

the capitol in Washington, its meetings were held there and at the Astor House. Forty-nine witnesses testified before it.

The investigations of the committee having been influenced to a great extent by the political proclivities of its members, they not infrequently differed in their individual judgments concerning the acceptance of the testimony of certain witnesses, and the manner in which it had been elicited. These differences caused a division of the committee, and as a consequence six presented a report of the majority and three a report of the minority. Each of these reports reflect the main features of the differences controlling the action of the members making the two reports.

In the report of the majority, that part of the committee prefatorily remarks :

“ At no period in the history of the federal government has there been deeper or better founded cause than exists at the present moment for every patriot heart to desire a prompt consummation of that signal ‘ *task of reform* ’ which public sentiment, many years since, inscribed on the list of executive duties in characters too legible to be overlooked, requiring, ‘ particularly the correction of those abuses that have brought the patronage of the federal government into conflict with the freedom of elections, and *the counteraction of those causes which have disturbed the rightful course of appointment, and have placed or continued power in unfaithful or incompetent hands.* ’ \* \* \* \*

“ The committee will remark here, that, in the outset of the investigation they have made, *they supposed it both proper and safe to place themselves somewhat confidingly under the guidance of several special reports which had been made to the house upon the subject of Mr. Swartwout’s defalcations, by the treasury officers, previous to the appointment of the committee.* \* \* \* \* It, however, very soon became evident that those reports were not to be implicitly relied on as auxiliaries in finding out either the law or the facts of the case. \* \* \* \*

“ There seems to be no cause to doubt the correctness of the reports of the treasury officers as to the extent of Mr. Swartwout’s [alleged] defalcations, viz.: (\$1,225,705.69) *one million two hundred and twenty-five thousand seven hundred and five dollars and sixty-nine cents.* \* \* \* \*

“ *So far as Mr. Swartwout’s interests or reputation are to be affected, it matters not whether any portion of his [alleged] defalcations be traced back to 1830, or only to 1837, because such a question, respecting dates, is not pretended in any way to alter the aggregate amount.* ”

Having signally failed, as is shown by the testimony of the several witnesses examined, to find a veritable cause for the collector’s alleged defalcations, the committee set forth as established facts, grounded on that testimony, the following inferences :