

Ohio and the waters of the Chesapeake bay. The facts however disclosed in that report, only served to dissipate whatever favorable anticipations had been cherished in regard to a canal communication with the west. They saw with dismay, that a canal encumbered with 400 locks, a considerable portion of which would be elevated from 1200 to more than 2000 feet above tide, and which would be sealed up with frost three or four months in the year, with only a limited and precarious supply of water in summer, must be wholly inadequate to the demands of the immense trade, it was destined to accommodate.

Abandoning, therefore, all reliance upon such an insufficient means of communication, a number of the citizens of Baltimore, held a meeting on the 12th day of February, 1827, for the purpose of devising the most effectual means of improving the intercourse between that city and the western states, on which occasion various documents and statements were submitted, illustrating the efficiency of rail roads for the conveyance of articles of heavy carriage at a small expense, which being examined, and the superior advantages of this mode of transportation over turnpike roads and canals being satisfactorily shewn, the documents were referred to a committee, who subsequently reported, a mass of facts, derived principally from English authorities, of a highly interesting character, observing in conclusion, "that the stock of information now in the possession of this committee is admitted not to be very extensive, but they have gleaned from several communications and reports which they have examined upon this interesting subject, enough to leave no doubt upon their minds that these roads are far better adapted to our situation and circumstances than a canal across the mountains; they therefore recommend that measures be taken to construct a double rail-road between the city of Baltimore and some suitable point on the Ohio river, by the most eligible and direct route, and that a charter to incorporate a company to execute this work, be obtained as early as possible."

The facts developed on this occasion were deemed so weighty and conclusive, that it was unanimously resolved to apply to the legislatures of the several states through which the contemplated rail-road might pass, for acts of incorporation, authorising the company, to construct such a road. The legislatures of Maryland and Virginia, then in session, with a promptness which entitled them to the public gratitude, concurred in an act, incorporating a company as desired, and investing it with ample powers. This act was subsequently acceded to by the legislature of Pennsylvania in the same liberal spirit.