

THE MUD-CUT BOON.

Quite a stir has recently been made among the politicians of this State by the publication of an anonymous article against the further extension of the Western N. C. Railroad, and in order that our readers may understand this "boom" (as it is called) we will endeavor to explain.

When the N. C. R. R. in which the State had a controlling interest was completed to Chambers, it was determined to extend this road from Salisbury via Morganton and Asheville to some point or points in Tennessee, connecting there with other roads, and thus making a near and direct line from the great cities of the West through the centre of North Carolina, to the coast. The State subscribed liberally to this road which was called the W. N. C. R. R. or more generally the "Western Extension," and when the late war terminated the road was in running order for some distance from Salisbury. As soon as possible after the war it was resumed, the Congressional appropriation of 1865 not having met a dollar in hands to aid the construction (most of which was done by subscription by individuals), and the road was finished to Old Fort, about 20 miles east of Asheville. The State conventions of both parties had adopted resolutions in favor of further extension of the road, in pursuance of their platform, and they proceeded to extend the road. Under the mismanagement of that rule the road had become largely involved, had been abandoned, and was about to be sold, and thus the State would lose its stock. The Democrats when the sale took place and the road bought in for the State, thus preserving her late investment in the road, and has since been under her exclusive control. When this had been done, the question at once arose, whether the State should expend money in extending the road, or if the funds remain at Old Fort. It was generally considered, however, that the road should be extended as originally designed, and no work was resumed, a large tonnage of convicts being sent from the Penitentiary, and iron was brought to the track as fast as it was needed. The great tunnel at the summit of the Blue Ridge (which was a tremendous undertaking) is about finished, and the cars will be running to Asheville in a few months. And now the article, above alluded to, appears, urging the resumption of further work and expense, stating that under democratic leadership recommendations of private individuals, money had been expended in building the road from Old Fort towards Asheville and that the taxpayers of the State cannot stand so heavy a burden upon them. If this statement be true, it is natural that all taxpayers should be inquisitive as to the propriety of spending any more money on this road, but in contradiction of this statement, Hild's Weekly says (and Dr. Worth has privately informed us) that the records in the State Treasurer's office show that the exact amount expended is \$101,992.10. Of this sum, \$121,919.21 have been expended for the support of the convicts who are building the road, and who would have cost just as much, or more, if they were confined in the Penitentiary.

There are several other circumstantial statements made in this anonymous article, to which we will not now refer. We deprecate the publication of such an article, for it cannot do any good just now, as the work on the road must continue under existing laws at least until the assembling of the next Legislature in January 1881—and it may do much harm by exciting a discussion, and it may be a division in the Democratic party at a time when there should be perfect harmony. When upon the eve of so important a campaign as next year's will be involving issues of such magnitude, it is deeply to be deplored that such a firebrand should be thrown into our ranks. The attempt to array the East against the West—to excite sectional prejudices—is as unwise, as it is impolitic in a national sense. This question cannot be made a political one, for both parties have repeatedly committed themselves in favor of the "boom," but it is simply a matter of business. The State, as owner of the road, must regard its extension from a business standpoint, that is, will the investment pay? Just as my private friend would do, if the road was laid in this matter, the State must set through the Representative of the people in the next Legislature, and we doubt not they will make a thorough examination, especially with the arguments urged, and act for the best interests of all.

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