

by sending the entire mail in curricles at all seasons of the year, the mail being altogether too large to be transported on horseback. His estimate was compared with two others made in the office, and found to be judicious.

A new system was then agreed on, and it was decided that the entire mail should be carried at all seasons of the year, and an adequate compensation, as was supposed, was allowed for that service. Colonel Tayloe engaged to transport the mail on his part, and Messrs. Williams and Farish on theirs, in curricles. On my arrival in this office, it was intimated to me that Colonel Tayloe did not carry his mail with regularity; he stated that every practicable exertion was made, though sometimes unsuccessful. At length we undertook to transport the route assigned to him through our agent; he succeeded tolerably well, but the business was found to be both troublesome and expensive. I therefore sold the property belonging to the office to Colonel Tayloe, and entered into a new contract with him, which was unquestionably advantageous to the public, and he has carried the mail punctually. The steamboat has destroyed all the profits of stages between Alexandria and Fredericksburg; in fact, I understand that the proprietors have now decided not to run stages on that route any more, and they have no alternative but to carry the mail in curricles at a great expense.

This statement is substantially the same as that made by Doctor Bradley on Tuesday last to your honorable committee.

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

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

HON. SAMUEL D. INGHAM, *Chairman of the Committee of Investigation.*

15th CONGRESS.]

No. 35.

[1st SESSION.]

INDEMNITY FOR MONEY LOST IN THE MAIL.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, JANUARY 19, 1818.

The Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom was referred the petition of Alan Farquhar, of the State of Ohio, respectfully report:

That the petitioner declares, under oath, that he did, in June last, enclose in a letter six hundred dollars, which letter and enclosure he delivered to Anderson Judkins, to deposit in the Post Office at Steubenville, to go by mail to the city of Philadelphia. The said Judkins testifies that he delivered said letter to the Postmaster at Steubenville, or some person acting in his place. A certificate from a number of inhabitants of said State, that said "Farquhar is a respectable citizen, in whose statements every confidence may be placed," accompanies the petition.

This sum of six hundred dollars Mr. Farquhar prays Congress to reimburse him.

Admitting the facts to be as above stated respecting the loss of the money, the committee are of opinion that it furnishes no solid ground for a claim upon the United States. Government established the Post Office Department for the accommodation of the citizens, but it never intended to become *responsible* for the safe transmission and delivery of all letters and packages intrusted to this mode of conveyance: such a course would subject it to innumerable impositions. All that it promises, and all it can perform, is to endeavor to employ none but faithful agents; to dismiss and bring to condign punishment such as are found unfaithful; and, if possible, to recover and restore any property which may have been embezzled.

The committee, therefore, recommend for adoption the following resolution:

Resolved, That the prayer of the petitioner ought not to be granted.

15th CONGRESS.]

No. 36.

[1st SESSION.]

PROPOSITION TO ESTABLISH A BRANCH OF THE GENERAL POST OFFICE IN ONE OF THE WESTERN STATES.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 11, 1818.

Mr. INGHAM, from the Committee of Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom was referred a resolution to inquire into the expediency of establishing in one of the Western States a branch of the General Post Office, for the purpose of making contracts for the conveyance of the mail, and to correct abuses in that Department, reported:

That, in an establishment of such extent as that of the General Post Office of the United States, it is not to be expected that the most perfect system of responsibility, executed with the most untiring vigilance, could at all times secure the public from every species of irregularity and abuse; and when it is considered how many persons are employed as Postmasters, whose emoluments offer no inducement to a diligent attention to their duties in the appointment of whom in sparse settlements there is often not an alternative in the choice; and also that the rapid extension of the post routes requires, annually, the employment of untried mail carriers, whose want of experience or capacity, and the frequent interruptions from bad roads, high waters, and various accidents to which such undertakings are always liable, cannot fail to occasion irregularities in the progress of the mails. It is a matter of gratulation and surprise that so few interruptions and losses are experienced.

The committee are not aware of any thing peculiar in the situation of the Western States that demands an alteration of the establishment with respect to them; nor have they been able to discover by what means a division of it in the manner suggested by the resolution, by locating one branch remote from the seat of Government, and consequently more difficult of access to the Representatives even of the States for which it might be established, would secure a more effective responsibility than when the whole is subject to the immediate direction and inspection of a general head, where the advantages of long experience are strengthened by a uniformity of proceeding, and secured by the direct responsibility of that head to the executive and legislative branches of the Government. The