

"Ours are the plans of fair delightful peace, unwarped by party rage, to live like brothers."

JOSEPH GALES & SON, EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS.

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MEMORIAL OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT CONVENTION, to the General Assembly of North Carolina.

TO THE HONORABLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF N. C.:

The undersigned have been deputed a committee to present to your honorable body a memorial, expressive of the views and wishes of a large and respectable portion of your fellow-citizens, recently assembled in the City of Raleigh, in Convention, upon the important subject of improving the internal condition of the State.

What is the present condition of the State? What its means for improvement? And in what way are these means to be most effectually applied? These are the interesting questions to which we have been directed most respectfully to invite your attention; and which, as your memorialists humbly conceive, are of such high public concernment.

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Table with 2 columns: Item and Amount. Includes 'In the Bank of the State, \$500,000', 'In the Bank of Cape Fear, \$200,000', 'In the Buncombe Turnpike, 5,000', 'Roanoke & Cape Fear Navigation Companies, 82,500', 'Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road, 600,000', 'Bonds for the sale of Cherokee Lands, in 1838, and of a prior date, 350,000'.

The cash balances in the Public Treasury are not included in the above estimates, as they may be required to meet current expenses and other necessary appropriations. The State, then, has a capital of more than two millions, vested in productive stocks and in bonds on interest. It is true, a part of this sum is pledged as a Literary Fund; but it is equally true, we presume, that no part of the principal of this fund is to be used, and that it will continue to increase, until the interest accruing on it may be called for, in purposes of education and of free schools.

Having shown the condition of the State, the necessity and demand for a change, and the means for effecting it, your memorialists are brought to the interesting question, as to what is best to be done? In answer to that question, we have to present to you that plan or system which was the result of the anxious deliberations of those in whose behalf this memorial is presented. No higher evidence could be given of the actual wants of our people, and of the demand and necessity for something to be done, than in the voluntary congregation of that assembly, whose wishes and opinions have been directed to make known. A body comprising near 200 delegates, selected from forty counties, men of character, of intelligence, and of wealth, voluntarily obeying the call of their country, argues a deep distress in the community, and a loud demand for its remedy.

Of the merits of the general system recommended, it is proper to say, whilst there existed a difference of opinion as to the grade or class of the respective works, yet there was none as to their eminent utility and meritorious claim to the aid and patronage of the Legislature. But the Convention was admonished, as all must be, by past experience, that the works proposed must be brought within the available means of the State, or all would fail.

1. A guarantee by the State of five hundred thousand dollars to the Gaston and Raleigh Rail Road. This is not a subscription or a loan, and does not call for any expenditure. It is a mere loan of the credit of the State, upon such a surety as the

Legislature shall require to enable the company to obtain a loan on better terms than they otherwise could do, and thus enabled to complete their great work. This favor appeared so reasonable in itself, as to meet with but little opposition. It is deemed due to the liberal spirit of those enterprising citizens who had been willing to risk their own good fortunes in so great a work. It also recommended itself to the convention, as a work penetrating to the capital of the State, there to be connected with other works, and accommodating many of our citizens in the transportation of their produce to market. Having already received the favorable action of a committee of both branches of your honorable body, more is not necessary to be said.

2. A subscription by the State of four fifths of the capital stock of the Fayetteville and Yadkin Rail Road. This is one of the great works in the general system, and may be considered as standing at the head of those recommended in the first class. In regard to this work, the Convention had certain data, both as to its necessity, its importance to a large portion of the State, its policy as sanctioned by a vote of the Legislature and of the people, and certainly as to the cost of its construction. As to the work itself—it is to connect the East and West; to commence with a home market, from the banks of a river, rising and terminating within our own limits—to be extended for the present to the Yadkin, a stream which passes through a productive and populous section of the country, and whose product must be carried to a distant foreign market, unless this great work shall succeed.

3. The incorporation of a Company for the opening of an Inlet at the foot of Albemarle Sound, near Nagshead, and a subscription by the State of three-fifths of its capital stock. This work was deemed by the Convention of the highest importance, from the fact of so many of the counties in the North-East part of the State being directly interested in its success; from the quantity and quality of the produce which would find a market through it; and from the fact that it has been long pressed upon the notice both of the National and State Legislatures. Albemarle Sound runs in a direction east from the conflux of its head waters, the distance of some eighty miles, and at its eastern extremity is separated from the ocean by a narrow strip of sand bank, some hundred yards in width. It is navigable within four or five miles of the ocean, where its waters separate into the Roanoke and Croatan Sounds, and change its direction nearly south. Roanoke Island is between them. These two sounds unite again, and some twenty-five miles from the point where the current of the Albemarle changes from an east to nearly a South course, they enter the Pamlico Sound. From the North-Eastern extremity of the Pamlico is fifty miles distant, the Ocracoke Inlet, the only navigable one for vessels suited to the coasting trade. It is proposed to throw a dam or other construction across the Croatan Sound, and thus force the waters of the Albemarle to break their passage through the bank at its foot into the Atlantic Ocean. It is estimated by intelligent seamen accustomed to the navigation of this coast, that through the proposed inlet, double the number of voyages may be made as are now through that at Ocracoke. It has been estimated by a member of the Convention, that the 12 counties in North Carolina, nearly all the produce of which seeks its market through the Albemarle, export not less than from four to six millions of dollars annually. This produce consists of corn, cotton, wheat, fish, peas and an immense amount in naval stores and lumber. These articles are nearly all of such bulk as to forbid a deposit between the place of production and sale. Hence the importance of its being received from the wharves and rivers of the producers and carried at once to the ocean for its final destination. To the fishing interest the success of the work is of peculiar importance, as the annual tribute from abroad for this article alone is estimated by gentlemen from that section of the State at \$500,000.

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whiskey, &c. &c. &c. So that vessels can supply themselves with a cargo from that port, that cannot fail to suit some market and make a profitable voyage. Again—that steamboats have been plying on the Cape Fear as high as Fayetteville for the last 20 years; and we are assured that no serious accident has ever occurred during the time. Like other rivers in the South its navigation is suspended in the summer months; and so is the great Ohio. We learn that the navigation of the Ohio, from ice and drought, is suspended, on an average, six months in the year; whilst that of the Cape Fear is suspended not more than four and a half months, and that at a season when the crop is not ready for market. Such are the advantages of the Cape Fear Inlet, under circumstances as they now exist.

We have said the policy of building this Rail Road has been sanctioned by the Legislature and the people. We have only to advert to the fact of the incorporation of the company and a subscription of two-fifths, under the authority of a law of your last session. Has a single member been ousted of his place in consequence of the vote thus given? As far as we know, or have reason to believe, not one.

But we are here met with the objection, the plan-proposed changes the subscription by the State from two-fifths to that of four-fifths: why this change? The answer is to be found in the fact, that unless it is made, the road cannot succeed. A survey and estimate have been made, under the direction of the most experienced Engineer in the United States—a North Carolinian, feeling for his native State all the ardor and zeal of a most devoted son from which it appears, to construct the work in the best possible mode and in the way which meet his sanction, would cost two millions of dollars. To raise two fifths of this sum, by means of private subscription, has been found impracticable. But should the subscription of the State be changed, as proposed, we are well assured the amount will be most certainly taken by individuals. This is recommended not only from the magnitude of the work, its accommodation for such a large portion of the State, but from the further fact, it is to constitute one of the connected links, the great trunk in which others are hereafter to share. These with the Convention were held conclusive facts and reasons to justify the change.

5. The survey of Neuse and Tar rivers, with the view to steam boat navigation, and if found practicable, that the Board of Internal Improvements be authorized to contract for effecting it. These rivers are the property of the State, the charters granted for their improvements having been long since forfeited. It is proper then that the surveys should be had at the expense of the State, as due to her citizens, who will use them for their produce, as well as from the fact that one of these rivers is so directly connected with the prosperity of one of its markets, Washington, which has heretofore been sustained with so much spirit, but which has recently suffered so severely by fire; whilst the other leads to an old town, which has many claims on the liberality of the State, besides its direct connection with the great Rail Road in which the State has so deep an interest.

6. A survey from Raleigh via Hillsboro, to Greensboro, with the view to a McAdamized Turn Pike Road, a company and a subscription of two-fifths by the State. This route is recommended from the fact that it is to take the main travel from the seat of Government to the Western Counties in the State; that it passes through two among the largest and most productive Counties in the State, whose people are farmers, deal principally in the necessities of life, own their own vehicles, accustomed to their use, and without this road, can share but little in the direct advantages of Internal Improvements. Besides, it is for the present to terminate at one of the most flourishing inland towns in the State, Greensboro, which has its flourishing Schools, its Steam Mills, Cotton Factories, and in every way its population is both active and enterprising. A cheap and speedy mode of reaching a market, as we learn, would often enable the enterprising proprietor of her Cotton Factory to send the product of his establishment to the City of N. York, and realize a profit of two or three cents on the pound. This profit would not operate to his advantage alone, but to that of the grower of the raw material. The proposed survey would cost but little and the road if McAdamized, would not likely exceed, according to the estimate of the Board of Internal Improvements, \$3000 per mile, and a part of it, possibly one half, would be an ordinary turnpike, the cost of which would not exceed \$200 to 300 per mile. The road in justice ought to belong to the State, except that experience has shown, to construct and keep up such works, calls for individual interest and attention; otherwise they constitute a continual drain on the public treasury, and end in ruin. From this line a branch might hereafter be extended, with great propriety, to some eligible point on the Dan river; and thus give to the people in that fertile region the means of reaching, if so inclined, the markets of their own State.

Such are the works as placed in the first class of the plan proposed by the Convention—such are some of the views and reasons which influenced that body in recommending them. If any one should object, that his work ought to be placed on equally favorable ground with the most favored class, he should pause, consult the means of the State, and then ask himself, "if such a plan had been adopted but five years ago, would not my wishes now be gratified?" Time marches rapidly; and a few years, as we trust, will serve to bring into operation the whole scheme, and others, if their claims and advantages shall hereafter be disclosed and properly pressed.

If so, the Convention was of opinion it should be granted.

4. The payment by the State of the balance, 150,000 dollars, of its subscription to the Wilmington and Raleigh Rail Road, ought at once to be made. The Convention came to this opinion as an act of justice to the very liberal and spirited exertions of the private subscribers, in having risked so much on their part for so great a public work, and from the certainty as well from the progress made, as high profits expected, that the work must and will be finished. The prompt payment cannot injure the State, and will greatly aid a spirited portion of her citizens.

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SECOND CLASS.—These, as will be seen, contemplate a connection with the two great rail roads now in progress, as well as with the proposed road from Fayetteville to the Yadkin. The Beaufort Road, leading from the fine harbor at that place, is the most important from that fact, as another outlet will be thus opened to the ocean, and the produce of the upper country will then find additional means of being shipped to any portion of the commercial world. The Beaufort Inlet is said to be not only the best in our own state, for its depth of water, being from 22 to 24 feet on its bar, but it is not to be surpassed by any other from the Chesapeake to Pensacola. Why then, it may be asked, was not its rail road placed in the first class? The answer, to a majority of the Convention, was plain and satisfactory. It has no produce, no capital—these must be brought from a distance. One great trunk in connecting the east and west, was deemed sufficient. A road from Beaufort to Raleigh, and thence to the west, had been authorized, and it totally failed. The Convention had no reasonable grounds to believe that it would prove more successful at present. Two connecting roads were

too expensive to be undertaken at the same time by the State, and her true policy forbade it. Hence, the one from Fayetteville was selected as most likely to succeed—as required by the pressing demands of our western citizens—as leading to markets in which capital is already employed, and as having an outlet that might answer present demands. Again, when the western road shall reach Fayetteville, you are still on the descending line, and from thence may be carried to Beaufort. Such, it is believed, will be the quantity of produce from the upper country as will hereafter force itself to the best market. In this way, what the friends of Beaufort cannot do for themselves, will be done by others.

The Loan of three millions to be contracted by the State. It has been already shown, in estimating the funds of the State, she has upwards of two millions invested in a way, whilst they will prove productive, are not likely to be embarrassed or squandered. By the system proposed, this fund is not to be touched, but to be held as a guarantee to sustain the credit of the state in the negotiation of a loan, and a surety to her own citizens against any contingency which may arise. The maximum of the loan is three millions; and the money, when borrowed, will be mostly expended amongst ourselves, and for it the State will hold certificates of stocks which will be productive, and will in themselves constitute an additional surety against any future calls upon her own citizens. These stocks can at any time be brought into market, and thus relieve the State against any pressing embarrassment. The debt will be postponed to a future period; the works will progress, the burden will be divided between posterity and ourselves; and in this way the estate which our children are to inherit will be improved, our own condition relieved, and means provided for them to meet the claim which has been entailed in order to its improvement. This accords with the most rigid principles of justice, prudence, foresight, and economy. The estate is fast going to decay; our people are not in a condition to make necessary repairs and to improve it, without a resort to loans. This state of things has not been brought about from any want of frugality in our expenditures; of forbearance in contracting debts, or from any extravagance or want of system in the proper and judicious management of our domestic concerns. At no former period in the pecuniary affairs of the State, has there been less extravagance, and yet at no period has it been found more difficult to keep free from embarrassment. The evil is to be found not in any passing events, but in the want of a proper encouragement to the products of our soil, and in the fact that our most wealthy and enterprising citizens are driven to more genial climes.

If we look to our sister States, most of them will be found in the march of improvement, and their citizens contented and happy. Yet they have resorted to loans; and experience proves, so far from ending in injury to the people, they have the more rapidly advanced to wealth and prosperity. And this too, without any resort to taxes; the profits from the works having been quite sufficient to meet the interest and provide a fund for the payment of the principal. South Carolina has but recently subscribed one million to her great rail road, guaranteed the loan of two millions more, and by way of relief to her favorite city from a heavy calamity, added two millions more to her debt. But we forbear to press this matter further, as it is idle to talk of embarrassing the State by contracting a debt of three millions of dollars.

If our forefathers, with not half of our means, limited as they are, when dissension, faction, and treason lurked in every neighborhood; when the property of the citizen was liable to seizure by the enemy and to wanton destruction by the traitor, when the assassin beleaguered his path by day and threatened his repose by night; if, at such a time, and under such circumstances, that band of patriots could bear up for a period of seven years, under a debt of seventy-five millions, let us not talk of embarrassment by the sum proposed, having, as the State has, the ability to raise it without prejudice to her citizens, but whether she, in her sovereign capacity, shall engage in a system of this kind at all. And can we, at such a period as this, with all the light of experience before us, be seriously called upon to discuss such a question? Will you leave these matters to individual enterprise, when every State in the Union has undertaken the system with so much success? At the close of the memorable struggle to which we have just referred, North Carolina had her territory and her population. Her territory still remains—Mecklenburg, Moor's Creek, King's Mountain, and Guilford are landmarks which time cannot raze from the page of history. But where is her population? Where the monuments of her improvement? Her population is fast leaving her, and her monuments, we fear, are only to be found in the record of things past.

Is this state of things to continue? Or are we ever to be roused to action? It is much to be feared, if you shall separate without doing any thing, the cause of internal improvement will have sustained a shock from which it will be difficult to recover. The patriotic feeling which now