

signed to be comprehended in the reply. The president and directors make this suggestion in apology for the extended answer which they proceed to make to this inquiry, of the committee, and from a fear that they may seem to enter farther into detail, than was desired.

All the works on the canal, hitherto executed, have been done, pursuant to special contracts; except a small portion, less than a half mile of the first section, immediately below the old Potomac canal, now, the feeder from the head of the Little Falls. By the first of these contracts, made in August, 1827, thirty-four sections, of about a half mile each, were let for construction, between this feeder and that immediately below Seneca creek. In the ensuing October, the contracts were extended to the immediate vicinity of the "Point of Rocks;" and at the same period, the locks and culverts, on the 84th sections, were let. The depth of the canal was, at this period, enlarged, from five to six feet below the water surface.

In the ensuing month of December, the sections, between Washington and the Little Falls feeder, or the first of the preceding 84 sections, comprising a distance of near five miles, and denoted by the first eight letters of the alphabet, were let, together with the construction of the four locks in Georgetown, and the mole, tide lock, and basin, at the mouth of Rock creek. The entire line below the Point of Rocks had thus been let, within six months, after the first organization of the company; and, since this, the various labours on this line, have been, as diligently prosecuted, as the circumstances of the country, and a due regard to the security of the works would admit.

In consequence, however, of the autumnal diseases of the valley of the Potomac; the unexpected rise of the wages of labour, produced by the competition of the numerous canals of Pennsylvania and the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road, many of the original contracts were abandoned by the contractors; and it became necessary, to the completion of the residue of them, to raise, from time to time, the prices of the various works stipulated to be done.

In the interim, different estimates of the probable cost of the canal, founded on these various prices of labour, were submitted by the president and directors to the stockholders, in their several general meetings, and to the public. These,