

Newspaper postage continued as before, except that the postage was reduced to one cent, though conveyed more than one hundred miles, if delivered in the same State in which it was printed.

In 1825 the law was revised, but the rates of postage were confirmed, as in 1816, above.

Under these circumstances, I was warranted in the conclusion that the rates of postage were so far settled, as that no important difference in their aggregate amount was to be contemplated. An experience of forty years, without producing an opposite conviction in the public mind, was deemed sufficient to justify the conclusion that the principle was settled. On this principle all the existing contracts for transporting the mails have been predicated. A reduction of the rates will, of course, require a very important reduction in the mail facilities of the country.

In relation to postage on newspapers, the consequence will be no less embarrassing. The expense of their transportation is very great, and their numbers are continually multiplying. It is an occurrence of almost every day, that more than a ton weight of newspapers is carried in one mail for hundreds of miles together, and at the rate of from eighty to upwards of a hundred miles a day; and if the postage on them shall be abolished, the number will be multiplied, and the expense of their transportation increased. It will probably be the means of superseding many of our village newspapers, by supplying their place with papers from the cities, which will render it difficult to provide for their rapid transportation at any expense.

The postages returned on newspapers for the year ending the 30th of June last amounted to \$254,796 64. If this sum shall be abstracted from the revenues of the Department, and the same or increased services still performed, it must be obvious that its present operations cannot be continued upon its own resources.

The conveyance of letters by mail affords a considerable revenue, with but little weight to transport. That revenue is the principal support of the Department. The conveyance of newspapers by mail gives a heavy weight to transport, with but a light revenue compared with their weight. If the revenue arising from letter postage shall be materially diminished, or if that arising from newspapers shall be abolished, it will be necessary so to abridge the mail facilities of the country, as that daily mails cannot be carried except between the principal commercial cities on the seaboard. The frequency and celerity of mail intercourse must almost every where be diminished; horse transportation must be substituted for that of mail coaches on many important routes; and distinct and more tardy methods must be adopted for transporting newspapers than letters. Such will be the inevitable consequences, unless provision shall be made to defray the expense from the treasury—a resort never solicited, never desired, and never given.

With these views, which are the result of certain calculation, the course which it will be most eligible to adopt is respectfully submitted to the wisdom of the committee.

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

W. T. BARRY

Hon. FELIX GRUNDY,

Chairman of the Committee on the Post Offices and Post Roads, U. S. Senate.

[22d CONGRESS.]

No. 125.

[2d SESSION.]

INDEMNITY ASKED BY MAIL CONTRACTORS FOR THE LOSS OF A STAGE AND HORSES.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 6, 1833.

Mr. CONNOR, from the Committee on the Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom was referred the petition of Reeside and Robinson, reported:

That the petitioners set forth that they were contractors for carrying the mail from Montgomery Court-house, in Virginia, to Blountsville, in Tennessee; that, in January, 1829, in attempting to cross Reed creek, near Wythe Court-house, in Virginia, the waters being up, their horses were drowned, and stage and harness injured; for which loss and damage they ask of Congress remuneration. The committee view it, when an individual or individuals make a contract with the Post Office Department for the transportation of the mail, that they are to run the risk of loss and damage in stock, stages, &c.; the annual compensation given for the performance of the service is deemed to be satisfactory to the person or persons thus engaging. Your committee, therefore, believe it inexpedient, and *Resolve*, That the prayer of the petitioners be not granted.

[22d CONGRESS.]

No. 126.

[2d SESSION.]

APPLICATION FOR CARRYING THE MAIL ON THE OHIO AND MISSISSIPPI RIVERS IN STEAMBOATS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, FEBRUARY 20, 1833.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled: Your memorialists, citizens of the town of Louisville, and commonwealth of Kentucky, respectfully represent:

That an association or company has lately been formed by citizens of Louisville, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Pittsburg, and other places, composed of a number of their most wealthy, enterprising, and meritorious merchants and traders, under the name of the "Ohio and Mississippi Mail Line;" and, with a view to promote the best interests of commerce and navigation on the western waters, it has succeeded in establishing, at great expense, a line of packets between the cities of Cincinnati and New Orleans, consisting of a number of the largest and most commodious steamboats. The number of vessels necessarily employed in the carrying trade on the Mississippi and its tributaries; the loose and irregular manner of conducting, heretofore, this business; the many disastrous and fatal accidents

which have occurred from their coming in contact and the bursting of boilers, in most cases the result of carelessness or reckless competition, having impaired the public confidence in this mode of transportation, induced the persons composing said association to embark in that enterprise. When your memorialists take into consideration the rapid improvement of the western country, the amount and value of its products, and the great extent of its inland navigation, they hesitate not to say, that any scheme which promises security to life and property embarked in commerce is worthy of public patronage. Your memorialists beg leave to represent, that they have been informed that a proposition has been made by said company to the Post Office Department to carry a mail in said line of packets from the city of Louisville to the city of New Orleans, three times a week for six months in the year; and that the Postmaster General, though convinced of its utility, has not the power, under the law regulating his duties, to enter into the contract upon fair and equitable terms. It is true that the law referred to provides that all waters on which steamboats regularly ply between port and port shall be regarded as post roads; but it also provides that the Postmaster General shall only have power to contract with any person or company to carry the mail in steamboats on such waters where the expense does not exceed three cents for each letter, and a half cent for each newspaper; and this compensation for carrying the mail, as above proposed, would be inadequate. The fact, well known to your honorable bodies, that New Orleans is the depot of the marketable productions of this immense valley, will show the great importance of facilitating intercourse between it and the principal towns on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

At present, there are three mails a week between Louisville and New Orleans, conveyed by land, a distance of about a thousand miles, and each is fourteen days in the transit, when it may be carried by steampackets, in perfect security, in about half that time. Most of the business correspondence is now conveyed by steamboats, *post free*, which must, from the best estimate that can be made, occasion an annual loss to the Post Office Department of from \$15,000 to \$20,000. It is believed by your memorialists, that, should the mail be sent from this place as proposed, every other day, in steampackets, to New Orleans, the mail from Baltimore would reach that city in about eleven days; and, upon this plan, the Ohio and Mississippi would become the great mail artery for the western and southwestern regions, diverging, as it conveniently might, into the interior, from prominent points on said rivers.

Your memorialists respectfully represent, that, during the steamboat season, (say from the 1st of January to the 1st of July,) the roads are bad, the streams high, the mails heavy and often detained, and packages much injured. Consequently, the river route is not only the most expeditious, but likewise the safest. The balance of the year, the navigation is uncertain, the roads good, and the mails comparatively light. Hence it is not desirable that the mails should be carried by steam longer than the period above stated.

Wherefore, your memorialists humbly pray that a law may be passed to authorize the Postmaster General to contract for the transportation of said mail from Louisville to New Orleans by water, &c. And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

22d CONGRESS.]

No. 127.

[2d SESSION.]

COST OF TRANSPORTING THE MAIL IN EACH STATE, INCLUDING THE EXPENSES OF POST OFFICES AND EXTRA ALLOWANCES MADE TO CONTRACTORS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, FEBRUARY 21, 1833.

SIR:

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *February 19, 1833.*

In obedience to the resolution of the Senate, dated June 9, 1832, I have the honor to submit the following report:

The resolution calls for a report of "the amount of expense of transporting the mail, and all the contingent and other expenses attending the post offices in each State, so far as the same can be ascertained, with the amount of extra allowances made to contractors since the 1st of January, 1830."

Not having received official information of the passage of the resolution, I was not apprized of its existence till some time after the commencement of the present session; when, being advised of it through the honorable mover of the resolution, the journals of the last session were searched, where it was, for the first time, discovered by me. This will account for the delay to furnish the answer.

The accounts of postmasters, with their compensation, and the contingent expenses of their several offices, are kept in alphabetical order, and not separately, by States; and the separation of the various items of charge in the whole number of nine thousand accounts for each quarter of a year, amounting to about seventy thousand for the whole time embraced in the resolution, and exhibiting the amount in each State separately, would occupy a greater length of time than the period of any one session would admit, and an amount of labor far beyond what is allotted to the business of the Department.

The incidental expenses of the Department consist principally in the disbursements made for mail bags, mail locks and keys, blanks for postmasters' accounts, post bills, wrapping paper for putting up mails, agencies, &c. The mail bags and locks are sent indiscriminately through all the States; and agencies are common to different States. Blanks are furnished to each postmaster according to the magnitude of his office, without any account of the exact expense of the amount sent to each. It is, therefore, not possible to specify the amount of expense in each State.

In the transportation of the mail, a very considerable proportion of the routes run partly into one State and partly into another; and, in some instances, the same route runs into three or four different States. In these cases it is impossible to determine what proportion of the expense is incurred for the transportation in each State. Mail routes also frequently pass through a State for the benefit of other States, rather than for the benefit of the State through which they pass. Such is the great mail route between Philadelphia and New York. It is placed under the head of New Jersey. Thirty miles of it are in the State of Pennsylvania, fifty-nine in New Jersey, and one mile in New York; yet it is principally for the benefit of the two cities which constitute its extreme points; and more than five times the benefit of it results to New York above that of New Jersey. This principle is still more strikingly illustrated in the mail route between Mobile and New Orleans. It runs into the three States of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. More than half of the whole route is in Mississippi, and, of course, more than half its expense is incurred for transporting the mail in Mississippi; yet the State of Mississippi derives no immediate benefit from it, except the supply of the little isolated office of Pascagoula, which does not yield \$100 a year net revenue to the Department. It must, therefore, be obvious that, if the exact amount expended for transporting the mail in each State could be given, it would but very imperfectly exhibit the amount of expenditure for the benefit of each State, or the comparative view of mail accommodation which each State enjoys. But another difficulty presents itself, which cannot well be obviated. It often happens, and in the most important mail routes, that one person or company contracts for a gross sum for carrying the mail on several routes lying in different States. In such cases, there is no rule by which it can be ascertained what proportion of that sum is applicable to the transportation in each State. If the