

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives

With a lively and grateful sense, let us first acknowledge the Supreme goodness of an Almighty Providence for the numerous instances in which he has peculiarly favored our land.

Permit me to embrace this opportunity to congratulate you upon the prosperous situation of our country, and the favorable auspices under which you have assembled. Our common country is in the full enjoyment of peace, and that portion of prosperity and happiness which our liberal institutions are calculated to ensure; the productions of our soil have ensured the warmest hopes of the agriculturist; our citizens during the past year have generally enjoyed an unusual portion of health; the accession to the population of our state during the past season, by means of emigration, has exceeded all former example; the resources of the state are gradually developing, and our finances are improving with a rapidity that answers our most sanguine expectations. But while we indulge ourselves in a gratifying review of the past, and in a pleasing contemplation of our present and future situation, let us not forget that unfeigned thankfulness and gratitude are continually due to Him from whom all blessings flow for these signal manifestations of his divine and beneficent regard.

Although the fertility of our soil and the variety of its productions, aided by the industry and economy of our citizens, after supplying an abundance for a rapidly increasing population, and placing all above the fear of want, furnish a large surplus of produce for market, yet the uncertainty of our only attainable market, and the difficulties to be surmounted, and expense to be incurred, by a large portion of our citizens in reaching that market, prevent them from realizing those advantages which their situation and circumstances would otherwise command, and operate as a dead weight upon the industry and enterprise of the state.

For a long period previous to the late war, the continued struggle for power in Europe, called immense numbers of their hands from the plough to fill their armies. Agriculture was neglected, whole countries were overrun, and the people as well as the armies were in a measure compelled to look to the United States for a considerable portion of their subsistence. American produce found a ready market in every part in Europe, and the high prices which it commanded, enabled the farmer in every part of the country to incur the expense of a difficult and tedious transportation, and yet to realize a handsome profit upon his labor. Nor was this prosperous state of affairs materially changed by the commencement of the late war with Great Britain. In consequence of the war, large disbursements of public money were made by the general government in every part of the country: a general rage for speculation was excited—numerous banks with a fictitious capital were established; immense issues of paper were made, and the circulating medium of the country was increased four fold in the course of two or three years. A natural consequence of this great increase of what was then deemed equivalent to money, was, that a fictitious value was placed upon labor, and every species of property; the estimate upon every thing was in reality a deception—a specious fraud upon the world; money, as it was then called, was easily acquired, and the people too generally, and too easily indulged in visionary dreams of wealth and splendor.

But this state of things could not last: the general pacification of the old world, and the consequent disbandment of their numerous armies again tenanted their long uncultivated fields; agriculture was so far encouraged, that every nation on the continent produced an ample supply of the necessities of life for their own consumption, and our American produce, could no longer find a market in that hemisphere. About this time, that the nations of the East assumed their pacific attitude, peace was concluded between this country and Great Britain; the extraordinary flow of money from our treasury was discontinued; our army was reduced; the newly created banks, began to fail; specie disappeared; the fictitious circulating medium of the country became trash in the hands of the people; wages and every species of property suffered an unprecedented depression in their value, and the industry of the country suffered a shock, from which in many places it has not yet recovered. The evils and embarrassments too, of this sudden change, were more severely felt in the grain-growing states, than in the South; as the planter has still been enabled to find a market for his cotton, sugar and tobacco.

To find a remedy for the pressure which operated so severely upon the agriculturist, in consequence of this sudden depression in

the market, has occupied the attention and called forth the exertions of the best talents of our country; and the remedies that have been adopted and pursued with so much success in other states, may advantageously be referred to, in considering of the means to be adopted for the amelioration of the condition of our own citizens.

In some of the states, a part of the capital which had formerly been successfully employed in commercial enterprise, has been employed in manufacturing establishments, by which large numbers have been withdrawn from the pursuits of husbandry, and a home market created for a great portion of the surplus produce of the farmer.

In other states, in addition to the establishment of manufactories, large portions of the dormant capital of the country, which had been withdrawn from mercantile pursuits, now no longer profitable, has been called forth and put into active circulation among the people in works of internal improvement. In many of the states, these remedies have been completely effectual; the cry of "hard times" is no longer heard, and a new impulse has been given, and new resources have been opened, to the industry and enterprise of the citizens.

The state of Ohio having become sensible of the advantages to be derived from the prosecution of a system of internal improvement, has recently commenced the construction of two canals, one of which is to open a communication between the river Ohio and Lake Erie. By this enterprise her citizens will be at once benefited, by the expenditure among them of large sums of money, furnished by Eastern capitalists. Employment will be found for large bodies of her citizens, who have heretofore been unprofitably engaged in the cultivation of the soil; a new and advantageous market will be opened for the surplus produce of the country, and a stupendous public work will be completed, which will be a permanent source of revenue to the state; besides leaving upon the pages of American history an instructive and illustrious demonstration of the energy and public spirit, of a free and infant republic.

This taken in connexion with the great artificial channel in New York, which the thunder of a thousand pieces of artillery has just announced as finished, cannot fail to give the North an advantage over the tropical climes.

The citizens of Indiana are still laboring under the difficulties produced by the causes to which I have alluded: and their relative situation with regard to markets, and the difficulties to be encountered, and the expense to be incurred in reaching their only approachable market, fluctuating and uncertain as it is, afford but small inducements to individual exertion and enterprise, as yet, in comparison with the inducements and facilities, that are presented in some of our sister states, where the languishing industry of the country has been revived, by the prosecution of public works to a successful issue.

Let us for a moment cast our eyes on a map of our own state, and examine the natural facilities for improvement, which are there obviously and impressively presented to view. The Wabash is a stream of great length: it runs through some of the most fertile portions of the state, and with the exception of the rapids near the mouth of White River, is deemed navigable for steam boats, during most of the season as far up as the mouth of the Tippacanoe. But these falls render the navigation of the river impracticable for a large portion of the year. This obstruction is situated upon that part of the river which forms the common boundary between this state and Illinois; and from a correspondence which I have had with the governor of that state, I have the satisfaction to inform you, that he tenders us every assurance, that the state of Illinois is willing to co-operate with this state in any measure that can be agreed upon to remove this impediment in the stream.

The navigable parts of the Wabash and the Maumee of the Lake, approximate very near to each other. By means of a canal of about twenty-eight miles in length, commencing at the junction of the St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, and terminating at the mouth of Little River on the Wabash, the navigable parts of those two rivers would be connected, and an uninterrupted water communication opened between the cities of New-Orleans and New-York, with the exception of the rapids before mentioned, in the Wabash, and the rapids situated near the mouth of the Maumee. The obstruction in the Maumee, which may be easily obviated, is situated in the state of Ohio, and must claim the early attention of that state, as it is in contemplation to extend the Dayton canal to a point on the Maumee above the rapids.

It will not for a moment be contended that the resources of this state are as yet equal to the accomplishment of works of equal magnitude with those in New-York, Pennsylvania, or Ohio; but, including the grant of land made by Congress, the waters

of the Wabash and the Maumee can be made to mingle, and the aforementioned obstructions can be removed, at an expense not exceeding one twentieth of the amount of capital employed in Ohio. May we then not indulge the hope that at some day not far distant, this almost natural channel of communication between the East and the West will be opened, and a great commercial thoroughfare established through the interior of our state; that we may witness with delightful sensations the various products of all countries, securely freighted in vessels floating upon its bosom.

The law of Congress approved May 13th, 1824, authorizing this state to open a canal through the public lands, to connect the navigation of the river Wabash and the Miami of the Lake, seems to have been predicated upon a belief, that the Indian title to the lands through which the proposed canal would pass, had already been extinguished. It is ascertained however, that the Indian title to a principle part of the lands through which the canal must necessarily pass, has not yet been obtained, by the General Government; consequently it is doubted whether this state can, without a violation of the rights of the native, as acknowledged and recognized by the federal government, proceed to survey and mark the route of the proposed channel for the purpose of availing herself of the donation under the provisions of the law of Congress, until these claims are quieted.

From authentic representations by those acquainted with the Indian affairs, it is believed that the Indians are inclined to dispose of their right of soil in that quarter of the state. It is therefore submitted to your consideration, whether a proper representation of this subject ought not to be made to our representatives in Congress, accompanied with a request to endeavor to procure an extinguishment of the Indian title to these lands.

And should we conclude to accept of the proposition of the General Government, it will be necessary to pass a law, authorizing the survey at as early a day as practicable.

From the prevailing sentiment in favor of internal improvement, manifested by every department of the general government, I think there is good reason to believe, that if the subject is brought before Congress at their present session, a grant of land and privileges much more liberal and beneficial could be obtained for this important purpose, than those contained in the act above mentioned.

The policy of opening a canal at the falls of the Ohio has for some years been undergoing the ordeal of public investigation, and it is but reasonable to suppose that at this time public opinion is prepared to respond to the question. It is not contended that this canal is of general interest to the state, except as a permanent & productive source of revenue; although a very respectable portion of our citizens are immediately interested in the great facility it would afford them, in the navigation of the Ohio; but it should be remembered "that a benefit to one part of the state, without an actual deprivation to the other parts, is a benefit to the whole." It is certain that works of this magnitude should never be undertaken without the approbation of public opinion, for no act of the legislature can ever be permanent or beneficial, when the settled determinations of the country are arrayed against it. When we consider the large sums which are annually paid for transportations around the falls of the Ohio; the active, extensive and increasing commerce carried on by means of that mighty river, and the immense value of the water power for machinery, that would be acquired by the construction of the canal, we are forced to appreciate its utility. We cannot refrain from fixing a high estimate upon this particular spot of ground, within our jurisdiction, when we reflect that so small an improvement, will enable us to demand a tribute from the head of navigation on the Ohio, to the mouth of the Mississippi; and when the Ohio canal is completed, we may expect a brisk trade from Canada to Europe; which will sufficiently indicate the importance of the work. Should you be satisfied that the public voice sanctions this project, and that the state of Kentucky will forbear to rear up a ruinous competition by the completion of a similar work on the other side of the river, you will have but little difficulty in coming to a conclusion favourable to the commencement of this long agitated work. The whole length of the canal will be about three miles, and the expense is estimated at about three hundred thousand dollars; and when the vast amount of property which is annually transported on the Ohio is taken into consideration, and compared with the amount transported on the New-York canal, it is believed that there will be but few who will withhold their assent to the opinion, that there is no point in the western country where an equal profit could be derived, from the expenditure of the same amount of capital, provided we could be permitted to enjoy it without competition. To raise the funds

for the completion of such works, by a system of taxation, would be impracticable: the people could not sustain the pressure.—Pursuing the course of other states on similar occasions, the money might be raised by loans, and means provided for the regular payment of the accruing interest.

As connected with this subject I cannot forbear the mention of a warm solicitude which is manifested by the citizens of the eastern part of this state for the construction of a canal from Lawrenceburgh on the Ohio, to Fort Wayne. They have already taken steps to procure a survey of the route, and it is understood have received assurances from a most respectable source, that the funds necessary to complete the work, can be procured from some of the eastern cities, so soon as a charter of incorporation sufficiently liberal in its provisions can be procured from the legislature of this state. As it is understood, that this project has no designs upon the public purse, and as the completion of the work will be of great and unquestionable utility, it is believed that no objection will be urged against granting a charter, as liberal in its provisions, as may be consistent with the policy, constitution and laws of the state. Our state pride should incline us to give an impulse to designs of this useful character, so eminently calculated to give us that standing in the Union to which we aspire.

The commissioner appointed by the last General Assembly to examine the obstructions in the two White rivers, and report the same, together with an estimate of the expense of the removal, to this session, has entered upon that duty, and in due time will lay before you the result of his examinations.

The two White rivers and their tributaries water a very considerable portion of the state, and at certain seasons of the year are navigable nearly two hundred miles from their junction with the Wabash. It is believed that these obstructions may be removed, and the navigation rendered comparatively secure, at an expense within the present means of the state; when they will prove valuable auxiliaries to the exporting citizen. This subject ought to claim the undivided attention of the Legislature.

I have said this much on the subject of internal improvement, because it seems to be demanded by the general necessity and spirit of the times. Canals for facilitating the means of commercial intercourse between distant points, are of acknowledged utility, as a means of giving a new impulse to the agricultural and manufacturing interests of the country, and improving the finances of the state, besides giving life and animation to the whole body politic. But schemes of this kind should not be hastily entered into, merely from a spirit of emulation, or a thirst for ephemeral glory. We should be satisfied that the extent and commercial importance of the navigation to be connected or improved, are sufficient to place beyond doubt the success and public utility of the work. When satisfied on these points the means of the state may be safely employed. The interest of no community can ever be jeopardized by borrowing money under these circumstances, to expend upon permanent and imperishable works of public utility for the internal improvement of the country, which is a common benefit to all, when it is reduced to a reasonable certainty that the profits arising from such improvements, will annually exceed the interest of the sum expended, and gradually extinguish the principal. It is this policy alone, which will enable us to enjoy in an ample manner, the numerous advantages with which nature has surrounded us.

It has been generally expected that during the present session the National Road would have been permanently located through Indiana, but circumstances have disappointed our wishes. As this road proceeds towards the setting sun, we feel an increased anxiety that it may be completed as soon as possible through this rising state. Under the influence of these feelings, and with due deference to the wisdom and good motives of Congress, and to the zeal and industry of our own members, allow me respectfully to submit to your consideration, whether a memorial to that body, expressing the hope which we entertain, that respectable annual appropriations will be made out of the national treasury, towards the continuation of this grand turnpike, would not furnish our delegation in Congress with materials, that would enable them to operate successfully in this matter, in our behalf, besides having a happy influence upon that interesting question.

By virtue of the compact entered into between this state and the United States, three per cent. on the sales of all public lands, within our boundaries, was granted to this state to be applied, under the directions of our legislature, to the making of roads and canals within the state. At the session of 1821-2, the legislature passed a law authorizing the location of a number of roads, and appropriated one hundred thousand dollars of the three per cent. fund for opening the same. At that time there was due to the