

THE REGISTER.

RALEIGH, N. C.

TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 1834.

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 most demands 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 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. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that this policy was the suggestion of narrow views, local prejudices and sectional jealousies.

The Board concur with the Governor in the opinion expressed to the General Assembly, in his message at the commencement of the session, "that the great channels of intercommunication in which the whole community is interested, and which, for that reason, will not probably attract, and are least likely to be effected by, individual enterprise, demand the exclusive attention and patronage of the Government.

The true test of the value to the State of any public work, is the amount which may be saved in the expenses of transportation from the place of production to the place of consumption. As, for example, suppose the cost of transporting a barrel of flour to be one dollar, and a company, by improving a river, were to reduce the cost of transportation to forty cents, and exact a toll of ten cents for each barrel—in this case, the farmer would save fifty cents and the company receive ten cents for every barrel.

The two most important objects to be attained by any system of improvement, is, first, a good outlet to the ocean, and, secondly, in connection with this outlet, a line of rail road, which may be best calculated to attract to it the produce of the largest portion of our territory.

It is a singular circumstance, that North Carolina, with a wider sea coast than any State in the Union, and the fifth State in extent of territory and in population, has less commerce and less important towns than any of her Atlantic sisters.

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ford and Elizabeth City, who were appointed to memorialize the Legislature in 1827, (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 when estimated as 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.

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.

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.

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 be 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 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, easy and natural, since the late failure of Pennsylvania, has made the use of it sufficient 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 335 miles; to Lake Erie 563; to Cleveland 161; to Louisville 150; to the Mississippi 450; together 1600 miles. If this is free navigation and no tolling toll. From New-York to Newbern is 460 miles. The following distances are assumed to be the most probable route of the rail road:

Table with 2 columns: Destination and Distance. Includes Newbern to Fayetteville (109), to Rockingham (59), 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).

Of which 670 is free navigation, and 533 tolls. This deducted from 1600, 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 to 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 1690 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.

Moreover, we know from the Baltimore surveys, that the ground along the great Kentucky is exceedingly difficult, and is most likely that this work, if ever undertaken, will incline to the north to Covington and descend the valley of the Greenbrier. West Virginia is entitled to the accommodation; but, leaving the Ohio navigation, is not, like East Tennessee, in distress for access to market. Indeed, the Baltimore surveys show that the high valleys of Virginia watered by the branches of the James, must principally furnish the business of the route along that stream, the country on the Roanoke must for that which the next geographical division to the South-Carolina and Georgia line, naturally falls in with the system of internal improvement contemplated by North-Carolina; whose western frontier includes the head waters of the Tennessee; so that, if the State resolves on having this road, the business of the extensive valleys watered by the Holston and the Clinch, would be more likely to descend with the current to Kingston and Knoxville, and export eastward by the rail road, than ascend and go north to the James river route, considerably circuitous.

"If we also consider the elevation; from Newbern to the foot of the Blue Ridge is stated to be a rise of 1200 feet; which, if the location of the rail be gradual, as I suppose it can be, on the southern location indicated, is only four feet in a mile.

"Since, then, there is nothing to fear from Virginia as a rival, on the other hand, there is nothing to apprehend from South-Carolina. For, not including in her boundaries the head waters of the Tennessee, she has, after improving her rivers, already turned her enterprise to the increase of commerce at her capital; and it is more likely that rail roads will ramify among the fertile counties of Georgia, than that, at her expense, one, at great cost, will be made over the mountains to aggrandize Charleston.

"The domestic trade of North-Carolina will include like the interior of Georgia, of New-York and of Pennsylvania) be alone a sufficient object for this main line of rail road, as the base of a system of branches up every valley to the north-west from it, and into every productive district between the rivers; but it is a great encouragement and warrant for the work, that a valuable part of the line of the State lies in the fertile counties of the eastern counties, the demand, and the labor wanting to give fertility to the alluvial lands of the eastern counties, as the Pennsylvania receives her supply of it from the State of New-York. The pine bearing lands of New Hampshire were in this way made fertile, receiving pluses by her canals.