

THE STAR, And North-Carolina State Gazette, Published weekly, by BELL & LAWRENCE.

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COMMUNICATIONS.

THE RIP RAP CONTRACT.

Letter from a gentleman at Washington City, to the Editors of the Star, dated Sept. 22.

Messrs. Editors.—I perceive that a writer in the Star, who must be unacquainted with the facts in relation to the Rip Rap contract, draws inferences unfavorable to Mr. Calhoun's conduct in relation to it. Having long since been perfectly satisfied of the motives of those who got up the plot in Congress, under this name, to injure the reputation of Mr. Calhoun, and of his correct course in relation to the whole affair, I did not suppose there was an intelligent man in the country who would now assert that he had been, in the smallest degree, to blame in that business.—Colvin, the Editor of Mr. Crawford's Gazette of this city, excepted.

I send you herewith the ample report of the Committee of Congress on this subject. You will perceive, that although the committee had been so far imposed on by the Radicals as to believe, at one time, there might be something improper in the contract in question, the documents they annex to their report fully clear away any such suspicion. Until this report was made, there was a large body of highly honorable and independent men in Congress, declined voting any further appropriation for the contract; but, the moment this report was made to Congress, they were fully satisfied of the correctness with which the whole affair had been conducted, and the vote afterwards was 180 to 20 against the Radicals. As soon as the report and documents were read, Mr. Cadwallader D. Colden, of New-York, got up and stated "that he had been grossly deceived in the business;" and his vote was one of the 180. Since then the authors of the plot have not dared to mention the name of the Rip Rap affair in Congress. They had got up their plot to injure Mr. Calhoun, and by dint of assertion and insinuation, had even, for a time, imposed on the independent committee appointed to investigate the matter.

There is one fact, now well known, which is as highly honorable to the gentlemen who composed the committee, as to Mr. Calhoun: that is, all the members of that committee are now among his warmest political friends, although they had been so far imposed on by his enemies at that time, as to have a very unfavorable opinion of him!! This fact speaks volumes to the nation. It is an amende honorable, which reflects credit on every member of that committee, as well as on the exalted patriot whose public acts they so fearlessly called in question. Such, I venture to say, will be the result of any investigations into the conduct of Mr. Calhoun, whose purity in public and private life is as unspotted, and as consistent, as has been his professions as a politician. He had always professed the same creeds, and practised what he professed.

I would thank you to publish the report of the chief engineer, Gen. Macomb, the hero of Plattsburg, (whose character for stern independence is as high as it is for valor,) which contains the substance of the whole affair; and I think your readers, and yourselves, will join in the view which is now generally taken of the plot, entered into by the friends of Mr. Crawford, to blast the reputation of a man who soars so much above him in point of talents and patriotism.

Report of General Macomb to the Secretary of War. Engineer Department, 7 April 29, 1823.

SIR: In obedience to your order I furnish herewith the information requested by the committee appointed by the House of Representatives to investigate the contract between the United States and Mr. Mix, by answers to the inquiries contained in the letter of their honorable Chairman, dated the 23d instant.

It is proper, however, to premise that the contract with Mr. Mix was made by General Swift, while at the head of the Engineer Department, long before I was appointed to that station, and that most of the information which I have obtained has been collected not only from the records of this office, but from other sources, and particularly from the recollection of those who have been attached to the office much longer than myself. It is probable that if General Swift was here that the report might be made still more complete and satisfactory.

In reply to the first inquiry of the committee, "was there any advertisement for proposals to make the contract published, and if so, when and where?" I have to state, that, in diligent inquiry, I do not find that there was any advertisement, and it is believed that there was none. The practice of advertising in all cases, which has existed since the complete organization of this department, does not appear to have been the practice in the engineer service, previous to the establishment of the Engineer Department at this place, which was in April, 1818, under circumstances similar to those under which this contract was formed: to wit: Where the frequency of intercourse with all the points from which proposals were likely to be offered, would admit of direct solicitations being communicated to them. It appears they were resorted to only when it was uncertain from what quarter proposals would be offered, and when it was necessary to invite distant and general competition, and it is probable that necessity was considered to be applicable to the contracts for the construction of the fortifications on the Gulf of Mexico, as advertisements for proposals for these were published throughout the country for nearly three months before they were formed. It appears that this contract was made strictly in conformity to the usual practice at that time, and that all the precautions were taken which were requisite to guard the interests of the government, and to secure the contract on the most moderate terms. By advertising to the position of the works at Old Point Comfort and the Rip Raps, near the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, it must be apparent that the necessary for the construction thereof, would naturally be supplied from the various rivers which flow into that bay, and that it must be obtained from the James, York, Potomac, or Susquehanna rivers; and such appears to have been the impression of the chief engineer at the time the contract was to be formed. His attention was directed to all of those points, and the owners of the quarries were informed that the government was about to form contracts for the supply of the stone that would be required for those works. The engineer superintending the district embracing the Chesapeake, and having special charge of those works, was instructed by General Swift to take measures to ascertain the price at which materials could be obtained for their construction. In pursuance thereof, Captain Maurice, of the Corps of Engineers, was dispatched to Richmond in order to ascertain at what price the stone could be obtained from the quarries on James's river; the result of his inquiry was that the stone to be procured at that point would cost \$4 to \$5 the perch. Application at the same time was made to Mr. Baker, stone quarrier at Georgetown, on the Potomac, to know at what price stone could be obtained at that point, the result of which was that it would be about the same price as that on James river. In addition to these inquiries Colonel Armistead had actual experiments made, by having the stone quarried, and transported under his immediate direction and superintendence, the result of which was that it could not be delivered at the works for less than \$3 50 per perch. His impression is, that the transportation of so large a quantity of stone as the government required might have raised the rate of freight to \$2 50 or 3, and in that case the price would have been augmented in the proportion of the difference between those rates and that upon which was founded the estimate of \$3 50. He considered the contract with Mr. Mix as being highly advantageous to the government at the time it was made, see his certificate herewith accompanying and marked A. The certificate of Colonel Armistead is confirmed by that of Captain Maurice, marked B, by which it appears that the lowest offer he received would have cost the government \$4 25 viz: \$1 50 at Manchester, 75 cents cartage to Rocketts, and \$3 for freight thence to Old Point Comfort. While these inquiries and experiments were conducted by Colonel Armistead, the superintending engineer, Gen. Swift, in order that the most accurate information might be obtained, also employed Mr. Leekie, a stone mason of intelligence and experience, to examine the several quarries with a view to ascertain the lowest rate at which stone of a suitable quality could be obtained. The result of his inquiries was that it could not be supplied for less than \$3 50 per perch. He reported in writing, but his report cannot be found. The result, however, is distinctly recollected by the officers attached to the department who have seen the report. These various inquiries attracted the attention of the owners of quarries at the various points from which the stone would naturally be supplied, and produced a competition not less considerable than if proposals had been invited by advertisement. Bids were accordingly received from the quarries at James, York, Potomac, and Susquehanna rivers: those from the last being founded upon experiments made by the permission of the engineer department, and at the expense of the government; and although some of these bids were received shortly after the contract was formed, yet it is manifest from them that it was impossible to form the contract upon terms more advantageous to the government. The proposal of Mr. Brooke from James river for stone of the kind required, was \$1 25 per perch at the quarry, to which Leing added the expense of freight to Richmond, portage to Rocketts, and freight to Old Point Comfort, the rate would be increased to at least \$4 50; see Mr. Brooke's proposal herewith marked C. The proposal from Messrs. McDougall and Grandall, from the quarries on the Susquehanna, was at the rate of \$3 50 per perch delivered; see the proposal dated the 4th of August, 1818, together with a letter from Mr. Crandall, dated the 4th of May preceding, herewith transmitted and marked D, by the latter of which it appears that stone obtained from the Susquehanna in the cheapest manner, and the most convenient for loading without regard to quality, (by which it is understood to be loose stone, obtained without the ex-

pendence of quarrying,) would cost \$3, the stone being rated at only fifty cents per perch. A proposal was also received from Mr. Denison upon the Susquehanna, at the rate of \$3 50, but it cannot be found; a letter, however, from Commodore Rodgers, recommending Mr. Denison, has been found, and is herewith transmitted. Both of these bids were made after long consideration and actual experiments, made as before stated, at the expense of the government, and may be supposed to be as favorable as the rates of freight and labor would justify. From the proposal of Mr. Weston, which is at the rate of \$4 per perch, and the statement of Mr. Croftenden, a merchant of respectability and extensively engaged in shipping, and of Mr. Baker and Mr. Pumphrey, stone quarriers, it appears that stone could not have been delivered from the Potomac at that time on terms as favorable as those on which Mr. Mix contracted. They tend also to show that the intention of the government to form the contract, was well known to those whose interest it would be to undertake such a contract. Mr. Croftenden, after two trips, did not think \$2 sufficient for transportation alone, and accordingly abandoned it at that price; see papers marked E. The contract with Mr. Mix was formed upon proposals from him for supplying the stone from a quarry on York river, agreeably to two specimens of different qualities, which accompanied his proposal, it is transmitted herewith, and marked F. General Swift being under the impression that the best of the appearance was a suitable quality, and the offer being fifty cents per perch lower than the rate which, by the experiments made both by the government and individuals, it could, under the most advantageous management be furnished, closed with the proposal and formed the contract in conformity to it. After the delivery of a few cargoes, doubts arose respecting the suitability of its quality, which, upon its being more critically examined, terminated in the belief that it would not answer the purpose for which it was intended. Mr. Mix was notified accordingly, that a further supply of that kind of stone could not be received, which involved the necessity of abandoning the contract altogether, or of supplying stone of a suitable quality from some other point. Mr. Mix protested against the determination of General Swift, on the ground that the contract had been made in relation to that particular kind of stone; that he had made his arrangements by purchasing quarries, and that it could not be delivered from any other point equally cheap; but, finally, rather than to lose the expenses he had incurred in preparations, he determined to comply with the decision of the chief engineer. The declaration in the price of freight and the expense of quarrying, which subsequently took place, has enabled Mr. Mix, notwithstanding the loss occasioned to him by the refusal of General Swift to receive the York river stone, to carry on the contract with profit to himself. It is, however, confidently believed, without such declaration, the refusal of the chief engineer to receive the York river stone, would have involved the contractor in serious consequences, and put it out of his power to comply with his contract, as it appears from facts which have already been stated, that stone could not have been delivered from any other point for less than \$3 50. In fact, the contract at the time was considered as advantageous to the government, that it is understood General Swift was desirous to extend it to the whole quantity required, which was declined by the contractor. It is believed under no other circumstances than those which have been mentioned, could the contract have been made for less than \$3 50. As the principal item of expense was the freight, which, as the York river quarry was not more than a sixth of the distance from the point of delivery, of the quarries on the Potomac and Susquehanna, the difference in the freight in its favor, more than compensated for the additional expense of getting out the stone from it. Whether the act of 1819, required that proposals for contracts should be advertised, it would be improper for me to offer an opinion. It is, however, but due to General Swift to state, that, on inquiry, it is ascertained that the practice of forming contracts without advertising, which has already been stated as being usual in the engineer service, previously to, and at the time of forming this contract, equally extended to every other branch of the government. It is particularly ascertained to have been the practice in the ordnance and quarter-master's departments, and in the general land office attached to the Treasury Department, as will appear by the statement from Mr. Meigs, transmitted herewith, & marked G. Even higher example may be quoted for its authority. Among other instances which might be referred to, it is sufficient to cite the contract made in 1815, by the Secretary of War with Captain Thomas Clark, for drying the Pea Patch, and that made by the ordnance department in 1816, under the sanction of the Secretary of War, with Mr. G. Boyd, for supplying ten thousand stand of arms, tools, materials, &c. for the use of the ordnance department; for neither of which contracts was there any advertisement. It is believed there were many other instances, and, in fact, that it was the universal practice.

Second Inquiry. "Was there any surety for Mix, the contractor? If so, you will oblige the committee with a copy of the instrument." Answer. Mr. Mix's contract was accompanied by a bond for its faithful execution, in the penal sum of \$30,000, with sureties, which were approved and certified to be competent by the recorder of the city of New-York. Copies of the contract and bond are herewith transmitted, marked H.

Third Inquiry. "How many perch of stone have been delivered under said contract, and from what place or quarry, and what kind of stone?" Answer. The whole quantity delivered is 87,964 perches. It has been delivered from various places, of which, however, no account has been kept. The principal deliveries have been from the quarries on the Potomac, near Georgetown. Except the few cargoes delivered from York river, at the commencement of the contract, as has been stated, the stone has been granite.

Fourth Inquiry. "In what manner, or how, was the delivery ascertained?" Answer. At the commencement of the contract, the quantity was ascertained by ac-

tual measurement on the deck of the vessel, and being accompanied with much delay, and some uncertainty, it was changed to marking the depression of the vessels in the water before discharging the cargoes, and then accurately measuring the quantity of stone which they contained, the process being occasionally repeated, to test its accuracy. As connected with this point, I furnish herewith, marked I, a copy of the correspondence relating to it, of Colonel Gestler, the engineer, charged with the superintendence of the works, with this department, which will afford more particular information. It is proper to observe, that with respect to this contract, the perch is estimated at 25 cubic feet, while at the Pea Patch, it is estimated at 22 feet, and at some other places particularly at Niagara and Bous's Point, as low as 16 1/2 feet.

Fifth Inquiry. "Has the contractor, Mix, sold his contract, and, if so, to whom, when, and at what price per perch? If known to the War Department. Has a new contract been made with the person to whom Mix sold it, if so, has security been given?" Answer. The whole of the contract, except one-fourth, which has been transferred to Messrs. Hewes, Goldborough & Co. of Har-de-Grace, with the assent of the Department, remains in the name of Mr. Mix, for which he and his securities are responsible. It is understood, however, that a sub-contract was made with Major Vandevanter, his cash-off of the contract, some time after its formation; but, as the arrangement was a private one between Mr. Mix and Major Vandevanter, and the latter was not recognized by the Department, he has not been responsible to the government for any part of the contract, which still remains in the name of Mr. Mix, with the exception of the fourth above stated. The terms and conditions on which Mr. Mix may have disposed of any part of his contract, have never been communicated to this department. No new contract has been made with Messrs. Goldborough & Co. They are bound by the stipulations of the original contract for the performance of the portion thereof of which they have become possessed, as will be seen by the bond given by them for its faithful execution, a copy of which, and of the letter from Mr. Mix, under which they were recognized as the owners of the fourth of the contract, are transmitted herewith, and marked K.

I have just received a reply to an application made to Mr. Mix, requesting him to state what had been the cost of the stone first delivered under his contract. It is founded on the expense of freight and quarrying, as ascertained by the charter parties, and bill of the quarrier, compared with the quantity delivered. Copies of the charter parties, and of the bill of the quarrier, together with Mr. Mix's letter, are transmitted, herewith, and marked L.

Respectfully submitted, ALEX. MACOMB, Adj. Gen. Chief Engineer.

Hon. J. C. CALHOUN, Secretary of War.

FOR THE STAR.

Report of the Auxiliary Bible Society of the University of North-Carolina.

The members of the Auxiliary Bible Society of the University convened a few days since, the following was the process of business:

- 1st. A Chapter in the Bible, read by the President.
2d. A Prayer, by the President of the University.
3d. The Reports of the respective Officers.
4th. An Address, by Rev. S. K. Kollock.
5th. An Address, by Professor Olmsted.
6th. Election of officers for the ensuing term.
7th. A Prayer, by the Rev. Elisha Mitchell.
The following officers are elected for the ensuing term:

- Robert Hall, President.
Edward D. Sims, Vice-Presidents.
Elam Alexander,
Mathias E. Manly, Cor. Sec'y.
Bramfield L. Ridley, Rec. Sec'y.
James W. Bryan, Treasurer.
Thomas Bond,
Samuel F. Sneed,
E. Mason,
M. Polk,
W. Anderson,
A. J. De Rossett,
T. J. Pugh,
Z. Johnston,
W. Donnel,
A. Moore.

It is due to Professors Kollock and Olmsted to remark, that their addresses served to enkindle in the breasts of the members of this Society a purer flame of love and zeal, by tracing the progress of divine truth and its sanctifying effects on the hearts of men.

We are happy to introduce this Society to the world, and we are glad that we are able to record, for the encouragement of other Bible Societies, an evident increase of zeal in the Bible cause amongst young men not professors of religion. We hope that this spirit will extend to every county in the state; and that none who have patronised institutions of this kind will be "weary in well doing." However well the citizens of this state may be supplied with Bibles, let us recollect that a majority of the globe are sitting in darkness, having no Gospel to tell them of the love of a dying Saviour; and to direct them to the bliss of an eternal world.

This Society is as yet in its infancy; it owes its existence to the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Robinson, who visited us during the last year, and was recognised as an Auxiliary, by the Parent Institution, March 8th, 1823. Since its organization we have contributed to the Parent Institution \$175: we have received 150 Bibles, of which we have in hand at present 100; having disposed of 50, at reduced prices and gratuitous distribution.

The warm interest which appears to animate the members of this Society, their unwillingness that their fellow mortals should be condemned, without knowing why and wherefor, and their consciousness of the honor of society, by the indiscriminate dissemination of the Scriptures, are sufficient guarantees of its perpetuity. Of 173 students, belonging to the University, 150 are engaged in this divine work, and although a very great

majority of them are strangers to the light of revelation, having never tasted its sweets, nor experienced the salutary consolations which it affords, still we sanguinely hope that we have grounds to anticipate the happiest consequences from the establishment of the Society. If we were to admit that the Christian religion is nothing more than the offspring of heathen superstition, a mere heathenism to frighten timorous mortals from the lure of vice and iniquity, as not its influence on many, as tending to modify his inordinate passions, and civilize the savage barbarity of his nature, a consideration alone sufficient to encourage all men of liberal sentiments and charitable dispositions, to embark with alacrity in the cause of its universal extension!

The country around Chapel Hill affords ample room for the exertion of charity; many are too poor to purchase a Bible, and we are assured that there are many families which had been destitute of a Bible for many years previous to the establishment of this Auxiliary. But since these deficiencies have been supplied, and we are still seeking out other objects of charity. Although the operations of the Society have not been very extensive, we believe that it has and will be made an instrument of doing good to families and individuals, since many have possessed themselves of this invaluable treasure, who otherwise would be little better than the idolatrous heathen, ignorant of God their Creator, and Christ their Redeemer.

It must be a subject of the warmest gratulation to Christians, to look around into the world and behold the exertions that have been made, and are still making, in the glorious cause of the salvation of souls.

The Parent Institution, with her 300 Auxiliaries, like the Nile and its tributaries, are streams which are fertilising the barren wastes of our country, and making "glad the City of our God." United in one firm phalanx; associated with the great, and wise, and good, on both sides of the Atlantic, and laboring under the banners of Jehovah, they are effecting a reformation in the moral character of the world, never before witnessed. The Hindon and Huttenrot will presently relinquish the inhuman practice of sacrificing the children of their bosoms, "flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone," to inanimate idols. The desert has become vocal with the praises of Himmanuel, and the solitary place begins to blossom as the rose. The ignorant poor are learning the way to those blessed habitations where all the elect of God in sweet communion brandish their palms of victory, and in strains of loud Hosannas join in celebrating their Maker's praise.

POLITICAL.

From the Fayetteville Observer.

"Those who live in glass houses should not be the first to throw stones." We would recommend to the attention of the editors of the Register, the old adage above quoted. Mere difference of opinion, is by no means an excuse for illiberality and vulgar abuse; and they furnish no evidence of cultivated taste, delicacy of sentiments, or dignity of character in those who decand to them.

The "mushroom papers" spoken of in the last Register, are, it is true, of comparatively recent date; but we know not in what respect they would suffer in a comparison with papers of older standing. Their editors are young, and if youth be criminal, they are guilty; they were born and bred in the country which shelter and protects them; and if that be a cause of reproach, they justly deserve it, and are proud to bear it. If any other reasons can be offered why they are not entitled to as much confidence as the Register, we are ignorant of them.

It is a little surprising that one of these "mushroom papers" is hand in glove with the Register! How does it happen that the venerable Register is found in such company?

From the Western Carolinian.

MEMBERS TO CONGRESS.

It is beyond dispute, that a majority of the Representatives to Congress from this state, are personally friendly to Mr. Crawford. This fact has been as a drop of honey in the mouths of his partisans; they have rolled it, as a sweet morsel, under their tongues; they have reasoned from hence, that a majority of the people must be for Mr. C. too. But they are grossly deceiving themselves, by resting their hopes on premises so fallacious; and they are deceiving other honest people, who are disposed to lend a credulous ear to their flattering tales. Had the private views of the candidates, relative to the presidency, been made a test of their popularity at the late election, then might we, with reason, have judged of the sentiments of the people from those of their representatives. But such was not the fact; for in three adjoining congressional districts, where members friendly to Mr. Crawford have been elected, a large majority of the people are known to be hostile to his pretensions. The candidates were well aware of this before the election; and, accordingly, in their harangues to the people, they made positive declarations, that should the election of President devolve on Congress, they would vote for that man whom a majority of their constituents might designate. And in another district, hard by us, we are well assured, from various sources, that the people's sentiments are in opposition to

the candidates who are friendly to the light of revelation, having never tasted its sweets, nor experienced the salutary consolations which it affords, still we sanguinely hope that we have grounds to anticipate the happiest consequences from the establishment of the Society. If we were to admit that the Christian religion is nothing more than the offspring of heathen superstition, a mere heathenism to frighten timorous mortals from the lure of vice and iniquity, as not its influence on many, as tending to modify his inordinate passions, and civilize the savage barbarity of his nature, a consideration alone sufficient to encourage all men of liberal sentiments and charitable dispositions, to embark with alacrity in the cause of its universal extension!

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