

would recommend a continuance of the resolutions; and in order to apprize the executive of Virginia of the feeling of the state upon this subject, your committee would respectfully suggest the adoption of the additional resolution accompanying this report.

As to the improvement of the navigation of the Potomac, your committee would say a few words. This noble river from its peculiar course, holding its way exclusively through the confines of the state, watering an extensive and fertile region, receiving the tribute of some of the finest streams of our country, among the rest, the Shenandoah, whose protracted channel sweeps through the most luxuriant valley of Virginia, must always be considered one of the richest possessions of the state, and eminently entitled to the attention of her citizens. Amid these advantages, it is the unfortunate lot of this river to present obstacles which must for a long time retard the course of improvement, and exclude the benefits of a commerce longing to seek that channel. It is remarkable for having the greatest fall of rapids of any river in the United States, where an ascending navigation is attempted, and the consequence is, not only an accumulation of rocks and rapids, which can only be surmounted by the arduous toil and disciplined skill of the boatmen, but a liability to extreme lowness of water, which has been known in some extraordinary years to have prevailed through the whole boating season, almost to the entire exclusion of that mode of transportation. These causes have operated to produce a neglect of the trade of that river, so as to reduce it to an amount certainly insignificant when compared with the inimitable riches which might be collected on its banks. The state has already spent large sums of money in the fruitless endeavor to seize upon its treasures, and the reiterated attempts of a well organized and richly endowed company give a striking demonstration of the utility of attempting to vanquish obstacles in their nature insuperable. The time doubtless will come when the enterprize of the state, aided by an abundant treasury, and the keen edged activity of commercial wants, will devise and execute some project which shall yet put Maryland in the full and perfect enjoyment of this yet unconquered tributary. That day is certainly not at hand, and the slender supplies of the state, your committee conceives would be lavished with a useless prodigality upon any attempt to render the navigation of the bed of that river more practicable than it is; indeed every thing seems to be done which can be done in regard to that object—the channel has been cleared, canals have been constructed around and through all the important rapids, and the most considerable falls are provided with durable and substantial locks—the trade nevertheless still languishes under unsubdued impediments. The only method of improvement therefore, which could be suggested would be the construction of canals through all that part of the country in which the river presents the greatest body of obstacles; an undertaking which could only be achieved with the wealth of an empire.

Your committee are naturally led from these speculations to a contemplation of the resources of the state in another quarter. The river Susquehanna has been brought upon the public view with a renewed interest, and the means of improving it have been already submitted to this committee, upon which they have had the honor to make a distinct report. They had the satisfaction to find their report promptly adopted, and the bill which accompanied it speedily passed into law. This river stands in a very different predicament from that of which we have just spoken. It appears to be now satisfactorily ascertained that every work which is calculated to improve the bed of the river and render it more practicable to the purposes of navigation, must ultimately offer a rich remuneration to the state, in an increased supply of produce. The Susquehanna unlike the Potomac, has, until it approaches within a short distance of the tide, a moderate fall, and rolls over a wide and comparatively smooth bed; is more regular in the rise and fall of its water, and in every respect is more propitious to navigation. Within forty or fifty miles of the tide it passes through a range of country which falls with great abruptness to the Chesapeake, and presents innumerable ridges of granite, which being broken in the bed of the river, often form the only serious obstacles which occur in its passage from the borders of the state of New York. Some late efforts evince the entire practicability of surmounting these difficulties, and there no longer remains a doubt, that a judicious effort applied to the improvement of this lower portion of the river, must be productive of incalculable benefit to the state; this once achieved, the produce of an immense extent of country, reaching through the heart of Pennsylvania, and penetrating into the interior of New York, are at once poured into the lap of Maryland. For an estimate of the value of this commerce, even under its present disparagements, your committee beg leave to refer to the separate report already made by them upon this subject. This work therefore in the opinion of your committee, deserves the serious and immediate attention of the legislature, and it is hoped that the measures already projected by the spirited and meritorious enterprise of the citizens of Baltimore, will have the effect to demonstrate the importance of the design to the great and permanent interests of Maryland, and speedily to enlist a more decided patronage in its favor.

The next object of concern in reference to the duties of your committee, is to be found in the execution of a design which was conceived as long ago as the year 1799, and as yet but partially accomplished, to effect a water communication between the Chesapeake and Delaware bays. A route was at that time marked out by commissioners appointed by a company incorporated for that purpose, (the commission consisting of gentlemen of Pennsylvania, Delaware and this state,) which was supposed to be the most eligible course presented by the character of the country of the peninsula, as well as by the convenience afforded in the supply of water. This route extended from a selected point on the Elk river to the Christina in Delaware, and the supply of water was to be obtained from a feeder, reaching from the upper district of the former. From the want of funds, as well as from other causes of less importance, this work did not progress further than the preparatory stages of the design, by the partial completion of nine or ten miles of the feeder, in which attempt the whole capital originally paid in hand, amounting to upwards of one hundred thousand dollars was expended. In the session of 1812, an act passed this legislature, expressing a design

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