

The petition from fundry inhabitants of Baltimore county, and the counter petition thereto, referred from the last to the present session, were read. ORDERED, That the petitioners and counter petitioner be heard on Friday the 28th of this instant, by counsel if they choose, and that summonses issue for such witnesses as the parties may require.

A petition from Robert Ballard, of Baltimore county, praying an act may pass, empowering him to dispose of part of the real estate of Jonathan Plowman, deceased, to discharge the debts due from the said estate; was preferred and read, and referred to Mr. M^cMechen, Mr. Key, and Mr. Duckett, to consider and report thereon.

On motion, leave given to bring in an additional Supplement to the act for the liquidation and payment of debts against persons convicted of treason; and Mr. M^cMechen, Mr. Quynn, Mr. Wootton, and Mr. Hammond, were appointed a committee for that purpose.

The following report and estimate of the expence for removing obstructions in Patowmack river, was laid before the house and read.

To the honourable the ASSEMBLY of MARYLAND.

IN consequence of a resolve passed May 31, 1783, by the last house of delegates, the subscribers were appointed by the governor in council, to view the river Patowmack, to estimate the expence of rendering the same navigable through the several falls, and the time that the work might be performed in.

To qualify us to form an estimate of this business with that degree of accuracy which we wished for, it seemed necessary that an actual survey should have been taken of the river through the whole course of the intended navigation, the fall every where precisely ascertained, the channel, with every rapid and shallow, narrowly investigated, and the expence of removing them, together with every other obstruction, accurately calculated upon the spot. But not having time to enter into this minute investigation, and deeming ourselves at best but inadequate to the task, it was rather with reluctance that we entered upon the business. Willing, however, to communicate every information which it was in our power to obtain relating to this important subject; having had frequent opportunity heretofore of examining most parts of this river; and having on the present occasion again reviewed the principal obstructions; we believe ourselves justified in submitting the following report and estimate to the consideration of this honourable house, trusting that the sums in the estimate will be found amply sufficient to perfect the work as there expressed.

Although it is evident that the north branch of Patowmack may be easily rendered navigable a very considerable distance above Fort Cumberland; yet as the principal motive for prosecuting the navigation much farther at present, could be only to obtain a shorter communication with the western waters, but as much of that country lying upon the heads of these waters remaining yet to be explored, therefore, until the navigation on these waters, the nearest and most convenient to Patowmack, is discovered, our observations and estimate is confined to Fort Cumberland.

The river Patowmack seems to run over a hard firm bottom, and in its course penetrates many mountains and considerable ridges, which occasions several falls and many rapids; however it appears, that these rapids may be all rendered safely navigable in the channel of the river, except in three places, where the fall seems too great to be made passable without the assistance of locks. From Cumberland, for the distance of one hundred and ten or twenty miles by water, to the Shanando falls, being where the river intersects the south mountain or blue ridge, there is no fall so great as to require a lock; and although in that distance there are many considerable and impetuous rapids, yet the river during moderate floods admits rafts to pass with safety to these falls, and is navigated in its present state by small vessels during the spring and beginning of summer; but as the dry season approaches, the scanty stream being dispersed in a wide channel, the rapids and many other places become too shallow for the purposes of navigation. From the beginning of the Shanando falls down to the ferry at Harper's, the fall being about twenty feet in about the distance of one mile, two locks will be required; and as the floods, which are frequently at the breaking up of the ice irresistible, demonstrate that it would be ineffectual to erect these works in the channel, therefore a level cut must be carried from the river. The channel through this mountain is narrow and confined; on the Maryland side the mountain rises immediately from the river into a mere precipice; on the Virginia side, there happens to be space for a narrow bottom, where in our opinion a canal may be carried at a much less expence, and with greater safety than on the Maryland shore; and could this cut be continued on below the remaining part of the fall, it would doubtless be preferable to add another lock; but as the river Shanando joins Patowmack at this spot, there is a necessity of returning into the channel. The fall from this place seems near ten feet, in rather better than one mile's distance; and as there is not any considerable fall at any one spot, by removing some rocks, and in other places swelling the water, the impetuosity of the current may in our opinion be so far lessened, as to admit rafts