

ENGINEER'S OFFICE, BALT. AND OHIO RAIL ROAD,  
*Baltimore, April 21st, 1842.*

TO LOUIS McLANE, ESQ.

*Pres't. Balt. and Ohio Rail Road Co.*

SIR: A resolution of the board of the 13th instant calls upon me as one of the officers charged with a department of the service, to "reduce its expenses as much as I possibly can, and to report such reduction to the next meeting of the board."

In a sincere desire to yield the fullest obedience to this requirement, I have given an earnest and attentive consideration to the subject of it, and now most respectfully present the following communication thereupon.

At the outset of the work west of Harpers Ferry in the fall of 1839, an organization of the engineer corps for the superintendance of the construction was made, and was, as then believed, no more extensive or costly than the exigencies of the service required. The work had been commenced with great vigor, and its progress it was supposed, would be so rapid as to finish it in the space of two years. A large force of hands was to be put upon the road, and the engineer corps had to be proportionably strong. Before much time, however, had elapsed, financial difficulties began to arise, and it became manifest that the speed with which the work was carried on must be diminished. A check being thus given to its advance, the force upon the line was thenceforth kept much below what would under different circumstances have been employed; and as it was believed that a smaller number of engineers and assistants would suffice for the direction of the contractors, the corps was accordingly reduced in October of that year from 3 division and 15 residents, to 2 division and 11 resident engineers, with their proper complement of subordinates. The local supervisors of masonry, &c. were also discharged as it became from time to time practicable to dispense with their services, on account of the completion of the structures which they had severally in charge, and in the wish to promote economy in the service the employment of a class of superintendents always heretofore employed—viz. Supervisors of laying the rails, has been omitted.

The experience of the two years and a half which have elapsed since the autumn of 1839, has clearly demonstrated that this reduced force of assistants has been no more than sufficient to ensure a proper supervision and control of the work.