

view of a revised estimate of this winter; but which the present Chief Engineer thinks not of any account for that purpose.)

I will here state further, as is more fully explained in the correspondence referred to, that owing to an interruption of the navigation of the canal, and to other causes, the papers in question did not come into my hands, again, until the 8th of December, previous to which the canal office had been moved from Washington to Frederick, and the charge contained in the letter of December 3rd had been preferred to the Board by my successor.

I have already said that the course pursued was not calculated to lead to any *immediate* embarrassment. I now add that in no other way was it possible for me to lessen *future* embarrassments.

As to *the papers, the absence of which* is more immediately complained of, I will state to the committee that with the general estimate of 1839 in hand, they cannot be and could not have been of *the slightest service* in the making out of the present general estimate, but *unexplained*, would have caused embarrassment and error. They are papers to which if I had remained in the office I should not again have had occasion to refer. *They are of that class of papers which have not been left by preceding Engineers.*

The committee, perhaps, are not aware that the field notes of the fifty miles of unfinished canal, the minute details of calculations therefrom, and upon which all the general estimates have heretofore been based, were none of them in my possession at Cumberland when I was dismissed, but were where they appropriately belonged, in the offices of the subordinates, along the line of canal, and where also is to be found all the information necessary for the *immediate* superintendence of the work. These books and calculations in the subordinate offices have hitherto been the resort in preparing "revised estimates" of cost as being the only safe reliance, and *they and they alone can furnish the data*, to justify an alteration of the preceding estimates, especially when a new officer is about to perform that duty. It so happens, however, that the board were long since informed that these offices would be in a state of confusion from their not allowing the several dismissed engineers when going out of office sufficient time to arrange their notes and papers preparatory to a transfer. The consequences of which are now felt, and it becomes a matter of convenience,