

most energetic contractors, from their having engaged on other work, and not being prepared at once to resume their engagements on this, some of the most important contracts, for this and other reasons, were abandoned after a protracted delay, the power of enforcing them having been forfeited by the suspension, in the supply of funds. In several cases, damages were demanded, on account of the suspension. An additional expense was also occasioned by damages during the suspension to portions of the work previously done.

Fourth, An unexpected increase in the cost of materials, for a large portion of the works of masonry. The quarries for the stone, for the hammered masonry, of the Dam at Cumberland, of the Aqueduct at the Town Creek, and of some other works were abandoned on account of the unsatisfactory character of the material, and quarries much more distant, were necessarily resorted to, at a heavy cost over the contract price, each of the cases above named, being attended with the consequent loss of advantageous contracts for the execution of the work. For the same reason, the Canal company, under the advice of the chief engineer, deemed it expedient to substitute composite locks, in the place of several, which had been designed to be of hammered masonry. In consideration of the urgent necessity of these changes, and of the difficulty of obtaining stone suitable for the dry masonry, even of the composite locks, the Canal company have agreed to accept the latter form of construction, in place of that originally intended, at the same price. There are some portions of the work embraced in the contract, which the contractors hope, will not be required, and that they will be remitted in consequence of the unexpected cost of those already mentioned, and also of the redressing of sections formerly finished, and also of various other portions of the work, which it might be superfluous specially to enumerate. Such have been the unexpected difficulties in obtaining materials for the principal works of masonry, including stone, bricks, timber, and cement, arising in regard to the bricks and cement, from the unexpected quantity required, that the cost of these structures, has exceeded, by a large sum, the amount anticipated.

For the reasons above stated, the progress of the work has been retarded, and its completion postponed, beyond the anticipations of the undersigned, as well as of the petitioners. The weather in this region has been unusually inclement, and unfavorable to the satisfactory progress of the work. It is now, manifestly, near its completion, and the utmost efforts have been made, especially since the commencement of the present month, to carry it forward as fast as possible. We feel a strong confidence, that unless the weather should prove materially unfavorable, it will be ready for the admission of the water, and for the regular opening of navigation by the 1st of April next, or at all events within the month of April. Every effort will be made for its completion, as soon as possible. All the work which may not be completed on the admission of the water, and not required for the use of the Canal, will be completed in a short time thereafter.