

of construction. It was reasonable to suppose, that instead of the amount of trade remaining the same, it would become greater, though the progressive increase might be but gradual, and it is presumed, that it was on this basis that the Treasurer of the Western Shore estimated that the State would have received from the company last year twenty thousand dollars. It has been shewn why this estimate has not been realized, but the board would respectfully repeat, the expression of their conviction, which is strengthened by the experience of the past season, that the reduction which they made in their rates of charge was a judicious and necessary measure; and that, had it not been adopted, the receipts of the company would have fallen very much below their actual amount.

It was stated in the last report, that the Westminster Branch of the road, about ten miles in length, and terminating at Owings' Mills, was in such a condition, that it could only be used for the transportation of passengers, in light cars to be drawn by horses; the track being too much decayed to bear the weight of a locomotive, or laden burthen cars. During the summer, it has been kept sufficiently in order to permit the passenger cars to continue to run; but it is doubtful whether it can be made available, even for this purpose, for another season, without extensive and thorough repairs. The opinion has heretofore been expressed by the board, that this work ought not to be undertaken, unless there were at the same time, a prospect of extending the road to Westminster. It has however been urged, that the owners of property through whose lands the road has been constructed, may reasonably ask that the facilities which were originally expected to be derived from its use, should be extended to them, and the subject has thus been again brought under the consideration of the board. It is estimated that the cost of relaying the track entirely, with the present light plate rail on a new wooden structure, composed according to the old plan of cross-ties or sleepers, and string pieces of sufficient strength to bear the transportation of produce and merchandise, will cost about \$8,500. If the plan recommended by Mr. Herron be adopted, which though more expensive in the first instance, will make a better track, and will cost less for repairs, the cost would probably be about \$14,000. The latter mode however, could not, it is believed, be used with advantage, unless the timber was subjected to some one of the various processes which are recommended to preserve wood from decay, and which would probably cost for the whole distance about \$5,000. Whatever plan of construction might be adopted, it would be very desirable that measures should be taken to render the timber more durable than it is when merely seasoned in the ordinary mode, but on the old plan of laying the track, this is not so essential because on such a road each piece of wood can without difficulty be separately removed when it may become defective.

There are also on the Westminster branch two bridges which would require renewal, at the cost of not less than \$1,000.

The least cost as above stated of renewing this branch road would