

by one of these memorials. Their only fruit will be seen in the act of the Legislature of Virginia, contained in the appendix of this report; which also embraces copies of the several memorials referred to.

The scarcity of labor along the line of the canal placed under contract, and its consequent high price, threatening heavy loss to the contractors, or the necessary surrender of their contracts, was early apprehended by the Board; but the precautions which they provided did not meet the countenance of those to whom the memorial was addressed: the ambiguity which rested upon the act of Maryland of 1794, in favor of the Potomac Company, still exists, and the privilege of employing for a limited period, slaves from the counties of Virginia bordering on the Potomac, is coupled with conditions that have proved unsatisfactory to their proprietors. Very few laborers are to be found on the canal from the neighboring states, notwithstanding the liberality of her slave laws towards her sister states, and the deeper interest of Maryland in a joint stock association, to the funds of which she has liberally subscribed, and in the prosperity of a canal, which so far as it has advanced, passes thro' her territory, as it will continue to do, unless driven from it to the opposite shore of the Potomac.

At the date of the last weekly returns, required from the resident engineers, of the labor employed on their respective residencies, the number of hands, consisting of men and boys, engaged on the works of the canal, was 2,113, of which 2,000 were men, and the residue boys. The number necessary to complete the canal under contract, in the time specified in the several contracts, cannot be short of 6,000.● A few of the sections have been surrendered, and relet; as have been all the locks except two. The reletting of the latter has augmented their cost to the extent already stated, and delayed their execution.

It is still however expected by the Board, to finish during the ensuing spring, so much of the line of canal under contract, as can be supplied with water from the Potomac, prior to a final removal of the obstruction

* Part of this deficiency may be regarded as supplied by the employment at the same time, of 419 horses and 83 oxen, many of which are used as substitutes for the laboring men, in excavating the canal by ploughs and scrapers.