

REPORT.

The committee directed by the order of the senate on January 24th to join the committee on Internal Improvement from the honorable the House of Delegates, and proceed in concert with them to examine and report upon the facts and allegations in connection with the subject matter of the collision between the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, and the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road Company, at the narrow passes between the Point of Rocks and Harper's Ferry; having performed that duty, begs leave to make the following report:

A short narration of the motives and causes which brought those great companies into existence, and which have propelled them onward to their present point of collision, may not be unimportant to a just estimate of the present condition of things, and to keep the General Assembly stedfast to its purposes in pursuance of that course of legislation which may enable it to achieve the great objects heretofore contemplated by the grants of charters to those companies.

The invention of the steam engine and its application to the propulsion of vessels, and the employment of this power to ascend and descend the valley of the Mississippi, had wrought an entire change in the commerce of the western states. Before this important and most pregnant discovery, the productions for exportation of the western states found their outlet almost wholly by a descending navigation down the Mississippi, and went abroad through New Orleans; and the ascent of the river being then *impracticable*, the returns by importation were made to Baltimore and other sea port towns on the Atlantic shores, and again from those great marts of importation were distributed to the consumer in the interior, and this branch of commerce found its only mode of conveyance across the rough and mountainous regions, towards the great valley of the west by *wagon power*. As the western wilds yielded to the enterprize and industry of civilized man and became settled and cultivated, so in proportion did Baltimore, (hitherto a mere village in comparison with Boston, New York and Philadelphia).