

to station buildings; the next was in relation to the machinery; the next about water stations, &c., &c.

He referred to this to show that the railroad company, had wisely adopted this plan. Suppose this duty of attending to one particular thing, was divided among a board of directors. In all human probability, they would have very many gentlemen who would know nothing about the duties they would be sent to perform, and from a divided responsibility even if understood, would be neglected. It required a long apprenticeship to understand them. They did not find the President nor the Directors of the railroad company, interfering with Mr. Parker, the gentleman to whom he had referred. He made his report, and they received it, and acted upon his recommendation. He had no doubt but that the recommendation of Mr. Parker, in relation to tolls, had great weight with them. He mentioned this to show that having boards of any kind was altogether wrong.

As to representing the State at the stockholders meeting, of these internal improvement companies, it was a very simple operation. It could be discharged by any intelligent gentleman, whom the Legislature of the State might be willing to vest with the duty. If he had intelligence and integrity, his character would be a sufficient guarantee, that he would faithfully discharge his duty to the State. He had heard of this supervisory committee, of this committee of vigilance, as it had been called. He begged leave to say that he thought it would be found that these committees were very unsafe. He thought it had been found so, here and every where. He submitted whether there were legitimate, important duties, sufficient to cloth this board with; if it was necessary that it should be created, to occupy the attention of the Convention, and hereafter to distract the people of the State:

For one, he thought not—and he said this after an experience of ten years in discharging the legitimate duties of such a board. Of duties to be superadded of course he did not speak—but he doubted whether there were legitimate duties sufficient to warrant the creation of this board.

If he had ever to cast his vote for gentlemen, he would endeavor to do it for gentlemen of sufficient character to be willing to trust them with some discretion themselves. He thought the true precaution they had in all these works was in the character, intelligence, and fidelity of the gentlemen they placed over them. Ingenuity knew how to circumvent these guards, and get around them, place them as they might.

He could give the gentleman from Carroll, (Mr. Brown,) a little further information about estimates.

Mr. Biser. Let us have it, sir.

Mr. Brown had no particular desire to hear the information. He spoke altogether from memory, having been a member of the Legislature when the estimates were acted on.

Mr. Biser said, that if the gentleman had spoken from memory, he had no desire to hear the information.

Mr. DAVIS said, that it would not take him long. It was a matter of history. They would gain nothing by concealment, the truth had better come out. It was known that the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company was raised by various meetings of gentlemen in different parts of the State. It first commenced here, afterwards in the city of Washington. The United States, (he was not exactly accurate as to the year,) detailed General Bernard, a French Engineer, from Buonaparte's army, who had acquired great celebrity in Europe, to examine the line of the Potomac, to ascertain what a canal would cost—one of considerably lower dimensions than now adopted. General Bernard, in his report, estimated that a five foot canal to Cumberland would cost nine millions dollars. So much for these incorrect estimates. The internal improvement Convention which assembled in Washington thought that the estimate was too high, and detailed a committee of gentlemen to inquire into the cost of a canal. These were not professional engineers, but gentlemen at large. This committee reported that it could be done for from three to four millions of dollars. Upon this recommendation, the State of Virginia; the District cities, the State of Maryland, and the Congress of the United States made their subscriptions, the State of Maryland subscribing \$500,000, upon the condition that the United States would subscribe for a million of dollars. What had been the actual cost, with all the impediments that had been thrown in the way, and a six instead of a five foot canal? A little over eleven millions of dollars—the variation from General Bernard's estimate being not so considerable as was supposed. He had seen it stated that the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal had cost seventeen millions of dollars. He confessed his utter inability to count up the money. He had examined this thing pretty thoroughly, but had been unable to count it up.

Now, he came to the Baltimore and Ohio railroad company. This company when it applied for its charter, stated that the Ohio river could be reached with a double track for five millions of dollars. Upon this representation, the State subscribed \$500,000. What had been the result?

The actual cost of the road to Harper's Ferry, had been four millions of dollars: the actual cost to Cumberland had been \$8,766,400; and the estimated cost of the road to the Ohio river was \$6,278,000. This was now the actual cost for a single track: a double track would cost about 3,500 more than a single track, making a total of nearly fifteen millions of dollars.

There had been an error not only upon the Potomac, but in the gentleman's own neighborhood. He, [Mr. D.,] did not consider it altogether fair to hold up every short coming, every delinquency to censure, if a person failed to see into the future; if he failed, in embarking in a new enterprise, to see all the difficulties that might ensue. "To err is human." He would ask the gentleman if he had not made mistakes, even in making an estimate for the building of a barn?

Mr. Brown. I have made mistakes.