

examine any of the waters of this State together with the notes of the engineers & other documents accompanying such reports. It would be desirable to the Board also to have any charts, maps, etc. of the waters and territory of this State, which may be in the possession of the Executive.⁹

Except for entries in the journals and ledgers of the treasurer of the Western Shore, showing payment of the expenses of the members of the board, no other records exist to document what the board did. A daybook entry for 30 April 1826 shows that on 20 April payment of \$1,500, chargeable to the board, was made to "Gov. Jos. Kent President thereof by its order, in virtue of the Act of 1825, Ch. 166, Sec. 9." On 30 May the daybook shows expense payments of \$96.75 to three members of the board. Similar expense accounts appear for one or more members on 31 December 1826 (\$30.00) and 29 January (\$214.00) and 31 December 1827 (\$279.68).¹⁰

Section 2 of chapter 166 of the Acts of 1825 had authorized the board to appoint a secretary and

to employ such and as many agents, engineers, surveyors, draftsmen, and other persons as in their opinion may be necessary to enable them to fulfill and discharge the duties imposed upon them by this act; and to allow and pay the said secretary, agents, engineers, surveyors, draftsmen, and other persons, such sum or sums of money as may be adequate recompense for their services.

The ledgers of the treasurer, however, show that for the entire period of the board's existence the only disbursements chargeable to the board's account were the \$1,774.75 paid to the governor, \$367.99 in expense allowances to board members, and, on 30 November 1829, a reversion of \$55.00 to the state. Total disbursements over a two-year period amounted to \$2,197.74,¹¹ which would indicate that few, if any, of the technical personnel authorized by section 2 were ever hired.

Evidently not everyone was pleased by the board's efforts. During the next session of the General Assembly a proposal was made to repeal the statute creating the board.¹² The journals of the following session indicate no further consideration of the board. In a message to the legislature, Gov. Joseph Kent was able to assure the General Assembly that, based on subscriptions to the proposed internal improvements, he was confident of their prompt completion. He did, however, reiterate a previously expressed reservation about the state's role in public works:

Notwithstanding the great advantage Maryland will obviously draw from these works they possess more of a national than local character and we have no doubt will receive the fostering aid of the National Government, which has heretofore been so wisely extended to works of a similar nature, though of minor importance.¹³

By 1826 the U.S. Board of Engineers had completed its survey of the feasibility of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. In marked contrast to the earlier reports in 1820 and 1822, the Board of Engineers designed a canal involving 398 locks and a tunnel four miles long and estimated the cost of construction to be \$22 million, exclusive of

9. Joseph Merrick to Thomas Culberth, Esq., Clerk to the Council, 24 April 1826, Maryland State Papers, ser. A. MdHR 6636.

10. Treasurer of the Western Shore, Day Book, 1826-36, 30 April, 30 May, 31 December 1826, 29 January, 31 December 1827, pp. 10, 12, 37, 40, 79, MdHR 3562.

11. Ibid.

12. *H. Jour.* (1826), p. 573. Delegates John W. Thomas, Samuel Sutton, Joseph Harlan, Samuel Barnes, and James W. McCulloh were formed into a committee to prepare a bill, but there is no indication that such a bill was introduced that session.

13. Gov. Joseph Kent to the General Assembly, *Maryland Senate Journal* (1827), pp. 9, 10 (hereafter *S. Jour.*). There was, at the time, a serious question of whether the federal Constitution permitted federal expenditures for works of internal improvements. Indeed both James Madison and James Monroe had vetoed on constitutional grounds acts of Congress providing for such improvements. See *Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*, ed. James Daniel Richardson (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896-99), 1:584; 2:143.