

Chief Engineer's Office, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal,

Cumberland, 18th February, 1850.

To Gov. Davis, Hon. Nathan Hale, and Horatio Allen, Esq.,
Trustees.

Gentlemen:—You desire me to say, in what manner, Messrs. Hunter and company have, so far as my observation may have extended as Chief Engineer, of the Canal company, performed their duties as contractors for the completion of the canal,—and by what time it may safely be assumed that the navigation will be opened to Cumberland.

I would say, in reply, that I do not think there was ever, in the United States, as large an amount of similar work undertaken in one contract by individuals, the prosecution of which, at every step, was attended by, and surrounded with more and greater difficulties and embarrassments, in raising means for its accomplishment, than that undertaken and now nearly completed by Messrs. Hunter and Co. There are, in my opinion, few, if any, persons who under like circumstances, would have effected as much as those gentlemen have, and brought the canal to a point as near to completion as it is at present. To their untiring zeal and perseverance in the prosecution of their contract, all interested in the success of the work, are under many and great obligations.

As regards the time when it may safely be assumed that the navigation can be opened to Cumberland, I would say, that there is no reason why it should not be by the 1st of May next. There must, however, no matter what efforts may be made, remain some work to be done after that time, but which may be postponed until after the admission of water into the canal with but little inconvenience to the navigation. The postponement of the work referred to, was permitted by the company, several months ago, as it is of a character that can be done with much more economy after the water is admitted into the canal than before.

Very respectfully,

CHARLES B. FISK,

Chief Engineer.