

the opportunity which is now afforded, to lay before the Legislature, a statement of its condition, prospects and relations."

The entire period of this Company's existence is embraced in the wide scope of the above inquiries; not perhaps, so much in their terms, as from the necessity of going into numerous and particular details, for the purpose of answering them correctedly and satisfactorily. In the present report, it is purposed to state,

1st. The past and present condition and relations of the Company.

2nd. The present condition of the work, in which the Company is engaged—the difficulties that have been overcome, and those that are anticipated, together with the manner and probable time of its completion, and the results which it is expected to produce. Under these heads, it is believed, that the report will be found to contain every information, which is at present required by the House of Delegates.

1st. The past and present condition and relations of the Company.

The Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road company had its origin in the desire of the citizens of Baltimore to open a direct and easy communication with the valleys of the Ohio, and upper Mississippi; and, by so doing, to regain that portion of the Western trade which they had once enjoyed, but which, the introduction of Steam Boat navigation, and different causes, had been gradually diverting into opposite channels, until it seemed in danger of being lost altogether.

The same motive had fixed public attention in Baltimore, anxiously and impatiently upon the proposed communication with the West, by the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and had made *this*, for a season, a favorite project; but when the report of the United States Engineers, transmitted to Congress, December 7th 1826, and published, presented a detailed and intelligible view of its character and difficulties, in place of the vague ideas which had before been entertained with regard to it, all hopes of accomplishing the desired object, by its means, was at once abandoned. The estimate of able and scientific men, fixed its probable cost at \$22,375,427 69, and actual surveys had ascertained that 398 locks, and a tunnel of upwards of four miles in length, were necessary to overcome the ascent and descent between the waters of the Chesapeake and those of the Ohio. (g)