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STATE LEGISLATURE.

REPORT ON INLAND NAVIGATION.

The Committee to whom were referred so much of the message of his Excellency the Governor as relates to the subject of Inland Navigation, REPORT, in part,

That having commenced the great work of Internal Improvements, it is the duty of the Legislature to persevere until the whole shall be accomplished. No considerations of local policy, no paltry considerations of expense, should divert our views for one moment from the destiny to which we are aspiring, and to which we shall certainly attain, if we cease not our efforts. Rising above the influence of little passions, let us devote our labours to the honor and glory of the state in which we live, by establishing and giving effect to a system of policy which shall develop her physical resources, draw forth her moral and intellectual energies, give facilities to her industry, and encouragement to her enterprise. It is only by persevering in a systematic course of elevated policy that the prosperity of the State can be reared up and be made stable. Isolated measures, without plan and without system, have never yet made a state great, nor a people happy: They baffle the efforts of honest industry by often giving to them a wrong direction; they disappoint the expectations of enterprise by their frequent abortion. The true foundations of national prosperity and of national glory, must be laid in a liberal system of Internal Improvements, and of Public Education; in a system which shall give encouragement to cultivation of the soil which shall give force to the faculties of the mind, and establish over the heart the empire of a sound morality. It does not fall within the province of the duties assigned to your committee to submit their views upon any part of this general system, except those which relate to the Inland Navigation of the State.

This subject divides itself into two parts; The first respects the inlets from the ocean; The second, the rivers which intersect our territory.

The coast of North-Carolina seems to have undergone great changes since the discovery of this continent, and is probably destined to undergo many more. The Current from the Gulf of Mexico, running near to the coast from the extremity of Florida to the Capes of Virginia, has deposited along this line part of that immense quantity of sand which is brought down the Mississippi and its waters from the interior of the continent. This constant accumulation of sand has choked up inlets which once admitted the entrance of vessels, and by giving a new direction to the currents of rivers near their mouths, has formed inlets, which did not exist a century ago.—Some of the large rivers which discharge themselves directly into the ocean, have had bars formed at their mouths which obstruct the entrance of vessels; others, with currents not more strong are free from those obstructions. This diversity seems to arise from the situation of the Coast; which in some places stretching out into promontories, diverts the Gulf Stream further into the ocean, and lessens its influence upon the coast next immediately to the north. The promontory which terminates at Cape Look-Out, makes such a diversion of this stream in favour of the inlet at Ocracock, and that which terminates at Cape Hatteras, diverts this stream so far from the coast that its influence seems to be insufficient to counteract the currents of large rivers and bays above that point. The Roanoke, the Tar, and the Neuse rivers discharging themselves into the sounds which stretch along our coast, have the force of their currents lost in the wide expanse of those waters, and find their way to the ocean through Ocracock, Currituck, and other still smaller inlets. The shallowness of the water through Currituck, and the other inlets between Cape Hatteras and the southern cape of Virginia, render it a subject worthy of the consideration of the Legislature, whether it be practicable to form an outlet to the ocean for vessels of burthen, at a convenient point along this part of the coast. Until such an outlet can be formed, nearly one half of the agricultural products of the State will be taken to markets in Virginia; for, the present difficulties of going to sea are such as to forbid the most distant hope of the rise of a great commercial city in that quarter, so long as they exist. The farmer will seek the best market for his

produce; if his own state afford it not, he will seek it elsewhere. Your committee entertain the opinion, that North Carolina possesses the capacities for one of the first commercial towns upon the continent, and that with the liberal aid of her Legislature, she may be made to rank with the great commercial states of the Union. If this opinion be well founded, every consideration of national pride and of private interest, invite us to adopt measures to give it effect; and your committee cannot doubt an anxiety in every member of the General Assembly to lend his aid to the accomplishment of a plan, which is to form one of the most celebrated epochs in our history, and a subject of congratulation to our remote posterity.

When Sir Walter Raleigh first visited our coast, he entered the Albemarle sound through Roanoke Inlet with the large vessels which composed his squadron. Since that time, owing to some cause which neither history nor tradition has handed down to us, the waters of the Albemarle have broke through the slip of land which divided them from the Pamlico, and now find their way to the ocean through Ocracock and other inlets. The Roanoke Inlet has gradually closed up until it has become a solid beach. If this inlet has ceased to exist by reason of the communication formed between the Albemarle and the Pamlico sound, it may again be opened by closing this communication, and forcing the waters of the Albemarle directly out to sea. As to the practicability of closing this communication, your committee entertain no doubt; and as it is a work identified with the glory and the best interests of the state, they are of opinion the Legislature should aid its accomplishment by incorporating a company with a suitable capital, and subscribing on behalf of the state such part of that capital as the public funds will admit: and as this subject is connected with the general prosperity of the commerce of North-Carolina, your committee hope, that upon a respectful application for that purpose, from this General Assembly to the Congress of the United States, that honorable body would direct a large portion of the capital required for this great national object, to be subscribed on behalf of the General Government.

Were this work completed, your committee would ask, where upon this continent could be found a more commodious Bay for Commercial purposes than the Albemarle? Where a finer river than the Roanoke, down which to transport the various products of industry? This river, extending its branches in different directions towards the mountains, waters more than fifteen millions of acres of land; an extent of territory nearly equal to one half of the whole territory of this state. No river in the Atlantic states can boast of a better soil; and when the company lately incorporated shall have completed their labors, few can boast of a better navigation. It will not be extravagant to say that the country watered by the Roanoke and its branches can maintain a population of four millions, and that the products which are destined one day to find their rout to market down this river, will exceed in value twenty millions of dollars annually.—Under these circumstances what can prevent the rise of a great commercial city near the mouth of the Roanoke? Is it not an object to create a commercial city? Does not this concentration of wealth give activity to industry in a thousand forms?—Does it not develop the resources of agriculture, perfect the mechanic arts, elicit the faculties of genius and expand the boundaries of science? The state which cannot boast of a great city, ever has been and ever will be held in disrepute: she will never cherish an exalted pride; she will never cherish a generous patriotism. Conscious of inferiority she will submit to a state of dependence, and suffer the many virtues to sleep. Thousands of generous souls who could not brook this consciousness of inferiority, have already deserted our soil, and thousands more will follow them, if we seek not to exalt the character of North-Carolina.

The lands watered by the Roanoke, and its branches are at this day worth in the market fifty millions of dollars. When the navigation of these streams shall be improved and a direct outlet formed for the waters of the Albemarle, they will exceed in value two hundred millions. This increase of national wealth will bear no proportion to the expense of accomplishing these objects. The increased value of the lands added to the increased population, will soon reimburse the expense. But if no pecuniary reimbursement should ever be made, the state will be amply indemnified by the increased pride of her citizens and in the increased affection which they will bear towards her. It is true that a considerable part of those lands lie in Virginia: but we should remember that we belong to the same

political confederacy and that we are members of the same kindred family.

The best inlets we now have on our coast are those at the mouth of the Cape-Fear.—The new inlet, which was formed during a violent storm not many years since, is gradually deepening and will probably soon have a depth of water equal to that in the old inlet. The shallows which exist between the new inlet and the town of Wilmington, and which render it necessary for vessels to lighten, are a serious impediment to the navigation of the river; and the increasing trade of the Cape-Fear renders it very desirable to have this impediment removed.

It is of much importance that some improvement, if practicable, should be made in the navigation at Ocracock, by deepening the swash within the bar.—As this time (and for many years to come it will so continue) all the trade of the Pamlico & great part of that of the Albemarle sounds is carried on through this inlet. Vessels which cross the bar with ease are compelled to lighten at the swash before they can proceed to Washington or Newbern. This inconvenience added to the dangers and difficulties of the navigation off the coast at Ocracock have rendered it a subject of enquiry whether an outlet for the trade of the Pamlico could not be formed at Beaufort. Here is a good port, easy of entrance for vessels of considerable burthen. That a communication by a canal between the Neuse below Newbern, and Newport river which runs into the sea at Beaufort, is practicable, there is no doubt. The enterprise of an individual, the late Dr. McClure, proved it to demonstration.—The objections to this plan seem to grow out of the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of navigating the Pamlico, or even the wide mouth of the Neuse in boats which could pass the canal. Upon this subject your committee cannot pretend to speak with confidence. Perhaps when steam boats shall be brought into use upon the Pamlico & its waters, it will be found that the objections now urged to this route for the trade of these waters, no longer exist. In the mean time your committee recommend that one or more engineers be employed to survey the inlet at Ocracock and to ascertain whether it be practicable to improve its navigation by deepening the channel over the swash in a way to prove lasting; and also to survey the Pamlico & Croatan sounds, & report the obstructions to their navigation and the best means of removing those obstructions. They also recommend that a similar survey and report be made of the Cape-Fear river below Wilmington. These surveys should be extended to the Albemarle; and as the plan which your committee has recommended respecting this sound is one of great magnitude, it seems to require the attention of a special board of commissioners; and your committee recommend that such a board be appointed with instructions to employ suitable engineers to make all necessary surveys and reports.

As to the second part of the subject referred to your committee, viz. the improvement of the navigation of the several rivers which intersect the state, they cannot forbear to congratulate the Legislature upon the zeal which has been evinced by the citizens on the Cape Fear and the Roanoke. They are informed that more than double the amount for which the books were opened by the Cape-Fear Company, was subscribed before the first general meeting of the stock holders, and that a sufficient sum has been subscribed on the books of the Roanoke Company to authorize the company to be organized and to commence their work. The best wishes of the good people of the state attend their labours; and your committee have only to regret that there has not been a simultaneous movement in every quarter of the state in the work of improving our inland navigation. The Tar and the Yadkin rivers have as yet had no companies incorporated for their improvement; the company incorporated for the Neuse has been so restricted in its privileges, that the spirit of enterprise has been damped. The Catawba Company, labouring under a limited charter, and encountering numerous difficulties, have given to their fellow citizens an evidence of public spirit, which cannot be too much applauded & which ought to be better rewarded. They were the first in this state to embark in the work of internal improvements. Without the countenance of the Legislature, without the aid of distant funds, they have silently worked their way, until the objects of their incorporation have been nearly attained. It is due to this company to place them upon a footing with the most favoured company in the state, and to give to them this public testimonial of respect and gratitude.

Your committee are of opinion that a company should be incorporated for the Tar river, and that the charter heretofore granted to the Neuse company be amended, and the

same rights and privileges be given to them, which are granted to other navigation companies. The Engineer who has been employed to survey the rivers in this state, has finished his survey of the Tar and Neuse; and when your committee look to his report and see that for a sum less than fifty thousand dollars, the Tar river might be made boatable to Louisburg, and for a sum less than forty thousand dollars, the Neuse river might be made boatable to the neighbourhood of Raleigh, they ardently hope that those of their fellow citizens who are interested in the improvement of those rivers, will lose no time in making this improvement.

As a necessary part of the improvements for this section of the state, your committee recommend the construction of a turnpike road from the city of Raleigh to some convenient point on the Neuse river within the vicinity. When the Neuse shall be made navigable, such a road will be of particular importance to the city of Raleigh and the country around.

The Yadkin is the next river in size, in this state, to the Roanoke, and next in importance not only on account of the extent, but of the fertility of the country which it waters. More than eight millions of acres in this state are watered by the Yadkin and the various streams which run into it. From near its source to the county of Montgomery, there are but few obstructions to its navigation. But at sundry places from the upper limit of Montgomery county to a point more than six miles within the limits of South-Carolina, great obstructions are to be found. The Narrows, the Falls, the Grassy Islands, all present serious difficulties.—But no difficulties are here to be found which an enterprising perseverance cannot surmount; and the character of the state no less than the interest of individuals, is deeply concerned in surmounting them. No section of the state of the same extent contains so numerous a population, none labours under such inconveniences in getting its produce to market, and none contains lands which are so far beneath their intrinsic value. In this state of things the heavy products of Agriculture perish in immense profusion upon the hands of the farmer, while those which are more portable are wagoned to the distant markets of Fayetteville, Camden, Charleston, Lynchburg and Petersburg. It is the duty of the Legislature to change this condition of things; to adopt a system of policy which shall ensure to industry a reward proportioned to its toils, which shall stimulate enterprise by opening a field for its exertion, and which, in fine, shall advance the wealth of individuals and at the same time subserve the public prosperity. It is among the most important objects of state policy to improve the navigation of the Yadkin and its waters; & that such a direction, if practicable, be given to this navigation, that the commodities which are to be transported along it, shall find a market in this state. To effect the latter of these objects, it is proposed that a communication be opened between the Yadkin and the Cape-Fear. The grounds between those two rivers have not been surveyed, and your committee cannot therefore speak with confidence, as to the practicability of opening such a communication. They are informed that little doubt exists, with those who are well acquainted with the intermediate country; and so desirable in a national point of view is this communication, that your committee think no expense commensurate with the revenues of the state should be spared to effect it. Independent of this general consideration, the private interest of individuals inhabiting this section of the state, is deeply concerned.—This communication would double the lumber trade of the state and greatly increase its trade in naval stores: it would bring into activity a fund of wealth, which without it is destined to remain for ever inactive and useless. Your committee do therefore recommend that companies be incorporated for improving the navigation of the Yadkin, and opening a communication between it and the Cape-Fear.

As connected with this subject, your committee beg leave to draw the attention of the legislature to the opening of a communication between the Catawba and the navigable waters of Rocky River, which runs into the Yadkin below the falls. Your committee are informed that it is probable such a communication may be opened, and they recommend that a survey be made, and if such a communication be found practicable, that the route be marked out. The utility of connecting the Catawba with the waters of the Yadkin, will depend upon connecting the Yadkin with the waters of Cape-Fear. Should both be effected, the productions of more than one half of the territory of the state, would find their market upon the Cape Fear, and enlarge and sustain its commercial towns upon that river.