

attending to a distant concern, which, under the direction of so many persons, each having a slight interest, would be very badly managed.

It is unnecessary to paper over, the happy position enjoyed by Maryland, for becoming the seat and channel of a great and lucrative intercourse with the western country. This position is well known to her neighbours, who are making great efforts to counteract its influence. It is much to be feared, if they are not met by corresponding efforts on our part, that mere natural advantages, unaided and left to themselves, will not be able to stand the competition with enterprise, wealth, and enlightened public spirit.

Though the enquiries made under the resolution of the honourable the general assembly, have been confined to the objects specified, yet in considering the subject of roads, that of canals, so intimately allied to it, has often incidentally presented itself. Several water routes, to connect the different parts of the state, are now lying neglected, and of some not even a survey is made, because no individual is willing to undertake the expense. The practicability of a water communication from the upper waters of the Potomac to the branches of the Monongahela, is strongly asserted, and there is no doubt, that the capacities of the state are far from being explored. In every application to the legislature for aid, the interested statements of the parties concerned, are almost the only source from which they can draw any information; and the consequence often is, that either the bounty of the legislature is unworthily bestowed, or that a suspicion of the motives creates a hesitation which withholds their assistance from objects of real importance.

The creation of a board of commissioners of public improvements, would probably give a stimulus to the public, and produce much good. It might be advisable to give no salaries, but being elected by the legislature, the distinction would be coveted by those willing to give their attention to subjects of this nature. An appropriation for the expenses of a surveyor or engineer would however be necessary, and an examination of the means and sources of internal improvement be made throughout the whole state, which could not fail to be useful. The official reports of such a body would be entitled to credit, and its very creation be beneficial, by encouraging a turn for useful improvement in every county throughout the state.

We have the honor to be

with great respect,

Your obedient servants

Charles Fieldsborough

Council Chamber January 14th 1819

To the Honourable the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates
Gentlemen We have the honor to transmit the annual Report of the Inspectors of the