

more and Ohio Rail Road Company was finally organized, by the election of its officers. Application was made to the general government for the aid of a portion of its engineer corps, to make the necessary surveys; and on the 20th of June, Captain M'Neill and Doctor Howard reported themselves ready for duty, with their respective brigades. A reconnoissance of the country between Baltimore and the Ohio river was commenced forthwith, and continued without intermission, until accomplished. Definite surveys followed the reconnoissances, and on the 5th April, 1828, Dr. Howard, Col. Long, and Capt. M'Neill, joined in a report, in which they recommended the route from Baltimore by the Valley of Patapsco to Parr Spring, then down Bush or Bennet's Creek to the Monocacy, and thence across the Valley of the latter stream, to and around the Point of Rocks, and up the Valley of the Potomac. This route, they observed, "would present fewer obstructions to the cheap and expeditious transportation of commodities, than any other that had been surveyed." (a) And on the 5th of May following, the board of engineers of the company, having examined the country between Baltimore and Conococheague Creek, confirmed the decision of the officers above named, and pronounced "the Valley of the Potomac to afford, by far, the greatest facilities for passing the South Mountain, (b) compared with any other routes leading across it in the State of Maryland;" and "express their entire conviction, that the route by the Point of Rocks is entitled to a decided preference, in respect to the cost of motive power, economy of construction and commercial advantage." (c)

This determination of the board of engineers, which was adopted by the board of directors, was in accordance with the idea that has been for sometime entertained, of the general direction of the road. The Potomac river evidently afforded that opening in the mountains through which it was to

(a) Report of Engineers on the reconnoissances and surveys, made in reference to the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road, p. 83.

(b) Same, p. 87.

(c) The South Mountain appears as one ridge in Maryland, at Harman's Gap, near the Pennsylvania line. To the southward of this, it is split into two ridges, which, gradually receding from each other, contain the Middletown Valley between them, and strike the Potomac at Harper's Ferry, and the Point of Rocks, and are there known as the South and Culvelin Mountains respectively. In the report of the 5th May, this distinction is not made in terms, but the Point of Rocks is spoken of as a part of the South Mountain, as it, in fact, is.