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By Geo. Howard,

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General Assembly.

GOV. OWEN'S MESSAGE.

To the Honorable the General Assembly of N. Carolina:

Gentlemen: Assembled under the provisions of the Constitution, "to consult for the common good and general welfare," you bring with you a more general knowledge of the wants of our fellow citizens in the various sections of the State, and are better acquainted with their wishes and interests, than any individual, however exalted the station he occupies, as the reward of your favor. To this fact probably, not less than to the power you possess of making laws affecting the life, liberty and property of our fellow citizens, is to be ascribed the intense interest which is felt and expressed throughout the State, at each returning anniversary of the General Assembly; and perhaps no period of our political existence has found our Legislators assembling, with the prospect of being occupied in the discussion of subjects affording more general interest, calling for greater deliberation and talents, and promising more extended benefits or the reverse. And what abundant cause of gratitude and grateful acknowledgment have we, to the giver of every good and perfect gift, that the representatives of the people are permitted to assemble and deliberate upon their concerns, in the undisturbed possession of civil and religious liberty, the boon of heaven, and at a moment of profound peace, no less the gift of him who governs the universe.

The attention of the Legislature has been so frequently invited by my predecessors, and so often directed by their own wisdom to the great cause of Internal Improvement, that, were it not for its immeasurable importance to the happiness and prosperity of the State, it might be deemed an act of supererogation, again to call your attention to it; but the people of the State, in their primary meetings, and their representatives in the General Assembly, have so often manifested a disposition to improve their commercial facilities, both for foreign

and domestic intercourse, that to pass it over in silence, might be deemed reprehensible in the Executive, and not less so in the Legislative Department of the Government. And having commenced this great work, which, with a general diffusion of morals and education among all classes of our citizens, is the most elevated policy which wisdom has suggested for the development of our moral and intellectual energies, it is our duty to pursue it, until we have attained that rank and station in the graduated scale of the Union, to which we shall be entitled by a judicious improvement of the means, with which the God of nature has so abundantly blessed us. And if the system of Internal Improvement we have adopted for this purpose be defective, which our many abortive enterprises prove but too clearly, (and it would be strange to expect it otherwise in the morning of its existence,) let us, rising above the influence of despair, and with a unanimity and zeal worthy of so glorious a cause, apply the remedy. But if, after a candid examination of the whole subject, with no other object in view than "our country and our country's good," our means are believed incompetent to any work of Internal Improvements, (however gloomy the picture it may present,) let us, with equal unanimity, abandon it, until our hands be strengthened. Yet where shall we look for strength but to a liberal system of Internal Improvement, as the foundation of public education, and the basis of all national prosperity.

The friends of Internal Improvement, look to the present Legislature with much solicitude, and your present vocation is at once an evidence that you are familiar with the sentiments of the people on this subject, and that they repose great confidence in you. This confidence is a sure guaranty that any measure you may adopt in regard to it, will meet their approbation. Every patriotic and enlightened citizen of the State is earnest in the enquiry, why so much money has been expended in the employment of Civil Engineers, assistant surveyors, &c. and so little in connection with this subject has been done? Our Engineer's office abounds with plots and surveys of swamps, roads and rivers; but little practical improvement has been effected. And no great or valuable improvement can be accomplished without an effective force, and this, too, continually at the disposal of the State. The absence of such a force, would seem to account for the unsuccessful attempts already made, and promises no better result from any future enterprise until the cause be removed. To acquire this force, but two methods can be suggested—by hire or by purchase. No reason can be concei-

ved why that course which an individual pursues with the best results in the management of his private concerns, should not also be the best policy for the State in the prosecution of a similar enterprise. Individuals who hire slaves soon become embarrassed. If they cannot succeed in the management of this kind of labor, it is but reasonable to suppose the State cannot. Her interest to be secure, must flow in the same channels which have been marked out and pursued by her most successful and enterprising citizens. They acquire by purchase all the valuable slaves they can, and with their labor clear, cultivate and improve their lands, and with a sure and steady pace move onward to wealth and all its enjoyments.

If, in the more healthy parts of the State, labor of a different kind may be advantageously employed in the construction of roads or the improvement of rivers, it is very evident that in those sections, where our most valuable unappropriated lands lie, slaves constitute the only effective force. With them our swamps must be drained and our rivers opened, or the former remain the abodes of noxious animals, and the latter, a mere apology for navigable streams. Such is the demand for slave labor, they cannot be had for hiring, without great sacrifice; and those hired for short periods, cannot be properly disciplined. To employ white laborers to drain our swamps, cannot succeed. They have not the physical ability. There cannot be found a single instance in the low country of the Southern States, where even a farm on an extensive scale has been cleared and cultivated by this species of labor, and the most liberal wages cannot effect it. It is evident, then, from a moment's reflection, that the State is reduced to the necessity of either giving up all pretensions to improvements upon a large scale, or to make an appropriation to purchase laborers, commensurate with the work to be performed, and to cease to think of employing any longer a species of force, which both public and private experience demonstrate to be unfit. And if an individual, stripped of every advantage but his strength and dexterity, can purchase of these lands and become wealthy, why may not the State, with all her advantages, make it profitable to bring into active operation her millions of them? And instead of crippling enterprise and driving from her bosom the most valuable and enterprising of her sons by a neglect of her means, give vent by rail roads and improved navigation through her own seaports to the produce of her own soil, increased four-fold by a judicious system of Internal Improvement, which, persevered in with diligence and economy, shall ere

long exhibit us to our sister States full of wealth and happiness.

The States of South-Carolina and Virginia, already awakened to their true interest on this important subject, have assumed an imposing attitude; and unless something effectual be done, to give direction to the products of our own soil, through our own seaports, North-Carolina, in her intercourse with these her sister States, must still contribute to their advancement, a large portion of the profits of her industry.

The Board of Internal Improvement, in their report to the Legislature in 1827, recommended that steps should be taken to ascertain the certain amount of produce annually exported from the State. Permit me again to call your attention to it, as a subject of vast importance to correct legislation. Destitute of the aids which it is calculated to afford, we are completely at sea without land-mark or compass, on the all important point of determining the ability of any given portion of the State, to supply its quota of expense, for works of permanent utility.

The good effects on the people of our State, in relation to their opinions on the subject of Internal Improvements, which the adoption of this measure would produce, cannot, I think, be doubted. Its tendency is, to instruct them as to the immense amount they annually lose by a sickening system of transportation to foreign markets, while it demonstrates their resources for constructing and supporting better ones at home. Instead of surmise and wild conjecture on this point, they will have calculations based on facts, official and indisputable.

The information contemplated by the measure is such, as should be in the possession of every statesman and legislator; for it comprehends the wealth of the State, and, in no small degree, its moral power, with which, when they may be wanted, numbers may be commanded.

The enlightened liberality of the framers of our Constitution, and the Legislature of an early day, have done much for the cause of learning, by establishing an Institution in the centre of our State, in which the higher branches of science are taught as successfully as in any similar institution in our country, and is the only monument of learning within the State of North-Carolina, to which the eye of the stranger or the citizen patriot may be directed, with any emotions of pride and patriotism. It will at once be understood that my allusion is to our University. Much remains, however, to be done, towards perfecting and giving permanency to this institution; and its situation at this time, calls more loudly for legislative interposition and patronage, than at any former period of its existence. Its funds, which promise