

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.