it should not go into effect until authority was obtained from the General Assembly of Maryland to issue these bonds. In 1866 the Legislature gave their sanction to the issue of six hundred thousand dollars, and therefore and to that extent the authority of the Mayor and City Council is undoubted, and had the cost of the building in all its parts and furnishings, when completely finished, been limited to the amount realized from the sale of the bonds authorized to be sold, their legal rights could not have been doubted. But the plan adopted will far exceed the amount authorized by the Ordinance or by the approving act of the Legislature of 1866, chapter 1.

The architect's estimated cost is eight hundred thousand dollars, if his plans are adhered to, and proper economy practiced. Such a hope, however, is, we think, a vain delusion, and if the work progresses at all in these expensive times of building, but little less than a million and a half of dollars may confidently be expected as the final cost.