

[13th CONGRESS.]

No. 30.

[3d SESSION.]

SUNDAY MAILS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, JANUARY 27, 1815.

Mr. DAGGETT made the following report:

The Committee of the Senate, to whom were referred the petitions of numerous citizens of the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, North Carolina, and Ohio, praying the Congress to prohibit the transportation and opening of the mail on the Sabbath, having attended to the duty assigned to them, respectfully report:

That the importance of the subject, and the motives which actuate so large a portion of their fellow-citizens, are duly regarded and appreciated. Was the practice of the transportation of the mail on every day of the week now commenced, and that of opening it on the Sabbath under no regulations, the committee would consider it necessary to make some legislative provision on the subject. The General Government, from its establishment, has pursued a system of causing the mail to be transported on the Sabbath, on the great roads leading through and across the country, while the practice has been avoided on routes of less importance. The public convenience has justified these measures in the view of the Government. In 1810, a law was made, directing "that every Postmaster shall keep an office, in which one or more persons shall attend on every day on which a mail, or bag, or other packet or parcel of letters shall arrive, by land or water, as well as on other days, at such hours as the Postmaster General shall direct, for performing the duties thereof; and it shall be the duty of the Postmaster, at all reasonable hours, on every day of the week, to deliver, on demand, any letter, paper, or packet, to the person entitled to or authorized to receive the same." The committee learn, with pleasure, that the Postmaster General, under this law, has prescribed the following regulation: "At Post Offices where the mail arrives on Sunday, the office is to be kept open for the delivery of letters, &c. for one hour after the arrival and assorting of the mail; but in case that would interfere with the hours of public worship, then the office to be kept open for one hour after the usual time of dissolving the meetings for that purpose." Presuming that the Postmaster General will continue this regulation, and that he will, at all times, guard the Post Offices against improper practices, in respect to the opening the mail and the delivering of letters on the Sabbath; and considering the condition of the country, engaged in war, rendering frequent communication through the whole extent of it absolutely necessary, the committee deem it inexpedient, at this time, to interfere and pass any laws on the subject-matter of the petitions referred, and they, therefore, respectfully submit the following resolution:

Resolved, That, at this time, it is inexpedient to interfere and pass any laws on the subject-matter of the several petitions praying the prohibition of the transportation and opening of the mail on the Sabbath.

[13th CONGRESS.]

No. 31.

[3d SESSION.]

NUMBER OF POST OFFICES, AND THE PRODUCE OF POSTAGES FOR SIX MONTHS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 28, 1815.

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit to the Senate a report from the Postmaster General, complying with their resolution of the 15th of December last.

February 28, 1815.

JAMES MADISON.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, February 27, 1815.

The Postmaster General, in compliance with your directions, communicating a resolution of the Senate of the United States, relative to the Post Office establishment, respectfully reports—

That the subsequent pages contain an account of the number of miles of post road in each State; the number of Post Offices; the amount of postages, after paying the expenses of collection for six months, ending June 30, 1814; the expense of transporting the mail for six months, by the contracts now in operation, with the difference or balance of or against each State.

Also a detailed statement of the accounts of the several Post Offices, arranged under the heads of the several States, territories, and districts, for six months, ending June 30, 1814, showing the names of all Post Offices then in operation, from which accounts have been received; the names of the several Postmasters; the amount of postage collected on letters and packets; on newspapers; the compensation for delivering free letters; the commission on letter postage; on newspaper postage; the expenditure for ship letters; for way letters; for contingent articles; and the balance in favor of or against each office.

All which is respectfully submitted.

The PRESIDENT of the United States.

R. J. MEIGS.