

means so precarious, the procurement of which having often disappointed its hopes and calculations.

We have neither deemed it incumbent on us or discreet, to make known to the public the difficulties which have encompassed us; and looking only to the means authorised by the State, for the prosecution of the work, and presuming them to be fully realized, the impression has no doubt prevailed that ample resources were in hand, and that greater progress should have been made. But in communicating with the legislature, we deem it our duty to state fully and candidly, as we have done, the circumstances in which we have been placed since its last session; believing that it will be conceded, with a full knowledge of the facts, that all has been done which it was in the power of the company to accomplish.

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, in view of its dimensions, and of the intrinsic difficulties in its construction, following as it does the ravine of a rapid stream, breaking through successive ranges of mountains, is one of the most stupendous works which has been attempted in this or any other country. It has required both time and ample means for its accomplishment; and it has been one of its greatest misfortunes, that the estimates of its early friends in this respect, should have been considered as correct data in after times. It is certainly true, that but for the long delay produced by the controversy with the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road Company for the right of way, and with adequate means at command, this work could have been finished some years ago, and at a comparatively less cost; then, the same competition for labor as at the present day, did not exist, and it could have been obtained at less than half the price now paid for the same services;—then a laborer could be hired for from \$10 to 12 per month, who would now receive from \$1 to 1.25 per day. The price and scarcity of provisions also constitutes a very heavy item in the increased cost of the works at the present day. The canal has now passed by the rich agricultural counties bordering on the Potomac, of Frederick and Washington on the one side, and Jefferson and Berkeley on the other. It is now in progress through the mountainous region of Allegany, where the population is sparse, and but little land in cultivation, with the exception of river bottoms, of very limited extent. The drought of the last summer was probably felt in no sections of the States of Virginia and Maryland with greater severity, than in that and the neighboring counties on both shores. The production of the soil was probably inadequate to the wants of the country, independent of the large accession to its population, of something like two thousand men. The consequent increased demand for provisions of every kind, induced a corresponding increase in the price, far exceeding the markets on the seaboard.

Contractors, in making their proposals for work, look to the amount of labor necessary for its accomplishment in a given time, and estimate the cost of labor at the high rates, at which alone it