At a New York ratification meeting, Horace Greeley introduced a resolution proclaiming that there were two irrepressible conflicts, one pitting freedom against “aggressive, all-grasping Slavery propagandism” and the other, “not less vital,” between “frugal government and honest administration” on the one hand and “wholesale executive corruption, and speculative jobbery” on the other.¹ Samuel Bowles of the Springfield, Massachusetts, Republican accurately prophesied that on “an issue likely to rival, if not to overshadow, that of the irrepressible negro – that of honesty, simplicity and economy in public affairs,” Lincoln would run well, for he “is a man of the most incorruptible integrity” whose forte is honesty. “‘Honest old Abe’ will mean something serious, as well as prove a taking campaign cry.” Because Lincoln had not been a prominent seeker of the office, he seemed unlikely to be indebted to “friends picked up on the line of a long life, and clamorous for more or less dirty work, and a great many enemies to punish.”² Along with several other newspapers, the Cincinnati Commercial lauded the candidate as a “straight-out and decided Republican” whose “administration of the government would be honest, economical and capable.”³ William Cullen Bryant pledged that his New York Evening Post would “do all it could” to “turn out the present most corrupt of administrations, and install an honest administration in its stead.”⁴

² Chicago correspondence by Samuel Bowles, 16 May, Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican, 19 May 1860; “Abraham Lincoln as a Candidate,” ibid., 26 May 1860.