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SPEECH OF MR. MEMMINGER, COMMISSIONER FROM SOUTH CAROLINA.

Delivered 26 January 1837,
Before the Senate of North Carolina, on
the Bill to confer Banking Privileges on the
South, West of the Carolina and Charleston
Rail Road Company.

Mr. Speaker, I am fully sensible of the honor you confer in assigning me a seat in this august body, and in inviting me now to address you. I am satisfied that this privilege to merit on my part, but has been awarded by your courtesy as a token of respect for the state whose organ I am, and of interest in the objects of your session. I rejoice that the auspices under which we advance to this discussion are so favorable. Your new constitution has just gone into operation, and you, the first legislature created by it, are about to give tone to a new period of the state's existence. You, to whom the people have delivered the helm of government under a new system, are now to decide whether the ample domain opened to your care shall continue in its present actual condition, or whether by infusing new life and energy throughout its veins, you may not advance the happiness and prosperity of your country.

What then is this actual condition, and is so advantageous as to induce you to seek its continuance? Unfortunately for all, one dark picture is but too true a sketch of both our states. Their roads are indeed thronged with travellers, but the carriages are all in one direction. It is a waste of which there is no return, on which is expending the wealth and population of our country. Behind it desolate and barren wastes, and other side the very vestige of civilization. In sections of your state where it would seem that nature had been lavish of her bounties—where a fertile and apparently holds out encouragement to the farmer, the same disastrous influences are actively at work. From the fertile river lands near your sea coast, up to the very foot of the mountains, the same scenes are exhibited, and the planter or man the Cape Fear abandons his home and his household gods, and in his peregrinations to the West, joins the throng already hurrying thither from the Yadkin and the Catawba. Turn where you will, deserted fields, dilapidated habitations, and a disheartened people meet your eye; and in some portions of the state, the densest forest is again assuming its dominion over the ruined works of man. That these are not mere portions of the magnificence I appeal to the Senators who surround me. I appeal to the declaration made by your territorial improvement convention, which I will have before me.

Will any man undertake to assign a sufficient reason for this state of things, thus equally affecting the different sections of your country? If the population of unhealthiness of the lower country be assigned as a cause, I will point to the fertile and healthy regions of the upper country, where the same scenes are exhibited. Why is it that Mecklenburg and Lancaster and Burke and Rutherford—why is it that Rowan and Iredell and Davidson and Blount do not exhibit the vigor which pervades the rest of our country, and there at least arrest the tide which is gushing out the life blood of the state? Their treasures are exceeded by no portion of the world. They are competent to furnish means of enjoyment and happiness to every class of mankind, from the mere utilitarian to the most romantic imagination. Not the far famed Valley of Aosta, nor the more classic vale of Tempe, furnish retreats more inviting than the beautiful and sequestered dells of Burke and Rutherford. There too, may be found a Pelion and an Ossa; and if the snow clad Olympas be wanting to complete the picture, the splendid carpet of the Bald Mountain ridge can furnish ample compensation. Would you have the rash waters—the bounding cataract clothed in its snowy wreath? Here too it presents itself, and in a guise which would charm the very nymphs of Delphi.

But these are mere secondary advantages, which may serve to allure the traveller and to attract the curious. North Carolina commands elements far more powerful. Within the single county of Lincoln, there are treasures which to the state are invaluable. The Iron mines of this region equal, if they do not exceed, any in the world. The ores are of so fine a quality that in their crude state they are almost malleable, so rich that they repay the most wasteful and injudicious searching, and so abundant that they are found in every direction. At hand there is prepared the most abundant power, and a profusion of all the means of turning it to the best account. On the banks of the Catawba River alone, there is a site even more inviting than

Lowell in Massachusetts—a place which nature has as it were marked out as the seat of Manufactures. A mountain arrests the river, and behind its broad barrier protects the country below; a small valley on one side is left, as if to tempt the formation of a canal to conduct the water, while around the other side the river rushes down a precipitous channel, until after tumbling and chafing along a descent of some 30 feet, it returns near the position from whence it started. On every side around, extends a country fertile in all the products of the soil, and the river itself, navigable for a considerable distance above and below, furnishes a natural channel both for distributing the supplies of the manufactures, and of bringing food for their consumption. On one side of you is the cotton grower, ready to supply you with his raw material, on the other, the consumer, both anxious that you should save them the expenses of transportation from the sea coast market. These advantages are not peculiar to this spot—but from the banks of the Yadkin and throughout the Western counties, they exist without stint, free as the best gifts of Heaven to man.

And yet there they stand unimproved, nay almost unknown, and the country around, which should be teeming with all the wealth of an active population, lies desolate and waste. Upon the banks of your streams, where should be exhibited the thriving bustle of the manufactory, silence has dominion, interrupted only by the hoarse rush of the river; and if any eye is there to mark what might be done, it is that of the stranger who is wondering at the apathy exhibited around him.

Let me ask why is all this? Why is it that the sons of the North have seized all the treasures which their country offers—nay, have converted the rocks of Massachusetts, and the sands of Connecticut and Rhode Island into seats of civilization; into towns and villages, diffusing around them wealth and prosperity? Why is it that with advantages, which nature has denied them—with every source of national wealth within reach, we stand still—nay, are continually receding, while they are advancing with all the energy and vigor of youth? Sir, the reason is but too obvious. I blush to confess it. It is owing to ourselves, to the want of public spirit among the people of the south, to their neglect of all those means upon which is founded national happiness, to the refusal to develop and to open avenues to the resources of the country. Sir, I am not mistaken in assigning these as the causes. Tell me not that the more fertile lands of the West, and the emigration thereby produced have been the cause. Look at Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan. Have they not for years been draining from Massachusetts and Connecticut a tide fully equal to that which has flowed from us to Alabama and Mississippi? And yet is Massachusetts or Connecticut reduced to the state in which we find our selves? No sir; there they stand like godly matrons with their blooming children, erect with conscious pride, their youthful vigor yet un fading—their energies strengthened by the advance of time; like Cornelia with her children, they can proudly exhibit these as my jewels. While we, already yielding to despondency, are heading under the decrepitude of a premature old age.

Mr. Speaker, this must not—shall not be. The sons of the South will advance to the rescue; we will not abandon our country, but are resolved to seize upon the spirit of the age, and amid all its inventions, endeavour to find some one to elevate the character and condition of the South—to develop its resources and stay the wounds through which its life is ebbing. It is a source of congratulation that to this state is due the honor of originating the plan by which we propose to effect so important a change. Sir, North Carolina again has the honor of pointing out the path. In the days of the Revolution she first gave birth to a declaration of Independence, and manfully did she maintain the position to which it led. Again she has indicated a remedy, and I trust that again, as in the days of King's Mountain and of Guilford, she will unite with her sister of the South and strike boldly for the prize.

I hold in my hand, sir, the proceedings of a Convention held at Raleigh in 1833, on the subject of internal improvements, over which presided Governor Swain, one of your most distinguished citizens, and to whom is due the tribute of every friend of this great cause. This Convention proposed the identical plan now before us of constructing a Rail Road across the Blue Ridge to Tennessee, to cross the Mountains at some point with which North Carolina might join a Rail Road from the east. This plan was declared perfectly feasible, and an estimate was submitted in a report signed by Duncan Cameron, which advocated and pointed out the proper measures to be

taken by the state for its successful accomplishment. These gentlemen, with a sagacity beyond all praise, developed the effects which would thus be produced upon the state at large, and brought to view a survey and report made by a competent and practical Engineer. In this report, the natural union between North and South Carolina in such works is alluded to, and it is stated—that the geographical division to the South Carolina line naturally falls in with the system of internal improvement contemplated by North Carolina, whose western frontier includes the head waters of the Tennessee. It then proposes a Rail Road from Newbern, by way of Fayetteville and Charlotte, to the foot of the Blue Ridge, and says, 'it seems clear that after the place and manner of passing the Blue Ridge is decided on, the rest is easy.' In commenting on the subject, the Convention say, that by way of illustration they will consider the effect to be produced on but a single item, Salt. Of this indispensable article, it is stated—that Iredell county consumes on an annual average 5,000 bushels. The ordinary cost in the Eastern markets is 40 to 50 cents per bushel. It now costs when it reaches the Iredell planter 81 50 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 showing 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 show 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. Carry out the principle and the mind would be overwhelmed with astonishment in the computation.

It may well be conceived, Mr. Speaker, that North Carolina deemed this Rail Road of immense importance to her, even for the development of her own resources. But when it was taken in connexion with the commerce of the West, it assumed still more imposing magnitude. Of the advantages of a Southern outlet, the Convention were well aware, for they particularly bring to view the fact—that during five months, the Northern Canals are closed by ice; that of Pennsylvania four months; that of the Potomac three months; and the Ohio is generally frozen for some months. It was therefore that the scheme proposed became of an engaging character, and would have induced the State to make every exertion for its accomplishment. But the difficulty and expense of passing through the mountains exceeded the means of North Carolina, and on that account the project was deferred.

This difficult and expensive part of the route the Cincinnati and Charleston Rail Road Company now propose to make. They undertake to scale the blue ridge at a point in your State. They propose, with united means, to overcome the barrier which you found too strong for your single power; and when an outlet is thus secured, in the language of your engineer, 'the rest is easy.' The path to the ocean is open both to North and South Carolina. You have already, under the charter, a right to join whatever road you please to construct; and rest assured, that should you construct that proposed by your Convention, there would be an abundant harvest both for that and for the Road to Charleston. Indeed it may well be doubted whether you will not reap the most profitable portion of the harvest.

Suppose for instance, that the Road now being constructed from Raleigh to Gaston be continued through Fayetteville, Charlotte or Salisbury, to meet the Cincinnati and Charleston Road at the foot of the mountains. Is it not obvious that all the passengers from the South or West who have gone up to Knoxville with the intention of passing on to Baltimore, Richmond, or any point North, will take the Charleston Road, until they get through the mountains; from whence your Road will conduct them directly to their destination? Will not this be the current during all the summer months; and will it not probably draw off even those from the upper parts of South Carolina and Georgia, who intend going North?

Will not the same result follow with such articles of produce as are wanted in the lower parts of North Carolina, either from the West, or from the Western counties of your own State; and will not these communications open a market, and increase the value of land all along the line? Nay, will it not open to Fayetteville an increase of trade down the river?

There is another point of view, in which this Road will still further benefit your State. Many of the passengers

who go to Charleston from the lower sections of the Road, and from Tennessee, will thence desire to go on to the North, as they now do. Of course, being unaccustomed to the sea, they will take the shortest and least dangerous navigation. As soon, therefore, as your Wilmington and Roanoke Rail Road is completed, and the Steam Boat line established to Charleston, you will attract to this route all these travellers. The temptation you will offer them is a voyage of a single day between sunrise and sunset, and the avoidance of a night voyage around Cape Lookout and Cape Hatteras, two of the most dangerous points upon the coast.

Thus then, you will perceive that North Carolina is vitally concerned in the project now in contemplation; and I stand here commissioned by South Carolina to offer a participation in its advantages. With our united strength, we can accomplish the undertaking and arouse our country from her prostrate condition. We can bring to the doors of our people a market for their products, and thereby procure for them at home those advantages, to seek which they are abandoning us. We can infuse new spirit into our countrymen, and direct their united energies. We can create a mighty river, which will carry through our land a stream of fertilizing prosperity. This is the object we propose to accomplish, and this the prize to be secured by making this Road.

Is this prize worthy our united efforts, and is the road to it practicable?

I was about to take it as conceded, that your grant of the charter to the Rail Road Company, last year, had decided these questions in the affirmative. But I observe that the Senate is desirous of further information. I will merely pause, to point out to you the efforts making elsewhere for even a portion of this trade, in order to show you its surpassing importance.

From Massachusetts to Georgia, almost every State is now engaged, at immense expense, in endeavours to share it. New York, not satisfied with her Canal from Albany to Buffalo, is constructing a Rail Road on the same route, and she finds her account in this double communication. Massachusetts, notwithstanding the competition of the Hudson river, is pressing forward a Rail Road across the mountains from Boston to Albany, in order to secure a mere fraction of the trade. Pennsylvania, with a spirit which does honor to her sagacity, has, at the inconceivable expense of 35 millions of dollars, opened her communication with the West, and already finds the experiment successful, notwithstanding the necessity she is under of crossing the mountains on 14 inclined planes. Baltimore is urging her Rail Road with an energy beyond all praise, and has already advanced within the barrier of the mountains, at an expense and through a country which would have deterred almost any other people. Virginia is advancing in the same contest; and even the people of the District of Columbia, with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, have pressed forward, and are enjoying a portion of the harvest. Georgia too has extended her arms on the other side, and is urging forward to the Tennessee river, in order to cut off the portion that is within our grasp. And shall the two Carolinas alone be found absent from this glorious contention? Shall we alone, of all this gallant band, be found wanting; and thereby acknowledge our incapacity for manly emulation? Shall the statesmen of the South prove recreants to their people, and abandon the means which Heaven offers to lead prosperity back to their country—and if I may so express myself, to bind fortune in her service—aye, sir, to make fortune her slave; for every thing combines to favor the project of carrying on this commerce through our States.

Consider for a moment the difficulties encountered in the various changes which goods must undergo between New York and Cincinnati. First a Sloop must ascend the North River to Albany—then a Canal Boat must take its place to Buffalo—then another Sloop to Cleveland—then a Canal Boat to Portsmouth, and then a Steam Boat to Cincinnati. Throughout all these changes, separate agents must be employed, and additional risk and expense must be incurred. The same difficulties exist at Philadelphia, and yet they carry on a trade with advantage to both parties. But when it is considered that even this communication is obstructed by ice for great part of the year, the disadvantages are greatly increased. Upon a computation made last year, it was ascertained that at one time at least two millions of dollars worth of goods bound to the West, were frozen up in these Canals. Now the Southern Route avoids all these difficulties, it requires no changes of conveyance—no multiplication of agents—and is subject-

ed to no uncertainty in delivery, either from ice or delay. More than all, it is the least distance to the sea, and offers a market which needs the very products which the Road will convey.

Is the Road practicable physically? This question too, has been answered again and again. But the opinion of Maj. M'Neil, than whom a more scientific engineer cannot be found, is conclusive on this point. He expresses 'his decided conviction, not only of the ENTIRE PRACTICABILITY OF THE PROJECT, but of its COMPARATIVELY EASY EXECUTION.'

But nothing can be more conclusive of the faith of South Carolina in the scheme, than the fact that she has subscribed towards it one million of dollars from her share of the Surplus Revenue. And this furnishes, too, an additional reason why North Carolina should embrace the scheme. By the estimates of the Engineers, it appears that at least three millions of dollars, or about one fourth of the capital of the company, will be required to make the Road through North Carolina. This State will therefore actually receive one fourth of South Carolina's share of the Surplus Revenue, and her citizens will have distributed among them the immense sum of three millions of dollars. And this too, for the purpose of making a fixture which cannot be removed, which will constitute a part of the State, be subject to its laws, increase its revenue, and enhance the value of land in all the adjoining counties. Can any man compute the advantages to result from such an outlay of capital, and the benefits to be received both by individuals and by the state?

These then, are among the advantages which this Road offers. Need I ask the Senate, whether they are worthy the efforts which are demanded to secure them? Need I now ask whether you will accept the hand of fellowship which I have offered you, and advance with us to the undertaking? I see the generous spirit of the South has warmed your hearts—I see that your judgments are satisfied—that you now ask only that I shall exhibit the means by which this great enterprise is to be accomplished.

Unfortunately, the means provided by the present charter have proved wholly inadequate. Mere private subscription has been unable to raise more than one fourth of the sum required by the estimates. The books were opened under the charter, and by some evil coincidences the subscriptions at the West wholly failed, and South Carolina almost alone had to undertake the task of subscribing the four millions necessary to secure the charter. In doing this, her citizens have taxed their strength to the utmost; and the apathy of the other sections shows how futile are all expectations of further subscriptions, without some additional inducements. Eight millions more are necessary, and these can only be procured by the offer of advantages sufficient to attract the investment of capital. Even those who have already subscribed, disheartened by the lukewarmness of other States, and seeing that the means now at command are insufficient to effect the object, have come to the determination to abandon the present charter, unless measures are devised for procuring additional funds. We are thus brought to the issue—there is no mode of evading it. Additional subscriptions can only be procured by a grant of banking privileges. Ingenuity can devise no other method, unless the States at their own expense undertake the work—an undertaking, which it would be vain to speak of. There is no middle ground left, and the question now to be decided is between the grant of Banking privileges and the abandonment of an enterprise, the most magnificent which the South has ever conceived, and which involves the destiny of our country for many succeeding years.

Mr. Speaker, let us not deceive ourselves in this matter. We have now reached a crisis. Around us on every side, our countrymen are advancing with an energy, beyond example, towards prosperity and power. We alone are stationary; a strong effort has been made to arouse our people, and they are now awakened to the necessity of exertion. They are ready with but slight encouragement to advance in this glorious race, to urge their every power in behalf of the State, and to turn back the tide of commerce to our shores. If we lend them our sympathies—if we grant the aid which they require—all is safe, and our country must prosper and improve. But if we repress their ardour and now reject their advances, their spirits will be broken, their last hope will have fled. The more generous hearts which had offered you their aid, will have been frozen by your apathy. They will have turned away in disgust, and have sought more genial climes in which to expand; and long ere you will be able to arouse your people for another effort, other channel-