

accuracy of intellect, to convey an idea so exact as "the point of tide water," or "the highest point to which the water flows in the Potomac." This is certainly not the idea which is expressed; on the contrary, the language is so broad as manifestly to open the whole extent of the tide water of the Potomac, within the limits of the District, to the choice of the company for their place of beginning; and a Legislature is not to be considered as saying one thing, and meaning another and a different thing.

It is true, that if their language be so ambiguous as to be equally susceptible of two constructions, that shall be preferred which will best promote the avowed object of the law. But I apprehend that there is no ambiguity here. The language though general, is not ambiguous. On the contrary, its generality is well explained by the nature of the case, and was manifestly intended. It arose necessarily from the nature of the case that it should be thus general; and it was, I think, properly made thus general, because its being so made would best promote the great object of the law.

What was the great object of the law? The preamble answers the question. It was to open a communication between the eastern and western waters; between the tide water of the Potomac, in the District of Columbia, and the navigable waters of the Ohio. The work contemplated was a great national work, and for great national objects. It did not look to little ends, and least of all, to the local rivalries that might arise between particular spots along the line of the canal. It proposed nothing so minute and invidious as to foster one spot in preference to another. It aimed at higher purposes. It dealt with States, not with villages. It looked to great political results; the consolidation and perpetuation of the Union by promoting the agricultural, commercial and manufacturing interests of those vast masses, the western and eastern sections of the continent. It was not the good of a few, therefore, much less of a handful, that it contemplated, but the good of the whole, so far as this good stood connected with this vast channel of communication between the East and the West.

The language of the preamble of the law, it proposed, means of this great channel of trade, "to extend and multiply the means and facilities of internal commerce and personal intercourse between the two great