

ABSTRACT—Continued.

| Periods. | Letter postage. | Newspaper postage. | Commission on letter postage. | Commission on newspaper postage. | Allowance for free letters. | Yearly compensation. | Amount paid for ship letters. | Am't paid for contingencies. | Balances due by postmaster. | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1809. | | | | | | | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | \$1,536 81 | \$41 20 | \$332 36 | \$20 60 | \$9 68 | - | \$9 02 | \$27 19 | \$1,179 16 | |
| April 1 to July 1, - | 1,665 50 | 48 03 | 358 10 | 24 02 | 7 72 | - | 44 48 | 28 24 | 1,250 97 | |
| July 1 to October 1, | 1,799 00 | 48 44 | 384 80 | 24 22 | 7 20 | - | 33 68 | 31 60 | 1,365 94 | |
| Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, - | 1,946 22 | 49 47 | 414 24 | 24 73 | 8 96 | - | 57 88 | 13 52 | 1,476 36 | |
| | | | | | | 1,616 63 | | | | |
| 1810. | | | | | | | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | 2,015 31 | 52 54 | 428 06 | 26 27 | 11 42 | - | 24 64 | 18 54 | 1,558 92 | |
| April 1 to July 1, - | 2,074 11 | 52 80 | 439 82 | 26 40 | 7 42 | - | 21 60 | 46 62 | 1,585 05 | |
| July 1 to October 1, | 2,126 19 | 45 24 | 450 23 | 22 62 | 6 72 | - | 21 40 | 23 45 | 1,647 01 | |
| Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, - | 2,193 56 | 46 48 | 463 71 | 23 24 | 6 88 | - | 60 62 | 44 25 | 1,641 34 | |
| | | | | | | 1,912 79 | | | | |
| 1811. | | | | | | | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | 2,236 23 | 47 98 | 472 25 | 23 99 | 10 22 | - | 80 66 | 38 71 | 1,658 38 | |
| April 1 to July 1, - | 2,153 64 | 47 21 | 453 73 | 23 60 | 6 98 | - | 68 04 | 22 66 | 1,623 84 | |
| July 1 to October 1, | 2,196 97 | 51 59 | 464 39 | 25 79 | 6 70 | - | 22 08 | 41 25 | 1,688 35 | |
| Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, - | 1,997 37 | 48 86 | 424 48 | 24 43 | 8 68 | - | 49 18 | 23 83 | 1,515 63 | |
| | | | | | | 1,947 24 | | | | |
| 1812. | | | | | | | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | 2,286 45 | 53 40 | 482 29 | 26 70 | - | - | 59 84 | 73 14 | 1,697 88 | |
| April 1 to July 1, - | 2,091 37 | 54 72 | 443 27 | 27 36 | 9 84 | - | 41 02 | 32 16 | 1,592 44 | |
| July 1 to October 1, | 1,928 24 | 47 04 | 410 65 | 23 52 | 7 06 | - | 11 56 | 43 74 | 1,478 75 | |
| Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, - | 1,983 24 | 49 34 | 421 65 | 24 67 | 8 64 | - | 32 92 | 20 50 | 1,524 20 | |
| | | | | | | 1,885 65 | | | | |
| 1813. | | | | | | | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | 2,495 21 | 47 90 | 512 62 | 23 95 | - | - | 32 00 | 44 28 | 1,930 26 | |
| April 1 to July 1, - | 2,619 43 | 40 84 | 522 55 | 20 42 | - | - | - | 44 62 | 2,072 68 | |
| July 1 to October 1, | 2,950 19 | 30 73 | 549 02 | 15 36 | - | - | - | 49 40 | 2,367 14 | |
| Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, - | 2,481 84 | 30 62 | 511 54 | 15 31 | - | - | - | 53 57 | 1,932 04 | |
| | | | | | | 2,170 77 | | | | |
| 1814. | | | | | | | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | 2,964 39 | 24 48 | 550 15 | 12 24 | - | - | - | 38 77 | 2,387 71 | |
| April 1 to July 1, - | 2,997 46 | 39 43 | 572 79 | 19 71 | - | - | - | 53 37 | 2,391 02 | |
| July 1 to October 1, | 3,205 44 | 30 22 | 589 43 | 15 11 | - | - | - | 54 31 | 2,576 81 | |
| Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, - | 3,086 19 | 26 56 | 579 89 | 13 28 | - | - | - | 80 50 | 2,439 08 | |
| | | | | | | 2,352 60 | | | | |
| 1815. | | | | | | | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | 2,847 94 | 29 86 | 540 83 | 14 93 | 15 92 | - | 86 76 | 56 83 | 2,162 53 | |
| April 1 to July 1, - | 3,382 37 | 21 03 | 468 20 | 7 01 | 20 81 | - | 21 26 | 39 06 | 2,847 06 | |
| July 1 to October 1, | 2,961 78 | 26 27 | 418 09 | 8 76 | 10 66 | - | 36 26 | 27 30 | 2,486 89 | |
| Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, - | 3,446 75 | 34 70 | 481 22 | 11 57 | 9 17 | - | 49 00 | 38 05 | 2,892 44 | |
| | | | | | | 2,007 17 | | | | |
| 1816. | | | | | | | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | 3,578 27 | 32 91 | 499 07 | 10 97 | 13 04 | - | 43 26 | 31 41 | 3,013 43 | |
| April 1 to July 1, - | 2,343 02 | 7 16 | 498 06 | 3 58 | 11 40 | - | 47 74 | 17 62 | 1,771 78 | |
| July 1 to October 1, | 2,303 56 | 13 86 | 490 02 | 6 93 | 10 18 | - | 29 94 | 36 37 | 1,743 98 | |
| Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, - | 2,148 40 | 8 11 | 459 28 | 4 06 | 8 92 | - | 58 36 | 37 96 | 1,587 93 | |
| | | | | | | 2,015 51 | | | | |
| 1817. | | | | | | | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | 2,441 73 | 12 87 | 512 71 | 6 43 | - | - | 77 26 | 38 94 | 1,819 26 | |
| April 1 to July 1, - | 2,608 44 | 15 92 | 546 20 | 7 96 | 10 00 | - | 40 50 | 59 64 | 1,959 76 | |
| July 1 to October 1, | 2,415 27 | 13 36 | 511 11 | 6 68 | - | - | 31 64 | 39 25 | 1,839 95 | |
| Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, - | 2,680 83 | 6 30 | 531 78 | 3 15 | - | - | 71 92 | 39 78 | 2,040 50 | |
| | | | | | | 2,136 22 | | | | |
| 1818. | | | | | | | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | 2,588 10 | 2 89 | 525 66 | 1 44 | - | - | 55 74 | 53 23 | 1,954 92 | |
| April 1 to July 1, - | 2,786 99 | 16 96 | 541 27 | 8 48 | - | - | 51 94 | 33 01 | 2,169 25 | |
| July 1 to October 1, | 2,827 09 | 11 29 | 544 68 | 5 64 | - | - | 66 88 | 42 16 | 2,179 02 | |
| Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, - | 2,811 83 | 8 46 | 543 06 | 4 23 | - | - | 64 98 | 32 93 | 2,175 09 | |
| | | | | | | 2,174 46 | | | | |
| January 1 to April 1, | 2,943 95 | 13 48 | 555 79 | 6 74 | - | - | 62 48 | 44 23 | 2,288 19 | |

ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 20, 1832.

Mr. CONNOR, from the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom was referred the resolution instructing them to inquire into the expediency of providing, by law, for some more effectual accountability of the Post Office Department, reported:

From an examination of the regulations adopted by the Postmaster General, and as acted on now by that Department, they appear to your committee to be, in every way, calculated to insure a faithful application of its funds, efficiency in their collection, and entire safety in their preservation.

By this system, the head of the Department has excluded himself from the receipt or payment of any of its funds; and the senior Assistant Postmaster General, who acts as the treasurer of the Department, is excluded from the payment directly to him, or by him, of any of its moneys. The whole revenue of the Department is received in one of two modes: first, either by deposits in the banks, which are designated, and which (exclusive of the branches of the United States Bank) are considered perfectly safe; or, secondly, by the payments of postmasters to contractors on the drafts of the Department. Certificates of deposits are made to the Department, and signed by the proper officer of each bank, respectively; which certificates are endorsed and registered in the chief clerk's office; and the drafts on postmasters are countersigned by the principal pay clerk; no payment being required but on the signature of two officers. The postmasters, who are directed to deposit the proceeds of postage in bank, when the proceeds of their offices do not amount to six hundred dollars in one quarter, are required to deposit the whole quarterly balance within fifteen days after the close of each quarter; when the quarterly balances exceed the rate of six hundred dollars per quarter, they are to make their deposits monthly; and when their quarterly balances exceed the rate of three thousand dollars per quarter, they are to make their deposits weekly; the proceeds of each month

being paid within the succeeding seven days, and the whole quarter's balance to be paid within fifteen days after the close of each quarter. For each sum thus deposited to the credit of the Post Office Department, duplicate certificates are to be taken; one of which is to be transmitted by the first mail thereafter, as the postmaster is not entitled to a credit for his payment until the receipt of this certificate at the Department.

The whole of the disbursements of the Department are made, also, in two modes: first, by checks on the banks which are the depositories of its funds; which checks are required to be signed by two officers of the Department, each acting independently of the other; and, secondly, by drafts on the postmasters, in favor of the contractors, as heretofore stated; thus effecting, by this mode, the double purpose, without the possibility of loss in either payment or receipt.

The money appropriated for the contingent expenses of the General Post Office, such as fuel, stationary, &c., is also kept separate from the funds of the Department; and its disbursement is assigned to another officer of the Department, who is required to account directly with the Treasury, annually.

The moneys appropriated for salaries of officers and clerks are not mingled with the funds of the Department, but are especially assigned to the care and disbursement of a distinct officer; and the salaries, being paid monthly and settled quarterly, are never entered in the principal books of the Department, but those accounts are kept in a separate book; and, finally, all vouchers for receipts and expenditures are regularly made to the Treasury Department, registered, and deposited. The best evidence of the correctness of the system adopted by the Department is, that, within the last three years, not a loss has been sustained by the Department, except one, and that doubtful, and not exceeding forty dollars in amount. Your committee are unable to devise any other mode of accountability more effectual that would not be calculated greatly to embarrass the Department in its efficiency. Very many years since, a change in the organization of the Department was brought to the notice of Congress, and the propriety suggested of subjecting the payment of money in that Department to the same checks to which all other payments of public moneys were subjected; and that the sums arising from the postage of letters should be paid into the treasury. The objections being then the same as at this time, producing embarrassment in the operations of the Department, no definitive action by Congress was had, and the Department was left to pursue the system as then acted on.

22d CONGRESS.]

No. 120.

[1st SESSION.]

POSTAGE ON NEWSPAPERS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE ON THE 19TH OF MAY, 1832.

Mr. GRUNDY made the following report:

The Committee on the Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom was referred the bill to repeal the postage on newspapers, have had the same under consideration, and report:

That they are aware of the importance of diffusing information throughout the community through the medium of the public press, and that it is the duty of the Government to promote an object so laudable and desirable, so far as is consistent with the successful operations of the Post Office Department, and the other great interests of the country; but the safety of a Department, the beneficial effects of which are felt by every portion of the community, should not be hazarded for slight causes, nor should the principles of justice and equity be sacrificed for the attainment of fancied benefits, which are already enjoyed in a more substantial and durable form.

The committee have deemed it their duty, in examining the bearings and tendencies of a measure of such magnitude as that contemplated by the bill, to examine carefully into the condition of the Post Office Department; and they are gratified to find that it is highly prosperous. While every State and section of the country is feeling the benefits of the improved facilities of the mail establishments, the results, as to the financial condition of the Department, demonstrate the ability and faithfulness with which it has been administered.

From the 1st of July, 1827, to the 1st of July, 1830, the expenses of the Department, in each year, considerably exceeded its revenues, making in the three years an aggregate of \$181,854 80 of expenditures beyond the total amount of its revenues for the same period; but, from the 1st of July, 1830, to the 1st of July, 1831, the revenues of the Department exceeded its expenditures by \$62,252 18; and, from the 1st of July to the 1st of October, 1831, the revenues of the Department were \$10,683 38 more than its expenditures; making an aggregate difference in favor of the Department, in one year and three months, of \$72,935 56. During this latter period, the progress of improvement in the mail facilities of the country does not appear to have been in any degree diminished. Calculating that the same state of things would remain unaffected by any novel proceedings on the part of Congress, the Postmaster General has, since the 1st of October last, made provision for improvements quite as extensive, and, it is believed, as salutary, as at any former period. The passage of the bill would present an insurmountable obstacle to their accomplishment, as will be shown by the subsequent part of this report.

It must be obvious to every man of business that a Department like that of the General Post Office, involving an amount of receipts and expenditures equal to two millions of dollars per annum, cannot be advantageously managed without a considerable surplus revenue on hand, at least equal to one quarter of a year's revenue. On the 1st of July, 1827, the surplus revenue on hand amounted to \$370,633 87, and its revenues for the year ending on that day were \$1,473,551; showing a surplus equal to more than one quarter of a year's revenue. The revenues of the Department for the year ending the 1st of October, 1831, were \$2,052,439 64, and the surplus revenue at the disposal of the Department on that day was \$221,078 09, less than one-ninth part of the revenue for the year.

Although the prosperous condition of the Department is such that this surplus is continually increasing, the committee are of opinion that it would be inexpedient to impose upon the Department the necessity of diminishing it at the present time.

The bill which has passed both Houses of Congress at the present session requires the establishment of 20,600 miles of additional post routes. If the expense of transporting the mail upon these routes shall average that of the 110,000 miles of post routes already established, it will amount to \$234,000 a year; but, upon the lowest estimate, if the mail shall not be carried more than once a week over any part of them, the expense, it is believed, cannot amount to less than \$100,000 a year. The revenues which they will yield cannot well be estimated; but new routes, during the first year of their operation, seldom produce a revenue much beyond the expenses incurred by the establishment of the post offices on them, and other incidental charges attendant on them, and it must be several years before they will yield an amount approaching any thing near the expenditure which they will occasion.

The object of the bill is the more extensive circulation of newspapers. If this object shall be gained, it must, in the same proportion, increase the burdens of the mails; this will operate unjustly and oppressively upon mail contractors, who have already entered into obligations and made their arrangements without reference to the new state of things which would be produced by the passage of this bill; and should it be decided by the judicial branch of the Government that the Postmaster General could enforce the fulfilment of the contracts, it would, at least, constitute