

In construing a legislative enactment, a Court of justice cannot regard the resolutions, orders, or propositions entered upon the journals of either branch of the legislative department; but must look to the statute book alone, the words of which must speak for themselves; nor can it consider the motives which may have influenced the Legislature any further than they are manifested by the language of the statute itself. A Judge must form his judgment of the meaning of the Legislature as if the case had been brought before him by demurrer, in the consideration and determination of which no evidence can be admitted; yet, in all such cases he may well inform himself from dictionaries or books which treat on the particular subject; in doing so, however, such authorities are not to be regarded as mere evidence, but only as the grounds of his judgment, as if he were to cite authorities illustrative of the opinion he delivers. *The King v. Waddington*. 1 *East*, 149, 158; *The Attorney-General v. The Cast Plate Glass Company*, 1 *Anstr.* 39; *Cameron v. Cameron*, 7 *Cond. Chan. Rep.* 374; *The People v. Utica Insurance Company*, 15 *Johns. Rep.* 380, 394.

The provisions of the Act incorporating the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, upon the true construction of which the present question turns, relate only to the termination of a great work which that corporation is to cause to be executed; and the matter to be decided is, where that termination was intended to be; or whether that body politic has been restricted to any given space or \*place within, or at which their work must terminate.

The great, the sole purpose of this Act is to cause a navigable canal to be made "from the tide of the River Potomac, in the District of Columbia," over to the River Ohio; and this Act of incorporation must be construed with reference to that great object, so far as regards the matter now under consideration. 1 *Blac. Com.* 61; *New River Company v. Graves*, 2 *Vern.* 431; *Curling v. Chalklen*, 3 *M. & S.* 510. **155**

The termination, now in controversy, is no otherwise described than by the expression, "from the tide of the River Potomac, in the District of Columbia." The tide thus designated is a large space; and the surveys, which have been exhibited in this case, demonstrate that it is perfectly practicable to extend this canal along, and to terminate it at any one point of the whole of this space of tide. The canal may be stopped precisely at the head of tide; but this, it is admitted, would not be altogether correct, or certainly not for the best. It is said, that it should descend to, and be terminated at good, practicable tide navigation. Again, it is clear, that the canal may be conducted up the valley of Rock Creek, and so, round Washington, to the Eastern Branch, and enter the tide near Bladensburg; or thence, descending along the left bank of that river, it may unite with the tide opposite or below Washington. This, however, it is pronounced with one voice, and at once,