

tion, with a return to high charges after all competitors are expelled. The travelling public are seriously interested in this question, and have a right to expect from the State the establishment, permanently, of such a rate of fare as is reasonable, and will supersede just cause for a resort to other means of conveyance than those provided by the State, through the medium of the corporations, fostered by its patronage, and owing their existence to its laws.

Since June last no report has been received from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, furnishing information as to its present condition or future prospects. It is believed, however, that within that period no such material change has taken place in its affairs, as if communicated, would assist the Legislature in deciding finally—and it is most earnestly, but respectfully, urged upon the Senate and House to do so—what disposition shall be made of the very large interest of the State in that corporation. Further postponement and delay on this subject, cannot possibly be productive of good to any of the interests to be affected. For more than sixteen years the State has been concerned, with other parties, in the undertaking to make a Canal from tide water on the Potomac, to the coal fields and iron oar banks of Allegany. For five years past the work has made very little progress. During this last period the interest due to the State, and of which it has received no part, amounts in the aggregate to more than two millions of dollars. The corporation stands honestly indebted to the amount of more than one million of dollars to individuals, many of whom are in a state of extreme want and privation, caused by the unjust withholding of their hard earned wages. I submit whether considerations of public justice and private morality, do not require, at the hands of the representatives of the people, an early and just disposition of these claims.

If it shall appear that neither the credit of the State, nor of the corporation, can be made available, so as to progress at once, to the completion of the Canal, without ruinous sacrifices to the creditors of the company, would it not be advisable, now, to adopt decided measures to determine clearly the vested interests of Maryland in that company? When that has been done, by a foreclosure of the State's mortgages, the facilities for pledging our interest in the corporation, will be so far increased as probably to diminish to a great extent, if not entirely to supersede the pecuniary sacrifices, which have been heretofore considered necessary to ensure the completion of the Canal to Cumberland.

By the last report of the Directors of the Penitentiary, which will be laid before you, it will appear that valuable improvements have been introduced into the management of that institution.—Its nett revenue for the year 1843 was \$483.66. The entire production of the labor of the convicts, during the last year, was \$38,997.37, while the expenses of every description amounted to \$29,462.53, leaving a clear profit of \$9,534.84. The number of persons, now in confinement, is 280. The policy adopted by the