

ent. A control which at no distant day must render her the mistress of the great western trade, the guardian of the gates through which the treasures of a boundless country shall find their vent, and which shall draw to her shores the riches of an incalculable commerce. In addition to this the bounteous hand of nature has spread through her confines one of the most magnificent bays in the world, upon whose expanse floats securely to their market, the richest portions of her produce. The Susquehannah and the Potomac washing her remotest borders, open to the industry of her citizens, the prospect of exhaustless treasure, while innumerable fertilizing streams between, literally irrigate every field, and afford an immeasurable supply to every demand for internal improvement. These advantages have not been overlooked or unappreciated by the citizens of our state, and numerous efforts founded upon private as well as public patronage, to facilitate and improve the means of internal transportation, attest the interest it has excited. And your committee rejoice to find that this subject begins still more to engross the attention of every intelligent part of the community. In this, our state does but respond to the prevailing sentiment of the nation. Since the late war, there is scarcely a part of the Union which has not directed its attention and means to this question, and the result has been an improvement in the general aspect of the United States in the course of a few years, which considering the population and the wealth of the country, and the extent of territory upon which these improvements have been spread, is perhaps unequalled in the history of free nations. The state of Maryland has from the period of the revolution to the present time, evinced a most commendable disposition to lend her aid to every undertaking which professed to encourage these objects, and although at times an injudicious calculation may have thwarted her success or disappointed her hopes, still she has derived many and most permanent advantages from the well timed appropriation of her resources.

At the present juncture much is required of her. The competition of formidable rivals, although, your committee believe, it cannot subvert her strength, may for a long time retard the full and profitable exercise of it; and it therefore becomes a matter of the most urgent solicitude, that we should be in a situation to keep pace with the zealous enterprise of our sister states, who are at this moment contending with us for the prize of future power and importance in the commerce of the west. Though that struggle be maintained with all the perseverance which self interest can supply, and the effective force which a nervous and a wealthy population can bestow, Maryland must nevertheless, by a discreet and intelligent expenditure of her means, aided as she is, by a more than countervailing beneficence of providence, forever hold a successful mastery in the strife.

Your committee conceive that this subject is urged upon the attention of the state by other considerations. The present generation seem to be more imperiously called on for the adoption of a new system of policy in regard to this question than any other that has preceded them, and perhaps more than their successors ever may be. The tranquilized state of Europe, the establishment of what appears to be a more settled order of things, the general competition in every branch of trade, bear more decisively at this time, than at any former period, to throw the several states of our Union back upon their own resources, and of necessity, to drive them to the contemplation of their intrinsic energies. The period is rapidly approaching at which it is conceived a large manufacturing interest will be fostered in our country, and the attention of our population applied to furnish a substitute for a vast variety of the present commodities of trade, which before the lapse of many years, must become the product of our own labor, and the growth of our own soil. This consequence has been partially developed at the present day, by the entire change of our political relations with the states of Europe, and it is believed that so far as regards the condition of this continent, that posture of things will be permanent. From this view, it is obvious, that the labour of our country must be differently applied, and the current of our national means turned into new channels.

Your committee beg leave further to say, that in their opinion, it is impossible to give a more profitable direction to the policy of the government, than by the application of its strength to internal improvement. A judicious effort in this way is always sure to produce a rich harvest of remuneration, and it is believed that every expenditure required by it, is completely reimbursed to the country, almost before its deficiency is felt. There is scarcely a turnpike road constructed, or a canal made, which does not in the course of a very few years, yield to the community, however profitable it may be to individuals, a full recompense for its creation; and indeed from the facilities which the state of Maryland every where presents to this species of enterprise, and the increase of trade that must inevitably be the consequence, your committee do not hazard too much by declaring that a well selected scheme for the improvement of the means of internal transportation, must become one of the most profitable objects in which capital could be invested. In the discharge of the duty assigned to them by the house, your committee conceive it necessary that they should present a general view of the most prominent objects of improvement at present within the contemplation of the state, and as the governor's message more particularly designates the river Potomac as a subject of attention, they would beg leave to make some remarks in reference to it.

The commission which was authorised by the resolutions of last session, to unite in an examination of the river with a similar commission from Virginia, have been delayed by the tardiness of the latter state, in the commencement of their work. Although the Virginia commissioners have been named by the executive of that state, obstacles, unknown to your committee, occurred to prevent the execution of the design entrusted to them, until the lateness of the season rendered it impracticable to proceed to any satisfactory examination of the state of the river; it is presumed however that all parties will be ready to progress in the contemplated enterprise, as soon as the approaching year may become most favorable to their purpose; and as the objects for which this commission was created, are of very interesting importance to both states, your committee