

In November 1853 the terms of Gittings and Ponder expired, and Joshua R. Nelson and Moore N. Falls were elected to succeed them. Both men had served, by virtue of appointment from the previous board, as directors of the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad. Apparently Franklin, the commissioner from the Fourth District, had died or resigned, and Samuel Chamberlain was appointed to succeed him.

On 7 March 1854 Charles R. Stewart, the sole survivor from the initial board, submitted a brief report to the General Assembly. He pointed out that the board had held several meetings since the previous May to elect directors of the various companies and had declined to instruct the C & O Canal Company to issue bonds to discharge the debts of one of the contractors on the canal. He concluded the report with a polite suggestion that the legislature consider the suggestions made in the commissioners' first report.¹⁶

As noted, there is no indication in the board's journal of any further meetings until 6 April 1854, at which time the board elected directors of the three railroads. For reasons not specified in the minutes, the board made wholesale changes in those directors. Of the ten state-designated directors of the B & O, only two incumbents (George Brown and Howard Kenedy) were reappointed. John S. Gittings, a former commissioner from the First District, was appointed to the B & O board. None of the incumbent directors of the Baltimore and Susquehanna survived, and two of the three incumbent state directors of the Annapolis and Elkridge were replaced. The minutes of the 6 April meeting state that the board was to meet again in June at the annual meeting of C & O Canal Company stockholders, but no minutes of the meeting survive. The journal contains two blank pages, presumably reserved for such minutes.¹⁷

The next recorded meeting of the commissioners was on 2 November 1854, at which time the board filled a vacancy in the directorship of the C & O Canal Company and the B & O Railroad Company. It also authorized Falls and Stewart "to act in behalf of said board in representing said state in all the meetings of the stockholders of the several companies of internal improvements in which said state is interested as a stockholder or a creditor." Two more meetings were held in December 1854 for the purpose of selecting directors of the Northern Central Railroad Company and filling a vacancy on the board of the B & O.¹⁸

By 1852 a significant improvement in the state's overall financial picture had occurred. Not only had repudiation of the state debt been avoided, but a surplus of over \$300,000 had been accumulated in the state treasury. In fact, Gov. Enoch Lowe, in his address to the 1852 General Assembly, recommended repeal of the stamp tax. He told the legislators that all of the state's "ordinary and extraordinary demands" had been met, that the interest accruing on the state debt had been paid, and that over \$1 million had been paid into the sinking fund. His concern, in fact, was that these funds were not being invested.¹⁹

In this same address the governor also gave a glowing report as to the condition of the state's internal improvements. He assured the General Assembly that "the public works of the State are in a flourishing condition, by comparison with former years." Indeed, the figures Lowe recited showed that the state had been averaging more than \$250,000 a year since 1849 from interest and dividend income on its investments, a significant increase over the prior years. He was convinced that the economic health of the railroad and canal companies was important to the state's

16. *S. Jour.* (1854), pp. 312-13.

17. BPW Minutes, 6 April 1854, vol. 1851-83, p. 15.

18. *Ibid.*, 2 November, 11 December 1854, pp. 18-19.

19. *S. Jour.* (1852), doc. A, p. 26.