

THE REGISTER.

RALEIGH, N. C.

TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 1854.

Internal Improvement.—Much has been spoken and written upon the subject of the internal improvement of this State, during the last twelve months; and although no practical results have flowed from the discussion, it is believed not to have been entirely unprofitable.

There is no more accurate criterion by which to determine the advance of a country in intellectual improvement, than the scale upon which physical improvements have been constructed.

These positions seem to us to be nearly self-evident. The history of the world is but a series of examples all tending to prove their truth.

There is nowhere in North-Carolina, a like extent of country, abounding in more fruitful valleys, or blessed with a more salubrious and propitious climate, than that possessed by the Cherokee Indians upon our borders.

It seems to us, that little reflection is necessary, to satisfy any one of the correctness of these views. In the natural order of things, national wealth must precede national education.

If this point be conceded, the remaining subjects to be considered, are—1st, What plan of improvement is best calculated to advance the general prosperity of the State?

We have not sufficient confidence in our own judgment, to suppose that we could devise a better plan, and if we had, we should forbear to recommend it, because the one under consideration was the result of liberal concession and compromise.

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ded and fifty millions, is not greater than is frequently the result of a single mercantile misadventure, so the amount annually expended during the period the system was in progress, was less than the actual capital employed by various individuals in North Carolina upon their respective farms.

But to return to the immediate point of discussion, we do not know that we can express the views we entertain, with respect to the enquiry, which object must demand attention—physical or intellectual improvement—more clearly or forcibly, than by extracting a few sentences from the last Executive Message to the General Assembly:

"The aggregate amount of the fund is at present too small to justify our entering upon any general system of Education. Indeed, were this fund much larger, it may well be doubted whether the period has yet arrived, when it can be judiciously expended for the promotion of the wise and benevolent purposes contemplated by the founders of our Government.

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tion of our principal rivers, and to cut the necessary canals. To effect these great objects for a State extending over an area of 32,000,000 of acres, and containing a population of 600,000 souls, an annual appropriation of 40,000 dollars for a few years seems to have been the only expenditure contemplated from the Public Treasury.

The science of engineering was not at that time understood, and no individual could be obtained competent to direct our operations. The politicians who devised the plans, undertook the execution of the work, and with a fund not larger than some of our citizens have employed profitably upon their own farms, improvements were commenced simultaneously at the sources of all the principal rivers in the State.

The public, disappointed by the results of the expenditure, became discouraged, and improvement was abandoned. The great error was, in attempting to effect every projected improvement in the State at the same time, with a fund barely sufficient to the accomplishment of the least difficult of the whole.

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ford and Elizabeth City, who were appointed to memorialize the Legislature in 1837, (cited in the following representation upon the subject:

"Your memorialists believe that the annual exports of the produce of our country through Ocracoke, are not estimated at five millions of dollars, requiring for their transportation and actual employment two hundred thousand tons of shipping. They find, from calculations carefully made and compared, that the charge of these vessels for lighterage and detention at the Swash, averages one dollar per ton, and amounts annually to two hundred thousand dollars; that the additional rate of insurance, because of the risk and detention at the Swash, averages three quarters of one per cent. and amounts, on the exports and imports, to seventy-five thousand dollars, and on vessels, to sixty thousand dollars per annum.

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the value of five millions of dollars annually, would find its way into it. That which was intended for the south would reach the sea at O'd Topsail inlet, or stop at Newbern or Beaufort. The latter is known to be the best harbor and seaport on our coast; and from its proximity to the Southern and West India market, must at once become an important commercial town. The produce, on the other hand, intended for the North, would either go up the Chesapeake and inland to Philadelphia, or out to sea at the capes of Virginia, or seek a market at Norfolk, now the finest seaport, and which, supported by such a trade, would soon become one of the largest cities in the Union.

By this channel of communication our coasting vessels and all others drawing eight feet water, would be relieved from the hazardous and difficult navigation around Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout, the most dangerous points known to our navigators, and where it is believed more vessels have been wrecked than on the whole coast of the U. States besides.

Nor would the advantages of this navigation be confined to the coasting trade. A farmer descending any one of the rivers connected with this channel might continue on in his own boat either to Beaufort or Norfolk, dispose of his produce without the intervention of a commission merchant, purchase his own supplies, and return with equal ease in the way he came.

An improvement of this character would contribute much to make us one people. Wilmington, Beaufort, Newbern, Washington, Plymouth, Edenton, Hertford and Elizabeth City would be drawn nearer together. The produce of the West would be brought down by rail road and improved river navigation, and find its way to the ocean or be concentrated at Beaufort and Norfolk.

In addition to the facilities this canal would open to commerce, it would have the effect of reclaiming a large body of Swamp lands, which would be soon brought into cultivation and rendered productive. That which is now a howling wilderness, the abode of wild beasts and venomous reptiles, would become a fertile and highly cultivated country, and this great highway of trade exhibit upon its borders a succession of fruitful fields and flourishing villages, the reward of our enterprise and liberality.

These are some of the advantages likely to result to our own State. Let us now consider in what manner the interest of the Union would be affected by the accomplishment of such a work. An inland navigation would be opened from Connecticut to Georgia, with the exception of a short run, through a safe sea, from Beaufort to Charleston. If the channel be completed and the tolls made light, the whole coasting trade of the United States will pass through it, to avoid the dangerous navigation around Cape Hatteras.

And if the banks of the canal be constructed to admit of steam navigation at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour, all the travelling from north to south and south to north, for nine months of the year, will be by this route.

The General Government has been at great expense in constructing a navy yard at Norfolk, supposed to be superior to any in the Union—the port of Norfolk offering, perhaps, the best possible situation for such a work. It is of great importance that this yard should be well supplied, and upon reasonable terms.

This canal would open to Norfolk a country abounding in almost inexhaustible forests of the finest pine and oak timber, and furnishing adequate supplies of naval stores. The live oak timber of the south might be transported by this route, immediately to the yard, with the greatest economy and despatch. These are some of the advantages in times of peace; in war, this inland communication would be invaluable, and might be maintained in defiance of the fleets of our enemies.

Should the Chesapeake be blockaded by a superior squadron, our fleets and men of war could at any time receive at Beaufort, through these canals, any supplies they might require from the navy yard at Norfolk. Merchantmen might send their cargoes by the interior, and receive return cargoes by the same channel. The existence of such a work would give to North-Carolina a distinction and consideration in the Union, of which her sons might well be proud.

It would more than obviate the difficulty occasioned by the closing up of Roanoke inlet, since instead of one we would have easy access to two of the best seaports on our coast.

From any point upon the canal, rail roads might be constructed to the interior of the State. The precise location of such roads can be properly determined when the necessary surveys and estimates shall have been made. An able communication upon the subject has been submitted to the Board, by Mr. Sullivan, a Civil Engineer, formerly of Boston, but now a resident in New-York. The boldness, originality and apparent practicability of his plan, will arrest the attention of the Legislature. His opinions have been submitted to an Engineer, second in reputation to no member of the profession in that State, who has given them the sanction of his hearty concurrence. They will be stated without further prefatory remarks and with little change of his argument or form of expression.

The Blue Ridge being within the boundary line of this State, and its limits comprising the head waters and valleys of the Tennessee, will hold the key of communication with the valley of the Mississippi. A comparison of distances upon a line of location for the rail road, which seems to comprehend the most beneficial effects to the State, intercepting the transportation by the rivers, as far south as possible, in order to include

the whole of the southern countries within its range; and by branches, all to the Tennessee the base line of the system.

This passage would be direct between Newbern and New-York. It is well known that the cheapest freighting is by large vessels, and that steam power can be afforded and is generally used on the Hudson, to command the city and despatch. The step in improvement from steam boats to steam coasters, will be easy and natural, since the late further discoveries of coal, both bituminous and anthracite, Pennsylvania, has made the use of it sufficiently economical for the steam engine in navigation.

"To show the great probability of this effect of the rail road, we may compare the distances and expense by the most improved routes now open. Let us take the most direct place of departure, and the Mississippi at the confluence of the Ohio, as that to be reached from New York to Albany is 355 miles; to Lake Erie 563; to Cleveland 161; to Louisville 150; to the Mississippi 453; together 1623 miles, which 1105 is free navigation and 518 is toll. From New-York to Newbern is 460 miles. The following distances are assumed to be the most probable route of the rail road:

Newbern to Fayetteville, 460 the sea passage
to Rockingham, 109
to the Yadkin, 10
to Charlotte, 60
to the Catawba, 15
to Broad River, 30
to the Blue Ridge, 40
across the Ridge, 10
to Asheville, 10
to the state line, 30

375 Northern
By reason of the curves,
to Knoxville, 60
to Kingston, 40
to Nashville, 100
— 220 Tennessee
Road.
By the Cumberland to the Ohio, 160
To the Mississippi at the confluence, 48
— 208
1223
Of which 673 is free navigation, and 553 tolls. This deducted from 1623, shows a difference of 715 miles in favor of the North-Carolina and Tennessee route, over that of Ohio. Besides which, this route reaches the navigable head of the Tennessee in 875 miles from New-York, of which two-thirds is free. This will be the cheapest route to Alabama. The Tennessee is navigable about the Muscle shoals 600 miles, and each shore may be considered a rich agricultural and mining country. The nearest market to this part of Tennessee will be the cities of North-Carolina. The expense of freight by these two routes may also be compared. It is stated in a recent publication, that it costs, to get a ton of merchandise carried from New-York to Louisville by the lake and canal, \$2 75 per cwt. (or 55 dolls. per ton) and that it requires 21 days. Freight from New-York to Newbern, in proportion to that across the Atlantic, would be 3 dollars; but in the ratio of the freight by steam boats on the Hudson, it would be 6 dollars; and as carrying on rail roads can be profitably afforded for two cents a ton a mile, this would be to Knoxville \$8 30, and to Nashville 30 dollars—making \$17 50 for that city, which is besides nearer to the great river than Louisville. And as the Cumberland runs over a limestone bed, it might be easily improved for a low water navigation by locks submerged and out of the way when the water is deep enough. But the Ohio cannot be. Its shoals are of sand.

"The general considerations which strongly recommend the North-Carolina route, are, 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. Besides that, it is too low for navigation two months of the summer almost every year. But North-Carolina is in that medium of climate as well as geographical relation to the west, that permits of uninterrupted commercial intercourse through the State. Nor is there any thing in the nature of a rivalry to be apprehended from the Virginia improvements. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal has so great an ascent, as in effect to increase the distance considerably. The rise westward is 2485 feet, and the descent to Pittsburg 1699 feet—whole lockage 4172 feet. The James river route rises, in 241 miles, 2576 feet, and descends to the Ohio in 221—463 miles, 1997 feet.