

them under the provisions of the act of 1844, which required that no contract should be made for the completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal without the assent and concurrence of the State agents.

The State's agents elected the President and Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio canal company; but from the time of their election, these officers were vested under the charter with the entire control of the work.

The gentleman from Frederick, (Mr. Thomas,) had said that this was a tremendous power to be wielded by this company—a greater power than the Governor of the State wielded. But how could the Convention remedy it? Would the election of the State's agents by the people remedy it? The moment the agents elected by the people had cast their votes for President and Directors, these officers would be vested with all the power now held by them.

They could admit claims against the company—increase the pay and numbers of their officers and thus they could indirectly impose, if you please, very considerable taxation upon the people, because by increasing their debts and expenses, they would partially exhaust the revenue and thus according to the argument, increase taxation.

There was, however, a safeguard that this immense power would not be used to the injury of the State, in the control which the State every year could exercise over the appointment of these officers. They were required to report annually to the legislature of Maryland, and to set forth a detailed statement of the proceedings of the whole year. If these officers proved unfaithful to their trust, to be agents of the State, at the next election would appoint others in their places. The election of the agents by the people could have but the same connection with this result—the only remedy now in the power of the State.

But the board of public works were expected to exercise supervision over the public works.—If one of them should attempt upon the line of the canal to give a single order, it would be disobeyed; or if not, that employee of the company who would obey his order, when inconsistent with the orders of the president and directors, ought to be and would be discharged. It was necessary that the whole should be under one control, as an entirety, and managed with reference to the various causes operating in different portions of the work, to increase or decrease the trade—and to promote and establish the safety of the work.

A greater calamity could scarcely be imagined than the adoption of a system by which, by any possibility, the city of Baltimore could have a controlling influence over the Chesapeake and Ohio canal. It had been the steady and stern enemy of that work from its commencement. One-half the difficulties it had encountered had been from that quarter. Very few gentlemen had any conception of the capacity of the canal. With its present single locks, it could bring down two and a half millions of tons of coal. If Balti-

more city could obtain the control of the canal, it would be easy to raise the tolls upon it, and plausible reasons might be assigned.

It would appear to many that a toll of a dollar or two for coal would be better than fifty cents. And yet the experience of other canals demonstrated that the lower the tolls were reduced, within certain remunerating limits, the larger would be the revenue. Baltimore city would increase the toll, and thus throw the trade upon the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, to the great inconvenience of western Maryland, and the great injury of the canal.

As an illustration of the principle that reduction of toll was followed by increase of revenue, the Chesapeake and Ohio canal had determined to transport to the agricultural portions of the State the fertilisers of the soil, at almost a nominal toll, under the conviction that they would thus increase the amount of agricultural products to be carried over the canal.

The result had been that to the town of Hancock, persons came ten, fifteen, and even twenty miles, to purchase their plaster, and not wishing to go there with an empty wagon, they would take their wheat and flour to the canal, so that in that town a considerable trade had already been built up. A few years ago 15,000 bushels of wheat was the extreme amount which could be purchased at the market price in that place;—whereas it had now gone up to 30,000, and it was believed that the next year it would amount to 60,000. He mentioned this to show that it required a minute acquaintance with the region of country, the business and experience of canals, to decide justly upon the amount of toll to be charged.

Now why should the agents who elect the Directors, be elected by the people? Were their reports made to the people? Were the necessary statistics accessible to the people generally? All these reports were made to the Legislature, and not even published in the newspapers where the people could see them. The Legislature had the information which would enable them to act understandingly; and it was in their power to decide whether the policy of the President and Directors had been beneficial or injurious.—The people had not the means to form a judgment upon it, and therefore could not act advisedly.

The gentleman from Frederick, [Mr. Thomas,] had said that he did not propose to increase the salary. He, [Mr. S.,] would submit to the Convention whether gentlemen would consent to be brought before the people to be nominated by the two parties, and to become a party to electioneering schemes for such an office, with a salary of one hundred dollars. He would say unhesitatingly, that no suitable man could be persuaded to accept such a nomination. Politicians would be selected, and especially such as would desire the place with the hope of being able to influence, by their position, the political character of the western portion of the State. The canal was an extensive work, employing very many men, and perhaps a sufficient number to