



AND

North-Carolina State Gazette.

Ours are the plans of fair & delightful Peace, Unwar'd by party rage, to live like Brothers.

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INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

(Concluded from our last.)

There may be some, sir, whose fears to do any thing which shall diminish the national resources may incline them to reject this system of internal improvement...

It has been somewhat conversant with the interests of the great private landholders of the Western country. They are a class of people whose sagacity in observing and industry in pursuing the means of accumulating wealth are not to be questioned.

The U. States are owners of about 200 millions of acres of land in the Western country, independent of Louisiana; more than 100,000,000 acres in the vicinity of the Lakes. The public lands occupy 60,000,000 acres on the Lakes.

And it is not by an actual sinking or sacrifice of the price of the land, but by its conversion into canal stock, which is worth, in all probability, more than its original value.

But it is to be presumed that not more than 1-3d of these works would be undertaken immediately, and that these would be completed before any others are begun.

the 50,000,000 of acres on the lakes, which are now worth \$50,000,000 would immediately become worth 100,000,000. — And thus, besides performing a great and imperious duty, which, as a government, we owe to the people of the Western country, we should by this operation, as mere proprietors of the soil, and in a matter of pecuniary speculation, advance the public property 50,000,000 of dollars!

But, sir, there are some gentlemen who are friendly to this system of internal improvement, but who think the present time inauspicious to such an undertaking, on account of the reduced state of the Treasury.

To this objection I would answer, — First, that the means by which it is proposed to carry on these improvements, are not calculated to make any sensible impression on the revenue: — And, secondly, that the bare increase of the sales of land, which would be effected in consequence of undertaking these works would more than supply the drains on the Treasury in constructing them.

The expense of executing the whole of the works enumerated in that bill, is estimated at sixteen millions of dollars. This is not a mere random estimate of opinion. It has been formed from the best information which the Secretary of the Treasury has been able to collect on this subject by a gentleman (Mr. La Roche) who, as an experienced as well as scientific engineer, is considered superior to any other in this country.

Suppose, then, that the whole of these works were to be undertaken immediately, and completed within ten years; and suppose, too, that no monies should be received from the sales of the hypotheated lands. The calls on the Treasury would then be,

Table with 2 columns: Year, Dollars. For the first year, 43,000; 2nd, 90,000; 3rd, 144,000; 4th, 200,000; 5th, 260,000.

—Which sum of 480,000 dollars is the interest of the whole principal sum of 8 millions. And this, sir, would not be a very large sum, compared to the magnitude of the object, and to the extent of our revenue; especially when it is considered that, after one year from this time, and before the effect of such an appropriation could be felt, our revenue will be relieved from the payment of two millions of dollars, and, after two years, from the payment of four millions of dollars annually, in consequence of the reductions which will have then taken place in the principal of the national debt.

But it is to be presumed that not more than 1-3d of these works would be undertaken immediately, and that these would be completed before any others are begun. The works, as far as they shall be completed, will be drawing a toll, equal at least, it is presumed, to the interest of the money they cost; & in this way the Treasury will be relieved from the payment of that interest. — Upon this calculation, the United States would never have to pay, in any one year, a greater sum than the interest of 1-3d of the principal sum of eight millions of dollars; and in this case, the calls on the Treasury would be, supposing that no aids were derived from the sale of land) as follow:

Table with 2 columns: Year, Dollars. For the first year, \$16,000; 2nd, 32,000; 3rd, 48,000; 4th, 64,000; 5th, 80,000.

the highest sum called for in any one year.

Let us now see what will be the probable amount of the sale of land, within a given period, to forward the execution of these improvements.

The present population of the United States is estimated at seven and an half millions. It is well ascertained that our population doubles every 25 years; and it certainly is increasing, at this time, in as high a ratio, as at any former period. According to a calculation of Mr. Bodge, (in his statistical tables) something more than one third of the increasing population of the U. States is constantly migrating to the western country.

Such a demand for new lands may appear extravagant to those who have not attended to the progressive population and settlement of the United States for the last twenty years. — A moment's recurrence to a few well known facts on this subject, will show that such a demand is not only probable; but that, unless some great national calamity befel us, it is certain. The population of the state of New York has considerably more than doubled within the last 20 years.

It is true, sir, that the rate at which the public lands are now, and have been for some time past selling, is not such as to warrant the calculation I have made as to future sales; but the causes of these sales being so contracted are obvious. One principle cause, which however will immediately cease to operate, because it is ceasing to be a fact, has been that the public lands were remote from the inhabited parts of the country.

Another impediment to the sales of public lands arises from the circumstance that you will receive nothing but specie in payment for them. The people who migrate to new countries are, with few exceptions, of the poorer class. They rarely have more than property sufficient to transport their families to their new places of residence; to construct a few temporary accommodations, and to subsist themselves and families until their farms become productive.

The sales in the year 1803 amounted to 19,250 acres. In 1804 amounted to 373,511 acres. In 1805 do. 619,235 do. During the whole of this time the public paper was received in payment. — The amount of sales was increasing near 100 per cent. yearly, and would probably have continued to increase in the same ratio to this time, had the same quantity of public debt been kept off, and had it continued to be receivable at the land offices.

Table with 2 columns: Year, Acres. In 1806 to 473,217 acres; 1807 to 284,130; 1808 to 195,579; 1809 to 143,409.

The sales thus retrograding in amount, in about the same ratio in which they had before advanced, and this for no other assignable cause than what that law furnishes.

But, sir, the grand, and all important operation by which only you can make extensive and effectual sales of the public lands, is to open the produce of them to market, and in this way to make them pay for themselves. Do this, and not only settlers, but monied men will become purchasers. There are now thousands, and I may say millions of dollars in the northern states, ready to be invested in the lands on the lakes.

The government of the state of N. York have long seen the advantages of such a navigation; and they have been for several years desirous of undertaking this canal. They wait only in the expectation that the general government will aid them in this great work; and this is certainly a just and reasonable expectation, inasmuch as the work would benefit the property of the U. S. to a much greater extent than that of the state of N. York.

The present time, far, in my opinion, from being unpropitious to the undertaking of this measure of internal improvement, is peculiarly fortunate. The great commercial capitals which have been thrown out of employment by the stagnation of foreign commerce, are now idle, and might be engaged in these improvements by a little attention on the part of government; and if they could be so engaged, they would continue to give support to a vast number of our sailors and other laborers, who have hitherto been employed in the subordinate occupations of commerce, but who have also been thrown out of employment by the stagnation of that commerce.

If I had not already drawn too largely upon the time of the House, I could point out other advantages resulting from this system of improvement, not

less important than those I have already mentioned. I could shew that it would bring into the treasury, perhaps some millions of dollars yearly, by the increase of duties on imports. The great additional quantities of produce which would be thrown into market through these roads and canals, would be exchanged for foreign merchandize, which is subject to heavy duties; and from which most of our present revenues are derived. I could shew also the great advantages which, in a military point of view, would result from these improvements. If the U. S. were to be engaged in a war, we are equally vulnerable and equally liable to be assailed, at half a dozen different points, some hundreds and even thousands of miles distant from each other; and it would be impossible to carry on any vigorous military operations, without the aid of good roads and canals to transport over such distances the immense quantities of arms, ammunition and provisions necessary to the supply of a great army. It is sufficient, however, that I suggest these arguments, and they will be properly appreciated by the House.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is one other point of view, in which, although an unpleasant one, I feel it my duty to present this subject to the House; and this regards not only the means of improving that great source of national wealth, the public lands, to the best advantage; but it involves the practicability of enjoying it at all. The people, who have purchased and settled on your new lands, are already your debtors to the amount of some millions of dollars; and in as far as they are your debtors, they are (to use a phrase perhaps somewhat too harsh) a species of enemy—and we have already seen to what a formidable extent their power and numbers are increasing. It is far from my intention, sir, to cast any injurious imputations on the character of these settlers. On the contrary, I know that they are not to be distinguished from the great mass of the yeomanry of this country; among whom it is to be found most of the real patriotism, as well as the real strength of the nation.

It is on them, that we are to depend for the security and permanence of our Republican Institutions. It is to them that this government must resort for protection and support, in every great and dangerous crisis—I say, sir, that I am not about to impeach either the honesty or the patriotism of these settlers; it is their interest & their wish to pay their debts, and to discharge all their duties to government as good and faithful citizens. But let me ask you, sir, let me ask any man of common observation, who has attended in the least, to the present situation of the western country, how it is possible for these settlers to pay you fifty or an hundred millions of dollars in specie, when they have no other resources than in their agriculture, and when the produce of this agriculture will not bring them money enough to buy their whiskey. — It is impossible, sir, and if you intend to hold those lands, much more if you intend to make them a source of public revenue, you must furnish the means of making them productive, by opening them to market. Every motive of interest and policy unites in urging the government to undertake this system of internal improvement. It is a subject too vast to be accomplished by individual enterprise. The means of the citizens of the Western country are peculiarly inadequate to such an undertaking. They cannot construct canals, for the very obvious reason that they are already deeply in debt for their lands, and they must continue so until this great work is executed for them. They will then not only be able to pay you for their lands, but they will remunerate you for the expense of opening canals, by the tolls which they will be able to pay. In the advantages which these outlets for their produce will give them, and on which their prosperity must so essentially depend, you will have a pledge for their future attachment and fidelity to your government, and which they will never forfeit. But, sir, if you neglect to avail yourselves of the opportunity, which this system affords, of securing the affections of the western people—if you refuse to extend to them those benefits which their situation so imperiously demands, and which your resources enable you, and your duty enjoins it on you, to extend to them: If, while you are expending millions yearly for the encouragement of commerce,