

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

committee have not been apprized of any abuses which may have led to the resolution under consideration; they are consequently ignorant of any facts which would go to show that a division of the Post Office establishment would in any degree remedy the evil; and without knowing of the existence of such an abuse if it exists, or of any circumstances attending it, they think it would be premature to attempt a remedy which might not have the remotest application to the case, while it would probably produce other evils of much greater magnitude than any that may have been complained of. They therefore submit the following resolution, viz:

*Resolved,* That it is inexpedient to establish a branch of the General Post Office in any part of the United States.

15th CONGRESS.]

No. 37.

[2d SESSION.]

## COMPENSATION OF POSTMASTERS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 15, 1819, BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE POST OFFICE AND POST ROADS.

GENERAL POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *February 15, 1819.*

SIR:

You will observe by the enclosures, which I have the honor to transmit to you, as chairman of the Committee on the Post Office Establishment, that I am desired by the Postmasters of several of the larger cities to invite the attention of Congress to the inadequacy of their compensation, as fixed in the year 1810, and also to the disparity between that compensation, restricted to \$2,000 per annum, and those of certain officers of the customs, and others of subordinate grade, receiving \$3,000, whose duties and responsibility would not, it is conceived, be found, on comparison, greater than those of the Postmasters of the principal cities of the United States. They also represent, and, I admit, truly, that the labors of their offices have considerably increased, and that much duty is necessarily required of them late at night, and before daylight in the morning, as well as on the Sabbath, when most other men are at rest. On these grounds, superadded to that of the well-known increase of the expenses of living, in large cities particularly, since the year 1810, they solicit a suitable increase of compensation; or, if it shall not be the pleasure of Congress to grant that, specifically, they pray the repeal or modification of the restriction before stated, in consideration of the change of circumstances since that restriction was imposed, and of the inconsiderable amount that would be relinquished by the Government under such repeal.

However worthy of favorable consideration the case of these Postmasters may be considered by Congress, it is neither my province nor intention to propose the allowance of any specific annual salary. The mode of compensating this description of officers, by way of commission, proportioned to their actual duties and responsibility, and by making special allowances adapted to circumstances, (the only mode which the Post Office committees, or the head of this Department, have ever recommended,) is perhaps better and more just in principle than any other, provided a fair and reasonable compensation, and such only, be thereby afforded; but whether the restriction to \$2,000 in the year 1810 ought now to be continued, under the change of times and circumstances, is for Congress to decide; and, in relation to that decision, it is deemed proper that I should state that a few of the larger offices only have yet been affected by the restriction in question, or reached the limit, after deducting their expenses, and these only to the amount of a few hundred dollars a year; nor does it seem probable that there will be any such future surplus as to require the control of Congress, which can at any time, when necessary, be exercised on the subject. But this inconsiderable amount of excess, which has hitherto been refunded, though unimportant to the Government, it might be desirable to the officers refunding it to retain, and I must confess that I think it would be well deserved for the increased duties, and the unseasonable hours of their performance, which, with the view of effecting improvements in the Department, by accelerating the transportation of the mails, and otherwise promoting the public interest and convenience, have been enjoined on the principal officers since their compensation was restricted by the act of 1810. I do, therefore, with entire deference, however, to the will of Congress, recommend the repeal or modification of the 40th section of that act, as prayed by the petitioners, with a limitation to such sum as Congress may think proper, not exceeding \$3,000 per annum; to which effect I have the honor to submit a section, to be added, if approved, to the Post Office or other suitable bill now pending in Congress.

I have the honor to be, with very respectful consideration, sir, your most obedient servant,

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

The Hon. ARTHUR LIVERMORE, *Chairman of the Post Office Committee.*

15th CONGRESS.]

No. 38.

[2d SESSION.]

## GUARDS FOR THE MAILS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, FEBRUARY 16, 1819.

Mr. STOKES made the following report:

The Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom was referred a resolution of the Senate of the 4th instant, instructing them to "inquire into the expediency of authorizing the Postmaster General to employ an armed guard for the protection of the mails of the United States, on such mail routes as he may deem necessary," have attended to the duty assigned them; and, upon consulting the Postmaster General, and weighing the reasons contained in his letter to the committee on the subject, they are of opinion that so many difficulties exist in the case as to render any additional provisions unnecessary; they therefore report the following resolution:

*Resolved,* That it is not expedient to authorize the Postmaster General to employ an armed guard for the protection of the mails of the United States.