

London July 5th 1797



Sir
Last evening Mr King presented me with your Letter acquainting me of the Receipt of my publication on Small Canals, which I hope you will soon have time to Peruse in a tranquil Retirement from the Busy operations of a Public Life; Therefore looking forward to that period when the whole force of your Mind will be upon the Internal improvement of our Country, by Promoting Agriculture and Manufactures. I have little doubt but easy Conveyance, the great agent to other improvements will have its due Weight and meet your patronage

For the mode of giving easy Communication to every part of the American States, I beg leave to draw your Particular attention to the Last Chapter on Creative Canals; And the expanded mind will trace down the time when they will penetrate into every District carrying with them the means of facilitating Manual Labour and Rendering it productive - But how to Raise a Sum in the different States, has been my greatest difficulty; I first considered them as national Works. But perhaps

an Incorporated Company of Subscribers, who should be bound to apply half or a part of their profits to extension would be the best mode. As it would then be their Interest to Promote the work, and guard their emoluments -

That such a Work would answer to Subscribers appears from such Information as I have collected; Relative to the Carriage from the Neighbourhood of Lancaster, to Philadelphia. To me it appears that a Canal on the small scale might have been made to Lancaster for 120 thousand £ and that the Carriage at 20 ^{Shillings} per ton would pay 10 thousand per annum, of which 7000 to Subscribers and 3000 to extension. By this means in about 10 years they would touch the Susquehanna, and the trade would then so much increase as to produce 30,000 per annum, of which 15,000 to Subscribers, the Remainder to extension; continuing thus till in about 20 years the Canal would Run Into Lake Erie. yielding a produce of 100,000 per annum or 50 thousand to subscribers, which is 50 per cent; hence the Inducement to subscribe to such undertakings.

Proceeding in this manner I find that In about 60 or 70 years Pennsylvania would have 9360 Miles

of Canal, equal to Bringing Water Carriage within the
easy reach of every house, nor would any house be
more than 10 or 12 Miles from a Canal. By this time
the whole Carriage of the Country would come on Water
even to Popovers - and following the present Rate of
Carriage on the Lancaster Road. It appears that the
tolls would amount to 4,000,000 per year. Yet no
one would pay more than 21 Shillings and 8^d per ton.
whatever might be the distance conveyed, the whole
would also be pond Canal, on which there is an equal
facility of conveyance each way. Having made this calculation
- in to show that the Creative System, would be productive
of great emolument, to Subscribers. It is only further
to be observed that if each State was to commence a Creative
System, It would fill the whole Country, and in less than
a Century bring Water Carriage within the easy carriage
of every part of the American States. - Conveying the
Surplus Labours of one hundred Millions of Men.

Hence seeing that by System this must be the Result,
I feel anxious that the Public mind may be awakened
to their true Interest. And Instead of directing

Turnpike Roads towards the Interior Country, or
expending large sums in River navigations. Which
must ever be precarious and lead, - I could wish to
see the Labour, and funds applied to such a System
as would penetrate the Interior Country and bind
the whole in the Bonds of social Intercourse -

The Importance of this Subject I hope will plead
my excuse for troubling you with so long a Letter
and in expectation of being Favoured with your
thoughts on the System and mode of carrying
it into effect. I Remain with the utmost

Esteem and Sincere Respect
your most obedient servant
Robt Fulton

The Excellency
George Washington



M. 1306
5th Feb 1797