

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

At a meeting of a portion of the Members of the late General Assembly, and other Citizens, friendly to Internal Improvements, at the Capitol, on the 6th instant.

Mr. MEARES, from the Committee appointed to prepare suitable Resolutions for carrying into effect the purposes of the meeting, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee appointed to consider the means by which correct information on the subject of Internal Improvement may be most effectually and extensively disseminated among the people of North-Carolina, and of uniting their sentiments on the best methods of enlarging their commercial opportunities, ask leave to report the following Resolutions, as the result of their deliberations:

1. Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, the prosperity of the people of North-Carolina, both general and individual, essentially depends upon speedily connecting the most unembarrassed, and least expensive commercial opportunities, with those which they now possess as an Agricultural State.
2. Resolved, That nothing is wanted to a full attainment of such commercial privileges, but a frank, enlightened and cordial union among all her people, to discover, commence and prosecute, with a steady perseverance, some plan of Internal Improvement, having for its objects a reduction of expence in transportation, a community of advantages, and a combination of means and resources.
3. Resolved, That it be recommended to the citizens of the State at large, and especially to such as by peculiarly favorable opportunities have, the means of acquiring information respecting Internal Improvements, to contribute their efforts and talents to obtain correct and practical knowledge, and to diffuse it through the community, that the whole people may be enabled to act with co-operation, efficiency, and experimental wisdom, in accomplishing as early as possible, the best plans of Internal Improvement, by which all may have unobstructed access to the general market of the world, with facilities and privileges equal to those which are enjoyed by the people of other States.
4. Resolved, That to place this object as speedily as possible before the people at large, Committees of Internal Improvement for each County in the State, be appointed by this meeting; that each Committee shall consist of at least five persons, who shall have power to enlarge their numbers at pleasure to any extent, by inviting and embodying others of their County to co-operate with them as constituent members of the committee; and that a Corresponding Secretary be the organ of communication of the County Committees with one another, and with other persons. The person first named on each committee to be considered as chairman, and it shall be his duty to take an early opportunity of calling the committee together; and if they think it advisable, a county meeting may be called, for the purpose of uniting the people on this important subject.
5. Resolved, That it shall be the object of each committee to inform themselves on the nature and advantages of Internal Improvement in general, by procuring and consulting the most valuable publications upon the subject, and to interest the public mind as extensively as possible, by seasonable conversation, by delivering pertinent Addresses on public occasions, and by furnishing written communications for the newspapers of the State.
6. Resolved, That a general meeting, composed of delegates or members from the County Committees, and of all other persons friendly to Internal Improvement who may wish to attend, shall be held at Raleigh, on the first Monday in December, annually, at which meeting gentlemen will be expected to enter into a free and full comparison of their sentiments on the general subject of Internal Improvement with a view to union and co-operation. And it shall be the duty of the meeting to decide by vote to what particular object or objects they will recommend that the energies and resources of the people should be directed, and also to apply to the Legislature for acts of incorporation, and for such other aid and facilities as may be deemed expedient.
7. Resolved, That the County Committees ascertain, as nearly as may be, the amount of Agricultural produce, or manufactured goods, sent to market from each County; to what place or places sent, and the expence of their transportation.
8. Resolved, That a Central Committee be appointed at the Seat of Government, to consist of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary, and of as many members as may be willing to become subscribers, whose duty it shall be to collect all the information in their power on the subject of Internal Improvements; to meet together on their own adjournments as frequently as they may find it necessary; to correspond with the County Committees; and to lay such information as they may possess before the general annual meetings.
9. Resolved, That a short Address, embracing the objects of this Association, together with the proceedings of this meeting, be published in the form of a Pamphlet, and that 15 copies thereof be sent to the several Counties in the State by the Members of this present General Assembly.
10. Resolved, That the members of the Central Committee pay to the Treasurer of the Association one dollar annually, for the purpose of defraying the expences of printing, postage and other contingencies.

The Report being adopted, the following Address was offered, to accompany these proceedings, in conformity with the 9th Resolution:

ADDRESS.

FELLOW-CITIZENS.—Convinced as we are of the necessity of Internal Improvement to the State of North-Carolina, we still solicit you anew to revolve this subject, and never to relax in your inquiries until you have become familiar with it in all its forms, and in the amazing effects which it is now daily producing in other States, and in different parts of the world.

No view can be taken of this subject, in which it will not appear essential to our welfare. There is not an individual in the State, west of a hundred miles from the sea, who is not habitually suffering the most injurious consequences from the want of a monied market, to which he may carry his productions with profit, and certain in its returns. All that might be gained by means of Internal Improvement is lost by the want of it. By Internal Improvement is evidently meant nothing more than providing cheap means of transporting all that we want to carry into market, and bring out of it. If by means of Internal Improvement, one hundred weight can be carried a hundred miles for eight, or five, or two cents, instead of a dollar as it now is, it must be admitted that there is a consequent gain of 92, or 95, or 98 cents in the conveyance of every hundred weight, through that distance.—The consequence is, that by Internal Improvement, the farmer must make a little short of two dollars on every barrel of flour, and more than two dollars and a half on every bale of cotton, in the portage of a hundred miles. Is this advantage then really certain to result? Let a statement of facts answer the question. By means of the Internal Improvement in which South-Carolina is engaged, 25 cents is the sum to which the company is limited by the act of incorporation, for carrying a bale of cotton from Columbia to Charleston, which is 120 miles. By Internal Improvement in Maryland, the charter of a like company, allows no more than two cents for the carriage of a hundred weight of flour or any other article, a hundred miles. By Internal Improvement in New-York, the cost of conveying a hundred weight a hundred miles, is in some instances the tenth part of a cent, in other articles it is generally less than a cent, and in the article of salt and in this alone, it is as high as two cents and a half a hundred for a hundred miles.—We know that these things are apt to appear incredible, and there are doubtless some who will boldly assert them to be so! But they are facts open to every man's examination, and we sincerely and frankly invite you to persevere in the enquiry on this important matter, until you shall satisfactorily ascertain for yourselves the truth or error of what we assert. And why should we wish to mislead any man upon this subject? We can have no possible interest in promoting the cause of Internal Improvement, distinct from such advantages as are to be enjoyed by all the people. The truth of the information we have here stated, is in the highest degree probable, from the eagerness of the people in other states to secure the benefits of Internal Improvement. Its proper effect is to reduce the cost of conveyance to almost nothing, and we all know that those of us who are in the higher parts of the country, are in ordinary years shut out from the market by the heavy expence of transportation, upon all but two or three articles, the carriage of which is sometimes justified, and sometimes not, by the prices which they bear.

And what is the reason why the prices are so low as to be ruinous to us? The answer to this question shows us the necessity of Internal Improvement. It is because those prices are regulated by people who have the privileges of Internal Improvement. The very fact of these low prices, is further evidence to show that all which we have said on the effects of Internal Improvement in lowering the price of carriage, is in perfect conformity with the truth. For how shall we at all account for the fact that other people can sell at such low prices, but upon the supposition that they are enabled to do it by the small cost of transportation. Their labour is to them worth as much as our labour is to us, and the labour of all men in an open market, and in any particular business or profession, is much the same in value. But if we have to lay out more labour than they do on any article, before it can be brought into the common market, then it will follow of course that we can no longer afford to take what they can afford to take. Now there is no reason to be seen for such a difference between others and ourselves, except in the single circumstance that their labour of conveyance costs them two cents, where ours costs a dollar.

But it will be said, if we should raise money for Internal Improvement, we can have no confidence that it will be properly and effectually applied. Of this you will say we have proof from past experi-

ence; for vast sums of the public money have been laid out formerly on these improvements, and they have been only wasted, instead of producing the consequences they promised. And must it then be given up as an impossible thing, that the people of North-Carolina and their Legislature, can prevent their public funds from being misapplied or unskillfully used? What, we might ask, is the disability under which God or nature has laid us, that we cannot ensure a proper use of our funds, as well as the people of other States and other nations? If we have failed through neglect, or want of skill or fidelity to ourselves and our interests, to have our funds rightly directed, what remains but that in the application of them hereafter, we act with greater wisdom? Others it seems, can learn by experience, and way not we? If we have been subject to losses heretofore, will it be wise in us to sit down and fold our arms together, and say, we will never make another effort. A great and important object is before us. It is indispensable to our prosperity. Permit us to say frankly, and to express our full and conclusive conviction, that we cannot do without Internal Improvement. By an appeal to all that is taking place in other States, it would be established, we repeat, it would be established beyond contradiction, that we are losing millions every year for the want of it. All that property which is now wasted upon our farms and around our homes we know not how, and which might yield us handsome profits, if there were no expence of conveyance, is now lost.—All that would be made, more than is now made, if we could convey every thing into the market, and dispose of it for goods or money, is now so much sunk.—All that would result from an improved culture of the soil, the sure consequence of an open and profitable market, is property destroyed as certainly as that it would exist, if such a spring were given to industry, and ingenuity as Internal Improvement would create in every man's bosom, and through all society.—All the fruits of commerce both at home and abroad, which would be the consequence of Internal Improvement, and which do not now come into existence, because we are shut up from its opportunities, are so much gratuitously annihilated. The advantages of common education upon an extended plan, easily provided for the children of the State, if money abounded, as it would by the aid of Internal Improvement, are now forfeited and lost. All the manufacturing capital, with its numberless productions, for the wealth, the accommodation, and the improvement of civilized life, which would be invested and enlarged from year to year, is, while we continue without Internal Improvement, as effectually abolished, as they would naturally and assuredly result from a system of improvement at this moment within our power, commenced and prudently prosecuted to its accomplishment. In short, if it be of the very nature of Internal Improvement, as it doubtless is, to increase the activity of human life, and by the arts which it creates to multiply its resources, indefinitely extending the capacities of enjoyment, as well as the numbers of those blessed with its advantages, then every year that it is postponed, we are extinguishing and viruallly destroying all that would result from its prolific power for the happiness, prosperity and honor of the State.

Will it be said that the pecuniary depression, so extensively felt in the community, furnishes a sufficient argument against embarking at present in any system of Internal Improvement? Allow us to ask, when is this depression likely to terminate? Must it not continue to increase in an appalling ratio until some prudent & practicable scheme of Internal Improvement, steadily and vigorously pursued, brighten our prospects and alleviate our distresses? What then shall we gain by the delays for which some so earnestly plead? Nothing, but the certain accumulation of difficulties and embarrassments to an indefinite extent. The resources of our State, and the wealth of our citizens, are more than sufficient to accomplish all that is desirable or necessary.

And can any man hold himself exempt from responsibility to his conscience and his country, who, by withstanding the cause of Internal Improvement, most assuredly is instrumental in this fatal extinction of good, and this virtual production of mischief, with all its pernicious and incalculable consequences? We hope, fellow-citizens, that the time is not distant, that it is already arrived, when we shall all of us survey this important subject on every side, and acquaint ourselves with its essential merits, that under the influence of its powerful and exalting motives, we may unite in one band of fraternity and citizenship, for the welfare of our common country.

Which Address being read, was unanimously adopted.

OFFICIAL PAPER.

TRANSPORTATION OF THE MAIL ON SUNDAY.

In Senate of the United States Jan. 19.

Mr. Johnston, of Kentucky, made the following report:—The Committee to whom was referred the several petitions on the subject of transporting the mails on the Sabbath, the first day in the week, REPORT:

That some respite is required from the ordinary vocations of life, is an established principle sanctioned by the usages of all nations, whether Christian or Pagan. One day in seven has also been determined upon as the proportion of time; and in conformity with the wishes of the great majority of citizens of this country, the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday, has been set apart to that object. The principle has received the sanction of the National Legislature, so far as to admit a suspension of all public business on that day, except in cases of absolute necessity, or of great public utility. This principle the Committee would not wish to disturb. If kept within its legitimate sphere of action, no injury can result from its observance. It should, however, be kept in mind, that the proper object of Government is to protect all persons in the enjoyment of their religious, as well as civil rights; and not to determine, for any, whether they shall esteem one day above another, or esteem all days alike holy.

We are aware that a variety of sentiment exists among the good citizens of this nation, on the subject of the Sabbath day; & our government is designed for the protection of one as much as for another. The Jews, who, in this country, are as free as Christians, and entitled to the same protection from the laws, derive their obligation to keep the Sabbath day from the fourth commandment of their Decalogue; and, in conformity with that injunction, pay religious homage to the seventh day of the week, which we call Saturday. One denomination of Christians among us, justly celebrated for their piety, and certainly as good citizens as any other class, agree with the Jews in the moral obligation of the Sabbath, and observe the same day. There are also many Christians among us, who derive not their obligation to observe the Sabbath from the Decalogue, but regard the Jewish Sabbath as abrogated. From the example of the Apostles of Christ, they have chosen the first day of the week, instead of that day set apart in the decalogue, for their religious devotions. These have generally regarded the observance of the day as a devotional exercise, and would not more readily enforce it upon others, than they would enforce secret prayer or devout meditations: urging the fact, that neither their Lord nor his disciples, though often censured by their accusers for a violation of the Sabbath, ever enjoined its observance, they regard it as a subject on which every person should be fully persuaded in his own mind, and not coerce others to act upon his persuasion. Many Christians again differ from these, professing to derive their obligation to observe the Sabbath from the fourth commandment of the Jewish Decalogue, and bring the example of the Apostles, who appear to have held their public meetings for worship on the first day of the week, as authority for so far changing the Decalogue, as to substitute that day for the seventh. The Jewish government was a theocracy, which enforced religious observances; and though the committee would hope that no portion of the citizens of our country could willingly introduce a system of religious coercion in our civil institutions, the example of other nations should admonish us to watch carefully against its earliest indication.

With these different religious views, the committee are of opinion that Congress cannot interfere. It is not the legitimate province of the Legislature to determine what religion is true, or what false. Our Government is a civil, & not a religious institution. Our Constitution recognizes in every person, the right to choose his own religion, and to enjoy it freely, without molestation. Whatever may be the religious sentiment of citizens, and however variant they are alike entitled to protection from the Government, so long as they do not invade the rights of others.

The transportation of the mail on the first day of the week, it is believed, does not interfere with the rights of conscience. The petitioners for its discontinuance appear to be actuated by a religious zeal, which may be commendable if confined to its proper sphere; but they assume a position better suited to an ecclesiastical than to a civil in-

stitution. They appear, in many instances, to lay it down as an axiom, that the practice is a violation of the law of God. Should Congress, in their legislative capacity, adopt the sentiment, it would establish the principle, that the Legislature is a proper tribunal to determine what are the laws of God. It would involve a legislative decision in a religious controversy; and on a point in which good citizens may honestly differ in opinion, without disturbing the peace of society, or endangering its liberties. If this principle is once introduced, it will be impossible to define its bounds. Among all the religious persecutions with which almost every page of modern history is stained, no victim ever suffered, but for the violation of what Government denominated the law of God. To prevent a similar train of evils in this country, the Constitution has wisely withheld from our Government the power of defining the Divine Law. It is a right reserved to each citizen; and while he respects the equal right of others, he cannot be held amenable to any human tribunal for his conclusions.

Extensive religious combinations, to effect a political object, are, in the opinion of the Committee, always dangerous. This first effort of the kind, calls for the establishment of a principle, which, in the opinion of the Committee, would lay the foundation for dangerous innovations upon the spirit of the Constitution, and upon the religious rights of the citizens. If admitted, it may be justly apprehended, that future measures of Government will be strongly marked, if not even actually controlled, by the same influence. All religious despotisms commence by combination and influence; and when that influence begins to operate upon the political institutions of a country, the civil power soon bends under it; and the catastrophe of other nations furnishes an awful warning of the consequence.

Under the present regulations of the Post Office Department, the rights of conscience are not invaded. Every agent enters voluntarily, and it is presumed conscientiously, into the discharge of his duties, without intermeddling with the conscience of another. Post Offices are so regulated, as that but a small proportion of the first day of the week is required to be occupied in official business. In the transportation of the mail on that day, no agent is employed many hours. Religious persons enter into the business without violating their own consciences, or imposing any restraints upon others. Passengers in the mail stages are free to rest during the first day of the week, or to pursue their journeys at their own pleasure. While the mail is transported on Saturday, the Jew and the Sabbatarian may abstain from any agency in carrying it from conscientious scruples. While it is transported on the first day of the week, another class may abstain from the same religious scruples. The obligation of government is the same to both of these classes; and the Committee can discover no principle on which the claims of one should be more respected than those of the other; unless it should be admitted that the consciences of the minority are less sacred than those of the majority.

It is the opinion of the Committee, that the subject should be regarded simply as a question of expediency, irrespective of its religious bearing. In this light, it has hitherto been considered. Congress have never legislated upon the subject. It rests, as it ever has done, in the legal discretion of the Postmaster General, under the repeated refusals of Congress to discontinue the Sabbath mails. His knowledge and judgment in all the concerns of that department, will not be questioned. His intense labors and assiduity have resulted in the highest improvement in every branch of his department. It is practised only on the great leading mail routes, and such others as are necessary to maintain their connexions. To prevent this, would, in the opinion of the Committee, be productive of immense injury, both in its commercial, political, and in its moral bearings.

The various Departments of Government require, frequently in peace, always in war, the speediest intercourse with the remotest parts of the country; and one important object of the mail establishment is, to furnish the greatest and most economical facilities for such intercourse. The delay of the mails one whole day in seven, would require the employment of special expresses, at great expence, and sometimes with great uncertainty.

The commercial, manufacturing, and agricultural interests of our country are so intimately connected, as to require a constant and the most expeditious correspondence betwixt our sea-ports, and betwixt them and the most interior settlements. The delay of the mails during the Sunday, would give occasion to the employment of private expresses, to such an amount, that probably ten riders would be employed where one mail stage is now running on that day; thus diverting the revenue of that department into another channel, and sinking the establishment into a state of pusillanimity incompatible with the dignity of the Government of which it is a department.

Passengers in the mail stages, if the mails are not permitted to proceed on Sunday, will be expected to spend that day at a tavern upon the road, generally under circumstances not friendly to devotion, and at an expence which many are but poorly able to encounter. To obviate these difficulties, many will employ extra carriages for their conveyance, and become the bearers of correspondence, as more expeditious than the mail. The stage proprietors will themselves, often furnish the travellers with those means of conveyance; so that the effect will ultimately be only to stop the mail, while the vehicle which conveys it will continue, and its passengers become the special messengers for conveying a considerable proportion of what would otherwise constitute the contents of the mail.

Nor can the Committee discover where the system could consistently end. If the observance of a holy day becomes incorporated in our institutions, shall we not forbid the movement of an army; prohibit an assault in time of war; and lay an injunction on our naval officers to lie in the wind while upon the ocean that day? Consistency would seem to require it. Nor is it certain we should stop here. If the principle is once established, that religion, or religious observances, shall be interwoven with our legislative acts, we must pursue it to its ultimatum. We shall, if consistent, provide for the erection of edifices for the worship of the Creator, and for the support of Christian ministers, if we believe such measures will promote the interests of Christianity. It is the settled conviction of the Committee, that the only method of avoiding these consequences, with their attendant train of evils, is to adhere strictly to the spirit of the Constitution, which regards the General Government in no other light than that of a civil institution, wholly destitute of religious authority.

What other nations call religious toleration, we call religious rights. They are not exercised in virtue of governmental indulgence, but as rights, of which Government cannot deprive any portion of citizens however small. Despotism may invade those rights, but justice still confirms them. Let the National Legislature once perform an act which involves the decision of a religious controversy, and it will have passed its legitimate bounds. The precedent will then be established, and the foundation laid for that usurpation of the Divine prerogative in this country, which has been the desolating scourge to the fairest portions of the old world. Our Constitution recognizes no other power than that of persuasion, for enforcing religious observances. Let the professors of Christianity recommend their religion by deeds of benevolence—by Christian meekness—by lives of temperance and holiness. Let them combine their efforts to instruct the ignorant to relieve the widow and the orphan—to promulgate to the world the Gospel of their Saviour, recommending its precepts by their habits of life. Government will find its legitimate object in protecting them. It cannot oppose them, and they will not need its aid. Their moral influence will then do infinitely more to advance the true interests of Religion, than any measures which they may call on Congress to enact.

The petitioners do not complain of any infringement upon their own rights. They enjoy all that Christians ought to ask at the hands of Government—protection from all molestation in the exercise of their religious sentiments.

Resolved, That the Committee be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

The Secretary of the Navy, in answer to a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 12th May last, directing him "to prepare and report a plan and estimates for connecting with two or more of the Navy Yards of the United States, as many establishments for purchasing, water-rotting, and preparing for manufacture, American hemp and flax, and also cotton, as well as for manufacturing the same into cordage and canvass, for the use of the Navy"—has reported unfavorably upon the first branch of the project, (the water-rotting &c.) and has transmitted a letter similar to his own from the Board of Navy Commissioners. The subject being impracticable as well as inexpedient, of course no plan and estimates are submitted. With regard