

469,889 miles of stage transportation, at 9 cents per mile,	-	-	-	-	\$42,290 01
Deduct 62,365 miles of horse transportation superseded by stages, at 4 cents per mile,	-	-	-	-	2,494 60
Nett value of the improvements,	-	-	-	-	39,795 41
The acceptances for the new contracts, besides the securing of these improvements, are not so great as the amount now paid for the transportation on that division by \$51,787 18.					
The renewal of the contracts, therefore, saves in money to the Department the sum of	-	-	-	-	51,787 18
Which, added to the value of the improvements, effects a saving of	-	-	-	-	\$91,582 59

Other improvements, highly important in their character, are proposed; the decisions on which have been deferred for further consideration. It is, however, anticipated, from the saving which has been effected in renewing the contracts, that the Department will possess the ability to make some further improvements in this division of mail routes.

There were, on the 1st of July last, 8,686 post offices. To the plan adopted for their supervision, and the vigilance with which it is observed, together with the system of finance which is strictly adhered to, may be attributed, in no small degree, the increasing prosperity of the Department.

I have the honor to be, with high regard, your obedient servant,

W. T. BARRY.

To the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

22d CONGRESS.]

No. 112.

[1st SESSION.]

INCREASE OF THE PENSION OF A MAIL CARRIER WHO WAS SHOT IN THE CREEK NATION IN 1805.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DECEMBER 28, 1831.

Mr. PEARCE, from the Committee on the Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom was referred the petition of Jonah H. Webb for an increase of his pension, reported:

That, from the evidence which has been submitted, the committee are satisfied the petitioner is aged and poor; that the wounds he received while employed to carry the mail of the United States from Athens, in Georgia, to New Orleans, rendered him unable to labor, and made him a cripple for life; that he is now in a suffering condition, the present allowance of fifty dollars per annum being insufficient to procure him the necessaries of life. The committee, therefore, ask leave to report a bill to give to said Webb eight dollars per month, the pension of a common soldier when totally disabled by wounds received in the service of his country.

22d CONGRESS.]

No. 113.

[1st SESSION.]

POSTAGE ON NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 13, 1832.

SIR:

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *January 10, 1832.*

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, enclosing the resolution of the House of Representatives relative to "the expediency of abolishing the postage on newspapers and periodicals;" in which you inquire the amount of "nett revenue arising from this source, and the amount of each, separately;" also, my opinion upon the "propriety of adopting this measure, having a due regard to the prosperity of the Department; with any other information which may be useful to the committee in forming a correct opinion on the subject."

To the first inquiry, I will observe, that the accounts of postages on newspapers and pamphlets are kept together, without distinguishing one from the other. The commission to postmasters is the same on both; and no occasion has ever arisen for separating them on the books of the Department. The postage on pamphlets which are not periodical is very inconsiderable. The intention of the law appears to have been to discourage their transmission by mail, except in cases where it might be regarded as a matter of considerable interest; and the object is accomplished. The postages on newspapers and pamphlets arise principally on the former, probably more than four-fifths of the whole: the remainder is almost entirely on periodical pamphlets.

The gross amount of postage on newspapers and pamphlets for the year ending June 30, 1830, was	-	-	-	-	\$196,606 34
That for the year ending June 30, 1831, was	-	-	-	-	223,485 01
The increase in one year was	-	-	-	-	\$26,878 67

The commission allowed to postmasters on newspapers and pamphlets is 50 per cent. on the gross amount; but, by reserving to the Department the fractions of cents, the nett proceeds are a little more than one-half of the gross amount.

The nett proceeds of postage on newspapers and pamphlets for the year ending June 30, 1830, amounted to	-	-	-	-	\$98,513 44
For the year ending June 30, 1831, to	-	-	-	-	112,111 22
Increase of nett proceeds in one year,	-	-	-	-	\$13,597 78

To the second inquiry, I have the honor to submit the following remarks:

The increase of postages on newspapers is in a greater ratio than that on letters; and the increase of postages of every description is in a ratio considerably beyond that of the population and business of the country. This greater ratio of increase has resulted from the greatly increased facilities which have been given to communications by mail. Having perceived, at an early day, the propriety and necessity of making such improvements in some of the leading mail routes as would be calculated to draw every kind of communication, as much as possible, into the mails, and would thus increase the revenue to a greater amount than the increased expenditure required for such improvements, my attention has been constantly directed to this object. The propriety of the course adopted has been justified by the results; the improvements having called for a considerable expense, while they have increased the revenue beyond their cost. But if improvements shall now cease to be made, the ratio of increase of revenue will be necessarily diminished.

If the progress of improvement shall continue, the gross amount of postage on newspapers and pamphlets for the year ending the 30th June, 1832, may be fairly estimated at \$249,000; and the nett revenue at \$125,000.

If the postage shall be abolished on newspapers and pamphlets, it will not materially diminish the labor of postmasters; and as their compensation, generally, does not now exceed a fair equivalent for their labor, they would probably solicit an increase of commission on letter postage. Should this be granted, the diminution of the means for carrying on the operations of the Department, and for that progress of improvements which the country demands, would consequently be \$249,000, for the first year, with the loss of its progressive increase from year to year. But if the postmasters should be denied an increase of commission to countervail the loss which they will sustain in being deprived of this part of their compensation, then the immediate diminution of nett revenue to the Department would amount to about \$125,000 a year. There must also be estimated the increased expense of transporting the mail, incurred by the additional weight which would be given to it in many sections of the country, in becoming the medium for conveying the newspapers which are now transported by other means, and by the greater number of papers which would be distributed, the expense of which could neither be anticipated nor computed.

Should the measure be adopted, it would, of necessity, give an immediate check to all further improvement in mail facilities, and require a curtailment of some that are already afforded. And in order to preserve the rapidity and certainty of communication now secured between the large commercial towns, so important to the great interests of the country, it will probably become necessary to provide for separating the newspaper from the letter mail.

The Post Office Department has always sustained itself without any expense to the treasury. Besides the conveniences which it extends to every section of the Union, it furnishes the means to all the departments of the Government for transmitting its communications to all parts of the country free from expense. On its present basis, it can be conducted securely. Its operations, its revenues, and its expenses, are held up to public view; and the head of the Department has, at all times, the strongest inducement, which a proper estimate of public sentiment can present, to manage its concerns with the strictest regard to economy, combined with the greatest degree of public convenience allowed by the means at his command. But should it ever be thrown on the treasury for support, it is evident that the same corrective restraint would not exist, either upon the representatives of the people, through whom the calls are generally made, or upon the head of the Department.

I have no hesitation in giving the opinion that the establishment ought, at all times, and under all circumstances, to rest on its own resources, independent of the national treasury.

Newspapers and periodicals are held to be of inestimable value to the community, though it has not yet been considered the duty of the Government to distribute them through the nation entirely at the public expense. The freedom of the press, guaranteed by the constitution, and the small share of postage with which these publications are charged, compared with the whole expense of their transportation, demonstrate the estimation in which they are held. If they shall be transmitted entirely free of postage, and an equivalent amount appropriated from the treasury, their transmission will be at the expense of the Government; or, if the Department shall still depend upon its own resources alone, then their transmission will be at the expense of those who pay the revenue in postages on letters.

From the preceding view of facts, the committee will judge of the policy or justice of adopting either of the alternatives stated, and how far the energies of the Department would be impaired by abstracting from it the revenue derived from newspapers and pamphlets, and, at the same time, adding to its charges the increased number which it would be required to transport.

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

W. T. BARRY.

HON. WILLIAM RUSSEL, *of the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, H. R.*

## DEFAULTING DEPUTY POSTMASTER.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 24, 1832.

Mr. JEWETT, from the Committee on the Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom was referred the petition of William McBride, made the following report:

That the petitioner sets forth in his petition, among other things, that on the 17th January, 1806, he was appointed postmaster at Harrodsburgh, in the State of Kentucky, and continued in that office until the 1st of January, 1813: that he endeavored, during that time, to discharge the trust reposed in him with fidelity, and duly transmitted his accounts to the General Post Office, and avers them to have been correct: that he had considered himself by no means in arrears to the Government; and was greatly disappointed in receiving from the Postmaster General a statement which varied from his account so rendered to an amount of about \$108 45.

That, long before he declined his office, the Post Office Department drew in favor of one James Westerfield two bills on the petitioner, amounting to \$145, which the petitioner avers that he accepted; and, in consequence of such acceptance, the petitioner (who was a retailer of merchandise, &c.) permitted Westerfield to take up goods, and suffered other demands which the petitioner had against him to lie, and also paid some money to Westerfield to a larger amount than those bills, and postponed a settlement with him, he having confidence in Westerfield, and being conscious that the Government was under no responsibility to Westerfield upon said drafts, by reason of their having been retained by Westerfield many years: that a difficulty occurred between the petitioner and Westerfield in regard to their dealings, inasmuch that they could not come to any settlement: that they made an ineffectual attempt to adjust their differences by a reference: that, before any difficulty occurred, the statute of limitations operated on the petitioner's accounts, and he was satisfied that Westerfield's disposition was such that he would avail himself of the benefit of the statute: that his advances to Westerfield are lost to him, unless allowed to him: that the Government finally sued him to recover the amount claimed to be due from him to the Post Office Depart-