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BY GEORGE HOWARD,

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DOMESTIC.

Internal Improvements.—House of Representatives, Wednesday, May 2, 1832:—

Amendments of Mr. Verplanck, making appropriations for internal improvements for certain rivers, bays, harbors, &c. being under consideration in committee of the whole, Mr. HALL, of North Carolina, offered an amendment to come in after the item for removing obstructions at Ocracock Inlet. The amendment is as follows: "For the removal of the mud shoal below the town of Washington, North Carolina, and a bed of stumps which obstruct the passage of vessels in the river."

Mr. HALL, in explanation of his amendment, said, that he did not wish to impose upon members of that House—they knew, generally, that he did not feel himself at liberty to vote for subjects of this character, but he wished to put it in the power of those who *did* feel themselves at liberty to apply the public money to such purposes, to apply it where it would be of some use to some of his constituents, and particularly to put it in the power of gentlemen who seemed so desirous of giving something to his constituents to do it, where it would be attended with practical utility. This object was, from its nature and location, as much entitled to an appropriation as any item in the bill. The shoal to which he alluded, was known to be an impediment to vessels going to or from Washington, loaded, and they had generally to lay below this shoal and lighten by boats.

Mr. H. believed the removal of this obstruction not only practicable, but, at comparatively a small expense, aided by the machine employed at the Swash, as he was compelled to believe, uselessly. This object is, according to the doctrine of gentlemen, as much *national* as any of the works appropriated for in this bill. It has all the attributes of nationality claimed for works of this character. It is an obstruction to commerce, it is within a collection district, near a custom house, and, therefore, according to the late doctrines, that, whatever is within a collection district becomes national, and, therefore, constitutional, is of consequence entitled to an appropriation. The stumps alluded to, though their removal is not altogether as important as the removal of the shoal, are yet entitled, upon the principles already stated, to be considered as good national stumps as any in the Union.

He again repeated, he would not deceive gentlemen, even if this amendment was admitted into the bill, which, he thought, upon their own principles, it ought to be, he should still be obliged to vote against the bill. He wished others to preserve their consistency—he meant to preserve his—but those who voted for any similar object he conceived bound to vote for this.

After some remarks from Messrs. Archer and Alexander, of Virginia, Mr. HALL observed, he presumed, from the manner in which the gentleman (Mr. Archer,) had asked his questions, and from the expression of his countenance, he did not require an answer to them all, which, indeed, he could not give, because they formed a string as long as his arm, and many of them he could not recollect. But he would answer the first which he did recollect, and say that, there really was such a place as he had mentioned. He had stated what was known to all the inhabitants of the town of Washington and surrounding country—and, tho' the subject had assumed some appearance of a joke, yet it was a true joke, and he knew it to be the wish, as it would be to the interest of these people, to have the obstruction removed, and he (himself) would as soon vote for it as any item in the bill, or any thing of the kind. He would say to the other gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. Alexander,) by way of explanation, that it was not the Swash which he was understood to allude to when, in conversation, he said it had been made worse—it was another place in North Carolina. But, in relation to the Swash, he would only say, that he did not believe that either much good or harm could be done it, permanently, nor did he believe that the whole corps of engineers, with the whole purse of Uncle Sam, could permanently remove the obstructions to the navigation and commerce of North Carolina. God and nature, he thought, had, in their modus operandi of creating these obstructions, determined pretty clearly that mortal man should not have any modus operandi by which, effectually, to remove them. He had desired to avoid saying any thing at present on this subject, because he knew it to be a favorite project with his colleague, (Mr. Speight,) but as it had been mentioned, and he had been drawn into remarks relative to it, he would say that, if any one would contemplate with proper attention, the elements which enter into the formation of these obstructions, they would see the futility of wasting money on them.

When, on Saturday the 5th, the same subject came up in the House, Mr. HALL objected to the appropriation for Ocracock, but previous to giving his reasons for so doing, said, he wished to make some explanations in relation to the amendment he had previously offered in committee, and should again offer in the House. He then went into such explanations as the case required, similar to those already stated, and called upon his colleague, (Mr. Speight,) to say

if his statements were not correct. Sir, said he, I know my colleague to be in possession of such information as will sustain me in what I have said in regard to this subject. He is a swift witness in this case. [Here Mr. Speight asked what he meant by a swift witness?] Mr. H. said, he meant a good witness—a competent witness—a witness having full knowledge of the subject—and he protested against its being supposed that he intended any thing in the slightest degree unkind to his colleague, who, being not only his colleague but his neighbor, he should be sorry to say any thing in the least unkind, and disclaimed it—but he again called on him to say if his statements were not correct, to which Mr. Speight nodded assent. Mr. Hall then said, his object in calling on his colleague was to show to gentlemen that what he had said was true, and that the information was clearly such as to place the subject on the same footing with the other items; nor could he see with what propriety gentlemen could vote for the other items and reject this.

Sir, said Mr. H. I will now state my reasons for opposing this appropriation for the Swash. I am quite certain that if any one will look at this matter in a philosophic point of view—if they will consider the real causes of the obstruction to the commerce of North Carolina, they will perceive that the idea of effectually removing these impediments is idle. It is supposed by philosophers and mariners that the trade winds have some influence in producing the gulf stream. Be this as it may, very few mariners who traverse the coast of North Carolina, are ignorant that the gulf stream is one of the principal causes of those obstructions, which, to think of overcoming, permanently, by the plunging machine, commonly called the dredging machine, is about as specious as to talk of quenching the sun with a squirt gun. They had as well get a school of shovel-nosed sharks to root away the sand. It is known that the gulf stream sweeps along our coast at the rate of three and a half miles an hour, bringing with it, from the capes of Florida, as it approaches more or less near the shore, according to its projection or incurvature, an immense mass of floating sand. As it approaches the projecting points of the coast of North Carolina, during the prevalence of east winds, it is pressed by the ocean more in shore, producing a counter current or eddy, in which the sand is whirled round and thrown into the mouths of our inlets, and in heavy easterly storms thrown in immense masses within the Sound, and forms that irregular semicircular deposit known by the name of the Swash, consisting almost wholly of land.

It is believed that the gulf stream, placed before the outlets of our rivers, is the principal primary cause of that deposit of sand along our coast, which forms a barrier between the Atlantic and the Sound, through which the breaks, called inlets, are made, and contin-

ually modified, by the battling of the winds and these mighty waters. And now let me ask, does any one really believe that we stand any chance to make a permanent removal of this deposit, while the causes which placed it there remain, and that, too with this dredging machine? Even supposing it may be cut through and part of it removed, what is to prevent the same operation from filling it up? Sir, if Congress are really in earnest about removing the obstructions to our commerce, let them make an appropriation to remove the gulf stream across the Atlantic; pass a law to stop the storms which beset this coast; and blow up the banks! we shall then have a good outlet to the ocean! I have had some knowledge of these storms—as fine a specimen of storms as is known. It has, you know, Sir, been doubted by some of our people, whether they had better thunder in England than we have in this country; but I am quite certain, if they have better thunder, they have no better storms than we have about Cape Hatteras and Ocracock. Now, Sir, to be serious, let me ask, what can we do against these elements? To bear me out, let me quote from a report of the engineers upon a kindred work, the celebrated Nag's Head, or Roanoke Inlet—obstructions made by the same elements. The following extract is from the report of Capt. Hartman Bache, of the Topographical Engineers, dated Feb. 12, 1829:

"It is impossible to enter upon the discussion of the proposed project, involving such important consequences to the populous and productive portions of the country, watered by the Roanoke river, without feeling deeply sensible of the difficulties in effecting so desirable an object, and the degree of uncertainty attending the result of any operations, where the causes to be governed are so infinite and powerful. This is apparent even to the most unpracticed in the profession of engineering, wherever the course of nature, in her marine operations, is to be governed. Indeed, there is probably no subject within the range of science, where so much is deduced from hypothesis, and where, necessarily, in the results, there is so little certainty. Nor can we, from the causes already put in practice, adduce the evidence of success of any series of operations, having in view such improvements, inasmuch as every case is of a new character. This would appear to be the fact, when we bear in mind, that probably in no one instance, where operations have been carried on for the improvement of harbors, inlets, &c. have the results met the expectations entertained. In expressing these opinions, I am impelled only by the desire of impressing upon the conviction of the sanguine, the difficulties which belong to hydrographical improvements, without particular reference to the subject of this report."

Sir, it will be seen that this reasoning is intended to apply, not alone to Nag's head, but to all marine obstructions and improvements, and is peculiarly applicable to the Swash. Now let us hear what the Report of the Secretary of War, made this session, tells us. The Report, in relation to Ocracock Inlet, says:—

"The dredging machinery designed to improve the channel of this Inlet, has been applied to that object, on the part called the Flounder slue, during all the favorable weather, since the beginning of 1830, and about 10,000 cubic yards have been excavated.

The engineer reports that, so far as a conclusion may be drawn from observation, during so short a period, it is in favor of the final success of the experiment. It is found that, in consequence of the exposed situation of the place of operations, not more than about 150 working days in a year can be counted on; and, at the present rate, ten years would be required to complete the proposed excavation. In order to afford, in this case, an opportunity of making as fair experiments as practicable, it is intended to apply another dredging machine of greater power in aid of the one now employed," &c.

With these high authorities, in addition to what I have myself shown, shall I not be borne out in my opinion of the utter futility of such enterprises? The Secretary of War tells us that the affair at Ocracock is an experiment. This, I believe, will be the third—I am told the fourth, appropriation for that object. We have now been making the applications for something little less than three years, I think, and the Secretary tells us it will take ten years more; this is called an experiment! It is an experiment, with a vengeance! A thirteen-years experiment, at the rate of twenty or thirty thousand dollars a year, for what, by their own showing, and the least acquaintance with the nature of the obstructions, can produce nothing but waste of money and eventual disappointment. I have been informed by many respectable persons living on the banks and other places not remote, that the whole affair was viewed as a mere idle waste of money. But, as regards the mud shoal below Washington, I cannot see what is the difference in principle between it and the Swash. The only difference is, one is an obstruction at the upper part of the same body of water, where it is called Pamlico river, and the other at the lower part, where it is called Pamlico Sound; both obstruct navigation and commerce. In explanation to a remark of Mr. Speight, that his information was drawn from pilots, who were interested, Mr. H. said, it was not alone from pilots, but many other respectable people, as well as respectable people of this class, whose information was likely to be, perhaps, better than others. The final success of the Swash I doubt; as to the shoal near Washington, success would probably attend that, with means properly applied.

Suicide.—Nancy Copridge, wife of Wm. Copridge, of this county, committed suicide by drowning herself on the 1st inst. She was so very ill at the time as to be unable to turn herself in bed. On the morning above-mentioned, she rose from her bed, ran off some distance from the house and threw herself into a mill pond. She has left a husband, and an infant only 3 or 4 days old.—*Eliz. City Star.*

On the 15th inst. about 5 o'clock, P. M. a flash of lightning struck down two boys and two horses, belonging to Geo. Pollok, Esq. at his Mill Creek plantation. One boy and a horse were killed on the spot. The others recovered.

Newbern Spectator.