

## REPORT

*Of the Committee on Roads and Canals, to which was referred a report of a select committee, made 12th May, 1820, relative to carrying into effect the treaty of Brownstown, of 25th November, 1808, accompanied with "A bill for laying out and making a road from the Lower Rapids of the Miami of Lake Erie to the Connecticut Western Reserve, in the state of Ohio," &c.*

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MARCH 8, 1822.

Read, and, with the bill, committed to a committee of the whole House to-morrow.

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The Committee on Roads and Canals, to whom was referred the report of a select committee, made on the 12th of May, 1820, relative to carrying into effect the provisions of the Treaty of Brownstown, made and concluded on the 25th of November, 1808, between the United States, of the one part, and the Chippewas, Ottawas, Pottawatamies, Wyandots, and Shawanees, of the other part,

## REPORT:

That it appears to your committee that, from the treaty aforesaid, there was a tract of land ceded to the United States, commencing at the foot of the Rapids of the Miami of the Lake, and extending to the western line of the Connecticut Reserve, of one hundred and twenty feet wide, for the purpose of locating a road, and all the lands within one mile on each side of the same, for the purpose of connecting the settlements of Michigan with those of Ohio, as well as to render the communication between the Indian tribes of the same nations more convenient, a part of which then, as well as now, reside on the Sandusky and Miami rivers, and the other part in the neighborhood of Detroit, and on the river Huron.

Your committee adopt the report above alluded to, as well as documents 1, 2, 3, and 4, which accompanied the same, all of which they ask to be made a part of this their report; which is respectfully submitted, accompanied by bill.

*Report of the Select Committee, made at the First Session of the Sixteenth Congress.*

The committee appointed to inquire whether any, and, if any, what, further provision may be necessary to give effect to the provisions of the treaty made at Brownstown, in the territory of Michigan, ask leave to

**REPORT:**

That the treaty referred to was concluded on the 25th day of November, 1808, (1 vol. L. U. S. 417,) and that its exclusive object appears to have been to obtain the establishment of a practicable and convenient road from the interior settlements of the United States to those of the territory of Michigan.

Many of the tribes of Indians, with whom that treaty was concluded, were, in virtue of previous treaties, entitled to receive, within that territory, large annuities. There never had been any artificial road leading to it, except through the province of Upper Canada. Delays had, consequently, occurred in the transmission of those annuities, and reiterated complaints were made because they were not received, or, if received, frequently damaged. To obviate such difficulties, and in the expectation that many important advantages would result to them from a measure which promised to bring them more immediately under the observation and protection of the government, the Indians, parties to the treaty, without any other remuneration than such incidental benefits as they anticipated from the establishment of the proposed road, voluntarily ceded to the United States a tract of land of one hundred and twenty feet in width, extending from the "foot of the Rapids of the Miami of the Lake," to the western line of the "Connecticut Western Reserve," and all the land within one mile of said tract, on each side of it; and also another tract of land, of one hundred and twenty feet in width, extending from Lower Sandusky, southerly, to the boundary line established by the Treaty of Greenville. This treaty is, in the body of it, declared to be reciprocally binding; but it is observable that no *new* obligation, of any nature, seems to have been imposed by it upon the United States, unless it may be fairly inferrible, from its context, its avowed object, and the circumstances attending its conclusion, that this government became bound to establish and maintain the contemplated road.

The intention of the parties to the treaty your committee believe to be obvious. The history of the transaction, the repeated declarations of the Indian chiefs who were parties to it, and the sentiments of Mr. Jefferson, then President of the United States, and who directed the negotiation, as they are disclosed in his message to this House, of the date of January 30, 1808, which accompanied a copy of the Treaty of Detroit, (see Executive papers, 1st sess. 10th Cong.) combined with the evidence furnished by the context of the treaty, indicate, conclusively, the establishment of a safe and convenient road as the sole object of the negotiation.

No measures, however, seem to have been adopted with a view to the attainment of that object, until, by an act of Congress of the date of December 12, 1811, (vol. 4, 364.) the President of the United States was authorized to appoint three commissioners, to explore, survey, and mark, the most eligible course for the proposed roads; and the sum of six thousand dollars was appropriated to defray the expenses of executing the law.

Before any progress, however, could be made, in giving effect to the views of Congress, war existed between this nation and Great Britain: and of that war, the first fruits were, the temporary loss of that entire province, to open an avenue to which, was the object of the law referred to. The lamentable consequences which resulted from so humiliating an occurrence, it is quite unnecessary to detail; it is sufficient to ask the attention of the House to the fact, that the barrier interposed, by the northwestern posts, having been broken down, the congregated force of the northern Indians was immediately felt, along the whole interior and incurvated frontier of Ohio and Indiana. Such a state of things was not favorable to the purpose of exploring the country and establishing roads. The money which was appropriated for the purpose of giving effect to the treaty of Brownstown, was soon lost in the immense aggregate of disbursements rendered necessary to enable the northwestern army, under the command of General Harrison, to advance. The greater part of the sum was expended in opening a road, of the first importance certainly—for, without it, the northwestern army could have made no progress—but quite useless, as it regards the permanent and paramount object contemplated by the treaty of Brownstown, that of obtaining a good road over the Black Swamp. Not a solitary traveller now finds his way along that avenue; it is principally indicated by the broken remnants of baggage wagons and gun carriages, scattered remains of flour barrels, and the mouldering skeletons of horses and oxen, remaining as they were left, just visible above the surface of the mud and wet which destroyed them! The road being found thus entirely useless, the President was authorized, by an act of Congress of April 16, 1816, (vol. vi. 53, 4.) to alter its location; it is believed that some progress has been made, through the War Department, in the selection of a better site for a road, but no progress has been made in opening it; and it seems to your committee quite impossible, by the aid only of the small and diminished military force of the government at Detroit, to effect, at any time, so desirable a work.

Such had been the proceedings in reference to the treaty of Brownstown, and such the small progress made towards the accomplishment of its purpose, when, in September, 1817, the treaty of the Rapids of the Miami was concluded, (2d ses. 15th Con. 113.) by the subsequent ratification of which, the Indian title to the whole country within which the contemplated roads were to be located became vested in this government.

It has not escaped the observation of your committee, that this treaty may be considered to affect materially the relation in which the

general government previously stood, in relation to the treaty of Brownstown; yet they have supposed that, if the obligation imposed upon this government by the last mentioned treaty were an absolute one; if no election were given to the United States, originally, to make the roads contemplated, and accept the cession; or, at their pleasure, to dissent from the grant, and refuse to make and continue the roads; then the obligatory force of the treaty of Brownstown cannot justly be deemed to have ceased in consequence of the treaty of the 29th September, 1817, but that, in good faith, this government is still bound to fulfil all its requisitions.

Without endeavoring, however, to arrive with technical precision at the only true construction of which these treaties may now be susceptible, your committee remain entirely satisfied that other considerations, founded in motives of the truest economy and the soundest policy, imperiously require the positive accomplishment of the views disclosed by the parties to the treaty of Brownstown.

The Black Swamp, so celebrated in the annals of our recent history, is an extensive morass, which winds round the southeastern border of Michigan; it terminates, on the north, at the border of lake Erie, comprehending a width of about thirty miles. It extends so far southerly and southwesterly, as to interrupt all communication by land between the settlements in Michigan and those of the interior of the United States. It consists of an elevated basin, of impervious clay, upon which rests a thick stratum of fertile black loam. There is so little inclination in its general surface, that, though numerous streams pass through it, there is little opportunity for the water, with which it is sometimes almost entirely covered, to escape from it, except by the slow process of evaporation; while, at the same time, there exists unequivocal indications that its surface is elevated so far above the level of the water courses, and of the lake, as that, by artificial drains, it may be made subservient to all the purposes of profitable agriculture.

No reliance, however, can be placed upon the individual industry of that country to construct a road over such a morass. The construction of a road must *precede* the establishment there of any considerable population.

The state of Ohio, within whose limits this morass is principally situated, if she possessed more ample funds than she does possess, could find no sufficient inducement to such an undertaking, for she has, comparatively, no inhabitants beyond it to protect; it forms the boundary of her population in that direction. Such a road must, therefore, be a national work. And, in addition to all those political considerations which so obviously and so powerfully dictate the construction, throughout the Union, of artificial roads and canals, there are others of local application, which, in the opinion of your committee, do imperiously call for the attention of the general government to this particular section of the Union.

Such a road as is proposed would pass through a vast country of uncultivated land, the whole of which yet remains the exclusive property of the government. Public lands are here considered a legiti-



mate source of public revenue. To carry into effect the provisions of the treaty of Brownstown would not only bring into market the beautiful country which is beyond the Miami, with the certain prospect of better and more accelerated sales, but would induce the settlement of that country, now so repulsive in its aspect, which lies between the Sandusky and the Miami, over which the road would go: it would soon be reclaimed. The construction of the road itself would uncover a considerable portion of the adjacent land, and fit it, with little additional expense, for immediate cultivation.

Your committee feel that they hazard nothing in the proposition, that, in a pecuniary point of view alone, this nation would soon find itself more than remunerated for the expense which might be incurred in the construction of the road, by the increased value of the public lands, and the accelerated sales it would induce.

There remains another and a distinct view of this subject, which your committee feel it a duty briefly to present: In examining the topic referred to them, your committee could not fail to consider it in regard to the military defences of the country.

The situation of the territory of Michigan in relation to the province of Upper Canada, renders that frontier, more than any other, perhaps, peculiarly exposed. Its settlements rarely penetrating into the interior, in no place presenting a very dense population, extend along the meandering shores of the lakes and straits from Lake Erie to Lake Huron, and approach the very verge of the national boundary. They lie at the foot of that vast avenue which leads through Lakes Huron and Superior, into the immense country of the northwest, and down which, with surprizing facility, a formidable Indian force may at any time be brought upon them. In its rear, and intervening between it and the interior settlements of Ohio and Indiana, there still continues a numerous and powerful Indian population of many thousands, while its southeastern termination rests upon that formidable morass, which so entirely separates that territory from the strength and the power of this nation. So circumstanced, this prolonged line of settlement is opposed in front by the most thriving population of Upper Canada—a population, increasing with a rapidity unprecedented in the annals of Canadian history; and which, whether its moral or physical character be considered, will hereafter be found more formidable, it is believed, than that of any other portion of either Canada.

Opposed by difficulties on all sides, and completely isolated, it would be unreasonable to suppose that the people of the territory of Michigan, though influenced by the most devoted patriotism, could alone successfully resist so complicated a pressure, as, in the event of a future war with Great Britain, may be brought to bear upon them. But, how much soever it concerns the honor of this nation to sustain its authority, and protect its people in every part of the empire, yet, any consideration founded alone in the exposed condition of the inhabitants of Michigan, becomes of diminished importance when the situation of that territory is adverted to, as it has relation to the in-

terior frontier of Ohio, Indiana, and even Illinois. It is on the peninsula of Michigan alone that the exposed parts of that frontier can be cheaply and securely defended against Indian or English hostile incursions. The military positions of Detroit, fort Gratiot, and Michilimackinac, and their intervening and neighboring settlements, are, in relation to that greatly extended interior frontier a perfectly effectual redoubt. No enemy can approach it, except the citizens of that remote country, and the authority of this nation there, be first prostrated in the dust.

Your committee do not deem it important to fortify the proposition which, on this point, they advance, by any train of deductions. They only beg leave to advert to two distinct periods in the history of that country, feeling entirely satisfied that an allusion to them, in connexion with the subject of this report, will be found to justify any practicable measures which may serve to increase the effective strength of the territory, or render more safe and practicable its communication with the interior of the Union.

In all that period which intervened between the Treaty of Peace of 1783, and the surrender to this government of the northwestern posts, and while the territory of Michigan was in the possession of a power either hostile or indifferent to the peace of this country, it is matter of history that the western settlements were in a state of continued warfare; from the heights of the Alleghany to Natchez, its whole line of frontier was marked by blood and fire. But when the authority of this government was established there, Indian hostility was neutralized, and, under the cover of profound peace, the western country grew rapidly. Holden in check by the barrier which the possession of the settled parts of Michigan enabled this nation to interpose against the English, and the Indians of the northwest, the Indians of the peninsula of Michigan, and of the northern part of Ohio, were deterred, during the early part of the late war, from acts of hostility; but when the authority of this nation was prostrated there, distress and dismay pervaded the whole defenceless line of the most advanced settlements, from Cleveland, on lake Erie, through Ohio and Indiana. But when, again, before the conclusion of the war, this government had, at almost infinite expense of money, and by a sacrifice of blood which was above price, again re-occupied those positions from which it had been driven, the scene of war was again removed, and the battles of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, were fought on the borders of Michigan.

The inference your committee would deduce from the historical facts alluded to, is, they flatter themselves, manifest. It consists, unquestionably, with the true policy of this government to throw into the peninsula of Michigan, by every practicable means, a dense population; and it is, more especially, their true policy to construct, over the Black Swamp, a permanent, safe, and convenient public road. Such a measure is dictated by good faith, for there can be no doubt but that the measure was contemplated by the parties to the Treaty of Brownstown. It is dictated by a wise regard to na-

tional economy, for the contemplated road would open an avenue to a fertile and beautiful country, the peninsula of Michigan; a country, the soil within which is almost exclusively the property of the nation. It would conduce greatly, too, to the settlement of the intermediate country, which is also the exclusive property of the nation, and whose settlement must, almost of necessity, be preceded by some extraordinary effort of the national government. But such a measure is not less imperiously called for, as an almost indispensable measure of defence. The prodigious sums of money which were expended in the efforts which the nation made to re-occupy that territory, would have constructed many such roads; efforts which could never have been called for, if, in the spirit of the Treaty of Brownstown, good roads had, previously to the war, been constructed; for, if a convenient and practicable communication, between Ohio and Michigan, had existed, this nation would have been spared the humiliation of witnessing a disgraceful capitulation, and that devoted people would have been saved from the indescribable horrors of Indian devastation.

Every view which your committee have been able to take of the subject referred to them, having confirmed them in the very decided opinion to which they have arrived, that a public road ought to be constructed, from the Miami to the western line of the Connecticut Western Reserve, it remains for them, respectfully, to submit their opinion, as to the best means by which that desirable object may be effected. They have not been regardless of the diminished amount of the public revenues: they are aware of the strong desire entertained by the House, to limit the public expenditures to the smallest practicable sum: and, it is with much satisfaction, therefore, that they feel themselves justified in recommending an expedient which they think will be adequate to the exigency, without any specific appropriation of money. On reference to the stipulations contained in the treaty of Brownstown, it is observable, that, a mile in width on each side of the contemplated road from the Miami to the Western Reserve, is granted, as well as the site for the road itself, to the United States. It seems probable that the framers of that treaty had in view, at the time of the negotiation, the application of the whole of the ceded land, specifically, to the purpose of defraying the expense of making the road. From the best information which your committee have been able to obtain, they entertain the belief, that this tract would furnish a fund more than adequate to the exigency; and that no more appropriate application could be made of the land in question.

They therefore, respectfully, recommend the adoption of the following resolution, viz:

*Resolved*, That the Committee on Roads and Canals be instructed to bring in a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to contract with any person or persons to construct a permanent and suitable road, to extend from the foot of the Rapids of the Miami of the Lake to the western line of the Connecticut Western Reserve, according to the plan contemplated by the treaty of Brownstown,

and on such route, passing through the Reserve (so called) at Lower Sandusky, as the President may direct; in consideration of the whole of the tracts on each side of the contemplated road, which were granted by the treaty of Brownstown, or so much thereof as in the opinion of the Secretary of the Treasury may be adequate to the object; and in which bill shall also be inserted, among other things, a provision or provisions, that the person or persons so contracted with, do complete the said road within a reasonable time, in said bill to be limited; that such person or persons do stipulate to keep said road in good repair, for and during a number of years, to be in said bill defined; and, also, that the person or persons so contracted with, do also give bond, with sufficient sureties, for the faithful performance of his or their contract; and also a provision, defining a time and manner in which the title to said lands may be conveyed.

All which, together with the documents Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, which accompany this report, and which they pray may be taken as part of it, is respectfully submitted.

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No. 1.

Whereas a grant of land was made by certain tribes of Indians, at a treaty held at Brownstown, in the territory of Michigan, on the twenty-fifth of November, one thousand eight hundred and eight, for locating a road from the foot of the rapids of the Miami of the Lake, to the western line of the Connecticut reserve; and a road to run southwardly from Lower Sandusky to the boundary line established by the treaty of Greenville: And whereas the sum of six thousand dollars was appropriated by an act of Congress, passed December the twelfth, eighteen hundred and eleven, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of exploring, surveying, and opening the same, which has not been expended agreeably to the provisions of said act; but from some cause, has been turned over to some other appropriation—or yet remains unexpended in the treasury of the United States: Therefore,

*Resolved, by the General Assembly of the state of Ohio,* That our senators and representatives in Congress be requested to use their influence to have the sum aforesaid laid out, on one or both of the beforementioned roads, as they may think will be most advantageous to the interest of the state, and consistent with the original appropriation.

*Resolved,* That the governor of this state be requested to forward one copy of the foregoing preamble and resolution to each of our senators and representatives in Congress, and one copy to the delegate from the territory of Michigan.

JOSEPH RICHARDSON,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

ALLEN TRIMBLE,

*Speaker of the Senate.*

February 22, 1820.



## SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE,

*Columbus, Ohio, 25th February, 1820.*

I certify the foregoing to be a correct copy of the original roll, remaining on file in this office.

JOHN M'LENE,  
*Secretary of State.*

No. 2.

WASHINGTON CITY, *March 31st, 1820.*

SIR: In reply to your inquiries relating to the application of certain moneys, appropriated to lay out and make certain roads contemplated by the treaty of Brownstown, I have to make the following statement: On the 27th of August, 1812, Mr. Secretary Gallatin wrote me, then Governor of Ohio, on the subject of that road, (a copy of his letter is herewith enclosed) to which I replied, stating to him the only course I could pursue in making the road, preparatory to the march of the northwestern army, under Gen. Harrison. As it was a state of war, and the road to Sandusky altogether through the Indian country, no contract could be made for opening the road. I ordered out a company of frontier militia, who opened the road, thus coupling the defence of the frontiers with the making of the road. This was done in the autumn of 1812. In January I received from the Treasury of the United States \$5,500, of which I expended on the road \$4,922 14 before the march of the army alluded to. Having many occasions for disbursing moneys on account of war operations, the residue of the \$5,500 was applied to various services, and for which I am accountable to the United States.

I am, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

R. J. MEIGS, Jr.

JOSEPH NOURSE, Esq.

*Register of the Treasury.*

No. 3.

*Extract of a letter from Governor Cass, and General M'Arthur, to the Secretary of War, dated*

*"MIAMI RAPIDS, Nov. 29, 1817.*

"Should circumstances destroy our naval superiority upon the upper lakes, our communication with Detroit and its dependent settlements could be preserved by land only, and our possession of the country would, in a great degree, depend upon the facilities which the roads might offer to the march of troops, and to the transportation of their munitions of war, baggage, and provisions. It is to be hoped that such an occurrence is remote, but the possibility of its happening, and its disastrous consequences, should we be found unprepared, furnish

powerful motives to provide, as far as human wisdom can do, for the event.

By completing a road from Sandusky to Detroit, considerable progress would be made towards opening a great national communication from the capital to one of the extremities of the Union.

The western turnpike, from Cumberland to the Ohio, terminating at Wheeling, would leave only the portion of road between that place and Sandusky to be made. Future enterprise and industry, either individual or national, might complete the work, and it would equally promote the varied intercourse of peace, and the important operations of war.

This view is prospective, but the time cannot be remote when the policy of connecting the different parts of this vast republic by great permanent roads, will be felt and acknowledged—when such a policy shall banish local jealousies and discordant interests, shall furnish new and increased facilities for private industry, and shall add strength and wealth to the resources of the nation.

Forts and military positions along a remote and exposed frontier, will furnish little protection, unless the communication to it is rendered easy and expeditious. A great leading road, such as the nature of this country requires, and the public good demands, would add more to its permanent security than any other defensive measure which could be adopted.

But these are considerations connected with the necessity of such a road, in consequence of the nature of the country, of its importance to the nation, for the preservation of a weak and important frontier, and of the improbability that such a road will ever be made unless some portion of the general resources are directed to this object: but, viewed exclusively as a subject effecting the revenue, there can be no doubt but its operation would be favorable.

From the settlements in Ohio to Detroit, nearly the whole country is the property of the United States. Every consideration, either of a fiscal or political nature, demands the immediate sale and settlement of this land; and every measure is important, which will facilitate the acquisition of either object. Among these measures, the most obvious in itself, and most certain in its result, is the opening of a leading road. In any country this would be important—in this country it is absolutely necessary. Sales will only be made with a view to settlements, and settlement will be aided and encouraged by making roads where the population of the country will long be unable to make them.

There is little difficulty in proposing a plan, which would accomplish this object, and, in all probability, increase the actual receipts at the Treasury, after the expenditures which may be necessary in effecting it.

Previous to the sale of the public lands, were the site of a permanent well made road, located from the line of the track recently purchased of the Indians, to Detroit, and, were the national faith pledged for its completion within a reasonable period, the competi-

tion excited among the purchasers, to procure the land in the vicinity of this road, would add greatly to its value. Any estimate upon this subject must be loose and conjectural: but, when it is considered that this road would pass through land, the property of the United States, for at least one hundred and fifty miles, a great part of which is fertile, and susceptible of compact settlements, and much of which is equal to any land in Ohio, it cannot be doubted, but it will enter the market with every prospect of obtaining a price far exceeding that fixed by law. It would not be necessary, in order to secure the desired object, that the work should be actually commenced. Every purpose would be answered, by determining the site of the road, and delaying its completion, until sufficient funds for that purpose were received from the sale of the land.

We have travelled out of the proper object of our mission, in bringing this subject to the attention of the government; but we trust our excuse will be found in its vital importance to this section of our country; and in the consideration, that, if the present opportunity passes away, without producing any favorable result, we may consider as hopeless every effort to attain it.

Considered as the means of increasing the national strength, and of securing the possession of an important frontier, we are aware that it has no exclusive claim to the attention of the general government; every section of the union has an equal right to urge its claims. But there is probably none in which the expenditure of an equal amount would be productive of more important consequences—and certainly there is none which is weaker in itself, or more difficult, from its position, to be defended.

But when it is recollected that this whole road, from the line of the purchase, was made upon the frontier settlements of Ohio, to the Detroit river; will pass through a country, the property of the United States, except one Indian reservation, and a few tracts which have been sold or granted at Lower Sandusky, fort Meigs, and the river Raisin; the effect of such a road upon the sale of the land, is a fair object of inquiry; and if it is believed, that the receipts from the sales will be increased by it, or even if such a result is doubtful, the importance and necessity of the measure, connected with other considerations, may fairly justify its adoption."

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#### No. 4.

*Extract from a letter addressed to the President, in the winter of 1818-19, by the Secretary of Michigan.*

"The alleged intention of the government to diminish the force at the military post at Detroit, would seem to imply that the importance of that position is not justly appreciated.

"If it be a correct proposition that, in respect to all permanent military arrangements, foreign people are to be considered in the

character of *belligerents*, then I think that position, in point of importance, inferior to very few.

"It juts far into the enemy's country, commanding the roads, which, running parallel with the Thames or the shores of lake Erie, little diverging, pass through the rapidly increasing settlements of that part of the province of Upper Canada which extend from the head of lake Ontario, and subjects the greater part of those settlements to the control of a large force at Detroit. The topography of that country, while it furnishes great facilities for the rapid advance of an American force through it, protects remarkably its retreat.

As a position opposed to an enemy's acting *offensively*, Detroit, in relation to the country opposite, is a *tete du pont*. All the principal roads of the British country, above the lower extremity of lake Erie, lead to, and terminate at, or near, the settlement of Sandwich. The position at Detroit commands them.

"A large force here, also, will always keep in check the Indian tribes which inhabit the *peninsula* of Michigan, and, combined with other means, if it do not make them allies, will, at least, neutralize their hostility.

"On this peninsula there must be full one thousand Indian warriors. Mr. Crooks, Dr. Turner, and other gentlemen, estimate them to be more numerous.

"The routes by which these Indians ordinarily, and almost necessarily, communicate with the British, are up the river St. Josephs of lake Michigan, and down the Huron to the mouth of the Detroit, and, from the northern extremity of it, past the south extreme of Saguinaw bay, to the heads of R. Rouge, and over to the Huron, coming in, at the same point, opposite Malden. A large military force here, consequently, cuts off this communication.

"This position, combined with that of fort Gratiot, commands the straits of St. Clair, and Detroit, and not only secures the upper country against the influence of a British naval superiority on lake Erie, but secures also the safety of that avenue through which supplies to the upper posts must of necessity pass; for, it is firmly believed that, without almost infinite hazard and expense, they cannot pass up the waters of the Mississippi. From Indiana to Chicago they cannot go; for, through the intervening wilderness and swamps, not even an Indian footpath has been explored; nor, without imminent danger, can they be passed from Fort Wayne; for, Detroit in possession of the enemy, the whole peninsula, being a wilderness, would be an enemy's country.

As a point from which to invade the upper province of Canada, Detroit is then of importance; but as a shield of defence for the uncovered frontier of Ohio and Indiana, as the only pledge of security for the upper posts, and as a security against Indian hostility, its importance must be manifest.

"Yet, without a strong military force, this important barrier may, at any time, be taken by a *coup de main*. Its inhabitants, as yet not probably exceeding about eight thousand, are located in one



extended and incurvated line, from lake Huron to lake Erie, not presenting, at any point, a very compact settlement. They have, in their rear, the Indians of the peninsula; on the one flank, a dreary extent of lake and wilderness; on the other, an impervious morass, cutting them off from the population of Ohio, while, in front, good and practicable roads lead to them, up which the concentrating force of the enemy may, at any time, be brought to bear upon them. How inadequate, therefore, is the country to the object of its own protection! If the government had not, heretofore, closed the doors of the country against a greater influx of inhabitants, its situation would be less precarious. Since 1807, the Indian title over a very considerable portion of the country, has been extinguished, but, until about the close of the year 1818, none of it has been brought into market.

“To the advantages indicated by this view of the subject, of locating a considerable military force near Detroit, is to be super-added the important one of protecting emigrants now coming in, and, for the first time, penetrating into the back country, from the individual acts of hostility of wandering Indians. Such occasional acts of hostility are to be expected. They will be excited by interruptions upon their hunting grounds. And still further is to be added the advantage of giving effect to the project of making a road through the Black Swamp. This is a work which, without the national aid, will hardly be effected in very many years. The country between Fort Meigs and Sandusky cannot be settled until the Swamp be drained; consequently, individual labor upon the road cannot be relied upon. The state of Ohio can hardly be expected to accomplish it, for, beyond that point, she has no citizens to protect; it forms her boundary in that direction. It must, therefore, be a national work; a work which, had it been effected before the late war, would have saved not only the degradation of a capitulated army, but, also, many millions of money.

“It is very certain, that a perfectly good military road may be made over this morass. It is equally certain, that the greater part of it may be made capable of producing abundant crops. The very act of making a durable road over it will fit a considerable part of it for cultivation. The deep ditches, which should be on each side of the road leading into the many streams which would intersect that road, would drain a very considerable part of the land bordering it. This Swamp is, in general, sufficiently elevated, consisting of a basin of hard clay, upon which is bedded a thick stratum of the most fertile black loam. The currents of the frequent streams which pass through it are rapid, and the height of their banks indicate that the general surface is not much depressed.

“If the object of securing, by means of such a road, to the post at Detroit, its military supplies, could be combined with that of inducing the settlement of the intermediate country, the advantage is surely worthy of notice, as it regards either the military, or the fiscal concerns of the nation.”

