

STAR, AND NORTH CAROLINA STATE GAZETTE.

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MEMORIAL

OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT CONVENTION.

To the Honorable the General Assembly of North Carolina.

The memorial of a Convention upon the subject of Internal Improvement, in which were represented forty-eight counties of the State, respectfully sheweth:

That, according to the appointment of their respective constituents, the members of the said Convention assembled in the city of Raleigh on Monday, the 25th instant, and have continued their session to the present time. That early in the session, a committee was raised, consisting of a member from each Congressional District of the State, to which was referred the general subject of Internal Improvement for the State of North Carolina, from which, through their Chairman, Duncan Cameron, Esq., the Convention received the following report, to wit:

"The committee to which was referred the general subject of Internal Improvement for the State of North Carolina, report to the Convention as follows:

"That they have duly considered the several matters referred to them, and after a full conference and comparison of views, they trust that they have been enabled to digest a plan, which, if not perfect in itself, is at least the best that they can reasonably hope will be carried into execution.

"It is no doubt obvious to every thinking man, that no plan could be devised entirely acceptable to all, or, perhaps, in all its details, acceptable to any one; while it is equally apparent that unless something is done to accommodate all, or nearly all, without an entire change in the principles of human nature, that hearty support and concurrence from the different sections of the State, so essential to ultimate success in our undertaking, cannot be expected.

"It was necessary, therefore, that the plan devised by the committee should be as wide and general as the wants of the State require, and its means are sufficient to accomplish. The State may be considered as divided, in its present condition, by five distinct sectional interests, viz. First, what are called the Northern counties; secondly, the Tar river and Neuse counties; thirdly, the counties usually trading to the towns on the Cape Fear; fourthly, the extreme Western part of the State; and, fifthly, the middle counties, lying on the Roanoke.

"To obtain the support and countenance of these different sections, as well as to accomplish our design of general utility, the interest of all these sections must be consulted and attended to. The committee thought it rather calculated to excite discord, and to cool the ardour of those whose views might not be fully met, to be at this time specific in the recommendation or rejection of any of the plans which have been referred to their consideration; every one of which may perhaps be, in itself, highly worthy of public patronage; but, from their multitude, beyond the reach of the means of the State to accomplish all, and from their peculiarly local character, not well calculated for incorporation into any general system of Internal Improvement. But to meet the wants, in part, of the people of the Northern counties, and those lying below Halifax, upon the Roanoke, they recommend a communication from Edenton by rail road, intersecting with the Portsmouth Rail Road to Roanoke, or by Canal with the Dismal Swamp Canal.

"To accommodate the people on the Tar and Neuse rivers, they recommend the cutting a ship channel, to connect the waters of Beaufort Harbour with Neuse river. They propose further a communication, by rail road, river, or canal, or any two of them, or all united, from some point on the seaboard of the State, to the Tennessee line; and another communication of the same kind from some point on the Roanoke river, running southwardly, to the South Carolina line. These two latter works, it is believed, will fully answer the purposes of the other remaining portions of the State; while the whole combined will, it is hoped, meet the wants of the State at large, and all, and every part, readily fall in with, and form a part of, any internal communication which it may be hereafter thought necessary to form between the eastern, western, northern and southern portions of the Union.

"They do not think it expedient at this time to indicate the points of commencement or termination, on the general routes of any of these works, but recommend that a Board of Internal Improvements should be raised, and an Engineer or Engineers employed, with full power and authority to plan and conduct the works according to the general outlines agreed upon. This general scheme, from its very nature and magnitude, they believe to be entirely without the range of individual enterprise, and therefore recommend its execution exclusively by the means of the State, and under the direction of its officers. While the committee are of opinion that most, if not all the specific plans referred to their consideration, are too peculiarly local to form a part of the general scheme above mentioned, they are far from being disposed entirely to overlook them; but as the selection of particular scheme or schemes, from among the number submitted as the most worthy subjects of legislative patronage, is an invidious task, and which, furthermore, they feel themselves very ill qualified to perform, the committee flatter themselves that by the adoption of one or two general principles they will bring all those local works, worthy of legislative patronage, within its reach; so that none may be turned away, who have claims to attention; while none will be fostered beyond their merits. To meet this view, they recommend that whenever any company shall be incorporated by the General Assembly, for any work of Internal Improvement, such company shall, in the prosecution of their work, be at liberty to intersect with, or cross any other work executed or to be executed by any other incorporated company or by the State; and that whenever the stockholders of any such company shall pay, or secure to be paid, three-fifths of the amount necessary for the completion of any such work, the General Assembly may, in their discretion, subscribe the remaining two-fifths, for and on account of the State, if thereunto requested by such company.

"The committee have endeavored to form an estimate of the amount necessary for the full accomplishment of the foregoing scheme; and, after mature consideration, they feel very confident that five millions of dollars will be a sufficient allowance. This sum will not be required in greater instalments than one million of dollars per annum; perhaps much less may serve.

"Whatever amount may be required, cannot be raised otherwise at this time than by loan. This, the committee is informed, may probably be obtained at a rate of 4 per centum per annum; but it is believed that the rate can, in no event, exceed five, if proper measures are adopted to provide for the regular payment of the interest. The committee does not doubt that the Legislature will, if it should so happen that the resources hereafter pointed out shall be insufficient for this purpose, by a proper system of taxation, supply the deficiency, which the Convention should recommend, and stand pledged to sustain them in to the extent of its weight and influence in the community. In addition to the vast fund of wealth held by the State in the affection and property of her citizens, the annexed schedule sets forth sundry items amounting in all to the sum of 1,067,000 dollars, actual property, belonging to the State, and now available to a great extent; uncertain items amount to 706,000 dollars; and the swamp lands; which the committee recommends should be pledged as far as it will go to the payment of the interest, and repayment of the principal, of such sums as the State may from time to time find it necessary to borrow for the prosecution of the scheme of Internal Improvement.

"The sum of \$1,067,000, at 4 per cent, will yield an income of \$42,680, and other annual items added thereto gives a certain available income of \$51,055 per annum. Part of this sum, it will be seen, consists of effects which have been heretofore set apart for the Literary Fund. But your committee thinks that the great object for which this fund was originally set apart, will in no wise suffer by the proposed diversion. This fund has been for a number of years lying unused, and would probably so remain for a number of years to come, so far as the use for which it is nominally designed is concerned; and, if used immediately, it is thought that in no way could it contribute so effectually to a wide and immediate spread of really useful and substantial knowledge, as by increasing the facility of intercourse between the different sections of the State, and bringing well informed persons, bearing with them the arts and sciences, with all the improvements of civilized life, to the most inaccessible

mountains and sequestered valleys of the State. A part of the fund which it is proposed to set apart as a partial security to those who may become the creditors of the State, it will also be seen, consists of lands lying in the western part of the State, to which the Indian title has not as yet been extinguished. It is, therefore, desirable that this title should be extinguished as soon as practicable; and to that end it is recommended by the committee, that in some proper way the attention of our representatives in Congress should be called to this subject. It is not the province of this Convention to interfere with any matter which may have a tendency to awaken political differences, or express any opinion upon political questions; but your committee may be allowed to say that many are of opinion that the bill commonly called the Land Bill, will sooner or later become a law of the Union; and, should it do so, the State of North Carolina will be entitled to the sum mentioned in the schedule; and your committee have, therefore, put it down as what may possibly constitute a part of her effects. Your committee further recommend, as the most effectual and speedy mode of carrying into execution the views and wishes of the Convention, that a memorial, signed by the members of that body, be respectfully submitted to the Legislature, during its present session, praying its concurrence therein, and its aid in their accomplishment.

"Respectful y submitted."

"DUNCAN CAMERON, Chairman."

Schedule of the effects proposed to be pledged to creditors of the State upon the contemplated loan.

Estimated value of Bank stock,	\$500,000
Do. do. Roanoke Navigation stock,	50,000
Do. do. Cape Fear do.	32,500
Do. do. Buncombe Turnpike,	5,000
Do. do. loan to Clubfoot and Harlows,	33,000
Do. do. Road stock Pungo and Plymouth,	2,500
Loan to Tennessee Turnpike Company,	2,000
Do. Swannanoah do.	2,000
Cherokee bonds,	40,000
Do. lands in Macon unsold,	100,000
Do. do title unextinguished,	500,000

Claim for military expenditures during late war,	90,000
Proportion of Western lands,	680,000
	\$706,000

Swamp lands without estimate.	
Annual income interest on above sum of 1,067,000 dollars, at 4 per cent.	42,680
Entries of lands,	5,000
Taxes on sales at auction,	675
Tavern tax,	2,700
	\$51,055

After a full, free and animated discussion upon the question of concurrence in the Report, 44 counties voted in the affirmative to 4 in the negative; and, upon motion, one member from one of the counties in the minority was allowed to enter his dissent to the vote of his said county.

In conformity with the last clause of that Report, the Convention begs leave to lay before the Legislature and people of the country, in a condensed form, its views and wishes upon this all important subject. The Convention disclaims all idea of dictating to the Legislature in the discharge of that high trust which is committed to it under our happy and wise Constitution; but asks the reasonable privilege of respectfully appealing to the sound sense, the warm patriotism and high responsibility of your enlightened body in behalf of a people, of whom, in common with yourselves, they constitute a part. The improvements made in other States have awakened in our citizens a sense of their own necessity, and pointed to the means by which they are to be relieved. Through us they cry to your honorable body, for it is you alone who can do it, to put those means within their reach, and we confidently trust their cry will not be unheard or disregarded. We invoke the aid of the Legislature not in the ordinary way of petitioning for charters, and praying for some pitiful contribution from the coffers of the State to aid us in the accomplishment of some trivial local object; but we come boldly forward and tell you that our plan is too stupendous for individual enterprise, too general in its utility to be the peculiar concern of any one section of the State, and pray that its execution may be exclusively directed by the parental wisdom of the State government, and the means furnished from its Treasury. The first question which presents itself is, is this demand reasonable? Is it right and proper that the government of a State should undertake the accomplishment of great public works? This certainly sounds much like a self-evident proposition, and it seems difficult to conceive how a negative answer should ever be thought of. But, strange as it may seem, doubts have been expressed upon the question. The tendency of human nature is to run into extremes, and in sudden and precipitate flight from one error, a man often finds himself thoughtlessly rushing into an opposite, but not less fatal one. The extravagance of trans-Atlantic governments was found to be a fruitful parent of corruption, and, therefore, cheapness was early sanctified in our political history as a useful attribute of a pure one. But the evil principle complained of in those governments was not expenditures in the improvement of the country, in patronizing agriculture and fostering the arts, but those made in pensioning the minions of power, in sustaining an indolent and purse-proud aristocracy, in the structure salaries of useless officers, and in cruel and criminal waste in unnecessary warfare. The Commonwealth is a term strictly applicable to all republican States, and is strongly significant of the nature of their governments. They were not devised only that their citizens might be safe, but that they might be happy. Whatever man singly is incompetent to perform for his individual happiness, society was formed that it might be accomplished by united effort. Shall government, then, in practice, discard the only principle upon which it was based?

But that this Convention may not be misunderstood, and supposed to assail the doctrine that internal improvement within the States is not the proper province of the general government, they beg leave to suggest that this doctrine derives its support mainly from the position, that internal improvement within the limits of each particular State, if not its duty, is at least its own exclusive right. But it is contended by some that, altho' a State may of right undertake such works, yet it is inexpedient that she should do so. This the Convention respectfully thinks depends entirely upon the generality of their usefulness, their extent, and their unfitness for individual enterprise; and they conceive that the subject under consideration possesses all these attributes. It is assumed by some, but denied by the Convention, that works can be done more cheaply by companies than by the government. It is not denied that an individual can accomplish a work within his ability with more despatch, fidelity and economy than a number, because the action of one mind is more concentrated than that of a number, and a principal will always be more astute in matters affecting his own peculiar interest than any agent. But as to companies, they are subject to all the differences, divisions and distractions of opinion with a government, and in common with it must depend upon the skill and fidelity of agents; while, on the other hand, it is certain that government engaged in extensive public works can, from its superior wealth, means of information and influence, command persons of more established fame and higher attainments to manage its affairs, than any private company, however extensive; and, from its incalculably superior credit, can command resources upon better terms, and, from its illimitable wealth, is in less danger of ultimate failure in the success of its undertakings. But, after all, our application to the Legislature is to do for us what she can. She can command the resources of the government; she cannot command individuals to subscribe to stock companies. In the present state of the public mind she will be sustained in the one; she will do nothing for our relief by authorizing the other.

The next question which arises is, whether the plan we propose is worthy of the patronage of the Legislature? We do not say that it is the best which could possibly have been proposed; but we do say that it is one calculated for great and general utility; that the people will receive it as commensurate to their great and imperious wants; and will sustain us in its recommendation, and you in its adoption. It has been our wish, in the

spirit of republican legislation, to effect the greatest good to the greatest number; and if any portion of the State is omitted in our plan, it must be some portion that is not, in the nature of things, within the reach of direct assistance; and can therefore only be benefited by the general prosperity. If it cannot slake its thirst where the fluid bubbles from the fountain, it can partake largely of the refreshing influence of the flowing stream. We believe that its execution will bring to the door, or place within the reach of the reasonable industry of every citizen of the State a cheap and easy intercourse with sufficient markets; and will refund to us the tribute which we have been paying to other States, by drawing to our markets the produce of some of our neighboring sisters. The Convention believes that, to the enlightened body they are addressing, it cannot be necessary to show the vast advantages which have ever redounded to a State from a proper system of internal improvement, or the necessity which now exists in North Carolina for its adoption. Her wasted fields, her deserted farms, her ruined towns, her departing sons, all reproach us with supine neglect. The immense tax which North Carolina now pays in the way of extra expense in transportation of the fruits of labor to market, and bringing back necessities in return, are sufficient to palsy the arm of industry and weigh down the spirit of enterprise. By way of illustration, we will mention salt alone. Of this indispensable article, it is stated that the county of Iredell consumes, on an annual average, 5000 bushels. The ordinary cost of this article, in the Eastern markets, is 40 to 60 cents per bushel. It now costs, when it reaches the Iredell planter, 150 cents per bushel; making from 100 to 110 cents per bushel for transportation. It is supposed that this, by rail road, may be reduced to 25 cents. Thus shewing that, upon the article of salt alone, an annual tax, for want of convenient transportation, is levied upon one county of 3,750 dollars. Suppose, upon a moderate calculation, that there are 30 other portions of the State in a like situation; and we shew, by a simple process of arithmetic, exclusive of what is paid by other portions not mentioned, upon the same article, there is an annual drawback, upon the labor of the State, of 112,500 dollars. Carry out the principle, and the mind would be overwhelmed with astonishment in the computation. It is said that the counties on the waters of Roanoke, Neuse and Tar pay, on transports, annually, by reason of their extra difficulties, 355,000 dollars. Upon this point, the Convention thinks it unnecessary to dwell.

Admitting the necessity and propriety of the works proposed, and the expediency of the State government undertaking them exclusively, it next becomes proper to inquire, what sum is necessary for their accomplishment, and can the State command it? Five millions of dollars, it will be seen, is the maximum sum required, and this, it is proposed, should be raised by loan, in sums not exceeding one million annually. These sums are fixed upon as being extremes, because the Convention are not willing to practice any imposition upon themselves, the Legislature or the people. They must necessarily speak in round numbers, and they chose such as were rather likely to be over than under the amount; that the public mind, at the same time that it was called upon to contemplate the happy fruits of their proposed undertakings, might be able to understand the difficulties to be encountered, and the price to be paid. That the correctness of the computation may be tested, the basis is furnished upon which it is made.

55 miles of rail road in the northern counties, at \$3,000 per mile,	\$165,000
150 ditto across the State,	1,300,000
365 ditto from East to West,	9,200,000
Ship channel from Newbern to Beaufort,	600,000
	\$5,000,000

The rate of cost per mile, for the first three items, is supposed to be excessive, and is founded upon the comparison of the rate of similar works in other States, although it is believed that in this State the rate would be less than in any other; while it is further supposed that by practice, experience, and the improvements for which the present day is so remarkable, the rate of cost of rail roads per mile is in a regular course of diminution. These items, however, must at last depend upon the surveys, reports and computations of experienced Engineers. The Convention believes that, upon the whole, their computations will be found to be sufficiently liberal to cover the actual cost. They can only say, that it is their wish to be correct, and they have taken some pains that they may be so.

You will next inquire, can the money be borrowed, and upon what terms? We are informed that in the city of London, alone, fifty millions are waiting the demands of a borrower, to say nothing of the other portions of Europe and the surplus capital of our own wealthy cities. As to the rate of loan, the committee, in their report, have undertaken to say that it may probably be obtained at four per cent, and can, in no event, exceed five, if proper measures are adopted to provide for the regular payment of the interest. But can this be done?

The Convention feels certain that the Legislature can and would do so by a proper system of taxation, should any accident create the exigency—a measure in which they would not only be fully sustained, but which would be imperiously called for by that high sense of justice which has ever characterized us as a people, and forced unwilling plaudits from those by whom we are least admired—a measure to sustain which, should it become necessary, each member of this Convention doth hereby pledge his sacred honor. But it is hoped and believed that it will not be necessary. The schedule annexed to the report of the committee, shows, in addition to the certain items and the swamp lands, an aggregate available fund of 1,067,000 dollars, which it is advised should be set apart as a partial security to a proposed creditors of the State. This, by further reference to the report it will be seen, in connexion with some certain annual items, will yield without infringing upon the principal, a sum more than sufficient to defray the annual interest upon the first million borrowed. That million, if judiciously expended, would probably, by the time the second million should be borrowed, yield an income which, if not sufficient of itself, would, with the surplus of the annual product of the original fund, pay the amount of interest upon such second loan, and so on, *folies quites*, as the loan might be required. But even if a less happy result should take place, and it should be necessary to make some small encroachment upon the principal of the original fund, it would take seven years and nearly one half to exhaust the fund now on hand, in the payment of interest, by borrowing one million annually; for five years, although no actual income should be drawn from any part of the works; and, in that time, if the money was not most stupidly expended, would not the gradual increase of the value of property along the lines afford a capital for taxation sufficient to discharge the debt? That increase on the route of the New York canal, is said to be \$90,000,000, and on the South Carolina rail road, a sum sufficient to defray the whole cost of its construction. So that the Convention may confidently predict that the sum proposed may be safely borrowed at the proposed intervals, without the smallest fear of its being onerously felt by any citizen.

The repayment of the loan, the Convention conceives, may be postponed to a very distant period; as it seems that money lenders, where they are satisfied with the investments, make their terms more favorable in proportion to the length of time for which the payment is deferred.

The Convention would not recommend to the Legislature to borrow a large sum of money to spend in idle and unprofitable experiments; but it may not be improper to remark, that even if the works proposed should be entirely unproductive, the introduction of five millions of capital, to be spent within the State, could not be considered as a certain loss, and would not be altogether without advantage. And this brings to our notice another reason why the proposed loan should be preferred to drawing the money from the pockets of the citizens, either in the way of present taxation or subscriptions to stock companies. There is in North Carolina a scarcity of circulating medium, and it is, we believe, a subject of complaint before your honorable body at its present session. Is it, then, the part of sound policy to make further exactions from those who are already oppressed, or, by availing itself of the present occasion for a useful and safe application, by the introduction of a large circulating medium into the State, entirely to relieve the evils complained of?

Nor will the effect be temporary. It is not like chartering a bank, which issues its notes, and thereby creates a present abundance, to be followed by a correspondent famine, when it shall call them in; but the amount under consideration is added to the permanent wealth of the State. It is funded in a perennial stock, which not only remunerates the holder by a regular payment of interest, but also by a vast increase of the value of the real property of the State, and furnishing the materials for productive labor.

The stimulating effect which is wrought upon every species of industry, by the introduction of such great quantities of circulating medium into the

country, would scarcely be less than that which would be found in duty. No would this effect be confined to the immediate vicinity. The increased wealth and wider circulation of the circulating medium, which are the positive results of the proposed works, would be communicated from neighbor to neighbor, and from generation to generation. But upon it may be urged, that the proposed works, by increasing the demand for the labor of the State, would tend to increase the price of labor, and thereby increase the cost of the works. But the Convention believes that the proposed works, by increasing the demand for the labor of the State, would tend to increase the price of labor, and thereby increase the cost of the works. But the Convention believes that the proposed works, by increasing the demand for the labor of the State, would tend to increase the price of labor, and thereby increase the cost of the works.