

SEC. 6. *Be it enacted*, That this State shall stand pledged to pay one-half of the expense of the commissioner who may be appointed by the Executive of the United States.

THOMAS WILLIAMSON,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*  
EDWARD WARD,  
*Speaker of the Senate.*

Passed November 24, 1817.

AN ACT to repeal all laws passed by this State relative to the southern boundary line. Approved January 30, 1818.

SEC. 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky*, That all laws heretofore passed by the General Assembly of this Commonwealth, relative to the boundary line between this State and the State of Tennessee, shall be, and the same are hereby, repealed.

SEC. 2. *Be it further enacted*, That the southern boundary line of this State shall be and remain on a line running west from the top of Cumberland mountain to the Mississippi river, in thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes north latitude, any thing in any former law passed by this State to the contrary notwithstanding.

STATE OF KENTUCKY, }  
*Secretary's Office,* } *sc.*

FRANKFORT, February 13, 1818.

The foregoing memorial and resolutions, and the several laws annexed thereto, are true copies of all the proceedings and laws passed by the Legislature of this State, and of the last law passed by the Legislature of the State of Tennessee, on the subject of the boundary line between those States.

Attest:

JOHN POPE, *Secretary.*

15th CONGRESS.]

No. 452.

[1st SESSION.]

### MISCONDUCT OF CERTAIN CLERKS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 30, 1818.

Mr. HOLMES, of Massachusetts, made the following report:

The select committee of the House of Representatives appointed to "inquire whether any and what clerks or other officers in either of the Departments, or in any office at the seat of Government, have conducted themselves improperly in their official duties," ask leave to report:

That several cases have come to their knowledge, which they have investigated with that attention which the interest of the Government and the reputation of its officers require. The inquiry had excited suspicions, and it became necessary that these suspicions should be removed, or their foundation ascertained. To listen to hearsays or surmises, further than they were the means of furnishing proof, would have been illiberal and unjust. We have, therefore, given to each case to which our attention has been directed a full examination, and it is either dismissed as groundless or here reported.

Our attention has been called to the Post Office Department, and we have been urged to re-examine a report of a committee of a former Congress. This we have declined. Justice to the officers implicated in that inquiry, and respect for the decision of a former committee, were sufficient to prevent us from a further investigation.

It was suggested that there were facts which did not come to the knowledge of that committee; but this suggestion was not found to be true; we could not see the propriety of re-examining a report made by gentlemen of intelligence, experience, and fidelity, and upon a much fuller and more extensive examination than we could possibly afford.

Our inquiry has, however, been called to another subject relating to that Department. It was stated and *proved* that Aaron T. Crane, a clerk in the General Post Office, was very extensively concerned as agent for claimants against the United States, and in purchasing soldiers' lands; that this business occupied a considerable portion of his time; that he attended to it at the offices of the different Departments during office hours; and that it was worth to him about \$1,500 per year. The proofs of these facts will be found in the papers marked B, C, D, G, H, M, N.

Mr. Crane was heard before the committee, and his statement accompanies this report. He did not deny any material fact, but stated as a justification that his salary of \$1,000 was small; that there was assigned him a *given duty* to be performed in a *given time*, and that what he could gain he considered his own.

But your committee cannot forbear to disapprove and condemn a practice which tends so strongly to infidelity. Mr. Crane's duty was the adjustment of the accounts of the several postmasters of the United States, and which were to be completed in every *six months*. The temptation to indifference or neglect, when *private duties* pressed him, would be too strong to be resisted; and we apprehend that the public have little reason to expect fidelity from an officer whose *unofficial labors* are the principal object of his attention.

Where the blame in this case should attach, is an inquiry more suitable for the House than its committee. It is matter of inference, from the facts reported, whether the fault is in the *chief* or subordinate officer, or in the *law* regulating the Department. From the high character of the officer who controls this Department, we are disposed to hope and believe that no intentional fault is imputable to him. But surely it neither comports with the dignity of the Government, nor the confidence which its officers should inspire, to permit them to engage in speculations which would be scarcely correct in any private citizen.

We have also examined the cases of James L. Edwards and William M. Stuart, clerks in the War Department, in the section of bounty lands, and the evidence is contained in the papers marked A, B, C, D.

These cases are alike, and, by the facts proved and not denied, it appears that they have transacted business as agents for claimants against the United States, principally in obtaining land warrants for the *Canadian volunteers*, for which they have received compensation. There was no proof that either of these gentlemen was much absent, or that their agencies materially interfered with their official duties. But the tendency of the practice renders it

necessary that it should be prevented. The clerks in this office are numerous, and it is necessary to rely much on their correctness and fidelity. Claims passing through *interested hands* would be likely to succeed, without the proper scrutiny. If the public have not already suffered from these agencies, there is certainly danger in indulging, and safety in preventing the practice.

The existing laws do not prohibit the clerks from transacting other than *official* business, with the exception of those in the Treasury Department. The allowances made by Government were deemed sufficient to command their exclusive labors.

If they engaged in employments incompatible with their duties, a corrective was expected in the *chiefs* of the Departments, to whom they were respectively responsible. But as the number of clerks is exceedingly multiplied, and many are removed from the immediate view of their *principals*, it would, perhaps, be safest to compel their exclusive services by laws to be enforced with suitable penalties; in this way only could we depend on their attention and fidelity.

Your committee have examined the case of Benjamin Homans, chief clerk in the Navy Department, and the evidence is contained in the affidavits of William Blagrove and Mr. Homans himself, and their statements marked O, R, T, U, V, W, Y. The evidence against Mr. Homans went to show that he had loaned for his own benefit a part of the *Epervier fund*, being a grant of \$12,000 made by Congress to the widows and heirs of those lost in that ship; and also that Mr. Homans had appropriated to his own use a horse and forage belonging to the Navy Department.

Upon hearing the whole case, however, it appears that the fund was paid over for the use of the claimants, by the Secretary of the Navy, to Mr. Homans, who gave bonds for its faithful application, to be accounted for in two years; that Mr. Homans had in one or two instances accommodated a friend with money from this fund; that the two years were not expired, and that no claimant had been denied or delayed; that the story of the horse and forage was at most a trifling affair, and there appeared in it nothing improper on Mr. Homans's part.

We know not whether it has been the practice for those *bound* to apply public moneys to specific purposes to use the money, provided they were always ready to account; but we are strongly inclined to the belief that public money should never be touched by the trustee, but for the purposes of executing the trust. Mr. Homans, however, it is believed, is a faithful officer and a responsible man, and that the money is perfectly safe in his hands.

We have also examined the case of Ezekiel Macdaniel, a clerk in the Navy Department, and the evidence is contained in the papers marked P, L, X.

It appears that George Beale, jun., a purser in the navy, was, by the captors of the Champlain squadron, appointed their prize agent, and that about \$290,000 of the money granted them by Congress was put into his hands for their use by the Secretary of the Navy. The Secretary of the Navy took surety of Beale for the faithful application of the money. After this, Beale was ordered to the *Mediterranean*, while a considerable part of this money was in his hands; he substituted Macdaniel to draw on his father of this city, and pay over to the claimants. The prize agent has not yet returned, and the father has neglected to furnish Macdaniel with money, whence several claims have been rejected *for want of funds*. That the conduct of the prize agent has been unfaithful, there can be no doubt. But no suit has been instituted against the sureties of Beale; and it is surely matter of regret that an officer so responsible as a purser in the navy should have contrived to delay and defraud the *honest tar* who has conquered for his country, and be still suffered to remain in employ. Public confidence should be withdrawn from a man who has so grossly abused a private trust, and withheld from our naval heroes the rewards of victory.

Macdaniel is agent of this Mr. Beale *without funds*; objections to agencies in public offices are, consequently, applicable to him. It does not appear that he has squandered any of the money; but it will be perceived that when clerks in the Departments are permitted to connect themselves with men like Beale, the public confidence will be impaired, and suspicions may attach where they ought not.

We, however, learn by the letter of the Secretary of the Navy of 16th February last, that Beale is ordered home to settle his accounts, and are in hopes that this error will be corrected.

But while this affords consolation to the claimants, it proves that Beale's duties as prize agent are incompatible with his office in the navy.

We have examined the case of Daniel Parker, adjutant and inspector general, and the evidence is contained in the paper marked S.

It appears that certain claims for property captured by the enemy were presented to the commissioner for allowance; they purported to be examined and vouched by "Isaac Clark, late col. 26 R. R." The papers were *entire forgeries*. Before their allowance, it was necessary that the genuineness of Clark's signature should be certified by Parker. Parker made the certificates, and but for the vigilance of Peter Hagner, Third Auditor of the Treasury, who discovered the fraud, these claims would have been paid.

General Parker attributes his *inadvertence* to a press of business, which prevented a due examination; but the forgeries being exceedingly apparent, the papers written throughout by the same hand, and Clark's official signature being of the *26th rifle regiment*, when no such regiment existed, the committee perceive in this case a very culpable, if not inexcusable neglect. Happily in these cases the fraud was detected; but we are told that several other forged claims certified as genuine by General Parker have succeeded, and the money has been paid.

By the eighth section of the act of the 2d September, 1789, the first section of the act of 3d March, 1791, and twelfth section of the act of 8th May, 1792, it is, in substance, provided that no clerk in the Treasury Department shall purchase by himself, or another in trust for him, any public lands or other public property, or be concerned in the purchase of any public securities of any State, or of the United States, or take or apply to his own use any emolument or gain for negotiating or transacting any business in the said Department, other than what shall be allowed by law, under a penalty of \$500, removal from office, and perpetual disqualification.

Your committee have examined several cases which appeared to have infringed or evaded the provisions of these acts.

The first is the case of Lund Washington, a clerk in the Treasury Department, and the evidence is contained in the papers marked B, C, D, G, H.

It appears that Mr. Washington is an agent for claimants generally; that he receives the claims usually by mail, attends to their passage through the several branches of the Department to which they belong, and takes a commission for doing the business; and that his agency extends to the transfer of *United States stocks*.

The next case is that of Michael Nourse, a clerk in the same Department, and notary public to the branch bank: The evidence is contained in the papers marked B, E, F, G.

It appears that he is an agent for claimants, of whom he takes a reward; that he transacts their business at the proper Departments, and receives and transmits their money.

The next case is that of Edward Fox, another clerk in this Department; the evidence is contained in the papers marked D, E, F.

It appears that he is agent chiefly for claims at the office of Mr. Lee, under the property act, so called. In a case of Colonel Jameson, of the Pennsylvania volunteers, he admits he received a commission of five per cent. In this case an error had escaped, and the sum of \$1,100 had been paid Jameson, without deducting \$600 previously paid to a captain of the same corps. We did not find that any blame could attach to Mr. Fox in *this case*; but when mistakes do happen, and redound to the profit of the clerks who are agents, it may excite reasonable jealousies in the public mind.

It was the design of these acts to guard the Treasury against the cupidity of its officers. The opportunities afforded the subordinate officers of this Department to learn the fluctuations of the public property are strong temptations to speculate, and to attempt to engross every important bargain without danger of competition. But if the law prohibits the clerks from purchasing public property or stock for *themselves*, and permits them to do it as *agents for others*, they would enable their *friends* to realize all the *exclusive benefits* intended to be prevented by these acts. Besides, it would in most cases be difficult to distinguish an agency from a *real interest*, and the clerks in the Treasury would be purchasers for *themselves* in the *names of others*, and without the possibility of detection.

But your committee have no doubt that to transact any business relative to the Department, in that Department, for *pay*, is a direct violation of the provisions of the law. It is the business of this Department to adjust and pay the demands against the United States. The subordinate officers should have no interest in any account or claim which they might be called upon to inspect or examine. An agency *coupled with an interest* operates as a reward paid by the claimant for the adjustment and allowance of his demand. This, then, is not merely "taking and applying to his own use an emolument or gain" for doing his duty; it is more—it is taking that which may encourage him to obtain what is *not due or more than is due*, under an expectation of augmenting the reward. Although the correct organization of this Department may, and generally will, prevent the evils of which we speak, yet the reason (and perhaps the expression) of the law applies with equal force to agents as to others.

Your committee are confident that no fault is attributable to the respectable officer who directs this Department: the honor, integrity, and talents of that gentleman are sure pledges that in him the public confidence will not be misplaced. Nor are we sure that the public *have materially* suffered from a practice which we condemn. We lay our animadversions on the *facts proved* before this House, subject to their investigation and correction. We feel the full force of the delicacy and perplexity incident to such an inquiry. While we regret that it has fallen to *our lot*, it will be matter of satisfaction to us that we shall have done our duty; and that among so many public agents so few instances of conduct of dangerous tendency have yet been discovered. The gentlemen whose cases are here reported were notified and heard, and their answers accompany this report. It is but justice to state that their conduct was frank, candid, and honorable, and that they did not appear to be conscious that the acts proved were incompatible with their duty.

We are, however, well satisfied that the practices developed by this inquiry are improper and inadmissible, and that, if a corrective is not to be found in the existing laws, these should be so altered as to effect a prohibition.

We are, nevertheless, aware that, after the most effectual legislative guards, much must depend on a prompt execution of the laws by the principal officers of the Department. They have the appointment of their clerks, and public opinion holds them responsible for the performance of their duties, and that those duties should not be perverted by practices dangerous to the fidelity of the clerks and the interests of the public.

We therefore recommend the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, That it is expedient to prohibit the clerks in the several Departments from acting as agents for claimants against the United States.

*Resolved*, That it is expedient to prohibit the officers in the several Departments from engaging in any business of trade.

*Resolved*, That the several acts relating to the Treasury Department should be amended, and certain penalties should be increased.

*Resolved*, That a committee be appointed to report a bill or bills to carry into effect the above resolutions.

J. HOLMES, *Chairman*.

A.

#### *Joseph Watson's affidavit.*

I, Joseph Watson, of the city of Washington, agent for claimants against the United States, testify and declare that, about January, 1817, Dudley Frink, of Buffalo, in the State of New York, called on me, I having been employed by him as agent to support his claims against the United States. He asked me if, by offering compensation to a Mr. William M. Stuart, a clerk in Mr. Nathaniel Cutting's office, it would not facilitate his business? I told him I thought he would not accept of such an offer. I understood, after this, from Mr. Frink's letter to me, that he had employed Mr. Stuart. After this, Mr. Stuart told me that he was the agent of Frink, and that Frink had advised his friends to send their business to him, which quite encumbered him, and he proposed to me to do the business for him, and let him have a portion of the charges. I stated to him that I would transact the business for my regular charges, and he must make his own arrangement on the subject; he said he would converse with me further on the subject, but he did not. He has frequently stated to me that he has received business as an agent from various quarters, particularly from the south. He never stated what compensation he had for doing this business, but I always understood from him that he received pay for it; nor did I ever know what sum he did receive. Mr. Frink, however, told me that Mr. Stuart's price was five dollars for each Canadian land warrant.

I have taken up a large package in an office, from Dudley Frink, as appeared by the handwriting, addressed to James L. Edwards, clerk in the War Department. I do not know what the package contained, but Stuart told me, when he made the proposition herein alluded to, that the transacting the business would be equally for the benefit of himself and Edwards. I further know that, in Mr. Stuart's absence, packages, addressed by Frink to him, were opened by Edwards, and the business was transacted by him.

I further recollect that Stuart, in the conversation above alluded to, observed that, as Edwards had done business of this nature for him in his absence, he (Edwards) would be equally entitled to the benefit of any business which might be done by me. I further testify that Lewis Edwards, a clerk in the War Department, has transacted agency business in relation to Canadian land claims. I had a number of Canadian claims sent me from Detroit, for a Doctor Crosby. I presented these papers to Lewis Edwards, as his agent. He acknowledged himself as such, and endorsed one of the papers in that capacity.

JOSEPH WATSON.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of 16th January, 1818: On the 4th February, 1818, personally appeared the above-named Joseph Watson, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman*.

## B.

*Peter G. Washington's affidavit.*

I, Peter G. Washington, a clerk in the Treasury Department, testify and say that Aaron T. Crane has frequently presented claims to the Third Auditor's office, in the Treasury Department, in which I am clerk, as an agent for claimants. What compensation he had, or whether any, for doing this business, I do not know. I know an instance in which Mr. Crane, several months ago, presented a claim for the pay of a discharged soldier; there was some defect in the papers, and they were returned to him. They were afterwards sent for, and Mr. Crane made some objections to returning them, stating that if he gave them up he might lose his *compensation* for doing the business; but he did give them up without security for compensation.

I further testify that James L. Edwards presented claims for pay of certain Canadian volunteers at Mr. Hagner's office; he acted as agent, but the claims were not allowed. William M. Stuart presented some of the same description, in the same capacity, and they met with the same fate.

I further testify that William Bayard has presented claims, as an agent, at Mr. Hagner's office, and has frequently received pay for them.

I further testify that Michael Nourse, a clerk in the Treasury Department, has frequently presented claims at Mr. Hagner's office, as an agent for claimants, and received them in that capacity. My father, Lund Washington, a clerk in the Treasury Department, has acted as an agent for claimants; he has collected claims in most of the offices of Government from different parts of the United States, and received compensation for them. His charge is three per cent.

P. GRAYSON WASHINGTON.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of 16th January, 1818: On the 4th February, 1818, personally appeared the above-named P. Grayson Washington, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

## C.

*John E. Frost's affidavit.*

I, John E. Frost, clerk in the War Department, in the section of bounty lands, testify and say that James L. Edwards and William M. Stuart, clerks in said section, have acted as agents in obtaining soldiers' land warrants. I heard them say that they received pay for it; but I do not know what compensation they received.

I have frequently seen Aaron T. Crane in Mr. Cutting's office, in office hours, acting as agent for claimants or *their* agents; he is pretty extensively concerned.

I know that Mr. Lund Washington has frequently transacted agency business at Mr. Cutting's office.

JOHN E. FROST.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of 16th January, 1818: On the 2d February, 1818, personally appeared John E. Frost, above named, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

## D.

*Richard T. Queen's affidavit.*

I, Richard T. Queen, clerk in the paymaster general's office, testify and say that, in the paymaster general's office pay for extra services has been uniformly refused. I know that Aaron T. Crane has acted as agent for claimants, and has been frequently at the office of the paymaster general in that capacity during office hours. He appears to be extensively concerned.

I further testify that Lund Washington, a clerk in the Treasury Department, acts generally as agent for claimants; he is at the paymaster general's office in office hours frequently. I do not know what compensation either of these gentlemen receives.

I further say that I have frequently seen Edward Fox, a clerk in the Secretary of the Treasury's office, at the paymaster general's office, acting as agent relative to the transactions of a court-martial of the Pennsylvania militia. Letters have come to Edward Fox under cover of an address to the paymaster general, and, as I understood, from Pennsylvania, relative to this transaction.

I further testify that I received of a Mr. Tallman, by the hands of a Colonel Watson, \$50, but not for any business in the offices, or either of them; this money was due me from a Mr. Carson, and paid me by Tallman.

I further testify that James L. Edwards and William M. Stuart have acted extensively as agents in business relative to the Canadian volunteers; but Mr. Edwards told me he did not receive a cent for doing this business; and I do not know whether Stuart did receive any thing or not.

I further say that Ezekiel Macdaniel, clerk in the Navy Department, acts as agent for George Beale, a purser of the navy. This I understood from him.

RICHARD T. QUEEN.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of the 16th of January, 1818: On the 6th day of February, 1818, personally appeared Richard T. Queen, above named, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.**William M. Stuart's statement.*

SIR: WAR DEPARTMENT, SECTION OF BOUNTY LANDS, *February 22, 1818.*

Agreeably to your request, I have the honor to inform you that I had received, by power of substitution and for agents only, three months' extra pay and land warrants for that class of claimants denominated "Canadian volunteers," and for which I have taken a compensation of not more than one-fourth of what is usually charged by

the regular agents in this place; by which means the claimants have been benefited, as the agents only charge, in addition to their own fees, what they have to pay to their substitutes here; and I am confident that the Government has lost nothing by the transaction.

First. Because I have a regular fixed business in this office, and have frequently been obliged to attend after three o'clock during the recess of Congress, and almost constantly when it is in session, to keep my business up, when I have, more than ten times over, repaid for the few moments that I have spared from my official duties in signing my name for warrants and money; and it is well known that I have never made out such warrants, or passed a single claim.

Secondly. Agents have sent claims to me which may have been just, but I did not think them so, and therefore declined handing them to Mr. Cutting for his inspection; those claims are now in my possession; the discharges on which they were predicated had the word "honorable" erased, but might very easily have been suppressed, and a certificate obtained from the records of the army to show that the claimants were borne on the rolls the length of time required by law; but, in place of acting the *subtle agent*, I retained the documents, because I thought it a duty I owed the War Department, and thereby lost my commission.

Colonel Watson has stated to the committee that I have received claims from the south. I most positively deny the charge, and assert, without fear of contradiction, that I have never transacted any agency business for any other person than Messrs. Frink, Jewett, Hopkins, Strong, and Pettis, of the State of Vermont, except a few patents that I have received for some gentlemen of the first *respectability* from the States of New Hampshire and New York for the soldiers of the late war, and for which I never would accept of more than fifty cents each; and, indeed, I never would have engaged in the business if it had not been represented at this office that Colonel Watson had sent to a correspondent of his in the State of New York the papers of a poor wounded soldier, who made the following charge for the colonel: notification, four dollars; pension certificate, four dollars; and for his services, four dollars more; to which the correspondent added for his own services seven dollars more—amount, nineteen dollars; and I have been credibly informed that he charges for patents four dollars, which are sent to his agents, who, for themselves, charge the same amount, and postage also.

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

WM. M. STUART.

The Hon. JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman of the Committee of Inquiry.*

*James L. Edwards's statement.*

SIR:

WAR DEPARTMENT, *February 18, 1818.*

In conformity with your request, I now do myself the honor of making a statement to you explanatory of the evidence which has been adduced before the committee of investigation, of which you are chairman, relative to certain business which I have transacted as an agent while employed as a clerk in the Department of War.

The testimony alluded to goes to show that I have received compensation as an attorney in procuring land warrants for a certain description of troops called Canadian volunteers. This evidence is strictly true; and had I conceived that there was any impropriety in such an agency, I should have been one of the last to have engaged in it.

The material objections which I understand to exist against the national clerks being employed as agents for individuals who have demands against Government are—

1st. That Government has not sanctioned the employment of agents for such purposes.

2d. That the employment of persons in the public offices as agents would lead to corrupt practices, in authorizing, for example, a clerk to receive a compensation as an attorney in a case where the claim was investigated by him, and where perhaps his judgment might be perverted in consequence of having an interest in the claim.

3d. That the clerks would, in their capacity as agents, consume a part of the time which should be devoted to official duty, and for which the Government pays them.

To the first of these objections I reply that, from the nature of the business in which I have been employed by individuals, an attorney was indispensably necessary if the claimant did not apply in person. A Canadian land warrant is transferable property; and a heavy responsibility is imposed on the person who undertakes to transmit it by mail several hundred miles to the individual to whom the agent is accountable: to be paid, therefore, for such business is, I presume, nothing more than reasonable; it is what no public officer is obliged to do.

To the second, that I have never, in my official capacity, investigated the claims of Canadian volunteers.

To the third, that I have never devoted any time during office hours to the transaction of business as an agent, except a few minutes in signing receipts.

For the evidence to support my assertions, I beg leave to refer you to the accompanying letter of Nathaniel Cutting, Esq., the superintending clerk of the Bounty Land Office.

So far from supposing that the employment of clerks in this office as agents has been detrimental to the public interest, I believe it has been advantageous to the Government, as well as beneficial to the individual who had a just claim. For instance, several claims have been presented by volunteers, who had served upwards of six months, but who did not receive honorable discharges: had these claims fallen into the hands of dishonest men, how easy would it have been for them to have suppressed the discharges, and obtained from the records of the War Department evidence of having belonged to the army for six months, (which is all that the law requires as to service,) and thus have passed the claims. That spurious claims are frequently presented by agents out of the public offices is a well-known fact; and this justifies the belief that, had the business which has been confided to gentlemen in this Department been confided to other hands, the Government would have been more liable to imposition. As to the compensation which I have received, I can only say that it is not more than one-fourth of what other agents have charged for similar services. Here, then, I consider the honest claimant and the Government equally benefited.

In the whole of this business I have done nothing which I conceive incompatible with my principles as a man, or my duty as an officer. A former Secretary of War gave permission to a clerk in his office to transact business similar to that in which I have been engaged. That gentleman is as much distinguished for sound judgment as correct principles. His character and abilities were never questioned. Whatever may be thought of my conduct in this business, I shall always have the consolation of a self-approving conscience.

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

JAMES L. EDWARDS.

Hon. JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman of the Committee of Investigation, &c.*

SIR: WAR DEPARTMENT, *February 7, 1818.*

I shall be highly gratified if you will be so obliging as to answer the subjoined queries. You will, no doubt, readily perceive the object I have in view in making this request.

1. Does not every claim for warrants for bounty land granted to "certain Canadian volunteers" pass through your lands for examination?
2. In obtaining warrants of the above description, is not the employment of an agent or attorney necessary if the claimant does not apply in person?
3. During the period of nearly two years that I have been in the War Department, have you ever found me remiss in my duty?
4. Did you ever consider my conduct reprehensible in transacting any extra-official duty?

I am, most respectfully, your obedient servant,  
NATHANIEL CUTTING, Esq. JAMES L. EDWARDS.

SIR: WAR DEPARTMENT, SECTION OF BOUNTY LANDS, *February 7, 1818.*

In reply to your queries of this date on the annexed page, I have no hesitation to reply that no warrant has been issued under what is commonly called the "*Canadian volunteer*" act, without my examining the evidence so far as to see that *the local authorities*, as was represented at this office, duly attested the *American citizenship* of the claimant *anterior* to the late war, and *his residence in Canada* at the commencement of it; and, since the *additional* act of March 3, 1817, that he had served six months with some regiment or corps of the United States army, was required to be attested from records in the War Department.

2d. A warrant has never been issued for *military bounty land* under the act above cited without my requiring that some person, *legally authorized*, should sign a *receipt upon the record* before delivery of the warrant. If, then, neither the *claimant* nor his immediate *attorney* appears here for that purpose, a *substitute* of the latter is indispensable.

To the third and fourth questions, I unequivocally reply in the negative.

Amicably, your obedient servant,

M. JAMES L. EDWARDS.

NATHANIEL CUTTING.

E.

*Joseph Watson's affidavit.*

I, Joseph Watson, of the city of Washington, agent for claimants against the United States, testify and say that Edward Fox, clerk in the Treasury Department, transacted agency business, from information, and from seeing him in the office of the Commissioner of Claims inquiring about and attending to claims.

I further testify that Michael Nourse, clerk in the Treasury Department, is notary public and agent for claims. I have seen him in Mr. Hagner's office attending to claims and inquiring about them in office hours, and have seen documents in that office filed with his name as agent. I understand that he is also notary public to the Bank of the United States, and transacts business in that capacity. I have understood that he has done business as agent in transferring stocks of the United States.

I further testify that Lund Washington, a clerk in the office of the Comptroller of the Treasury, has acted as agent for claimants against the United States, particularly for claims under the *property act*. I have seen him in the office of the Commissioner of Claims, frequently transacting business of this description, and I have understood it from his own conversation, and he expressly told me that he charged a commission for transacting this business.

JOSEPH WATSON.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of 16th January, 1818: On the 4th February, 1818, personally appeared Joseph Watson, above named, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

F.

*Thomas Dungan's affidavit.*

I, Thomas Dungan, clerk in the Treasury Department, testify and say that Edward Fox has, I understand, acted as agent for claimants against the United States under the *property act*, so called. His name appears as such on the books, but I do not know that he has received any pay for it.

I further testify that Michael Nourse very often hands certificates of United States stock to me to be transferred, and appears to have some agency in this business, but I do not know how far he is concerned, and the transacting this business takes but little time. I do not know that he receives any pay for it.

THOMAS DUNGAN.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of the 16th January, 1818: On the 7th of February, 1818, personally appeared Thomas Dungan, above named, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

*Edward Fox's statement.*

SIR: WASHINGTON, *February 20, 1818.*

In compliance with the wish expressed by the honorable committee over which you preside, that I should make a written and concise reply to the depositions of Messrs. Watson, Dungan, and Queen, and that I would also offer such explanations touching the same as they might seem to require, I have the honor to state that those depositions are substantially correct, and that I have, at various times, transacted business at this place, for which I have in most cases made a regular charge, but have never in any instance received a compensation, other than that allowed by law, for performing those services which were required of me in my official capacity.

I presume, sir, I need offer to the committee no other explanation on this subject than simply to state that, as no doubt of its propriety had ever occurred to me, I have not hesitated to attend openly to any business intrusted to my care which did not interfere or was not inconsistent with my official duties.

I have the honor to be, with the highest respect, sir, your most obedient servant,

EDWARD FOX, JUN.

The Hon. JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman of a Committee of Congress.*

## G.

*Thomas B. Dashiell's affidavit.*

I, Thomas B. Dashiell, clerk in the Treasury Department, testify and say that Michael Nourse, a clerk in the office of the *Register*, has frequently received money from the treasury as agent or attorney for claimants. I do not know whether he received any reward for this service. Mr. Nourse is notary public for the Branch Bank of the United States. He sometimes brings the papers to the Treasury himself, and sometimes he sends them.

I further testify that Lund Washington, a clerk in the *Auditor's* office, transacts business as agent for claimants. He has drawn very often from the treasury for claimants for property lost during the war.

I further testify that Aaron T. Crane is pretty extensively concerned as agent for claimants. He told me he had made a great deal of money by it. He has very frequently drawn money from the treasury in that capacity.

THOMAS B. DASHIELL.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed under a resolution of the 16th January, 1818: On the 5th day of February, 1818, personally appeared Thomas B. Dashiell, above named, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

*Michael Nourse's statement.*

Sir:

WASHINGTON, *February 17, 1818.*

I beg leave to submit the following facts and explanation in relation to the business which has been transacted by me, and which has claimed the attention of your honorable committee:

1st. With respect to the settlement of public accounts.

The documents upon which these have been obtained have all (three or four instances excepted) been sent to me by one gentleman, lately an officer in the army. His letters are opened and read at home, the papers examined, and, after being assorted, are generally sent under cover to the proper officer. When adjusted, I call and receipt for the payments. All letters in relation to claims and remittances are written and copied at home. The commission charged has in no instance exceeded one per cent. The claims received by me during the last year were about fifty.

2d. With respect to the transmission of stock warrants.

The certificates to which these warrants are attached are forwarded by mail directly to my address, either by the proprietor or his agent. When the warrants, which are filled up and attached to the certificates in the office of the Secretary of the Treasury, are completed, they are transmitted agreeably to advice received. Letters of advice receive my attention at home, where my answers are prepared, and a record of each transaction made. This agency has always been considered at the Treasury entirely of a private character, and altogether distinct from any thing like buying and selling of stock, inasmuch as the agent has no more control over the property than if it were a bill of exchange payable to a merchant in Charleston, and deposited in his hands for transmission.

3d. In relation to my duties as notary, I beg leave to refer to Mr. Smith's letter.

The committee will, I trust, excuse me in troubling them with one or two general but short remarks.

After being in the public employment for upwards of twenty years, during which period, with all my economy, I had barely subsisted, I found myself surrounded with a large family; to feed and clothe them, my salary in *this place* was *but* sufficient; to educate them, it would not enable me; to accomplish this most desirable object, other means were necessary; the commission business presented itself as one most likely to be useful, while, at the same time, it would interfere but little with my official duties. In attending to claims on Government, perhaps on each half an hour of public time has been employed; my commission has, however, been moderate, and the charges made only in consideration of my attention at other hours. Permit me, however, to remark that, having been blessed with good health, I have not, to the best of my recollection, been absent from my desk one whole day during the last three years. The commission business, however, did not answer my expectations; I therefore declined further proposals, and applied for the situation I now hold in connexion with the branch bank, which interferes still less with my public duties, and for which I am thankful, not only as it aids me in improving the minds of my children, but as it affords the means of contributing to the support and comfort of others who have peculiar claims on my benevolence.

I am, with the greatest respect, sir, your most obedient servant,

MICHAEL NOURSE.

The Hon. JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman of the Committee, &c.*

DEAR SIR:

OFFICE OF DISCOUNT AND DEPOSITE, WASHINGTON, *February 16, 1818.*

In answer to your inquiry, I have to state that the principal part of the notes protested in this office have been put into your hands at or near three o'clock on each day. Some few that we wished to send away by a particular mail have been delivered to you at earlier hours, with a request that they might be proceeded with and returned to us before the closing of the bank.

I am, dear sir, yours, very respectfully,

RD. SMITH, *Cashier.*

MICHAEL NOURSE, Esq.

## H.

*Edward Stephens's affidavit.*

I, Edward Stephens, clerk in the War Department, in the section of bounty lands, testify and say that Aaron T. Crane, a clerk in the General Post Office, has acted as an agent in obtaining the warrants for soldiers of the regular army. I have made out a great many for him. He has been very often there, attending, in office hours, to obtain these warrants, and to transact the business relating to his agency. He is very extensively concerned.

I further testify that warrants, to the best of my recollection, have been made out for Michael Nourse, a clerk in the Treasury Department, as an agent or attorney for the soldiers.

I further testify that Lund Washington, a clerk in the office of the Comptroller of the Treasury, has acted as agent in obtaining several land warrants—perhaps a hundred at various times. I do not know what compensation he received for this, or whether any.

EDWARD STEPHENS.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of the 16th January, 1818: On the 2d February, 1818, personally appeared Edward Stephens, above named, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

*Lund Washington's letter.*

Sir: CITY OF WASHINGTON, *February 20, 1818.*

Conformably to your request, I proceed to state, for the information of Congress, that I have acted as an agent for claims upon Government from the month of October, 1816, to this time.

The claims have been for the pay of soldiers, and pensions of widows, and lost property, say horses, arms, and accoutrements, and for obtaining land warrants and patents upon soldiers' discharges.

The collections have, in the whole, amounted to seventeen thousand dollars, the land warrants to about sixty, and the patents to about thirty. For my services I have charged three per cent. on moneys collected, on land warrants two dollars each, and on patents one dollar each.

The claims have been forwarded to me by Mr. T. G. Bradford and Mr. Washington Perkins, Nashville; Mr. T. F. Bradford, Shelbyville; and Messrs. Jones & Moore, Murfreesborough, all in Tennessee; and by Mr. George Kesling, Lebanon, Ohio, and from no other persons.

The giving receipts, obtaining money from bank, &c., have been necessarily done in hours of office business. Mr. Brent and Mr. Lee, in whose offices nearly all the business has been done, know that this has not taken much time as respects myself; and this may be established by the gentlemen who are my companions in business. I with great confidence assert that, as a clerk in the Treasury Department, I have done a great deal of business, and done it well; and I really believe I have actually performed as much or more labor, in my official capacity, since I have been an agent, than I ever did before.

I did not, nor do I now, entertain any doubt about the correctness of my own conduct in this matter. I have, however, under date of the 22d January, notified the gentlemen named above that I have withdrawn from the business. I have done this, lest the continuance of the agency should be considered among the causes *why* the great body of persons attached to the public offices as clerks do not receive from the Government, for their services, such compensations as will enable them decently to maintain themselves and families.

I am, very respectfully, sir, your most obedient servant,

LUND WASHINGTON.

J. HOLMES, Esq.

I.

*James Hewitt's affidavit.*

I, James Hewitt, clerk in the General Post Office, testify and say that the final settlement and registering the accounts of the postmasters of the United States is assigned to myself and Aaron T. Crane, and that this service is as much as two persons can well perform in office hours. Mr. Crane has frequently attended to business as an agent, and has, as he states, received pay for it. Mr. Crane is a very expeditious clerk, and does his equal proportion of this duty. I have done considerable of other business in the office; but I do not know that Mr. Crane has done any except that *assigned*. He is frequently absent from the office in office hours.

JAMES HEWITT.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of said House, 16th January, 1818: On the 12th of February, 1818, personally appeared James Hewitt, above named, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

K.

*Joseph Watson's affidavit.*

I, Joseph Watson, of the city of Washington, agent for claimants against the United States, testify and say that Aaron T. Crane and William Bayard, clerks in the General Post Office, have transacted agency business. Crane is a general agent; has so advertised in the papers. I have seen him transact business at the Land Office, and attending during office hours, for the purpose of purchasing lands from the soldiers; and he has told me that he was agent for claims generally. He stated that during the last year he made fifteen hundred dollars in this business. I have also seen him transacting business at other offices, particularly at Mr. Hagner's and Mr. Cutting's offices: this was also in office hours. Mr. Bayard's agency was, I think, confined to transacting business from the State of Ohio. I know that he received pay for this business, for he told me so. I have repeatedly seen him in office hours attending the offices in his capacity as agent, particularly at the paymaster general's office. Mr. Crane had powers of attorney to receive several patents, and a few days after he received them, as I understood, he went to New York to distribute them, and last summer he was absent in Virginia for two or three weeks.

JOSEPH WATSON.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed under a resolution of the 16th of January, 1818: On the 4th of February, A. D. 1818, personally appeared Joseph Watson, above named, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

L.

*Ezekiel Macdaniel's affidavit.*

I, Ezekiel Macdaniel, clerk in the Fourth Auditor's office, in the Treasury Department, testify and say that George Beale, jun. was purser in the navy, attached to the squadron on Lake Champlain, and about three hundred



and ten thousand dollars was placed in his hands, as agent for the captors of the British squadron. Mr. Beale is now in Europe. When he went away, about two years ago, he requested me to attend to the business; I consented; and he left about six thousand dollars in my hands to pay to the captors. At this time he directed me to call on his father, George Beale, of this city, for further funds. I have drawn from him about four thousand dollars more. This money has been paid over to the captors, except about twelve or fifteen hundred dollars, which I received about a month ago. I have frequently called for money, but could not obtain it. Mr. George Beale, jun. paid off a considerable part of the prize money himself before he went to Europe.

Question by the chairman. On what terms do you transact this business for George Beale, jun.?

Answer. I do not know what compensation I shall receive.

Question by the chairman. Was there no agreement between you and George Beale, jun. relative to your agency in this business; and, if any, what?

Answer. There was no agreement.

Question. Do you expect to receive any compensation?

Answer. It is a question which I am not prepared to answer.

EZ. MACDANIEL.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed under a resolution of the 16th of January, 1818: On this 11th of February, A. D. 1818, personally appeared Ezekiel Macdaniel, above named, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman*.

M.

*Edward Stephens's affidavit.*

I, Edward Stephens, clerk in the War Department, in the section of bounty lands, testify and say that James L. Edwards and William M. Stuart, clerks in the section of bounty lands, acted as agents and attorneys in obtaining the Canadian land warrants; they appear so on the books in the office. I never knew on what terms they did the business; the principal part of the business, I think, was done for Dudley Frink, who lives somewhere to the northward—if I mistake not, in Burlington, Vermont. The papers were examined by these gentlemen principally after office hours; and, after they were so examined, passed through the hands of Mr. Cutting for further examination. I have no knowledge of their being agents for any other claims.

EDW. STEPHENS.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed under a resolution of the 16th of January, 1818: On the 2d day of February, A. D. 1818, personally appeared the above-named Edward Stephens, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman*.

N.

*William Paine's affidavit.*

In December, 1816, I presented the claims of John Smith, of the 1st rifle regiment, and James Whitehead, of the 24th infantry, for clothing due to them, with powers of attorney legally executed. Mr. Hagner, the accounting officer, refused to admit the claim, and informed me there was no law existing to authorize the payment.

In March, 1817, I presented the claim of James Hanna, late a soldier, with power of attorney and papers. The claim was rejected under an alleged imperfection in the papers. Mr. Lund Washington, clerk, informed me that he received, (six or eight months subsequently,) on the same papers, the amount due to Hanna.

In May, 1817, I presented the claim of John May, administrator of Richard May, late a soldier, with power of attorney. This claim remained in the office for several months unsettled. P. G. Washington, a clerk in the same office, became authorized; and (as Mr. L. Washington, the father, informed me) the claim was settled and paid.

James Mathews, of the 5th infantry, and I. W. Winklehearke, of the same regiment, left their discharges with the district paymasters, who certified this fact, and (as it is said) forwarded the original discharges, with other vouchers, to the War Department. With a view that the land warrant might issue to the soldiers, I presented the certificates above mentioned to the Third Auditor, in order to obtain the discharges. He observed that his clerks could not be employed in searching for such papers. I then filed them in the office of Mr. Cutting, with an expectation that he might obtain the discharges. After six or eight months, I was again written to by the gentleman who sent me the papers; and, finding that nothing had been done, I again applied to the Auditor, who observed that he would not deliver the discharges unless I produced an order from the soldier.

Mr. Stuart, (a clerk in Mr. Cutting's office,) some time last summer, said he had received within a short time (a few days) twenty dollars, as commissions, &c.

Lund Washington has frequently told me that he was engaged as an agent, &c.; that he received commissions for his services; that he had obtained a number of patents, &c. I have myself delivered him a number of papers to establish claims, &c., which he said he was authorized to receive.

I have heard Aaron T. Crane say that he was extensively engaged as agent for claimants. He said his emoluments were considerable, and offered me a partnership in this business.

WM. PAINE.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of 16th January, 1818: On the 5th February, 1818, personally appeared the above-named William Paine, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman*.

O.

*William Blagrove's affidavit.*

I, William Blagrove, clerk in the Navy Department, testify and say that Benjamin Homans, clerk in the Navy Department, has loaned out of the *Epervier fund* (so called) about ten thousand dollars. This I know by his loaning to me about four hundred dollars; and he stated that he had loaned to a friend from eight to ten thousand dollars, and smaller sums to others.

I know that a horse, purchased for the Department, was kept at Mr. Homans's stable, and not used by the Department for more than a year; the forage was purchased at the public expense, and the horse was used in Mr. Homans's family.

I further testify that Ezekiel Macdaniel, a clerk in the *Fourth Auditor's* office, is agent for George Beale, jun., a purser of the navy, and prize agent for the Champlain squadron. Three hundred and sixty thousand dollars, appropriated by Congress to pay for the captured fleet, was placed in the hands of Beale. He is now absent, in Europe, and his father transacts his business here. Macdaniel transacts the business for prize claimants to obtain their pay out of this fund.

WM. BLAGROVE.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of 16th January, 1818: On the 7th February, 1818, personally appeared William Blagrove, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

*William Blagrove's affidavit.*

Benjamin Homans, at \$2,000,	-	nett quarter	\$500,	\$300 additional,	-	\$800
John Boyle, 1,200,	-	do.	300,	180 do.	-	480
William Blagrove, 1,300,	-	do.	325,	-	-	325
Noah Fletcher, 1,200,	-	do.	300,	-	-	300
Henry Rich, 800,	-	do.	200,	-	-	200
Thomas Fillebrown, 79 days, at \$2,	-	-	-	-	-	158

Leaving a balance still of \$29 in his hands.

The above is the apportionment first made by Mr. Homans of the surplus fund, at the end of the year 1817; afterwards it was modified, in consequence of our resistance.

WM. BLAGROVE.

Sworn to 26th March, 1818.

P.

*Joseph Watson's affidavit.*

I, Joseph Watson, now residing at the city of Washington, being interrogated and duly sworn, do depose and say that I have understood that the British armed vessels captured on Lake Champlain were appraised agreeably to the act of Congress approved on the 3d April, 1815, at the sum of \$310,000, and that \$290,000 of that sum was, in the month of June following, placed in the hands of George Beale, jun. as prize agent, with an authority to deduct from his payments three per cent.; of which last sum \$40,000 was in District money, and the remainder in treasury notes. That said prize agent, after making payments in Boston, New York, in the city of Washington, and elsewhere, was ordered on board of one of the United States vessels bound to Europe, in his capacity as purser in the navy; since which time, Ezekiel Macdaniel, a clerk in the office of the Fourth Auditor, has disbursed moneys to persons holding prize claims. That, on or about the 13th April, 1817, I received a claim of one Abijah Dudley, for prize money, amounting to \$116 40; and on or about the 16th June following, the claim of Robert Hamilton, also for prize money, amounting, as I was informed by Mr. Macdaniel, when presented on the 17th June, to about \$640; at which last time, or a few days after, he (Macdaniel) did endorse on the claim "exd. good," and apprized me, as he had before, in reference to Dudley's claim, that payment could not be made for want of funds; for, although he had undertaken to examine the claims and disburse the money, yet the prize agent had deposited the funds in the hands of his father, George Beale, of this city, who expected shortly to receive some bank dividends. In the course of the many conversations which I subsequently had with Mr. Macdaniel, he stated that George Beale, jun. had employed the funds in speculations which had not proved fortunate, and particularized the nature of the speculations; after this I saw Mr. Beale, and having urged him much on the subject, stating to him that Hamilton had been waiting in New York, and would wait there to receive his prize money, he agreed, as I understood him, to raise the money by discounting a note at sixty days, and to pay it the day following. But, on calling at the time appointed, Mr. Macdaniel tendered me a blank note, dated, I think, on the 5th September, which he informed me he had been requested by Mr. Beale to fill out in any name. This note I declined receiving, expressing my surprise at this mode of disbursing moneys, and stating that I was not authorized to make the claim an individual one. I have not yet received payment on the claims above alluded to, and have reason to believe, from letters received, that Hamilton is yet in New York patiently expecting his money. It is my impression that there are many prize claims remaining to be paid by Beale. When treasury notes commanded a high premium abroad, and District money was at a discount, I frequently was compelled to accept the greater portion of the claims intrusted to me in District money. I annex the original of one of the certificates which I, on those occasions, exacted from Mr. Macdaniel. I cannot state what compensation Mr. Macdaniel receives from Mr. Beale for his services, and whether he has any thing to do with the adjustment of the accounts of the prize agent in his capacity as clerk, but do know that the payments he has made to me have been so made during office hours.

JOSEPH WATSON.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of the 16th January, 1818: On the 11th February, 1818, personally appeared the above-named Joseph Watson, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

*Isaiah Hacket and Perly Foster's claims for prize money have been paid by me to Col. Watson, in District money.*

EZEKIEL MACDANIEL.

JANUARY 15, 1817.

*A. T. Crane's statement.*

DEAR SIR:

WASHINGTON CITY, February 17, 1818.

Agreeably to the suggestions of the honorable committee, I have made a statement relative to my official duties as a clerk, and also stated the manner in which, and my reasons for, undertaking the agency in which I have been employed.

The friendly manner in which you received and answered my first communication emboldens me to trouble you with a plain statement of my ideas upon the business I have been engaged in for the last two years, and I trust

that the openness with which I treat the subject will be excused, as the only object is to exhibit in as fair a light as possible every thing that has transpired.

That part of the evidence received by the honorable committee tending to show that I was "frequently absent from my office" may be explained by stating that twice or thrice, and sometimes oftener, I have had occasion, in the course of a week, to appear at some of the Departments or offices for the purpose of looking after the business confided to me by individuals. Upon the whole, it might possibly average twice a week the year round, and the time I was absent might be computed at from a half to three-quarters of an hour upon each occasion. This, in the winter season, is generally taken between the hours of 2 and 3 o'clock, just before the hour for closing the office. Well knowing the value of this time, a little extra industry and close application to my books have afforded me the opportunity by the gain I could make in my office business. In the summer season the clerks in the General Post Office attend to business one hour earlier than in most of the other Departments, and for that reason are not rigidly confined to the hour of 3 o'clock P. M.

That the transacting business of individuals with the Government in the capacity of agent is honorable and respectable, I must ever believe, for it has been done from time immemorial, and very few in any capacity who appear here have not more or less to do for their friends and others. That the attending to this business when it can be done without interfering with my office duties is correct, I am fully satisfied; and that the receiving compensation for what I have done, distinct from the office and duties required of me by the United States, is what I owed to myself, and for which I think no blame can be imputed.

It was said in my hearing by an honorable member of the House of Representatives that agencies were in no instance necessary. I do not know that they really are; but I know that the gentleman who made the observation had frequently presented claims to the different offices, and attended to their final settlement; he did not receive a per centage for his services, but *the act* as to necessity of agency I consider as pretty good evidence.

In the course of my hearing on Monday last, one of the honorable committee observed that a statement had been made that I was a long time absent visiting the States of Virginia and New York during the last year. That I have been absent and visited as is stated, I readily admit; and can only defend it by stating that the time thus spent could not be esteemed unreasonable in the course of two years, as it did not exceed *seven weeks*, two-thirds of which was expended in pursuit of health, and the remainder on a visit to my relations and friends. And as for furloughs or leave of absence, I would say that no class of society but the criminal is excluded from a partial share of freedom. I never knew or heard of any in the employ of Government or otherwise but expected an occasional liberty to follow inclination. The officer and the *private soldier* expect and receive their *furlough*; and from the *highest* to the least, through all the grades in the Departments and offices, I believe every man calculates upon an occasional recess. In my case, however, I feel a consciousness of meriting no censure for the little share of liberty that was enjoyed by me, as my official duty was exacted of me, and the time I was absent made good by extra labor after my return.

If any thing remains upon which yourself or the honorable committee are not perfectly satisfied, I shall be happy to again appear and make any explanation in my power; and if the certificate herein enclosed is not such as is required, an intimation thereof will be thankfully received and attended to. For the trouble I have imposed and the friendship you have shown, be assured of my grateful remembrance.

Very respectfully, I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

HON. JOHN HOLMES.

AARON T. CRANE.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *February 16, 1818.*

I, Aaron T. Crane, clerk in the General Post Office, do, upon honor, certify that during the late war I was a captain in the United States army, and consequently became acquainted with many who had accounts with the United States; that after my removal to, and permanent location at, the seat of Government, I frequently received applications from those who had been my companions in arms, requesting my assistance in the settlement of their claims: these requests were at first attended to on the score of friendship, and not unfrequently have my services been repaid, by those for whom I labored gratuitously, by their allowing me to pay the postage on their letters.

The many calls I received for this kind of service, and offers made of remuneration, induced me to make a business of it, which I the more readily undertook as the compensation (\$1,000 per annum) which I received from the United States I found was not adequate to my *support* in the *city of Washington*. This agency then became an object to me, and was industriously pursued, but, at the same time, my duties as a clerk were as punctually performed as if no agency had existed.

I would here state that *my official duties* are a *specific task which necessarily must be performed within a given time*. The part assigned to me is considered fully sufficient to occupy the time of an individual during the hours of office; and if I gain upon my duty, it is by extra industry, or the performance of it after and without the established office hours. For the proof that my business is done, and well done, I appeal to the head of the Department, and to the books which it has been my duty to keep.

AARON T. CRANE.

R.

*Joseph Mechlin's affidavit.*

I, Joseph Mechlin, clerk in the Fourth Auditor's office, in the Treasury Department, testify and say that Benjamin Homans, clerk in the Navy Department, stands charged on the books in the Fourth Auditor's office with about twelve thousand dollars—money appropriated, as I understood, to pay off the widows and orphans of the persons lost in the *Epervier*.

J. MECHLIN.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee appointed pursuant to a resolution of 16th January, 1818: On the 11th February, 1818, personally appeared the above-named Joseph Mechlin, and made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

S.

*Satterlee Clark's affidavit.*

I, Satterlee Clark, testify and say that Isaac Clark, late a colonel in the army of the United States, is my father. Some time in the month of January or February last, certain claims which had been previously presented to the

office of Richard B. Lee, commissioner of claims for property lost by the war, were shown to me by Peter Hagner, Esq., Third Auditor. Those claims purported to have been certified by my father, whose name was upon each, of which, I think, there were about twenty, and Daniel Parker, adjutant and inspector general, had certified that the signatures, purporting to be those of my father, were genuine. Upon examination, I discovered that they were forgeries.

SATTERLEE CLARK.

House of Representatives of the United States, in committee, 25th March, 1818: The above Satterlee Clark made oath to the truth of the above affidavit by him subscribed before me.

JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman.*

T.

*Benjamin Homans's affidavit.*

I, Benjamin Homans, chief clerk in the Navy Department, testify and say that, in the month of April, 1817, the Secretary of the Navy appointed me prize agent under the act of Congress passed 3d March of same year, to distribute the amount of six months' extra pay to the widows and heirs of the officers, seamen, and others, lost in the United States brig Epervier; and that I received the sum of \$12,654, estimated by the pay-roll for that purpose, and for which I gave bond and security in due form; and that I have paid out of the said fund every just claim that has ever been presented at the office, promptly and without delay.

I further testify and say that, at the earnest and repeated solicitations of William Blagrove, a clerk in the said office, I did loan to him, out of my own private funds, about \$450, for which I hold his note; but that I have not loaned the public money to any person. I further testify and say that, to avoid the further importunities of the said Blagrove, I may have said to him that I have lent *thousands* to some individuals, or that I had loaned all the money I could spare; and as I hold myself responsible, and ready at any time to settle up the account of my disbursement of the money aforesaid, the *proof* of loaning money is to [Mr. Blagrove alone; by continued payments, the sum is now reduced to about one-half, and claims are daily coming in, not *one* of which has ever been refused, when properly authenticated.

I further testify and say that the horse belonging to the Navy Department having been abused and neglected by the messenger, and the hay and provender wasted, I took the horse to my own stable for better keeping; that I have no other horse, and the bills rendered for horse feed are duly examined and passed at the Treasury, and that they are within the strictest limits of economy.

BENJAMIN HOMANS.

WASHINGTON COUNTY, ss:

On this 25th day of March, 1818, before me, a justice of the peace for said county, personally appeared Benjamin Homans, Esq., and made oath in due form that the facts stated in the foregoing deposition by him subscribed are true to the best of his knowledge.

DANIEL RAPINE.

U.

*W. Blagrove's document.—Extract.*

SIR: NAVY DEPARTMENT, February 6, 1818.

In reply to your letter of the 28th ultimo, as chairman of a committee appointed by the honorable House of Representatives to inquire what alterations are necessary to be made in the act entitled "An act to regulate and fix the compensation of clerks," &c., I have the honor to communicate, for the information of the committee, that five clerks were constantly employed in this Department during the year 1817, and the amount of compensation paid to them was as follows, viz:

To the chief clerk,	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$2,204
To the second clerk,	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,350
To the third clerk,	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,355
To the fourth clerk,	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,250
To the fifth clerk,	-	-	-	-	-	-	850
To two temporary clerks who were employed in the year 1817, one for 34 days, and the other for 79 days, at \$2 per day,	-	-	-	-	-	-	226
							\$7,235

Making an aggregate sum of seven thousand two hundred and thirty-five dollars, being the amount appropriated by Congress on the 3d of March, 1817, for compensation to the clerks employed in the office of the Secretary of the Navy.

So far as relates to that part of your letter which has reference to the respective employments of the clerks, I have the honor to state that the *chief clerk* has the arrangement and disposition of all the books, papers, and documents of the Department of which he has the charge and responsibility, and takes care to preserve them in perfect condition and regular order, so that reference may be had to any subject with promptness and perspicuity. He has the exclusive charge of all the furniture and effects, of the seal and keys of the office, to which no person is to have access out of office hours unless himself or such person belonging to the office as he shall permit. He has the general direction and distribution of the duty to be performed by the several clerks, and he apportions such duty according to circumstances and to the vacant time each may have from his special duty. He receives from the Secretary all letters, papers, and documents, with his notes and instructions for the correspondence or orders to be taken thereon, and distributes the same to the clerks according to the duties assigned to them. He attends personally to the general correspondence, and prepares all reports, estimates, and statements, except such as may be particularly assigned to some other clerk, and superintends the execution of the general duties of the Department, and sees that each clerk performs the duty required of him; and all letters, orders, and papers of every description, prepared by any of the clerks, pass through his hands for examination, before being offered to the Secretary for signature; he alone being held responsible for their correctness.

The *second clerk* aids the chief clerk in the general correspondence and in preparing instructions to commanding officers, reports and statements to Congress, chairmen of committees, &c. He has charge of the miscellaneous books, and keeps regular entries of the names, rate, and class; dimensions of hull, masts, and spars, and of the tonnage; actual force in guns, officers, and men; commanders' names, and special employment of all the ships and vessels in the navy, noticing, particularly, all the variations that take place in any of the public vessels. He likewise

keeps a record of all stores belonging to the navy, comprehending ordnance, small arms, ammunition, and implements of war of every description, nitre, sulphur, gunpowder, and naval stores of all kinds, so as to know the particular quantity at each place or station, and the aggregate balance at the end of each month. The second clerk also files the recommendations and applications of candidates for appointment in the navy, and keeps fair registers of the candidates' names, their place of residence, age when mentioned, dates of applications, persons recommending them, and such short but comprehensive notes of particular qualifications or merits and demerits as are represented in the letters addressed to the Department. He also keeps a record of the correspondence with the board of naval commissioners, and assists in such other general duties as his special employment may admit, or the pressure of particular business require.

The *third clerk* is charged with the correspondence between this Department and the officers of the navy, embracing orders, furloughs, &c. He endorses on all letters from officers to the Department the substance thereof, and files them in alphabetical order. He keeps a correct register of all the officers of the navy according to their several stations, and showing their place of residence, the age of midshipmen, number and date of commission or warrant, and the ship or station to which each officer is attached. He also keeps an alphabetical record of all the lieutenants, surgeons, surgeon's mates, pursers, sailingmasters, midshipmen, gunners, boatswains, and carpenters, in which he enters, from time to time, the vessel or station to which they are respectively attached, the nature of the service, notes of their general character and conduct, and of meritorious or reprehensible acts, with a short reference to the circumstance, letter, or document indicating such acts; and the register and the records are at all times in such order that the actual situation, rank, and character of any such officer may in a moment be ascertained. He prepares all the exhibits required by the President and by Congress in respect to officers of the navy, and all nominations to the Senate, the confirmations of which he records in a book appropriated for that purpose. He fills all commissions and warrants for officers, and affixes to the same the seal of the Department after the commissions and warrants have received the signatures of the President of the United States and of the Secretary of the Navy. He also attends to any other duties of the office as circumstances require, and which do not interfere with those specially assigned to him.

[After this are detailed the duties of the fourth and fifth clerks, and a reference is made to the report recently made by the heads of Departments to Congress on the subject of the salaries of the clerks.]

HONORABLE SAMUEL D. INGHAM,  
Chairman of a Committee, &c., House of Representatives.

## V.

*Benjamin Homans's document.**The United States, to Benjamin W. Crowninshield.*

DR.

1818.

Jan. 1. For his salary as Secretary of the Navy, and the salaries of the clerks and messenger employed in his office, for the quarter ending with the 31st of December, 1817:

Benjamin W. Crowninshield, Secretary of the Navy, salary at \$4,500 per annum,	-	\$1,125 00
Benjamin Homans, chief clerk, salary \$2,000 per annum, additional \$204,	-	704 00
William Blagrove, clerk, salary \$1,300 per annum, additional \$55,	-	380 00
John Boyle, clerk, salary \$1,200 per annum, additional \$150,	-	450 00
Noah Fletcher, clerk, salary \$1,200 per annum, additional \$50,	-	350 00
Henry Rich, clerk, salary \$800 per annum, additional \$50,	-	250 00
Thomas Fillebrown, temporary clerk, from 13th October to 31st December, inclusive, 79 days at \$2 per day,	-	158 00
William Righter, messenger, at \$410 per annum,	-	102 50
		<u>\$3,519 50</u>

Pay to Benjamin Homans.

B. W. CROWNINSHIELD.

True copy of the record:

JOHN BOYLE.

I, Benjamin Homans, chief clerk in the Navy Department, do testify and say that there is an annual surplus appropriation for paying extra clerk hire, the balance of which has been divided at the end of the year among the clerks in addition to their salaries, at the discretion of the Secretary of the Navy; and the mode adopted by William Jones, Esq., late Secretary, the first year he came into office, was by *pro rata*, according to the several salaries, and has been practised ever since; that every year there has been more or less extra clerk hire paid, which has varied the proportions; that the highest I ever received as chief clerk was about \$204, in two different years, and in one year \$178. I further testify and say that the neglect of some of the clerks during the year 1817 induced the Secretary of the Navy to deduct the extra clerk hire paid from their proportions, leaving mine and Mr. John Boyle's the same as the preceding year. As the extra services had been required in consequence of their neglect, it was not considered equitable to charge the same to those who had punctually performed their duty.

BENJAMIN HOMANS.

Sworn and subscribed to before me, this 27th March, 1818, in the city of Washington, District of Columbia.

ROBERT BRENT.

## W.

*Benjamin Homans's letter.*

Sir:

I have the honor to state to the honorable committee of which you are chairman, that, in giving my counter-deposition to that of William Blagrove, I have endeavored to avoid prolixity, and to meet the facts he alludes to with as little digression as possible.

I am not disposed to animadvert upon the malignity which dictated the accusations, or to recriminate any charge but that of *ingratitude*, which appears upon the face of his own statement.

A man in the desperate circumstances of Blagrove may do many unjustifiable acts, and discover a lamentable turpitude of character; but in this case it ought to be remembered that I obtained for him the place he now holds

at \$1,300 a year, and that I have been his best and only friend, until his own misconduct exposed him to general reprehension and contempt, and necessarily compelled me to withdraw my confidence from him; that he is under a load of obligations to me, and ought to have been the last man in the world to attempt to injure me.

It will appear obvious that, had I cause of apprehension for any act of my own in dereliction of duty, I should have conciliated every one, with a view to secure their good-will and to skreen myself. I have no hesitation in declaring, what I can prove, that my attention to public business, devotion of my whole time, to the neglect of my private concerns, and my endeavors to make others perform their duties in the Department, have been the causes of my having enemies of this description; and while I have sacrificed my health and domestic comforts to the public good, those who complain of me have never earned the salaries they have received from the Government.

I can appeal to the most respectable testimony, if necessary, to prove my zeal and faithful exertions for the last five years, and that I have a fair claim upon public confidence, and for additional remuneration from the Government.

I tender to you and the committee my perfect respect.

BENJAMIN HOMANS.

Hon. JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman of a Committee of Congress, &c.*

X.

*B. W. Crowninshield's letter.*

SIR: NAVY DEPARTMENT, *February 16, 1818.*

In reply to your letter of the 9th instant, in relation to the claims of Abijah Dudley and Robert Hamilton for prize money on account of the victory achieved over the British on Lake Champlain, in September, 1814, I have to inform you that George Beale, jun., the prize agent, is ordered to return to the United States; and, on his arrival, proper measures will be taken to cause immediate payment to all having just claims against him for prize money.

I am, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

B. W. CROWNINSHIELD.

JOSEPH WATSON, Esq.—*Present.*

*Mr. Blagrove's document.*

SIR: WASHINGTON, *March 26, 1818.*

I beg leave to trouble the honorable committee of which you are chairman with a recital of the grievances which have caused my complaints against the conduct of Mr. Homans, and I flatter myself the honorable committee will agree that I am entitled to file this statement with the depositions they have taken upon subjects entirely unconnected with my complaints—subjects, too, *not originally introduced by me to their consideration*: I mean the Epervier fund and the messenger's horse. I have felt, Mr. Chairman, most unhappily situated, in regard to obtaining a correction of abuses, in consequence of the proper channel of complaint being closed against me, and a consciousness of being at the mercy of arbitrary power, possessing within itself the means of oppression or *destruction*, and of self-vindication. Hence I have been brought to this alternative—passive submission and non-resistance, or such an exposure of facts to a committee of Congress as might lead to an effectual corrective. In adopting the latter, I am sensible of having hazarded the imputation of malice and revenge; perhaps my narrative may convince the honorable the committee that I am actuated by neither of these motives, which I most solemnly disclaim. I want justice and right; I want impartial and honorable treatment, and nothing more. Had I been permitted by the Secretary of the Navy to go into a full explanation of the causes which produced the misunderstanding between Mr. Homans and myself, I could have convinced him that he had been deceived as to those causes; that they were altogether of a private nature, and that I had not been so grossly blameable as must have been represented to him. For instance, the odious charge of *ingratitude* has been made against me, from which it would seem the reciprocal acts arising from a state of *friendly* intercourse have been nicely weighed, and those conferred upon me greatly overbalance those I conferred. Perhaps my scales might *reverse* that balance; but, between *friends*, I never knew that these acts were ever weighed. It is the sentiment, the sincere feeling of friendship, which keeps the scales always even; it is perfect equality and community of feeling. Mr. Homans cannot pretend to say I have ever been his dependant; if he does, his numerous assurances of friendship were hollow hearted. Certain it is, I never believed, till latterly, that he could have so much mistaken my character as to think me capable of holding his friendship upon such terms. No, sir, I can safely appeal to all who know me, as well here as in Boston, where I resided fourteen years, that I am not of an *ungrateful*, an *unjust*, a *malicious*, or a *quarrelsome* disposition. I never *coveted* or *abused power*; and, in my intercourse with society, there is no one who can charge me with intentionally inflicting pain, or withholding redress for unintentional injury. I am, however, not insensible to my faults; perhaps they may be numerous; but be they what they may, *they do not affect the happiness of others*. I pray your forgiveness for speaking so much of myself; *it is not from egotism, or rather a fondness for it*, but to aid in a just estimate of my statements.

In April, 1816, I entered the Navy Department, under an official letter of appointment from the Secretary, as clerk of "the registry"—a situation always considered that of *second clerk*. Previously to accepting this appointment, it was a question of calculation whether it were better to retain my then happy situation of chief clerk under General Mason, and take my chance at the termination of his office, or to accept at once an appointment which promised a permanency. I beg leave to refer to the letter from that excellent man as illustrative of this very question. However, upon the assurances of Mr. Homans that I should have the same income which Mr. Duval, my predecessor, received, the whole of which was enumerated, and amounted to \$1,745 per year, to wit, \$1,300 regular salary, fifteen per centum surplus upon that at the end of the year, and the secretaryship of the privateer pension fund, of \$250 salary, I found the preponderance in favor of the change, and accordingly accepted the appointment. Immediately upon commencing my new duties, Mr. Homans informed me he had found it necessary, to pacify Mr. Boyle, who was calculating upon the same situation, to give him the secretaryship last mentioned. I acquiesced, because I felt certain it was all proper and right, and because I had no disposition to dispute with those I was associated with. At the end of the year I did not doubt of receiving my fifteen per centum; this was then my impression; but in the course of the year it was explained to me that *extra clerks* might be wanted temporarily, and they must be paid out of the surplus money; so it proved, and at the end of the year I received \$60 short of the sum at first promised me. I made no remonstrance at this, because I saw it bore as well upon Mr. Homans

and the other clerks as upon myself, and also believed the employment of extra clerks was necessary. Things went on tolerably smooth until last summer. Mr. Homans received twelve thousand and odd dollars for the heirs of the *Epervier* sufferers, and, upon my application to him, he spontaneously told me it was his intention to circumscribe his accommodation to others, in order to render *me* some substantial aid in my then little embarrassments, all of which I had made known to him. Notwithstanding this voluntary assurance, he required me soon after to reimburse what I had borrowed, stating he had lent Mr. Mallory and others so much that he had not sufficient money for his marketing. To one individual he said he had lent eight or ten thousand dollars, but he felt certain of its safety. I told him I could not repay him then; that the money was not borrowed under an idea of my being obliged to repay it until he was obliged to account for the balance of the fund, in two years. Besides, he had not lent me half the amount I wanted, and had been encouraged to expect. I discovered a coldness in his manners, and endeavored to lead him into a candid discussion, but was unsuccessful. An overbearing disposition (perhaps a constitutional infirmity) began plainly to show itself in his conduct to me—a disposition I had frequently seen exercised towards others. I adopted a system of reserve, and avoided him, except upon office business. In the third quarter of the year he withheld all the salaries several days, and mine a fortnight; at the end of the fourth quarter the same was repeated, and he was preparing to cut off from any share of the surplus the two gentlemen in my room and myself; but, being resisted, he made an unequal and unprecedented distribution of it, by which we, to be sure, received a share, though he himself and his favorite received the greatest share. The chief clerk having the distribution of the daily labors of the office, it is always in his power to enable any favorite clerk to make a greater show of work than the rest; and if my predecessor, Mr. Duval, were called before your honorable committee, perhaps he could testify that for weeks, perhaps months, Mr. Homans did not assign him the least employment in the current business of the office. The fact was, Mr. Homans hated him, and hoped thus to show how unnecessary he was to the Department. Many instances have occurred at the Department in which he has extended this hatred to officers of the navy who were friendly to Mr. Duval, and in which those officers have become objects of official slight.

If it should be asked how it happens that a *chief clerk* should possess this power, I can only answer, that, from some cause or other, he has *managed* to get the honorable Secretary to do just what he dictates. The letters to the Department are first opened by him; and it is his usual practice to dictate answers at once, and leave it only to the Secretary to put his signature. Doubtless, the Secretary acquiesces in this course from the fullest confidence that every thing is conducted strictly right. But this confidence has had the unfortunate effect of placing the Secretary almost entirely in the power of the chief clerk. Hence, all he had to do when he aimed at depriving us of our proportion of the surplus money was only to represent to the Secretary that we were inattentive to duty, and often absent during office hours. A bold and open resistance, it is true, prevented the full accomplishment of his design, though it was in part accomplished. On the score of absences, it might be well asked how Mr. Homans could suffer himself to prefer charges against other clerks for *that* which he had himself been most guilty of; for it is a fact that the business of the office has been greatly obstructed by his visits to New York, to Philadelphia, and to Baltimore, at three several periods during the last summer—the latter while the Secretary was also absent. On the score of inattention to the duties assigned the clerks, I assert that they have done whatever has been allotted to them. A particular duty assigned to me—that of preparing a new registering book—furnishes the only exception; but to all my suggestions as to the steps necessary to be taken previously to my commencing the work he turned a deaf ear. There were not materials in the office for making a correct register; and as I had prepared a book, upon a new and acknowledged improved plan, which I did not wish to spoil, I omitted commencing upon it until such materials could be had. But the current business of the office has not suffered for want of this book. It would certainly be a convenient thing for reference; but the great object of facilitating the settlement of accounts by the Auditor is not obstructed by its non-completion. As to all other duties, I assert that the other gentlemen and myself have performed them promptly and cheerfully.

His animosities, therefore, are of a private nature. They have grown out of his imperious manners, his constant attempt to play the tyrant, and a moderate degree of independence on the part of those who were the objects of his tyranny. He cannot exist without a display of this paramount propensity. None, therefore, but *abject sycophants* can please him long.

The last thing he has attempted, and in which he has succeeded so far as to get the Secretary's signature, is the raising the fourth clerk over the heads of the third clerk and myself, not by the open and direct mode of telling us such was the new arrangement, but by describing, in an official letter to the chairman of a committee of Congress, the duties of the *fourth clerk* under the title of *second clerk*, in contradiction to an official report, made only one month before, to the honorable Speaker, and to written instructions, signed by the Secretary, issued in January, this year, wherein we are all designated by name as first, second, third, fourth, and fifth clerks. This was done with a view of securing to Mr. Boyle the salary of \$1,600 as second clerk, according to the new bill for graduating the clerks of the respective offices.

I will not longer trespass upon the patience of the honorable committee, trusting that it will be apparent to them that, if I am made the sacrifice to the tyranny and injustice of a vindictive man, to whom I gave no cause to justify hostility, the affairs of an important Department of the Government must still be in a precarious situation, unless an entire change be made in the system now in practice.

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

WM. BLAGROVE.

Hon. JOHN HOLMES, *Chairman of the Hon. Committee of Investigation.*

Sir:

FEBRUARY 9, 1818.

In the evidence incidentally given by me on Saturday last, I made a misstatement, which I beg leave to correct. It was impressed upon my mind that the amount of the prize money placed in Mr. Beale's hands was \$360,000; but, on reference to our books, I find that the amount was only \$290,438 19, and that it was paid over to him in 1815. Permit me, sir, to request the favor of your correcting this error in the testimony subscribed by me.

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

WM. BLAGROVE.

Honorable Mr. HOLMES, *Chairman of Committee of Investigation.*