

**HEARINGS BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE
ON APPROPRIATIONS, HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES. IN CHARGE OF THE
FORTIFICATION APPROPRIATION BILL**

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Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on appropriations, house of representatives. In charge of he Fortification Appropriation Bill by Various

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VARIOUS

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HEARINGS

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BEFORE THE

U. S. SENATE

SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

CONSISTING OF

MESSES. LITTAUER, MARSH, WALTER I. SMITH,
TAYLOR, AND BRUNDIDGE,

IN CHARGE OF

THE FORTIFICATION APPROPRIATION BILL.



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FORTIFICATION APPROPRIATION BILL.

HEARINGS CONDUCTED BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE, MESSRS. LITTAUER (CHAIRMAN), MARSH, WALTER I. SMITH, TAYLOR, AND BRUNDIDGE, OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, IN CHARGE OF THE FORTIFICATION APPROPRIATION BILL.

WEDNESDAY, *December 14, 1904.*

There appeared before the subcommittee Brig. Gen. Alexander Mackenzie, Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, accompanied by Maj. Frederic V. Abbot, assistant to the Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army; also Brig. Gen. William Crozier, Chief of Ordnance, U. S. Army, accompanied by Capt. T. L. Ames and Capt. T. C. Dickson, assistants to the Chief of Ordnance, U. S. Army.

ENGINEER DEPARTMENT.

STATEMENTS OF BRIG. GEN. ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, U. S. ARMY, AND MAJ. FREDERIC V. ABBOT, ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, U. S. ARMY.

Mr. LITTAUER. General Mackenzie, if you will turn to the bill here you will observe that the appropriations for fortifications—notice the language at the bottom of page 1—are made available from the time the fortification act becomes law and continue available until expended.

General MACKENZIE. Yes, sir.

Mr. LITTAUER. Now, can you give us some idea of how much of the appropriation made for the work that comes under your Engineer Department is still available? By that I mean that which is not pledged, because whenever an amount is pledged I take it for granted it is out of your hands and already contracted for.

Major ABBOT. Yes. When funds are allotted for the construction of a particular battery I shall consider them "pledged." Of unallotted sums there is practically nothing left. We have about \$7,000 of the preservation and repair fund. We have not enough gun and mortar battery funds to entirely finish all the batteries that are not completed yet, because some in Boston Harbor and elsewhere have cost a little more than the local officers estimated, and the balance is held till the very best distribution to nearly finish all can be determined. All the other appropriations are practically exhausted or pledged.

Mr. LITTAUER. Major, you are now speaking of the balance available and unallotted as of what date?

Major ABBOT. As of the present day.

Mr. LITTAUER. Now, in looking over the report of the Secretary of War, under date June 30, 1904, there seem to be in many of those items large sums; large balances, at any rate. For instance, for preservation and repair of fortifications you had \$414,631.41 unexpended on June 30 last?

Major ABBOT. If I understand what the figures in the table mean, it is a mistake, unquestionably, for the funds were allotted.

Mr. MARSH. Yes, that is a mistake, unquestionably.

Major ABBOT. We have only \$7,000 on hand at the present time of that fund available for allotment, and there is no district officer who has more than a small amount on his hands for any one of the very numerous items provided for under this appropriation. The whole appropriation for the fiscal year 1904 was only \$300,000.

Mr. LITTAUER. True; but you know these sums are available until expended. Was there not a balance left over?

General MACKENZIE. It was entirely allotted.

Mr. LITTAUER. Kindly look over that statement and give us some explanation of it if you can.

Major ABBOT. Last year the appropriation was made in April, so that we had a large balance on the following 30th of June.

Mr. LITTAUER. Yes; but that is the balance on hand on the 30th of last June—June 30, 1904.

Major ABBOT. There is an error, beyond any question, if that refers to funds unallotted or "pledged."

Mr. LITTAUER. This table on page 211 of the report of the Secretary of War for 1904 is a table which purports to state the balances on hand and available for expenditure from June 30, 1904, which of course is five months ago. The striking part of the statement is that our appropriations for the last year, as stated here, was \$7,333,748.99, and the balance still available is \$16,960,915.53; that is, it was on July 1, 1904. The large items do not concern the Engineer Department, but there are a number of them there that do concern it.

Major ABBOT. As to that \$212,000 stated to have been all that was drawn out for preservation and repair during the fiscal year 1904, I only wish it was so, because we have practically nothing left anywhere in the United States that I can now allot for preservation and repair work.

Mr. LITTAUER. Surely here is an item which you ought to be able to trace—sites for fortifications and seacoast defenses. There seems to be a balance there of \$422,288.59.

Major ABBOT. That is because we have land under process of condemnation. You can not tell exactly what the price is going to be, but it will perhaps more than exhaust that balance.

Mr. LITTAUER. We have been appropriating to you for that purpose only about \$100,000 a year.

Major ABBOT. Two hundred thousand, I think, has been the more usual figure.

M. BRUNDIDGE. You appropriated for last year, 1904, \$100,000.

Mr. LITTAUER. Yes; \$100,000 last year and \$200,000 the year before.

Major ABBOT. We have in process of condemnation one piece of land now estimated to cost \$250,000. It takes about four years when

you get involved in condemnation proceedings to settle the matter and find out what the actual liabilities are. Of course the funds are now in the Treasury, but it is necessary to have them in the Treasury before it is proper for the Engineer Department to commit the Government to any expenditures. For instance, if we estimate that the cost of a piece of land is \$250,000, it would be a wrong procedure for us with no funds in the Treasury to institute proceedings to condemn that land.

Mr. LITTAUER. Let us turn to another item. I believe you provide the searchlights for the defense of our most important harbors. I notice there is a balance of \$243,451.34 set down as on hand under that item on June 30, 1904. The appropriation for the year then ensuing, the fiscal year 1905, was but \$150,000. Does that account for it?

Major ABBOT. I do not understand how this table is made up. The money was allotted to disbursing officers before that time.

General MACKENZIE. This has nothing to do with the allotment.

Mr. LITTAUER. It is essential for us to know, when we make an appropriation, how much is available on the former appropriation.

Major ABBOT. A monthly report from our officers shows what balances there are on hand, and now there are very small sums for the searchlight work in anybody's hands.

Mr. LITTAUER. Then, in effect, you are not in a position to give us an explanation regarding that table?

Major ABBOT. Not regarding that table; no, sir. I know we have very little actual money left.

General MACKENZIE. I will furnish a definite statement, Mr. Littauer.

Mr. LITTAUER. Yes; send us a letter, and let it cover a general statement in explanation of how it is made up and in what way it is so different from the statement in your report about the condition of the general appropriation under the operations then in progress. In each of your annual reports you include a statement that I have never been able to make agree with this statement from the Secretary of War.

Major ABBOT. They do not agree with our balances.

General MACKENZIE. I know how this statement is made up, and while I have not gone into this particular subject I will connect it with ours and give you a full statement. This Treasury statement is made up from the requisitions drawn at the time the money comes out of the Treasury. It is charged up as of that date.

CONSTRUCTION OF GUN AND MORTAR BATTERIES.

Mr. LITTAUER. Now, General Mackenzie, the first item that is usual in fortification bills is the item for construction of gun and mortar batteries. You will find that item on page 2 of our bill. The note, there, states that your estimate for what you believe to be a proper expenditure during the year we are going to appropriate for here would be \$1,000,000. The Secretary of War eliminated the amount altogether, and I take it for granted that it was based upon the view that the construction of gun and mortar batteries in our coast defenses has now reached a point where our harbors are pretty effectively fortified against attack, so far as great guns were being considered, and that it was time now to call a halt on the development of the old Endicott Board scheme, and to permit other branches of the fortifica-

tion work to be treated and brought up to what might be called up-to-dateness.

General MACKENZIE. That, in general effect, Mr. Littauer, is true. A certain total was considered as the amount the War Department would suggest and recommend, and we were called upon to suggest those items which could, perhaps, be best omitted. While we felt that it was well that new work should go on, yet we still thought that if only a certain amount of money was available it would be more important to bring up the old works and add the fire control and all that matter than to go on with absolutely new work.

Mr. TAYLOR. Do you mean, General, that the leaving out or reduction of this item at this time is simply temporary?

General MACKENZIE. Yes, sir.

Mr. LITTAUER. We have understood in the past that the general scheme would entail a cost for engineering work and emplacements of about \$50,000,000.

General MACKENZIE. Yes.

Mr. LITTAUER. And that you had expended in the neighborhood of \$25,000,000 or \$30,000,000 of that.

General MACKENZIE. Yes.

Mr. LITTAUER. And having expended three-fifths of the entire amount which the scheme is to cost you have reached the point where those in charge of the determination and progress of this work have come to the conclusion that our harbors are now well fortified and that further emplacements should for the time being cease. Is that what we should understand to be the Department's conclusion?

General MACKENZIE. I do not think the idea that the work should cease is correct. I do think, if there is only a certain amount available, that new work may be suspended for a little while.

Mr. TAYLOR. You prefer the word "suspend" to the word "cease"?

General MACKENZIE. Yes; because we can not yet say the work is completed, and it should not cease until it is completed.

Mr. MARSH. You mean if there is a curtailment it could go better to that point than to the others?

General MACKENZIE. Yes, at this time.

Mr. LITTAUER. I learn from the report of the Secretary of War for 1904 that of the heaviest guns, the 8, 10, 12, and 16-inch guns, 334 out of the 364 designated to be emplaced under the general fortification plans are already provided for.

General MACKENZIE. Yes.

Mr. LITTAUER. And that 376 out of the 524 mortars have their emplacements provided for, and that 587 out of the 1,296 rapid-fire guns are provided for?

General MACKENZIE. Yes.

Mr. LITTAUER. Now, of course, the proportion of rapid-fire guns is far behind the proportion of heavy guns in point of installation.

General MACKENZIE. Yes.

Mr. LITTAUER. Is the cost of the installation or emplacement of the rapid-fire guns as great as the cost of the installation or emplacement of the heavy guns?

Major ABBOT. For the last four years we have practically put in none of the heavy guns, and have been emplacing almost entirely 6-inch and 3-inch guns.

Mr. LITTAUER. Are those costly emplacements?

Major ABBOT. The 6-inch gun emplacements cost between \$30,000 and \$35,000 apiece and the 3-inch gun emplacements between \$7,000 and \$12,000, depending upon the site and the character of the foundations.

Mr. LITTAUER. Is the 6-inch gun placed on a disappearing carriage?

Major ABBOT. Yes.

Mr. LITTAUER. And how about the 3-inch guns?

Major ABBOT. On a pedestal mount with a shield. We are still very weak in the rapid-fire element of the defense in many places.

Mr. TAYLOR. It is for the purpose of catching up with that that you suggest these appropriations?

Major ABBOT. Yes, sir.

General MACKENZIE. Of course that all comes out of an appropriation for new work. That is new work.

Mr. MARSH. The continued emplacement of these 6-inch rapid-fire guns is not new work, but continuing.

General MACKENZIE. No; that is new work. That will not go on, of course, unless an appropriation is made at this session.

Major ABBOT. That will stop. We can not emplace any more of those 6-inch guns until there is another appropriation.

Mr. MARSH. You say the fortifications are now short of these 6-inch guns?

Major ABBOT. Yes.

Mr. LITTAUER. Of the 6-inch guns, rapid-fire guns, 185 have been installed and 402 additional have been appropriated for but are not yet fully installed?

Major ABBOT. The Ordnance Department has not given us the guns.

Mr. LITTAUER. Then your work is finished, so far as these 402 guns are concerned?

Major ABBOT. There are two batteries of 6-inch guns on the Penobscot River that have been delayed, awaiting the acquisition of a piece of land.

Mr. LITTAUER. Outside of that large item, the emplacement of 402 guns, or more than twice as many as are now in effective position, what yet remains to be done?

Major ABBOT. We are all ready with the emplacements to receive the guns as soon as they are issued by the Ordnance Department.

MODERNIZING OLDER EMPLACEMENTS.

Mr. LITTAUER. Let us proceed to the next item—for modernizing older emplacements, \$600,000. This matter of the construction of gun and mortar batteries has been going on since 1890, and for the first time you have estimated for modernizing these old emplacements. Will you please explain to us in what way they need modernizing? What developments have been made which show the need of modernizing?

Major ABBOT. The original requirements of the service of heavy guns were supposed to be a capacity to be fired once in eight minutes to possibly once in five minutes. The idea in those days was that they would be opposed largely by other heavy guns, in comparatively small number, from heavily ironclad ships. With the development of the modern naval vessel, however, with an immense supply of rapid-fire guns, it has become necessary to increase very much the rapid fire of our land

guns and to add to the batteries a great many accessories to permit their attacking a vessel before the latter can get within range with their own overwhelming rapid-fire armament. With that in view, this new system of fire control has been developed, and all these appurtenances, in the way of telephone booths and telautograph booths and electrical communication and transportation of ammunition throughout our batteries have become essential. It is now possible to fire these guns every minute instead of once in five or eight minutes.

In the same way the ammunition service, which was entirely capable of serving the guns properly in the early stages, is now insufficient to provide the cannoneers and gunners with shots as fast as the carriages are capable of being served. The carriages are now improved by the Ordnance Department, and we have to expend considerable money to correspondingly improve our facilities in all the older emplacements, which suited the conditions of the seacoast defense at the time they were built.

Our later emplacements have all the conveniences to permit this very rapid rate of firing to go on continuously. In the early ones the only possible way to maintain high speed is to prepare beforehand and to have a great deal of the cartridges and projectiles piled up around the gun, on the loading platform, where they would of course be liable to explode in case any of the enemy's shots hit them. When you take the great number of guns which have been emplaced and bring the older ones up to date, it shows that the actual per capita expenditure on the older gun emplacements is comparatively small.

Mr. LITTAUER. It is stated in the report of the Secretary of War, on page 11, that the average cost of the desired improvement is estimated to be about \$725 per emplacement. Does not that give us a wrong impression, because the emplacements started in the later years are as complete as you would like to have them?

Major ABBOT. The extreme latest ones—

Mr. LITTAUER. You ask for \$600,000, and that amount has been reduced from \$942,500? That was designed to take care not only of all the batteries already installed, but those that are already appropriated for and not installed. In other words, I infer that the amount of \$942,000 is for 1,297 emplacements, and of the 1,297 emplacements, only 847 are installed, and 750 appropriated for and not yet completed.

Major ABBOT. At the present time, I say, we have hardly any incomplete emplacements in the United States, or anywhere, except in the Philippine Islands. There are three uncompleted emplacements on the Penobscot River. Those are about the only ones not finished, for all intents and purposes.

Mr. LITTAUER. This \$600,000 would bring up to the complete requirements all the emplacements now provided for?

Major ABBOT. Yes; the \$942,000 we estimated on would.

Mr. LITTAUER. Your argument is on the basis of the necessity of more room for working and more ease in working, and for a larger powder supply?

Major ABBOT. Not a larger powder supply, but larger means of getting these projectiles and powder cartridges from the lower to the higher level. The old-fashioned method was to put them on a crane and lift them by hand power with differential pulleys.

Mr. LITTAUER. How do you do it now?