

13th CONGRESS.]

No. 374.

[3d Session.

BOOKS AND PAPERS OF THE SEVERAL EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS DESTROYED BY
THE CONFLAGRATION IN 1814.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OCTOBER 26, 29, NOVEMBER 1, 11, and 17, 1814.

SIR: GENERAL POST OFFICE, *October 25, 1814.*

In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives, on the subject of information relative to the destruction of official books and papers belonging to the General Post Office, in consequence of the late incursion of the enemy, you are informed that *no* official books or papers were lost, belonging to the Department, in consequence of the late incursion.

I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,

R. J. MEIGS, JUN., *Postmaster General.*

The honorable the SPEAKER of the *House of Representatives.*

SIR: NAVY DEPARTMENT, *October 27, 1814.*

In obedience to the resolution of the honorable House of Representatives, passed on the 24th instant, I have the honor to report:

That the whole of the official books, papers, trophies, and effects, in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, except the furniture of the office, were preserved from loss or injury by the late incursion of the enemy, and are now entire; and that all the official books and papers, in the office of the Accountant of the Navy, have been preserved, except those official papers relative to accounts settled and transmitted to the Treasury Department, referred to in the letter of which the enclosed is a copy.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

W. JONES.

The honorable the SPEAKER of the *House of Representatives.*

SIR: NAVY DEPARTMENT, ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE, *October 26, 1814.*

In reply to your letter of this date, relative to the resolution of the House of Representatives, on the subject of the destruction of the official books and papers in the respective Departments, in consequence of the incursion of the enemy in the month of August, 1814, I have the honor to state that it is believed that all the official books and papers in *this office* were saved. I have no knowledge of the loss of a single book, or papers of consequence; but I have understood that many of our official papers, relative to accounts settled and transmitted to the Treasury Department, were destroyed. What effect the loss may have on future adjustments, it is impossible for me to say.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,

THOMAS TURNER.

The honorable WILLIAM JONES.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *October 31, 1814.*

In obedience to the resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 24th instant, the Secretary of the Treasury respectfully reports:

That, with the exception of some old letters from the collectors of the customs and commissioners of loans, and other unimportant documents, no loss of official books or papers was sustained in his particular office by reason of the incursion of the enemy in the month of August, 1814.

That the documents herewith transmitted, and marked A, B, C, D, E, and F, contain all the information furnished by the heads of the several offices attached to this Department, in relation to the object of the said resolution, and are prayed to be received as part of this report.

All which is respectfully submitted by

A. J. DALLAS, *Secretary of the Treasury.*

A.

SIR: TREASURY DEPARTMENT, COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE, *October 28, 1814.*

To enable you to comply with a resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 24th instant, in relation to the destruction of official books and papers in the Treasury Department, I have to state, that all the official books and papers which were in this office on the 24th of August last, the day of the incursion of the enemy into this city, were packed up and removed from the Treasury, and have all since been returned, except a box containing brief entries of accounts, and another containing part of the accounts entered on the new books of the Accountant of the War Department, for the fourth quarter of 1812, and part of the accounts entered on the old books for the three last quarters of the same year.

These boxes, it is supposed, have, by some means, become mixed with others belonging to some other of the Departments; and although diligent search has been made for them without effect, I do not yet despair of their being found.

I am, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

NATHAN LUFFBOROUGH, *Acting Comptroller.*

Honorable A. J. DALLAS, *Secretary of the Treasury.*

B.

SIR:

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, AUDITOR'S OFFICE, *October 27, 1814.*

In compliance with your request, accompanying a resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 24th instant, I have the honor to state that of the official books and papers in the immediate charge of this office, none are known to have been destroyed or lost "in consequence of the incursion of the enemy in the month of August, 1814," excepting only a set of the printed journals and reports of the two Houses of Congress.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your obedient humble servant,

R. HARRISON.

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

C.

TREASURER'S OFFICE, *October 27, 1814.*

Information respecting the books and papers of the Treasurer's office, required by a resolution of the House of Representatives, passed October 24, 1814.

Legers, journals, remittance, bank, draft, and other books generally in use since the year 1810, have been preserved, and many from the first establishment of the Treasury, particularly all the payments and receipts on account of the Treasury, War, and Navy Departments from their commencements. All the warrants, vouchers, and unsettled accounts of every kind were preserved, except a few accounts and warrants which had been paid in July last, on account of the Privateer Pension Fund, and one on account of the seventh article of the British treaty. These can easily be replaced, the vouchers for the payments being preserved.

Many of the books and papers destroyed were brought from Philadelphia, and very few would ever have been wanted, as all the accounts of this office are adjusted at the end of every quarter, and the documents accompany the accounts to the accounting officers of the Treasury Department, and are afterwards deposited with the Register.

T. T. TUCKER, *Treasurer of the United States.*

D.

SIR:

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, REVENUE OFFICE, *October 26, 1814.*

I have the honor of stating, in compliance with your request, that no official books or papers belonging to this office were destroyed in consequence of the incursion of the enemy in the month of August, 1814.

I am, with great respect,

S. SMITH, *Commissioner of the Revenue.*

Hon. SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

E.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, REGISTER'S OFFICE, *October 28, 1814.*

The Register, in pursuance of the instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury, has the honor to represent, that the loss of books and papers in relation to the records of the Treasury, has, in a great degree, been limited to those of minor importance; and that, upon the late incursion of the enemy, all the essential books of the Treasury were removed to a place of safety.

That to comply more especially, by giving a description of the books and papers which were lost on that occasion, he begs leave to avail himself, by referring to certain papers herewith subjoined, being statements made by the clerks, respectively, having the charge of the principal books and records, and to which he submits the following remarks:

On the statements A and B, in relation to the principal books and records of the revenues of the United States:

The receipts and expenditures of public moneys; the accounts of individual collectors of the revenue, and of all public agents and persons accountable for moneys advanced or otherwise, *were preserved*, and that such as were lost (the very bulky and numerous settled accounts of the War and Navy Departments excepted,) were considered unimportant, compared with the books and records which were, on the emergency, removed, and which claimed the first attention of the Register with the few remaining clerks, who were not in the field in actual military service.

On the statement C in relation to the public debt:

In this branch of the public records nothing has been lost that, it is presumed, can, in the most remote degree, affect the interests of the individual creditors, or the United States.

There arise two descriptions of records from the mode adopted at the Treasury, of a quarter-yearly settlement of the legers, in which every individual creditor on the books of the Treasury is exhibited; the first of these are old legers closed, and put away as finished; the other, those which are operative, and contain the names of existing creditors, the sums due to each, and periods of interest. The journals and legers of the first description only were lost.

On the loss of the books in which were placed numerically the old cancelled loan-office certificates; the cancelled army certificates; the cancelled final settlement certificates; the Register respectfully remarks, that an official register of certificates of the foregoing character *outstanding*, and which remained *outstanding* under each class, has been *preserved*, and that to this register of outstanding certificates reference has frequently been had in cases where petitions for payment have been presented to Congress; so that it is presumed no material inconvenience will arise from the destruction of those which have been brought in and satisfied.

On the marine records lost:

The records arising under the laws in relation to the registering, enrolling, and licensing ships and vessels of the United States, being duplicates transmitted to the Treasury by the district collectors, from the passing of those acts in the year 1792, bound up in volumes descriptive of their contents; together with the cancelled registers, enrolments, and licenses placed numerically in books for their reception; although they were destroyed, yet their loss, it is presumed, may be supplied in each port, by a reference to the corresponding records in the office of each collector, a mode which it is presumed has been resorted to, from the circumstance that, comparatively to their extent, few applications have been made for certified copies of such records at the Treasury.

Respectfully submitted by your most obedient and most humble servant,

JOSEPH NOURSE, *Register.*ALEXANDER J. DALLAS, *Secretary of the Treasury.*

A.

Schedule of the loss sustained by the destruction of the Treasury Department, in that branch of the Register's office, where the books and accounts in relation to the impost and tonnage duties, the internal revenue, and direct tax, are kept, viz:

The ledgers, journals, and auxiliary books connected with the imports, tonnage, and internal revenues, from the commencement to the year 1810, inclusive.

The export books, from the commencement to the year 1803, inclusive.

The vouchers and documents relative to the settlement of the accounts of the collectors of the customs, and supervisors of the internal revenues and direct tax, from the commencement to the year 1811, inclusive.

It is to be observed, however, that the general results of the accounts of every individual collector and supervisor, throughout the Union, as settled at the Treasury, being exhibited in the annual printed statements of the public accounts, the loss above enumerated cannot be considered as essential to, or in any way likely to affect the settlement of future accounts, arising from the sources of revenue before stated; and further, that all the auditor's reports and statements of the accounts of the collectors of the customs, the internal revenue, and direct tax, from their commencement to the present period, have been saved.

JOSA. DAWSON.

B.

REGISTER'S OFFICE, October 26, 1814.

Of the books and papers relative to the receipts and expenditures.

The principal ledgers and journals, from the commencement of the present Government to the year 1798, were destroyed. The ledgers since that period, as well as the complete set of day books from the commencement of the Government, have been preserved.

The vouchers and reports on settled accounts, which were contained in upwards of one hundred large cases and chests in the fire-proof building, were destroyed. The Treasury statements on said accounts from the commencement of the present Government have, in general, been preserved.

Upon the whole it is conceived but little inconvenience will be incurred in the settlement of accounts from the destruction of books and papers in relation to this branch of the office.

JOS. STRETCH.

C.

REGISTER'S OFFICE, October 25, 1814.

Of the books and records in relation to the accounts of the public debt, the following were destroyed:

1. Several old journals and ledgers, the accounts in which had been closed.

Books containing receipts for certificates of funded debt delivered at the Treasury previous to the year 1800. The receipts taken since have been preserved.

2. Cancelled certificates or evidences of the revolutionary funded debt, numerically arranged and bound up in books, which were numerous and bulky; they contained,

1. Loan Office certificates.

2. Army certificates.

3. Final settlement certificates issued by the commissioners of the staff department.

4. Final settlement certificates issued by commissioners in the several States.

5. Final settlement certificates issued in the marine department.

The whole were destroyed; an official list, however, exhibiting the certificates which remain outstanding *was preserved*, by which the equity of claims for certificates of either description may be ascertained with precision.

3. Receipts for dividends of principal and interest on the funded debt paid at the several loan offices, from the commencement of the Government to the 31st December, 1812, were lost; also, receipts for dividends declared at the Treasury to the 31st December, 1810.

Dividends returned unclaimed from the loan offices for payment at the Treasury; the transcripts of these dividends, however, which were made in this office, in books prepared with columns for receipts, and which were preserved, exhibit not only the amount paid thereon, but also every sum now due to individual creditors.

Transfers or cancelled certificates of the funded debt previous to the year 1811. All the powers of attorney for transferring stock were preserved.

MICHAEL NOURSE.

F.

GENERAL LAND OFFICE, October 26, 1814.

SIR: All the maps of this office, and all the books and papers necessary to the settlement of accounts, were saved from destruction.

The papers destroyed were files of military warrants, which had been located and patented; files of final certificates and other papers relative to purchased lands which had been patented; a few files of monthly returns from land offices, which files had been posted into the ledgers; the loss of these papers will not affect the public interest.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN GARDINER, *Chief Clerk.*

The honorable A. J. DALLAS, *Secretary of the Treasury.*

SIR:

WAR DEPARTMENT, November 9, 1814.

Conformably to a resolution of the House of Representatives, of October 24, requiring of this Department a report relative to the destruction of books and papers in consequence of the incursion of the enemy in the month of August, 1814, I have the honor to report, that all the books of record belonging to this office were saved, and that no papers of any kind were lost, except recommendations for appointments in the army, and letters received more than seven years previous; of all these, however, there is a record in the office, viz: the names of applicants, and a brief of the substance of all other letters which were not preserved.

All the standards and colors taken from the enemy during the revolution, as well as those of the present war, which had been deposited in the War Office, were also saved.

In relation to the books and papers of the several offices attached to this Department, I take the liberty to enclose the reports which have been made to me by the principal officer of each.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,

JAMES MONROE.

The honorable the SPEAKER of the House of Representatives.

Accountant's Report.

SIR:

DEPARTMENT OF WAR, ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE, *October 27, 1814.*

In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 24th instant, this day transmitted to me from your office, directing the Secretaries of the several Departments, and the Postmaster General, to communicate to the House such information as may be in their power, in relation to the destruction of official books and papers in their respective Departments, in consequence of the incursion of the enemy, in the month of August, 1814, &c., I have the honor to state, that the books and papers belonging to this office were removed at the time above mentioned, and are now in a state of safety, excepting a part of the papers and army accounts appertaining to the revolutionary war, which had been saved from the flames on the burning of the house occupied by the War Department in 1800. When the books and papers of this office were removed, as before mentioned, it was not practicable to obtain conveyance for all; it was, therefore, determined to leave the old papers and army accounts, as the loss of those (if any loss should happen) would be attended with less inconvenience than that of any other papers. They were in the fire-proof room of the office at the time of the incursion of the enemy, and when that building was burnt they remained uninjured by the flames; but the room having been entered by some persons soon after the building was destroyed, the papers were deranged, and many of them undoubtedly destroyed or carried away at that time; but it is not possible to identify those which may have been thus destroyed. When the public papers were brought back to the city of Washington, the remainder of those papers (by far the larger part of the whole) were removed to the house now occupied as the Accountant's office.

It is not probable that the loss of those papers can have any effect in the adjustment of the unsettled accounts of the United States, as the claims (if any) which might arise under them have been barred by acts of limitation.

With very great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient servant,

TOBIAS LEAR.

The honorable the SECRETARY OF WAR.

Paymaster's report.

ARMY PAY OFFICE, CITY OF WASHINGTON, *October 29, 1814.*

The paymaster of the army of the United States, in obedience to a resolution of the House of Representatives, under date of October the 24th, 1814, has the honor to report:

That, by great exertions all the books, accounts, rolls, and papers of his office, which were of any considerable importance were saved from the destructive incursion of the enemy at this place, in the month of August, 1814; but agreeably to the tenor of the resolution he proceeds to mention, as nearly as can be well ascertained, those which were not saved, and the probable effect which will result from their loss. They are as follows, namely:

Part of the copies of the statements of such recruiting and other accounts as had been adjusted and settled in this office, with old duplicate vouchers, the originals of which were sent up to the other offices of the Government to be finally deposited in the Treasury Department. No inconvenience will result to the Government from this loss; (provided the originals are preserved;) the only inconvenience which will be felt is in this office, where, instead of referring to our copies for information, we shall have to resort to the originals at the Treasury Department.

The accounts and vouchers of Lieutenant Samuel Scott, as paymaster of the twenty-fourth regiment of infantry. The instructions of the paymaster of the army to all sub-paymasters, direct them to keep duplicates of their accounts and vouchers, and Lieutenant Scott has been called on for the duplicates of his; when they are received the loss will be made good.

A small book containing a record of certain stoppages from the pay of non-commissioned officers, musicians, artificers, and privates; a book of minor importance, and as the stoppages had all been directed, and many of them actually made and done, the loss of it is considered of very little consequence.

The recruiting account and vouchers (in part) of the late Major Timothy Dix, of the 14th regiment of infantry, deceased. If the legal representative of Major Dix produces the duplicates, which it is expected are among the papers of the deceased, the loss will be retrieved.

It is possible that some few other papers might have been lost, which cannot now be recollected or ascertained. It is believed, however, that they could not have been of much magnitude or importance.

Respectfully,

R. BRENT, *Paymaster United States army.*

The honorable JAMES MONROE, *Secretary of War.*

Report of the Superintendent General of military supplies.

SIR:

WASHINGTON, *October 24, 1814.*

In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 24th instant, I have the honor to state, that none of the books or papers belonging to the office of the Superintendent General of military supplies have been lost or otherwise destroyed, in consequence of the incursion of the enemy in the month of August last.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

RICHARD CUTTS, *Supt. Gen. military supplies.*

HON. JAMES MONROE, *Secretary of War.*

Adjutant and Inspector General's report.

SIR: ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE,
WASHINGTON, *October 26, 1814.*

In conformity to your order, and with a view to meet a resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 24th instant, calling for information relative to the destruction of official books and papers by the enemy, on the 24th of August last, I have the honor to inform you that the papers which belonged to this office, and which were destroyed by the conflagration of the enemy, were files of muster-rolls, inspection, garrison, monthly and recruiting returns, up to the year 1813, inclusive. In addition to this, several copies of Stoddard's Artillery, and a few copies of a System of Drum Beating for the use of the army, which had not been distributed, were also lost. The whole loss, however, is of no material consequence.

I have the honor, to be, very respectfully, sir, your obedient humble servant,
JOHN R. BELL, *Assistant Inspector General.*

The honorable JAMES MONROE, *Secretary of War.*

SIR: ORDNANCE OFFICE, WASHINGTON, *October 27, 1814.*

In obedience to a request from your Department, I have the honor to state that, in the late invasion and conflagration of the enemy in this city, no valuable books or papers attached or belonging to this office sustained any loss or injury. A few printed books, of considerable value, and some loose papers of no intrinsic importance, with a small quantity of furniture, stationary, &c., formed the only articles which were destroyed.

Very respectfully, I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,
JOHN MORTON, *Deputy Commissary.*

HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, *November 14, 1814.*

The acting Secretary of State, in compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 24th ult., requesting such information as may be in the power of the several Departments to afford, in relation to the destruction of the official books and papers in their Departments, respectively, in consequence of the incursion of the enemy in the month of August, 1814, has the honor to report:

That, when it became apparent from the movements of the enemy, after his debarkation at Benedict, that his destination was the seat of Government, every exertion was made, and every means employed, for the removal of the books and papers of this office, to a place of safety; and, notwithstanding the extreme difficulty in obtaining the means of conveyance, it is believed that every paper and manuscript book of the office, of any importance, including those of the old Government, and all in relation to accounts, were placed in a state of security. That it was not found practicable, however, to preserve, in like manner, the volumes of laws reserved by Congress for future disposition; many of the books belonging to the library of the Department, as well as some letters on file of minor importance from individuals on business mostly disposed of, which were unavoidably left, and shared the fate, it is presumed, of the building in which they were deposited.

All which is respectfully submitted,

JAMES MONROE.

13th CONGRESS.]

No. 375.

[3d SESSION.]

REBUILDING THE CAPITOL, PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, AND OTHER PUBLIC BUILDINGS
IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, NOVEMBER 21, 1814.

Mr. LEWIS, from the committee to whom was referred a resolution "to inquire into the expediency of rebuilding or repairing the President's house, Capitol, and public offices, and of the expense necessary for that purpose, and whether the public interest or convenience would be promoted by any change or alteration of the sites of said buildings," made the following report:

That, amongst the first steps deemed necessary in discharge of the duties assigned them, they caused the superintendent of the city to lay before them the reports of several architects and mechanics of reputed skill and character, who had, at his request, examined the remains of the public buildings, all of whom reported, as their opinion, that the walls generally had not been materially damaged, and were not rendered unsafe or insufficient to rebuild on, conformably either to the former plans, or to some variations suggested, or such as may be adopted as improvements in the rebuilding.

These reports were accompanied by estimates of various amounts, forming an average of \$458,000. The whole first cost of these buildings appears to be \$1,215,110 10.

With the view of better understanding the grounds, and probable accuracy of the reports and estimates, the committee attended personally at the Capitol, and examined the state of that building, where, after a conference, and making such inquiries of an architect on the spot as were considered proper, they were induced to believe that the walls of both wings of the Capitol may be safely built on, and that the estimated expense of about \$250,000 for repairing the same was as nearly accurate, and as much to be relied on as could be reasonably expected, or as circumstances either admitted or required.

With the foregoing information, the committee proceeded to a due and general consideration of the subject-matter referred to them, and readily came to the decision that it was expedient, either to repair the late buildings,