

STATE OF NEW-YORK.

No. 250.

IN ASSEMBLY,

April 13, 1841.

REPORT

Of the Canal Commissioners, on the petition of inhabitants of Monroe county, praying for the removal of the canal feeder dam.

[Referred to the committee on canals.]

TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK.

The Canal Commissioners, in obedience to the several resolutions of the Assembly, of the 27th and 29th January, and the 8th and 23rd February, referring the petitions of sundry inhabitants of the city of Rochester and Monroe county, praying for the removal of the canal feeder dam on the Genesee river, to the Canal Commissioners to consider and report thereon,

RESPECTFULLY REPORT :

That a dam across the Genesee river above the city of Rochester, and a feeder from that point to the Erie canal was constructed for the purpose of taking the necessary waters of that river to feed the Erie canal from that place to Montezuma.

To protect the hydraulic privileges in the city of Rochester from injury by the construction of the Genesee Valley canal, it was determined to connect that canal with the river, so that the waters of Allen's creek, one of its tributaries, and which are taken into the canal at Scottsville, would be discharged into the river above the city.

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Immediately below this point of intersection, a new dam was constructed. A new guard lock to the Erie canal feeder was also constructed at this dam and the feeder enlarged and made navigable for boats navigating the Erie canal. The old dam was rendered unnecessary by the construction of the new one.

It is this new dam of which the petitioners complain, and ask the Legislature "to pass a law directing the Canal Commissioners to have said dams broken down before the warm weather commences."

By the enlargement of the feeder and the construction of this dam and the connexion of the Genesee Valley canal with the river, the navigation of the Erie canal may be maintained, should the old aqueduct over the Genesee river fail before the new one is constructed.

The condition of the old aqueduct is such that fears have been entertained for several years, that it could not be sustained until the new one was constructed. It is expected that the new one will be completed the ensuing season, but it is doubtful whether it can be brought into use before the opening of navigation in the spring of 1842. The importance of continuing the dam the present season for the purpose of navigation will readily be perceived.

The petitioners represent "that the new dam is only about one-half the length of the old dam and is elevated considerably higher." This is true to some extent, but not to the extent the petitioners seem to suppose. The river is some narrower at the place where the new dam is constructed than it is at the old one, and the new dam is about six inches higher than the former. That the waters of the river are raised to a greater height, and may, in times of great freshets, overflow a greater extent of territory in consequence of the construction of the dam at that place, cannot be doubted. But it should be borne in mind, that as the lands bordering on the river and its tributaries are cleared and cultivated, a greater and more rapid rise of its waters in times of freshets are the inevitable consequence. To these causes, in part, the evils complained of are doubtless attributable. The evils are none the less, from whatever cause they may arise, and it is due to the petitioners that all the relief should be afforded that is compatible with the maintenance of the public works.

The petitioners represent "that it is the opinion of the public generally," "that no dams are needed at the Rapids, for either the Genesee

Valley or Erie canal, the former being now supplied from Allen's creek, and the latter could be supplied from Lake Erie." It is true that the Genesee Valley canal is supplied from Allen's creek, and the Erie canal can, and is intended to be supplied from Lake Erie. But it is feared that closing the connexion between the former canal and the river at the dam, might, to some extent, injure the manufacturing interests below. And although it is not contemplated to use the waters of the Genesee river for the ordinary supply of the enlarged Erie canal at stages of low water in the river, yet it is an important auxiliary in filling the levels in the spring, and in contributing to the supply at times when there is a large surplus in the river, and which may be used for the purposes of navigation, without detriment to the hydraulic erections in the city of Rochester. Besides, in the event of a temporary suspension in the navigation, from any cause, west of the Genesee river, the feeder is indispensable to the maintenance of navigation from that city to Montezuma.

The petitioners are numerous and among the most enterprising and intelligent citizens of the county of Monroe. Their representations and wishes are entitled to great weight and consideration. All that can be done to remove the causes of complaint without a sacrifice of the paramount interests of the public, ought to be done.

Since the construction of the dam, that level of the enlarged canal has been reduced several inches below what was contemplated at the time of its construction. It is believed the dam may be reduced the same, which will remedy the evil in part. Examinations are making for the purpose of ascertaining whether any change can be made in the feeder, so as to dispense with the dam on that account, after the new aqueduct is brought into use. What will be the result of that investigation, the Commissioners are at this time unable to determine.

All which is respectfully submitted.

G. H. BOUGHTON,
HENRY HAMILTON,
DAVID HUDSON.
S. NEWTON DEXTER.

Albany, April 12, 1841.