

overall financial condition, and he gave an exhaustive account of their activities. Gov. Philip F. Thomas's prediction three years earlier of a solvent state meeting a goodly share of its ordinary expenses from investment income appeared to be coming true.<sup>20</sup>

Turning his attention to the toll wars between the B & O and the C & O, Governor Lowe said that he tended to regard the "injurious rivalry" with respect to the coal trade as a "phantom" but would leave that matter to the Commissioners of Public Works. He hoped the time would come "when the natural laws of commerce will obviate all necessity for the interposition of the [commissioners] between these two great companies."<sup>21</sup>

Gov. T. Watkins Ligon, elected in 1853, also recognized the importance of internal improvements, but he was somewhat more cautious as to the proper role to be played by the state in superintending them. In his 1854 inaugural address he stated:

The control of these vast interests has been by the Constitution devolved principally upon a coordinate branch of the government—the board of commissioners of public works. Their wisdom, I am sure, will plan out the course best to be pursued in their management and full disposition. . . . The result of some of these enterprises which the State has liberally fostered, has not been such as was by many anticipated when the credit of the State was loaned for their construction. Yet, on the other hand, it may be remarked that the benefits accruing to the State should not be measured by the direct profit or loss upon actual investment, or the amount of revenue annually derivable to the Treasury on their account. The State is the gainer wherever the result has been an increase in the extent and facilities of trade, because the value of the property of the State is thus increased, and the basis of the taxation, which is its legitimate source of revenue and power, correspondingly enlarged. This is, perhaps the chief end to which the State should mainly take in her relations to these works. It may, indeed, be gravely considered whether any connection with such works is desirable by the State, other than such supervisory power as may be necessary to preventing abuse or misapplication of corporate privileges.<sup>22</sup>

The Commissioners of Public Works held three meetings in 1855, and for the first time it appeared to be paralyzed by an internal split. On 5 March it met to select the ten state directors of the B & O. Eight candidates received the necessary three votes, but the voting for the other two positions deadlocked in a two-to-two tie on each of the four nominees. As a result, the selection of the remaining two directors was made by the state treasurer pursuant to article 7, section 3 of the Constitution.<sup>23</sup>

Tie votes occurred again on 4 June, when the board met to appoint directors of the C & O Canal Company. Stewart and Nelson each nominated a slate. Chamberlain supported Stewart's nominees, and Falls supported the Nelson ticket. With no nominee receiving the requisite three votes, that matter, too, was decided by the treasurer, who selected Stewart's list of candidates. The next day, 5 June, the board met to elect directors of the Northern Central Railroad and was deadlocked until the fourth ballot.<sup>24</sup>

In November 1855 the terms of Stewart and Chamberlain expired, and George Peter and Benjamin Lankford were elected as their successors. At the first meeting thereafter, on 28 December 1855, Moore N. Falls was elected president, and the commissioners proceeded to elect directors of the Annapolis and ElkrIDGE Railroad, apparently without any dissension. The board also adopted two resolutions requesting the state directors of the various internal improvement companies to use all proper means to cause the adoption of rates upon agricultural improvements and manures "as will only be sufficient to cover the cost of their transportation."<sup>25</sup>

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-22. See also chapter 3.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

22. T. Watkins Ligon, "Inaugural Address," 12 January 1854, *Maryland State Documents, 1854* (Annapolis, 1854), doc. C, p. 5.

23. BPW Minutes, 5 March 1855, vol. 1851-83, pp. 19-20.

24. *Ibid.*, 4, 5 June 1855, pp. 21-22.

25. *Ibid.*, 28 December 1855, p. 29.