National Intelligencer.

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on roads and canals.

In inviting the public attention to this report, we eminently calculated to excite reasonable reflections and exertions, we discharge one of the most pleasant duties, which has ever fallen to our lot. Having been always of opinion that the highest obligations of government consisted in extending the benefits of education and in promoting internal improvements, we have, for many years past, lost no occasion to awaken the nation to the importance of these objects, and to excite a zeal towards their accomplishment by exposing the readiness with which they might be effected. Our readers may judge, from this circumstance, of the interest with which we have labelled this first step taken by the general government in the establishment of objects, which it alone can accomplish.

This performance is in every respect masterly. It carries on the face of it the usual simplicity and perspicuity of its author, and without either spinodor of diction, or parade of learning, takes those views of the subject which are, perhaps, the most likely to impress conviction on the mind of the reader. It commences with the following concise general view of the subject:

"The general utility of artificial roads and canals, is at this time so universally admitted, as hardly to require any additional proofs. It is sufficiently evident that, whenever the annual expense of transportation on a certain route in its natural state, exceeds the interest on the capital employed in improving the communication, and the annual expense of transportation (exclusively of the tolls,) by the improved route; the difference is an annual additional income to the nation. Nor does in that case the general result vary, although the tolls may not have been fixed at a rate sufficient to pay to the undertakers the interest on the capital laid out. This indeed, when that happens, lose; but the community is nevertheless benefited by the undertaking. The general gain is not confined to the difference between the expenses of the transportation of those articles which had been formerly conveyed by that route, but many wilds were brought to market by other channels, which can find a new and more advantageous direction; and those which on account of their distance or weight could not be transported in any manner whatever, will acquire a value, and become a clear addition to the national wealth. Those and many other advantages have become so obvious, that in countries possessed of a large capital, where property is sufficiently secure, to induce individuals to lay out their capital on permanent undertakings, and where a compact population creates an extensive commercial intercourse, within short distances, these improvements may often, in ordinary cases, be left to individual exertion, without any direct aid from government."

"There are however some circumstances, which, while they render the facility of communication throughout the United States an object of primary importance, tend to check the application of private capital and enterprize, to improvement, on a large scale.

"The price of labor is not considered as a formidable obstacle, because whatever it may be, it equally affects the expense of transportation, which is saved by the improvement, and will of course pay the improvements itself. The want of practical knowledge is no longer felt; and the occasional influence of mistaken calculations, in sometimes thwarting or giving an improper direction to public improvements, arises from the nature of many, and is common to all countries. The great demand for capital in the United States, and the rate of territory compared with the population, are, it is believed, the true causes which prevent new undertakings, and render those already accomplished, less profitable than had been expected.

"1. Notwithstanding the great increase of capital during the last fifteen years, the objects for which it is required continue to be more numerous, and its application is generally more profitable than in Europe. A small portion therefore is applied to objects which offer only the prospect of remote and moderate profit. And it also happens that a less sum being sacrificed at first, has in actually requisite for completing the work, this proceeds slowly; the capital applied remains unproductive for a much longer time than was necessary, and the interest accruing during that period, becomes in fact an injurious addition to the real expense of the undertaking.

"2. The present population of the U. States, compared with the extent of territory over which it is spread, does not, except in the vicinity of the seaports, admit that extensive commerce, at least, within short distances, which, in England and some other countries, forms the principal support of artificial roads and canals. With a few exceptions, canals particularly, cannot in America be undertaken with a view solely to the intercourse between the two extremes of, and along the intermediate ground which they occupy. It is necessary, in order to be productive, that the canal should open a communication with a natural extensive navigation which will pass through that new channel. It follows that whenever that navigation requires to be improved, or when it might at some distance be connected by another canal to another navigation, the first canal will remain comparatively unproductive, until the other improvements are effected, until the further canal is also completed. Thus the intended canal between the Chesapeake and Delaware, will be deprived of the full advantage and benefit arising from the intercourse between New York and the Chesapeake, until an inland navigation shall have been opened between the Delaware and New York. Thus the extensive canals completed round the falls of Potomac, will become more and more productive in proportion to the improvements, which the navigation of the upper branches of the river, and then of its communication with the western waters, some works already executed are unprofitable, many more remain unattempted, because their utility and productiveness depends on other improvements, too extensive or too distant to be embraced by the energy of individuals.

"The general government can alone remove these obstacles.

"3. With means, not adequate sufficient for the completion of every practicable improvement, it will always stop with the capital necessary for each work, which it may undertake, as fast as the work itself can progress, without regard to the amount of interest on a dormant capital, and requiring the real expense to its interest rate.

"4. With those resources, and embracing the whole union, it will complete on any given line, all the improvements, however distant, which may be necessary to render the whole productive, and eminently beneficial.

"5. The early and efficient aid of the *federal* government is recommended by still more important considerations. The internal navigation, complaints, and perhaps dangers, which may result from a state of territory, which otherwise is not radically removed, or prevented, then by opening speedy and easy communications through all the parts, by navigable canals, will shorten distances, facilitate commercial and personal intercourse, and tend by a still more intimate community of interests, the most remote quarters of the U. States. No other single operation, within the power of government, can more effectually tend to strengthen and perpetuate the union, which secures external independence, domestic peace, and internal liberty."

This is the conviction, to which the mind of Mr. Gallatin has become so strong a system, that we earnestly hope to see pervading the union. It is only by the universal impression that these objects are essential, that they are inseparably connected with the prosperity, and perhaps the peace of the country, that we can expect their seasonable accomplishment. Thanks to the intelligence and liberality of a man placed in the most favorable situation, who thus unequivocally declares his own conviction.

"The Secretary proceeds—

"1. *Great Canals, along the Atlantic sea coast.*

"The map of the United States will shew that the navigation, either by inland navigation, secure from storms and enemies, and which, from Massachusetts to the Mississippi extreme, of Georgia, is principally, if not solely, interrupted by four necks of land—These are the isthmus of Barnstable; that part of New-Jersey, which extends from the Raritan to the Delaware; the isthmus between the Delaware and the Chesapeake; and that low and marshy tract which divides the Chesapeake from Albemarle sound: It is ascertained that a navigation for sea vessels, drawing eight feet of water, may be effected across the three last; and a canal is also believed to be practicable, not perhaps across the Isthmus of Barnstable, but from the harbor of Boston to that of Rhode Island. The Massachusetts canal will be about 26, the New Jersey about 28, and each of the two southern about 22 miles in length, making altogether less than 100 miles.

"Should this great work, the experience of which has heretofore shewn, is estimated at about three millions of dollars, be accomplished, a sea vessel entering the first canal in the harbor of Boston, would through the bay of Rhode Island, Long Island sound, and the harbor of New York, reach Brunswick on the Raritan; thence pass through the second canal to Trenton on the Delaware, down that river to Christiana or Newcastle, and through the third canal to Elizabeth and the Chesapeake, without sailing down that bay, and up Elizabeth river, it would, through the fourth canal, enter the Albemarle sound, and by Pamptico, Core and Bogue sounds, reach Beaufort and Wrightsboro, in North Carolina. Of the last mentioned place, the inland navigation, through Stumpy & Toomy's sounds, is continued with a diminished draft of water, and by cutting two low and narrow necks, not exceeding three miles together, to cape Fear river; and thence, by an open but short and direct run along the coast, is reached the inland navigation between which and the main, the inland navigation is continued to St. Mary's on the coast, and to Fernandina in Georgia. It is unnecessary to add any comments on the utility of the work, and peace and safety of the navigation of merchandise, or the conveyance of persons."

Mr. Gallatin proceeds to state in detail the mode in which these four canals, denominated the Massachusetts canal, the New Jersey canal, the Delaware and Chesapeake canal, and the Chesapeake and Albemarle canal, may be made, with the expences, and the progress already made towards their accomplishment. The practicability of these several canals appears to have been fully ascertained by survey, and the expence is indicated by the following table:

CANALS.

	DIRECTION.	Miles.	Feet.	Dollars.
Massachusetts	Worcester to Taunton	26	260	250,000
New Jersey	Brunswick to Trenton	28	250	250,000
Chesapeake & Delaware	Christiana to Elk	22	125	150,000
Chesapeake & Albemarle	Elizabeth to Pasquotank	22	40	750,000
Total		98	675	2,000,000

The two last canals appear to have been partially effected by incorporated companies. The Delaware and Chesapeake canal company have opened a depth of 22 miles in length, 24 feet wide, and 6 deep, only navigated by flats, 40 feet long and 6 feet wide. One hundred thousand dollars have been expended.

It is proposed by the Secretary that all these canals should be of the dimensions contemplated by Mr. Lasrode for the Delaware and Chesapeake canal, which are stated to be as follows:

"The canal 26 feet wide at the bottom, and 40 at the top on the water line, being dug at the depth of 8 feet, is intended for vessels of forty to twenty tons drawing 7 1-2 feet water; but the banks twenty feet wide for towing paths, and one of which may be converted into a turnpike road, being raised three feet above the level of the water, will, by encreasing the height of the lock gates one foot, admit a depth of 9 feet of water in this canal; to which depth it would perhaps be eligible to dig at once. The locks 80 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 8 (or 9) feet deep on the gate-sills, containing each 11,500 to 13,000 cubic feet of water, and with a lift of 8 to 9 feet each, will be constructed of hewn stone laid in tarras."

It is computed that the receipts of tolls by the Delaware and Chesapeake company would yield a nett annual income of 15,000 dollars on an expenditure of 250,000 dollars. This will enable the reader to judge of the little pecuniary encouragement accompanying these object to the general government, to whom 6 per cent. would be a tangible remuneration. Indeed, from the great increase of communication, it is probable that canal stock which yielded five per cent. would stand at par. In this instance the dividend would be about 6 1-2 per cent.

The next point that engages the attention of the Secretary is the *Communications between the Atlantic and Western waters.*"

"The Appalachian mountains, to use an ancient generic denomination, extend in a direction from the south, from the 42d to the 34th degree of north latitude, approaching the sea, and never washed by the tide in the state of New York, and thence in their southerly course, gradually receding from the sea shore. Viewed as a whole, their breadth may be estimated at 110 miles, and they consist of a succession of parallel ridges, following nearly the direction of the sea coast, irregularly intersected by rivers & divided by narrow valleys. The ridges, which divides the Atlantic river, from the western waters generally known by the name of Allegheny, preserves throughout a nearly equal distance of 250 miles from the Atlantic ocean, and a nearly uniform elevation of 3,000 feet above the level of the sea.

"These mountains may, however, be perhaps considered as consisting of two principal chains: between these lies the fertile Innomine valley, which although occasionally interrupted by transversal ridges, and in one place by the diffusion of Allegheny ridge, may be traced from Newburgh and Esopus, on the Hudson, to Knoxville on the Tennessee.

"The eastern and narrowest chain is the Blue Ridge of Virginia, which is by north east course traverses under various names, the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, & N. Jersey, forms the high lands broken at West point by the tide of the Hudson, and then uniting with the Green mountains, assumes a northerly direction and divides the waters of the Hudson, and of Lake Champlain from those of Connecticut river. On the borders of Virginia and North Carolina, the Blue Ridge is joined by an inferior mountain, with the great western chain, and thence to its southern extremity, becomes the principal or dividing mountain, discharging eastwardly the rivers Roanoke, Pedee, Santee, and Savannah, into the Atlantic ocean; southwardly the Chattahoochee, and the Alabama into the gulph of Mexico, and westwardly the New river and the Tennessee. The New river, taking a northerly course, breaks through all the ridges of the great Western chain, and at a short distance beyond, takes under the name of Kanhawa, with the Ohio. The Tennessee pursues, at first, a southwest direction between two chains, until having received, and in a westwardly course turned the mountain extremity of the great western chain, it assumes a northwardly direction, and joins its waters with those of the Ohio, a few miles above the confluence of that river with the Mississippi.

"The western chain, much broader, and generally more elevated, is known under the names of Cumberland and Gauly mountains, from its northern extremity, near the present town of the Tennessee river, until it reaches in Virginia, the principal dividing mountain. Thence, in its northerly course, towards the state of New York, it obtains various names by the Green River river, which, by its junction with the New river branches of Kanhawa, and the Monongahela and Allegheny, which from their confluence at Pittsburgh, assume the name of Ohio, it forms only it pours into the Atlantic ocean, James river, the Potomac and the Susquehanna. From the northernmost and less elevated spurs of the chain, the Genesee flows into the lake Ontario; and in the quarter the northerly branches of the Susquehanna seem to take their sources, from amongst inferior ridges, and in their course to the Chesapeake, to break through all the mountains. From the Susquehanna, the principal chain assumes a more eastwardly direction, and washed on the north by the lateral branch of the river Mohawk, within it gives rise southwardly to the Delaware, it terminates under the name of Catskill mountain, in view of the tide water of the Hudson.

"This description has been introduced for the double purpose of pointing out all the rivers which can afford the means of means of communication, and of shewing the practicability, in the present states of science, of effecting a canal navigation across the mountains.

"The most elevated lock canal of which a correct description has been given, is that of Languedoc, and the highest ground over which it is carried, is only six hundred feet above the sea. It is not believed that any canal has been undertaken, or at least completed in England, of an elevation exceeding 450 feet above the waters united by it. The Allegheny mountain is so centrally, and from observations made in several places, 2,000 3,000 feet above the level of the sea. The precise height of the dividing ridge was ascertained by the commissioners, who laid out the United States road from Cumberland on the Potomac to Brownsville on the Monongahela, at 2,260 above the first, and at 2,130 feet above the lake near Cumberland, from the levels taken by