

If, in any instance, I may have seemed to be wanting in courtesy to any gentleman, or upon any occasion to have given pain to his sensibilities, I beg him to believe that it sprang from the error of my judgment, and from a scrupulous desire to discharge with accuracy and impartiality, the responsible duties which were devolved upon me by the House; and if, during our association here, I should at any time have seemed to be harsh, I pray you to attribute it to human imperfections, which human weakness cannot at all times control.

I am happy to have witnessed the uniform kindness and courtesy which has characterised the deportment of each member during the session—and if there has been any ebullition of feeling, it has been transitory and evanescent, and instead of provoking the angry passions of our nature it has passed off like the lightning of the tempest, and given way to serenity and peace.

The present session of the General Assembly will not have passed without operating important influences upon the character and welfare of the State, and I doubt not that the time is not distant when those effects will be seen in the restoration of our credit and the ability of the State to meet and maintain her engagements in good faith to her creditors, and the account which we may give of our labors, to our constituents will, I doubt not, receive their approbation. I cannot omit mentioning one act which has now passed, which in my opinion, is of paramount importance to all others of the session—that to provide for the completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to Cumberland, a great work of improvement, in which the State embarked twenty years ago, with so much zeal, and upon which so large an amount has been expended as yet without any return for the heavy expenditure and without producing, because not carried to its destined terminus, any essential benefit. The importance of this work does not, in my opinion, depend so much upon the commercial advantages to be derived from it, or from the developement of the mineral resources of the State, as upon the nationality of its character. It is not that by this, in connexion with the other great work of improvement projected and prosecuted under the auspices of the State, that the wealth of the West is to be drawn, and in its passage through the State, like the waters of the Nile, shall deposit its rich sediment to enrich us. It is not that the emporium of our commerce is to be the mart of the West, drawing upon the stores of Europe and Asia to supply the increasing demands of a rapidly growing population. It is not from such considerations that the completion of this great work is to derive its importance or be interesting to posterity. It is that when that great and fertile country lying in the Valley of the Mississippi, shall be possessed by a population as dense as it is capable of maintaining, that those great works of improvement are to be the chains to bind the western people to us by their interests, the ligatures between the distant parts of this Union, the prop and stay of the National Government, the anchor of our political safety, the mountain barriers to our disunion.