

Statement.—No. 2.

Amount of postages collected, from 1st January to March 31, 1814,	-	\$176,576 71	
Amount of postages collected, from 1st April to June 30, 1814,	-	188,867 08	
			\$365,443 79
Amount of postages collected, from 1st January to March 31, 1815,	-	223,696 42	
Amount of postages collected, from 1st April to June 30, 1815,*	-	289,307 00	
			<u>513,003 42</u>
Amount of six months, from 1st January to June 30, 1814,	-	\$365,443 79	
Addition of 6 15-100 per cent.,	-	22,474 80	
Amount which should have arisen from 1st Jan. to June 30, 1815, without additional rate,	-	\$387,918 59	
Actual produce,	-	513,003 42	
Increase in consequence of additional rates,	-	<u>\$125,084 83</u>	

Amount from 1st January to March 31, 1815, was \$223,696; which, divided by 4, as 50 per cent. was charged only on two months, gives 55,924; which, taken from 387,919, equal 331,995. Then, as 331,995 : 125,085 :: 100 : 37 6-100.

The Postmasters' accounts are not yet so arranged, that a statement can be exhibited to a later period than the above.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, January 1, 1816.

SIR: I have the honor to state, in reply to your letter of the 5th, that my concluding observation may, perhaps, be considered as too hypothetical. The result of the comparison which was made of the produce, under the old rates and those of the new, showed that the latter produced only one hundred and thirty-seven instead of one hundred and fifty; or, that there were only ten letters now sent, where there should be eleven in ordinary circumstances. But, considering the return of peace, the extraordinary number of letters which must arise from the discharge of the army, the settlement of accounts, and the new occupations of those connected with the army; also the restoration of commerce, and the great increase of commercial enterprises, many more being engaged in it than in ordinary times, or than can be supported by trade in ordinary times, it appeared to me that the postages, instead of the regular increase of fifty per cent., ought to have gone much further, probably to seventy per cent., (say of a tenth, in consequence of disbanding the army, and the like quantity for the increase of commerce.) On this ground it was inferred that, where those causes ceased, there would be a great falling off in postages, and that a rate which should be but a moderate advance on the former, would be as productive.

In this respect, the committee will perceive that there is more of inference and conjecture than of precise data. The rates contemplated for letter postage were,

For any distance, not exceeding five miles,	-	-	-	4	cents.
Over five, and not exceeding forty miles,	-	-	-	10	"
Over forty, and not exceeding ninety miles,	-	-	-	12	"
Over ninety, and not exceeding one hundred and fifty miles,	-	-	-	15	"
Over one hundred and fifty, and not exceeding four hundred miles,	-	-	-	20	"
Over four hundred, and not exceeding six hundred miles,	-	-	-	25	"
Over six hundred miles,	-	-	-	30	"

For newspapers—

For any distance, not exceeding two hundred miles,	-	-	-	2	cents.
Over two hundred, and not exceeding five hundred miles,	-	-	-	3	"
Over five hundred miles,	-	-	-	4	"

Monthly and weekly magazines to be rated as newspapers; every eight pages of octavo paper to be rated as one, and also any surplus less than eight pages.

A comparative table of the old, new, and proposed rates, is annexed. The first rate is calculated for places very near each other; the old rate, for such a short distance, was eight cents, and the present is twelve cents; but both rates are so disproportioned to the service, that very few letters have been sent in the mail for the distance; and the present rate, it is believed, will produce many; or, in other words, this rate will afford considerable accommodations, and whatever it produces may be considered as a gain. This affects the communication between Georgetown and Washington city; Philadelphia, Germantown, and Frankfort; Boston, Charlestown, and Cambridge; New York and Brooklyn; with sundry other places contiguous to each other.

It will be observed, that an increase is proposed in the postage of newspapers; this is on the ground, that the old rate is inadequate to the expense of conveyance, and that the proposed rate is still inconsiderable. A weekly paper, carried two hundred miles, will cost only one dollar and four cents a year, and few persons take newspapers from a greater distance. The amount of newspaper postage in 1814 was \$59,149 36; and this increase would produce nearly \$50,000 a year clear revenue, supposing the commission allowed to Postmasters to remain at its present rate.

Very respectfully, your most obedient,

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

Hon. the CHAIRMAN of the Committee of Ways and Means.

* This account is not complete, but the sum is believed to be nearly correct.

COMPENSATION OF POSTMASTERS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE POST OFFICE AND POST ROADS, FEBRUARY 2, 1816.

SIR: GENERAL POST OFFICE, February 1, 1816.

I have the honor to enclose a bill for regulating the compensation of Postmasters, agreeable to your request. In this I have proposed an increase of commission on the first hundred dollars collected by each Postmaster, from

thirty per cent., fixed by the former act, to forty per cent. This commission seems to be required at the smaller offices, where the commission is very small in proportion to the trouble. In the larger Post Offices it will give an increase of forty dollars a year. In other respects it merely changes the existing law to the former rates of commission, except in one instance; that is, allowing the Postmasters at Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, one cent for the receipt and delivery of each free letter. They were excepted from that allowance under the former act. If that exception continues, they cannot have an increase of compensation, as it appears that their commissions barely cover two thousand dollars, and their expenses for clerk hire, rent, &c. Indeed, the Postmasters at Philadelphia and Baltimore represent that they cannot now make an adequate compensation to their clerks.

The next section proposes an alteration, so as to allow a Postmaster to receive twenty-four hundred dollars a year, instead of two thousand, the present limitation. The latter is evidently too small for the Postmasters in the large towns, where house-rent and other expenses have become very high.

I have proposed a section for a new table of rates of postage, leaving the sums blank. It seems not to be desirable to increase the rates beyond the former scale; and, in that case, no cause is discovered for any legislative provision.

A table has been suggested of the following rates: $6\frac{1}{2}$, $12\frac{1}{2}$, $18\frac{1}{2}$, $22\frac{1}{2}$, and 25 cents. It is objected to this, that so many fractions will occasion a great deal of trouble and frequent mistakes in making out the post bills, entering and adding the accounts, and that it does not conform at all to the decimal arrangement of the coins of the United States, which are 5, 10, 20, and 25 cents. With these it is impossible to make quarter and three quarter cents.

The allowance for free letters will produce probably three hundred and twenty dollars a year to the Postmasters at New York and Philadelphia, and two hundred dollars a year to those of Baltimore and Boston. It appears that nine thousand six hundred and ninety-six free letters were received and sent from Philadelphia, exclusive of distributed letters, on which no allowance is proposed, in the quarter from October 1st, to December 31st, 1815, and the allowance would amount to ninety-six dollars and ninety-six cents for that quarter. The amount has not been ascertained in any other quarter; but the quarter from January 1st to April 1st, is estimated to produce more, *Congress being then in session*; and the two next quarters are estimated to produce less.

In respect to the resolution of the House on the motion of Mr. Goldsborough, made on the 8th ultimo, I would very respectfully remark that, on the first establishment of the Post Office in 1792, it was made the duty of every master of a vessel to deliver all letters, by him conveyed, into the Post Office, excepting those for the principal owner or consignee. The same duty has been re-enacted, and continued since; but it was found that, from want of technical precision, the penalty could be avoided in some cases; and the act of the last session was made to remedy that defect.

There is hardly a harbor or village in the United States, to which the mail is not carried at the public expense. If vessels are allowed to carry letters in opposition to the mail, and without any emolument to Government, especially between places where Post Offices are established, the public, by these casual conveyances, will be deprived of much of its revenue. It will, in fact, be at the expense of sending posts which carry no mails, when opportunity offers by these vessels.

It has been thought expedient to prohibit common carriers by land from carrying *any* letters; but in respect to those whose common carriage is by water, the law is much more favorable. The practice is not only authorized, but the carrier is encouraged by a payment of two cents for each letter, and the public only charges six cents, (or nine cents so long as the fifty per cent. addition continues.) This is a very moderate postage, and no hardship is perceived in the case.

Another motive in establishing this regulation was to prevent speculation. If the master of a vessel is not compelled to deliver letters, which he brings, into the Post Office immediately after his arrival, the master or his friends, by knowing the state of the market and suppressing letters, may speculate on others. He has now, indeed, the power to refuse a letter; but if he undertakes to deliver one, he cannot deceive the person sending it, by keeping it back, without subjecting himself to a penalty.

On the whole, it appears to me that the two sections objected to are beneficial to the public, and ought not to be repealed.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

HON. SAMUEL D. INGHAM, *Chairman of the Committee of Post Offices and Post Roads.*

14th CONGRESS.]

No. 34.

[1st SESSION.]

INVESTIGATION INTO THE FISCAL OPERATIONS OF THE GENERAL POST OFFICE.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 27, 1816.

Mr. INGHAM, from the committee appointed in pursuance of a resolution of the House of Representatives, adopted on the 29th day of January, to investigate the conduct of the General Post Office Department, reported:

That they have used their utmost endeavors to ascertain every fact that appeared to be material to a full understanding of the conduct of the officers of that Department. As the inquiry originated in a request of the Postmaster General, the committee, in the first place, addressed to him a letter, (No. 1,) requesting to be informed of the reasons of his application to Congress; and also that he would give them such information as appeared to be calculated to facilitate the investigation. The Postmaster General stated, in his answer, that the application was induced by a rumor that some person or persons of the Department had sold draughts for moneys due to the General Post Office for premiums, which had been converted to their private use, (see letter No. 2.)

The committee, therefore, proceeded to inquire into the truth of the rumor, by the examination of every person who seemed likely to have any knowledge of the fact; but, in the examination of some of the clerks in the General Post Office, various suggestions were made of improper transactions in the Department, other than those to which their attention had been drawn by the Postmaster General.

The investigation has therefore assumed a very extensive scope, and has consequently occupied more time than could have been anticipated at its commencement. This delay has also been increased by circumstances arising out of the nature of the inquiry. As no person appeared to make any specific charges, the committee had no alternative but to abandon their undertaking, or listen to rumors and the hearsays of some witnesses, and send for other witnesses to prove the facts; they made choice of the latter course, and have examined every person who was either suggested to them, or appeared as likely to possess any information on the subjects of their inquiry.

The charges arising out of the suggestions of the witnesses, and which, from the various communications they made to the committee, it appeared to be the desire of some of them most especially to establish, are as follows:

1st. That certain persons in the General Post Office, and particularly Abraham Bradley, Jun., Assistant Postmaster General, had sold Post Office draughts and checks, and applied the premium to their private use.