

the bottom, and three feet deep. The entire cost of such a work was estimated at \$1,578,954. It cannot be questioned that such a work was within the means of those who had designed it, without looking abroad for any aid; and it can as little be doubted that such a canal would have subserved, however imperfectly, the local interests which it was contemplated to advance, and which were thus enlisted in its support.

The subject, however, thus exhibited to the community, attracted a more general attention, and speedily drew around it a more enlarged and wide-spread feeling. In the month of November, 1823, a convention of delegates chosen by the people of various counties in the States of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, and by the corporations and other interests of the District of Columbia, assembled at the Capitol, in the city of Washington. New interests had now been brought into connexion with the subject, and the object to be attained became proportionably enlarged. No longer limited to the contracted plan and local views in which it had its birth, it now assumed a larger and more imposing character. It was perceived that an opportunity was presented to effect a junction between the Western waters and those of the Chesapeake, to open a great channel of communication across the Alleghany mountains; and the citizens of Pennsylvania and Ohio appeared to enter zealously into a project which promised so effectually to connect the prosperity of those great commonwealths with that of the States bordering on the Potomac.

The plan had now assumed a national instead of a local character. The President of the United States, in his annual message in December, 1823, submitted it to the consideration of Congress, as a subject of the highest importance to the general interests; Congress responded to the call, and from that moment the original design, contemplated in the report of the commissioners of Virginia and Maryland, became merged and absorbed in the noble work, which was to promote the more enlarged views and interests now engaged in its behalf.

In surrendering the project which they themselves had contemplated, which they felt themselves competent to execute, and which, to a certain extent, would have accomplished the objects they designed, Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia, could not but acknowledge that another was substituted more comprehensive in its beneficent influences, and better calculated to promote the general