

THE W. N. C. R. R.

The question of selling the Western North Carolina Railroad is of so great importance to the tax-payers of this State that we make no apology for the space in our columns given to its discussion.

The State of North Carolina is the owner of the Railroad running westward from Salisbury towards Asheville, and owes for the road the sum of \$850,000, for which debt mortgage bonds have been issued bearing seven per cent. interest and falling due in the year 1890.

The State therefore is paying every year the sum of \$59,500 as the interest on said bonds. The State has been and is still at work attempting to extend the road, one branch to be extended almost due west from Asheville 44 miles to Paint Rock, and the other in a south-west direction 150 miles to Ducktown.

As this sum is an annual burden upon the tax-payers of North Carolina there has arisen quite a discussion upon the propriety of discontinuing work on the road, and this saving this large amount every year.

To stop the road at its present terminus would be very unfortunate, so much indeed that it would probably be better to bear this burden a few years longer and extend the road to Paint Rock, but the State would not extend it to Ducktown. It is certainly a very debatable question, and its discussion has already excited some unpleasantness between the eastern and western sections of the State and also in the ranks of the Democratic party.

The East is growing restless under this burden of paying money to build a road in the West, while the West claims that this road should be built, for they have paid towards building roads in the East. Now, while this unpleasant discussion was beginning to create considerable illfeeling, a proposition was made by certain Northern capitalists to relieve the State of this burden and extend the road both to Paint Rock and Ducktown.

This proposition has as its object the relief of the State of the burden of paying for the road, and it is indeed pitiable to think how these ignorant creatures have been duped by political tricksters. The correspondent of the Herald says:

"J. H. Russell, an undertaker, from Indianapolis, testified that up to January 27, or within a portion of two months, there had been interred at the expense of the county in which the city of Indianapolis is located from twenty-five to thirty men, women and children from among the colored emigrants who had arrived at Indianapolis from North Carolina; they were all buried as paupers, at an average expense to the county of \$5 15 each; from reports brought to him by men in his employ and from his own observations he could say that there was great destitution among the emigrants in Indianapolis. He mentioned an extreme case that he saw himself, having visited the house to attend to the burial of one of the children, where a family of nine lived in a small hut having but two rooms, and where there was no furniture, and nothing for a bed but a pile of straw and a blanket in one corner of one of the rooms; he thought it a shame and an outrage both on the emigrants and the people of Indiana; to bring these poor, destitute people to that State; he believed the people of Indiana, generally were opposed to it, but thought some leading republicans, were assisting the movement for political purposes."

In order to accept this proposition an extra session of the Legislature is necessary, as that body alone has the power to authorize a sale of the road. The directors of the road held a meeting at Raleigh last week, and by a vote of 6 to 5 decided not to advise the Governor to convene the Legislature. There are twelve directors of the road, so there was one (Col. Shober) not present at the meeting, but it was stated that he was in favor of the sale and would

have voted for an extra session, so that really the directors are evenly divided upon the question of convening the Legislature. Our entire Congressional delegation are all in favor of the sale, and have urged the Governor to call an extra session. But the Constitutional advisers of the Governor are the Council of State (composed of the chief State officers), for by Section 9 of Article III the Constitution says, "The Governor shall have power, on extraordinary occasions, by and with the advice of the Council of State, to convene the General Assembly in extra session." We think of course that he should consult the Council of State upon so important a matter, as no doubt he will do, and as we hear that they are all in favor of convening the Legislature, there is but little doubt that an extra session of our Legislature will be called, and will probably be held by the middle of March. As it is almost certain, therefore, that our Legislators will soon be called upon to consider the question of selling the road upon the terms offered, it is proper that the people should be fully informed upon the matter so as to instruct their representatives how to act.

We believe that a very large majority of the tax-payers of the State will say, "sell the road and relieve us of this burden." We are decidedly of the opinion that the road should be sold and sold at once. We think the Legislature ought to accept the proposition that has been made, unless more favorable propositions are submitted by other parties. We think speedy action is important, so as to relieve the State at once from further expenditures. Treasurer Worth has stated that there will not be sufficient funds in the Treasury this year to meet the appropriations made by the last Legislature, and barely sufficient to run the machinery of the Government, keep up public schools and pay the interest on the public debt. The condition of our Treasury, therefore, demands prompt action. If we can make the sale at once and immediately cut off this great expense of \$171,500 a year, then there will be plenty of money to pay all other demands upon our Treasury. In addition to this annual saving of \$171,500, the road will be built sooner than the State can build it, indeed we doubt very much if the State would ever build both branches, and certainly not the one to Ducktown, which is considered the more important. So that, by selling the road the State will be relieved of a burden and the completion of the road assured.

Breaking up a Legislature. A member of the Virginia Legislature and a newspaper reporter recently had a fight in the rotunda of the capitol, while the Legislature was in session, and all the members made a rush for the scene and all business was temporarily suspended. It was a novel way of breaking up a Legislature, and reminds us of our Radical Legislature of 1868 being broken up one day by a circus parading the streets of Raleigh!

The Poor Dupes.

The Committee appointed by the United States Senate to investigate the causes of the negro exodus from North Carolina to Indiana is still examining witnesses, and it is indeed pitiable to think how these ignorant creatures have been duped by political tricksters. The correspondent of the Herald says:

"J. H. Russell, an undertaker, from Indianapolis, testified that up to January 27, or within a portion of two months, there had been interred at the expense of the county in which the city of Indianapolis is located from twenty-five to thirty men, women and children from among the colored emigrants who had arrived at Indianapolis from North Carolina; they were all buried as paupers, at an average expense to the county of \$5 15 each; from reports brought to him by men in his employ and from his own observations he could say that there was great destitution among the emigrants in Indianapolis. He mentioned an extreme case that he saw himself, having visited the house to attend to the burial of one of the children, where a family of nine lived in a small hut having but two rooms, and where there was no furniture, and nothing for a bed but a pile of straw and a blanket in one corner of one of the rooms; he thought it a shame and an outrage both on the emigrants and the people of Indiana; to bring these poor, destitute people to that State; he believed the people of Indiana, generally were opposed to it, but thought some leading republicans, were assisting the movement for political purposes."

Directors' Discussion.

For the information of our readers and that they may hear both sides, we copy from the Observer a portion of the speeches made by the directors of the Western North Carolina Railroad at their recent meeting, upon the question of advising the Governor to call an extra session of the Legislature, for the purpose of selling that road.

"Mr. W. T. Dortch made remarks at some length upon the proposition. He inquired if the parties who desired to purchase the road can by mortgaging it for \$15,000 per mile, as they propose, build the entire line, why is it that the State of North Carolina cannot do it. We are to have nothing in the way of controlling power. If we are to furnish, as we are to be required to do, 500 convicts, ought we not to have an interest in the management of the road? What necessity is there for haste in the matter of sale? The longer the delay the better. When the road is finished to Paint Rock it can be sold for \$3,000,000. Yet it is proposed to sell it now for \$550,000 in bonds which are worthless and subject to a mortgage of \$4,800,000. He did not wish to be a slave to capitalists, nor did he desire the State to keep up its interest in any of its roads. The iron, rolling stock, etc., of the road were now worth a million dollars. Reject the proposition. Put the whole force of convicts on the Paint Rock division, and it can be graded in eighteen months, and as cheaply as any road in central North Carolina. Eighteen miles down the French Broad are already graded. He favored building both branches, but thought that the one to Paint Rock should be completed first, and then that to Ducktown. The Treasurer says he cannot give any more money this year. Never mind that. Let us wait until the Legislature meets next winter, and ask that body to give us power to mortgage the road and raise funds. He did not propose to impose any further tax upon the people, and this plan would avoid it. The road must be completed to Paint Rock if it will not pay if it only stops at Asheville. He thought it singular that just as the great work of getting through the Blue Ridge was completed these capitalists should come here and make such offers. It was because they saw the immense importance of the line. Another thing to be considered was the regulation of freights if these parties purchase the road. Who will regulate them? The Legislature cannot do so. Once the capitalists get the road they have the people in their power. The completion of this line will give us a great bulk of freights from the West, which now goes North. If this road be sold west will follow the sale of the North Carolina and Atlantic and North Carolina roads. The people will then say that they have expended millions on the roads from the coast to the mountains, and then, after all, they have been sold, and the debt still left. The State will not be hurt by delay in this matter, for the road will be as valuable next year as now. In less than twenty years the line of rail-ways will pay the expenses of the State government. The bonds are due in 1890, but we need not pay them then. We can raise more money by mortgage to pay them. Mr. Dortch said he could think of but two objects of the capitalists in the proposed purchase. One was to secure the road and the great trade from the West over the road. The other was to control the road in the interest of Northern roads. For one of these two reasons the offer was certainly made.

Mr. Wilson said the people up in his country, if it was left for them to say, would say stop the work. The North Carolina system is an idle name. The interest in the roads has passed into other hands. The interest in all save the Western North Carolina is held by other corporations. Mr. Dortch says that the State can build the road as well as these parties. Mr. Best's friends advance the money and take up the bonds. This is what Mr. Best says. I do not know his financial ability. We have a \$850,000 mortgage on the road from Salisbury to Asheville. Then there are \$550,000 of a statutory lien. There are 45 miles to iron to Paint Rock, at a cost of \$350,000. Then add \$200,000 more to build it, and you have a total of \$1,800,000. It will take \$5,000,000, at the lowest estimate, to build by contract labor the road to Ducktown. As to using the earnings of the Paint Rock branch to complete the other branch, it will take thirty years to do it, putting the earnings at one hundred thousand dollars. If the State would come forward and build the road it would be well, but it will be so many years before this can be done that I am desirous to see the road completed by the capitalists. If they build the Ducktown branch it will, I believe, be the most valuable. He said he heard of no one coming in proposing to build to Ducktown. They are disposed to build to Paint Rock. He favored the proposition in the interest of the State and the people of the west. He advised that the matter be submitted to the next Legislature. He also said: The proposition, as I understand relieves the tax payers of \$170,000 per annum for twenty years and guarantees the completion of the Paint Rock line in twelve months and the Ducktown line in four years, and secures to the State money paid out since its sale. This being the case, I shall certainly favor the proposition, and thus remove all sectional differences between the east and west.

Mr. R. H. Battle, Jr., spoke to the proposition.

He said that he had apprehended that there would be little difference of opinion in the board as to whether the Legislature should be called together. He thought, however, that the question was one not without difficulties. We are now called upon to decide what we ought to do. Four weeks ago we met here to receive a proposition from Mr. Best. I think we acted wisely in declining to favorably consider the proposition at that time for several reasons. Mr. Best has repeated the proposition with some amendments. The Governor has considered it carefully and suggested amendments guarding the interest of the State. The questions for us to consider are, first, whether this bill will remain open until the next Legislature meets. Of this we have no assurance. The question then arises, if we are not certain that this proposition may be repeated, should we not give the Legislature an opportunity to say what it is to be done with the property of which that body alone has control, and about which that body alone has a right to act? We are not called on to decide. We stand merely in the relation of advisers. I have come to the conclusion that my duty is to vote to give the Legislature an opportunity to decide upon the matter. Only \$200,000, the amount required to pay the expenses of the special session, is at stake on one side, and this great interest on the other. If any one, at the session of the Legislature, offers a better bid, it can then be accepted, for the Legislature has a perfect right to reject this proposition and accept others. We must take into consideration the wishes of the people of the State. So, inasmuch as we do not have to act decisively, but only to let the Legislature decide, we ought, with such amendments as we think should be inserted to guard the State's interests, submit the proposition to the Governor and advise him to call the Legislature.

North Carolina Negroes.

We are pleased to note that so influential a Northern Journal as the New York Herald is at last forced to admit that the colored people in North Carolina are well treated by the whites. We all know that the same laws govern both races and that the rights of all are equally protected, but this is not generally believed by the people of the North. In a recent issue the Herald has the following to say:

"If the testimony of North Carolina negroes now being taken by the Ex-slaves Committee in Washington can be depended upon (and we see no reason to discredit it) the condition of the ex-slaves in that portion of the South is not by any means uncomfortable so far as the present or discouraging so far as the future is concerned. As a rule they are fully as well, if not better, off than a large proportion of their white fellow-citizens of the same class in life and of the same opportunities in the North. According to the latest testimony on the subject—the testimony of the negroes—the average wages of colored farm laborers are from eight dollars to ten dollars a month, with cabins, firewood and subsistence. During the cotton picking season men and women can earn from one dollar to one dollar and a quarter per day. Skilled colored labor, of course, commands higher figures. Blacksmiths and carpenters receive from one dollar and fifty cents to two dollars per day, and white and black mechanics work together, although white men get a little higher wages. The colored man who gives this testimony was formerly a slave, but now he is a land lord, being the owner of houses which are occupied by white tenants who pay him a rental of between four and five hundred dollars a year. In the matter of education there is no discrimination, and if negroes are more frequently punished for petty offenses than white men it is because the latter have more money to employ lawyers."

Pierced by a Lead-Pencil.

Five years ago a man in this city fell and became insane. A surgeon then found a slight wound in his body, closely by the heart, thought the man had been either stabbed or shot. A few days later, however, small pieces of black lead began to come out of the wound, and it was then concluded that in the falling the point of a lead-pencil which the man had in his vest pocket had penetrated the body. Probing later brought out a little wood. Monday the surgeons used the knife, and, to their astonishment, a whole lead-pencil, which had been sharpened but once, was extracted. It was five and three-eighths inches long, and the wood was split in two. It had been completely imbedded below the chest and not half an inch from the heart. The man is very weak, but it is thought he will recover.

Bold Robbers.

On the 11th inst., seven or eight young men, with handkerchiefs tied about their faces and drawn revolvers in their hands, entered Ehrman's dry goods store in Chicago. Besides the proprietor there were in the store two lady customers, at whose heads the ruffians leveled their revolvers and demanded their money, which they surrendered, being about \$12. In the meantime, Mr. Ehrman was kicked and pounded by others of the gang because he refused to give up his cash. Before they succeeded in overcoming him they became fearful of arrest and hurriedly escaped.

Lumber Trade.

The Raleigh correspondent of the Goldsboro Messenger says that the lumber trade is growing in importance in our interior districts. The saw mill owners state that a daily freight train for lumber alone, can be supported on the Raleigh & Augusta Air Line, from Keyser's depot. Twenty car loads are daily placed in position for loading, but the greatly increased prosperity of that road, especially in through traffic, causes much unavoidable delay in transporting lumber to this point. The demand for building purposes steadily increases, and it now commands at the mills from \$8 to \$15 per thousand, with an upward prospect. New mills are going up constantly. R. H. Page, Esq., of Cary, is moving his boiler and machinery this week from the factory there, with a view of sawing lumber in the valuable pine region opened by the extension of this road to Hamlet.

A Profitable Cow.

A correspondent of the Raleigh News from Greensboro says that a citizen of that place bought twenty months ago a Jersey cow for which he paid down \$75 cash, a big price, seemingly. Well, she had two calves in twenty months for which he got \$15 and \$25 each, with which, after selling two gallons of milk per day at 15 cents (a low estimate) he counts himself in by her \$12), or \$245 clear profit, and he has sold a thing about the better only that he had to buy but two pounds during this twenty months for his family. I should have said he had just sold the cow for one hundred dollars each and shipped her to Atlanta, Ga. See what good stock will do. This cow would cost more than one giving a gallon a day.

River Rafts.

The river between this city and Fayetteville is said to be "choked full" of rafts on their way to this place. There are all sorts in the lot—rafts of turpentine, rafts of tar, rafts of lumber and rafts of wood. In all it is estimated that there are about two hundred between this place and Fayetteville. This may be an excessive estimate, but the pilot of the steamer Waco, which arrived here this morning, says that he counted over one hundred last night. About twenty of the rafts are from above Fayetteville and the balance from about the banks of the river between the two cities and from streams which empty into the Cape Fear.—Wilmington Review.

College for Durham.

The colored people in Durham are making an effort to raise funds to erect a building for school purposes, and propose to make it a college. Solomon Gray, one of our most enterprising colored men, has given an acre of ground in a beautiful grove just outside the corporate limits, on which to erect the building. It is to be of brick and large enough to accommodate one hundred and fifty students. Everybody, white and black, should encourage this work.—Durham Post.

Fatally Burned.

On last Saturday night, Mrs. Kilpatrick, wife of E. A. Kilpatrick, after putting her little ones to bed, knelt down at a chair before the fire to offer up her evening prayer, when a spark fell on her night dress and instantly she was enveloped in flames. The unfortunate lady losing her presence of mind, rushed into the open air, and before any assistance could be rendered her, was fatally burned.—Kinston Journal.

A Humbug.

Several of our exchanges are giving space to articles exposing the humbuggery of agents who are traveling through the country selling Swedish clover. It is claimed that the article is not only a fraud, but a veritable pest to farmers, and that the agents of the so-called clover do not pay their bills, or those they employ to canvass for them. Look out for all such should they pass this way.—Goldsboro Messenger.

A Lively Valentine.

In the large collection of fanciful and daintily decorated missives and packages, adorned with skewered hearts and wreaths and flowers, received at the postoffice yesterday, was a mysterious looking box with a small hole in the top, addressed to a city resident. Upon examination the box was found to contain an old be-whiskered rat, with "a small but interesting family" of rodents.—Wilmington Star.

Prosperous County.

Pitt county has \$5,000 in good judgments and owes nothing. Three years ago she expended \$3,500 improving the court house. There has been built a new bridge, 657 yards long, at a cost of \$1,000. They have not levied a cent of special tax to accomplish all this. The tax is twenty-six cents on the \$1.00, and eighty cents on the poll. Greenville is without a town government, and yet there seems to be no trouble for the want of it.—Observer.

Old Woman.

Easter Wallace, no doubt the oldest person in the county, has just died at her home in Sharon township. She was a slave of Alexander Wallace, but was freed by her master long before the war. She gave her age at 104 years, and citizens of the county who have known her for a half century say she is not far from it. She claims to have known Gen. Andrew Jackson when he was a boy.—Charlotte Observer.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

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