

INVESTIGATION OF THE AFFAIRS OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 28, 1821.

Mr. PHELPS made the following report:

The Select Committee, to whom was referred the investigation of the affairs of the Post Office Department, according to order, have had the same under examination, and beg leave to report, in part:

That, immediately after their appointment, they commenced a performance of their duties, and believed it would be in their power to effect an extensive investigation. They began an inquiry into several important subjects, which the state of health of several members of the committee compelled them to abandon. They have recently devoted their attention entirely to such inquiries as offered a fair prospect of termination during the present session of Congress.

When it is recollected that the transactions of this Department embrace a period of many years, and extend to almost every part of our country, it will be obvious that obstacles would occur in the investigation of them which could be surmounted only by an expensive and protracted inquiry.

The committee never entertained a belief that, during the present session of Congress, they should be able to review, in a manner satisfactory to themselves or the House, the quarterly receipts and expenditures of this Department. This service the law requires of the accounting officers of the Government, when the proper vouchers are exhibited by the Postmaster General, and which, by law, he is bound to render quarterly.

The following subjects have been investigated by the committee:

1. The expenditure of public money, by this Department, for transporting the mail from Washington City to Fredericksburg, in the years 1814, 1815, and 1816.
2. Whether duplicates of all contracts made by this Department, and all proposals respecting them, have been lodged with the Comptroller of the Treasury or not.
3. Whether the Postmaster General has, once in three months, rendered to the Secretary of the Treasury a quarterly account of all receipts and expenditures of the Department, or not.
4. Whether the Postmaster General has paid into the Treasury of the United States the balance due from him, as the law requires, or not.
5. Whether the public money was not loaned to Benjamin Tallmadge and John G. Jackson.
6. Whether the Postmaster General, in his annual reports to Congress of the contracts made by his Department, has reported them conformably with law, or not.
7. Whether he has annually reported to Congress all contracts made by his Department, or not.

The evidence, in relation to these several subjects of inquiry, consists of the original applications to transport the mail from Washington City to Fredericksburg, during the years 1814, 1815, and 1816; a copy from the original list of bids, as furnished by the Postmaster General, and official documents.

The evidence, in connexion with the several heads, is referred to numerically.

In reference to the first head of inquiry, the committee find, that, in the month of September, 1813, a contract was made by the Department with four persons, believed to be entirely responsible, for transporting the mail from Washington City to Fredericksburg, during the years 1814, 1815, and 1816, for the sum of \$3,300 per annum, amounting, in the whole, to the sum of \$9,900; a part of which contract was afterwards transferred to another person. No further contract, embracing the same route and period, has been discovered in the list of contracts, duplicates of which have been returned to the Comptroller of the Treasury, or been furnished to the committee by the Post Office Department; but it appears that a sum considerably larger than that stipulated by the above contract has been paid for the service in question, on behalf of the United States. The reason assigned for this additional expenditure, by the Postmaster General, is the occurrence of a change in the mode of transporting the mail, alleged to have been rendered necessary by the war, and to have been adopted in obedience to the direction of a superior authority. The sum paid, under this variation of arrangement, for the three years above mentioned, appears, from the returns to the Treasury, to have been \$31,551 52, of which amount \$16,150 81 were paid for the year 1816. These entries are alleged by the Postmaster General to furnish an erroneous exhibit of the real expenditure, resulting from the manner of making up the returns to the Treasury, in which various sums paid to the same person, though for different services, are comprehended in the same entry. Thus, from the account in detail on the books of the Post Office Department, the whole sum paid for the transportation of the mail from Washington to Fredericksburg, for the year 1816, appears to be \$8,915 45, instead of \$16,150 81, as shown by the returns to the Treasury. The committee have had no time or opportunity to obtain testimony in relation to the facts connected with the subject. They submit the documentary evidence they have collected, numbered from 1 to 11; the letter of the Postmaster General to the committee; and two extracts, marked A and B, from the books of the Post Office Department, verified by the chief clerk of that Department.

In relation to the second head of inquiry, the committee find that duplicates of all contracts and proposals respecting them have not been lodged with the Comptroller, as is required by law.

Documents Nos. 12 and 13, and letter of the Postmaster General.

In relation to the third head of inquiry, it appears that the Postmaster General has not rendered his accounts to the Treasury Department for settlement to a later period than the 31st day of March, 1819.

Reference to documents Nos. 14 and 15, and the explanation on this subject offered by the letter of the Postmaster General.

In relation to the fourth head of inquiry, it appears that the balance due from the Post Office Department to the Department of the Treasury, amounted, on the 1st day of January, 1819, to the sum of \$653,491 99, which includes all money then on hand, and debts due to the Post Office Department; the amount of which the committee have no documents to ascertain.

Reference to documents Nos. 16 and 17, and letter of the Postmaster General, accompanying his report of debtors to his Department.

In reference to the fifth head of inquiry, no evidence has been obtained by the committee. It will be found embraced, however, by the explanation contained in the letter of the Postmaster General, which, on this point, was satisfactory to the committee.

In relation to the sixth head of inquiry, the committee, by adverting to several annual reports of contracts made to Congress by the Postmaster General, find that the dates and duration of those contracts are not reported, which the law, in express terms, requires. As these reports are to be found in the clerk's office, the committee considered it to be unnecessary to swell their report with them.

In relation to the seventh head of inquiry, the committee find that the Postmaster General has not made a report to Congress of the contracts made by his Department in the year 1818, until after the commencement of the present investigation. See document No. 18, and letter of the Postmaster General to the committee.

The committee have contented themselves with submitting the above brief statement of the object to which their inquiries have been directed, together with the connected evidence and explanations for the information of the House, without suggesting any resolution or act for its adoption.

DOCUMENTS.

No. 1. A.

STAUNTON, VIRGINIA, *August 30, 1813.*

SIR:

Owning so much property on the road, in the stage way, and finding it impossible to be back by the 18th of September, when your contracts are to be closed, I am induced, by letter, to forward you my proposals for the same.

I will carry your mails from Alexandria to Dumfries, and back again, on the same terms, low as they are, as I have heretofore done, namely, for \$1,800 a year; and, in case Messrs. Farish and Williams should not offer for the route from Dumfries to Fredericksburg, I will also contract to carry that for the same they do—say \$1,200 a year. Should any person or company offer on lower terms, which will be ruinous, yet, from the great expense I have been at in erecting houses on the road, and the improvement of the stage line, I trust, as an old contractor, and a faithful one, too, you will give me permission to take it, when I say I will carry it lower for you than any other person.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

JOHN TAYLOE.

No. 1.—D.

CLOUDDALE, *September 4, 1813.*

DEAR SIR:

I beg leave to hand the enclosed, and trust it will comport with the conveniency, as well as the interest, of your Department, to continue the contract in my hands on our northern route. I rely entirely on your brother (the doctor) to do the needful. In great haste.

I am sincerely yours,

JOHN TAYLOE.

No. 2.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1813.

SIR:

I will carry the mail from Washington to Alexandria, or the place proposed by your advertisement of May 20th, for the sum of \$800 a year.

JOHN CALDWELL.

G. GRANGER, Esq., *Postmaster General, U. S.*

No. 3.—A.

GEORGETOWN, *September 18, 1813.*

SIR:

I will carry the mail of the United States in a stage from Georgetown, by Washington, to Alexandria, on the plan proposed in the Postmaster General's advertisement of the 20th May last past, for the sum of \$1,000 per annum.

WILLIAM CRAWFORD.

A. BRADLEY, Esq., *Assistant Postmaster General, Washington.*

No. 3.—B.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1813.

SIR:

I will carry the mail of the United States from Alexandria to Fredericksburg, agreeably to the Postmaster General's advertisement, at the rate of \$2,800 per annum.

I am, respectfully, sir, your most obedient servant,

WILLIAM CRAWFORD.

ABRAHAM BRADLEY, JUN., Esq.

No. 4.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1813.

SIR:

I propose to carry the mail of the United States from Washington City to Fredericksburg, agreeably to your advertisement, for the term mentioned, at the rate of \$3,700 per annum.

I am, respectfully, sir, your most obedient,

HAZLEWOOD FARISH.

No. 5.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1813.

SIR:

I will undertake to carry your mails from Alexandria to Fredericksburg, and back, for \$2,700 a year, and refer you to Mr. James Sanderson, of Alexandria, as to my ability, and who will become my security for the faithful performance thereof. I mean this proposal not to interfere with the bid of Messrs. Tayloe, Williams, and Farish, in case you think proper to give the contract to them as old contractors.

I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

LAURENCE WASHINGTON.

No. 6.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1813.

SIR:

I propose to carry the mail of the United States from Washington City to Fredericksburg, agreeably to your advertisement, for the term mentioned, at the rate of \$3,300 per annum.

I am, with respect, your obedient humble servant,

GEORGE WILLIAMS.

No. 7.

WASHINGTON CITY, *September 18, 1813.*

SIR:

I hereby offer to transport the United States' mail from Washington City to Fredericksburg, agreeably to your schedule, for the sum of \$2,000 per annum, for the term of your proposals.

JOHN DAVIS.

GIDEON GRANGER, *Postmaster General.*

No. 8.

The bids and entries in the original list of bids in the Post Office Department for this route appear thus:

No. 34.—*Washington City and Fredericksburg.*

John Tayloe—Alexandria, Dumfries, \$1,800; and Dumfries and Fredericksburg, (if Farish and Williams do not bid,) \$1,200, or lower than any one.

John Caldwell—Washington, Alexandria, \$800; withdrawn.

George Williams—\$3,300; accepted.

William Crawford—Georgetown, Alexandria, \$1,000; Alexandria and Fredericksburg, \$2,800; withdrawn.
 H. Farish—\$3,700.
 John Davis—\$2,000; withdrawn.
 Laurence Washington—Alexandria and Fredericksburg, \$2,700.

No. 9.

This contract, made the 20th day of September, in the year 1813, between George Williams, Hazlewood Farish, William Crawford, and John Davis, of the one part, and the Postmaster General of the United States of America for and in behalf of said States, of the other part, witnesseth: That the said parties have mutually covenanted as follows, that is to say: the said George Williams and others covenant with the said Postmaster General, 1. To carry the mail of the United States, or cause it to be carried, from Washington City, by Alexandria, Occoquan, Dumfries, Stafford court-house, and Falmouth, to Fredericksburg, and from thence, by the same route, to Washington City, every day, at the rate of eight hundred and twenty-five dollars for every quarter of a year during the continuance of this contract, to be paid in draughts on Postmasters on the route above mentioned, or money, at the option of the Postmaster General.

2. That the mail shall be delivered at each Post Office in said route, at the time specified in the schedule hereto annexed, on penalty of two dollars for each hour which shall elapse between any time so fixed and the time of the mail's actual arrival, to be deducted from the pay of the said George Williams and others, unless they shall make it appear, to the satisfaction of the said Postmaster General, that the delay was unavoidable.

3. If the delay of arrival of the said mail continue until the hour of departure of any depending mail, whereby the mails destined for such depending mail lose a trip, it shall be considered as a whole trip lost, and double the sum allowed the said George Williams and others for one trip, to be calculated in proportion to the value of the whole number of trips, shall be deducted from his pay, as a penalty for such delay or loss, unless it shall be made to appear, to the satisfaction of the Postmaster General, that such delay was unavoidable; in which case, only the value of the sum allowed as aforesaid shall be detained and deducted. And it is understood that no pay shall be made for any trip lost, whatever may be the cause of the loss.

4. That the said George Williams and others shall be answerable for the persons to whom they shall commit the care and transportation of the mail, and accountable for any damages which may be sustained through their unfaithfulness or want of care.

5. That ten minutes after the delivery of the mail at any Post Office not named in the annexed schedule, on the aforesaid route, shall be allowed the Postmaster for opening the same, and making up another mail to be forwarded.

6. That if the said George Williams and others, or their agents, charged with the aforesaid mail, shall pass any Post Office, without stopping the time allowed for opening and making up a mail, unless sooner discharged by the Postmaster, they shall forfeit five dollars for every such failure, to be deducted from their pay.

7. That if the person or persons to whom the said George Williams and others shall commit the transportation of the mail, do proceed without it, or do not make a proper exchange of mails where such exchange is stated to be made, or, instead thereof, shall carry back the same mail which he or they brought to such place of exchange, it shall be considered as a whole trip lost, and double the sum allowed the said George Williams and others, for one trip, to be calculated in proportion to the value or sum allowed for the whole number of trips to be performed, shall be deducted from their pay as a forfeiture for such failure. And a similar deduction shall be made for every trip lost during the continuance of this contract, unless it shall be made to appear, to the satisfaction of the Postmaster General, that such trips were not lost through neglect, but unavoidable accident.

8. That upon reasonable complaint, made by the Department of the Post Office, against any carrier of the said mail, for negligence or misbehavior, such carrier shall be forthwith discharged.

9. That when the said mail goes by a stage wagon, it shall invariably be carried within the body of it; and that when it stops at night, it shall be put in a secure place, and there locked up. A penalty of one dollar a mile shall be incurred for every mile in which the mail, when conveyed by stage, shall be carried out of the body of the carriage, to be deducted from the quarterly pay before stipulated. And if one delay shall occur equal to a trip lost, the Postmaster General, when satisfied that such delay has arisen from negligence or misconduct, shall have full right to annul this contract.

10. That the said Postmaster General covenants with the said George Williams and others to provide portmanteaus and bags necessary for containing the letters and newspapers which constitute the aforesaid mail, and pay the said George Williams and others for the carriage thereof, as aforesaid, at the rate above mentioned, quarterly, in one month after the expiration of each quarter; the penalties, if any, being first deducted.

11. It is mutually understood by the contracting parties, that, if the route, or any part of the route, herein mentioned, shall, previous to the expiration of the contract, be discontinued by act of Congress, or a line of stages shall be established on the whole or any part of the route, the mail not being carried by stage under this contract, that then this contract, or such part of it as is discontinued, or on which stages shall be established, shall cease to be binding on the Postmaster General, he giving at least one month's notice of such event, and making an allowance of one month's extra pay.

And it is mutually covenanted and agreed, by the said parties, that this contract shall commence on the 1st day of January next, and continue in force until the 31st day of December, inclusively, which will be in the year 1816.

Provided always, That this contract shall be null and void, in case the said George Williams & Co., or either of them, shall become a member of Congress; and also in case any member of Congress is, or shall become, directly or indirectly, himself, or by any other person whatsoever in trust for him, or for his use or benefit, or on his account, interested herein, in the whole or in part; and this contract shall, in all its parts, be subject to the terms and requisitions of an act of Congress, passed on the 21st day of April, in the year of our Lord 1803, entitled, "An act concerning public contracts."

In witness whereof, they have hereunto interchangeably set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

GEORGE WILLIAMS,
 HAZLEWOOD FARISH,
 WILLIAM CRAWFORD,
 JOHN DAVIS.

Signed, sealed, and delivered, in the presence of

DAVID SHOEMAKER, JUN.
 A. BRADLEY 3d.

This schedule, subject to alteration by the Postmaster General, he previously stipulating what he deems, if any, an adequate compensation for any extra expense that may be occasioned thereby.

Leave Washington City every day at three o'clock, P. M.

Arrive at Alexandria same day at half-past four o'clock, P. M.

Arrive at Dumfries by twelve o'clock.

Arrive at Stafford court-house next morning by ———.

Arrive at Fredericksburg same morning by seven o'clock, A. M.

Leave same day at three o'clock, P. M.

Arrive at Dumfries same day by nine o'clock, P. M.

Arrive at Alexandria the next morning by three o'clock, A. M.

Arrive at Washington City same morning by half-past four o'clock, A. M.

On the copy of this contract, furnished by the Postmaster General, there is upon the margin the following note or memorandum, viz: "A part of this contract, Alexandria and Dumfries, was assigned to John Tayloe; and a part of the pay, equal to \$1,250 a year." But, upon a copy procured from the Comptroller's office, there is no such entry or memorandum.

No. 10.

This contract, made the 9th day of November, in the year 1813, between John Tayloe, of Washington City, of the one part, and the Postmaster General of the United States of America, for and in behalf of said States, of the other part, witnesseth that the said parties have mutually covenanted as follows, that is to say, the said John covenants with the said Postmaster General—

1. To carry the mail of the United States, or cause it to be carried, from Alexandria, D. C. by Occoquan, Va. to Dumfries, and from Dumfries, by the same route, to Alexandria, every day, at the rate of three hundred and twelve dollars fifty cents for every quarter of a year, during the continuance of this contract; to be paid in draughts on Postmasters on the route above mentioned, or money, at the option of the Postmaster General.

2. That the mail shall be delivered at each Post Office in the said route, at the time specified in the schedule hereto annexed, on penalty of fifty dollars for each hour which shall elapse between any time so fixed and the time of the mail's actual arrival, to be deducted from the pay of the said John, unless he shall make it appear, to the satisfaction of the Postmaster General, that the delay was unavoidable.

3. If the delay of arrival of the said mail continue until the hour of departure of any depending mail, whereby the mails destined for such depending mail lose a trip, it shall be considered as a whole trip lost, and double the sum allowed the said John for one trip, to be calculated in proportion to the value of the whole number of trips, shall be deducted from his pay, as a penalty for such delay or loss, unless it shall be made to appear, to the satisfaction of the Postmaster General, that such delay was unavoidable; in which case, only the value of the sum allowed as aforesaid shall be detained and deducted. And it is understood that no pay shall be made for any trip lost, whatever may be the cause of the loss.

4. That the said John shall be answerable for the persons to whom he shall commit the care and transportation of the mail, and accountable for any damages which may be sustained through their unfaithfulness or want of care.

5. That ten minutes after the delivery of the mail at any Post Office not named in the annexed schedule, on the aforesaid route, shall be allowed the Postmaster for opening the same, and making up another mail to be forwarded.

6. That if the said John or his agents, charged with the aforesaid mail, shall pass any Post Office without stopping the time allowed for opening and making up a mail, unless sooner discharged by the Postmaster, he shall forfeit five dollars for every such failure, to be deducted from his pay.

7. That if the person or persons to whom the said John shall commit the transportation of the mail do proceed without it, or do not make a proper exchange of the mails, where such exchange is statedly to be made, or instead thereof shall carry back the same mail which he or they brought to such place of exchange, it shall be considered as a whole trip lost, and double the sum allowed the said John for one trip, to be calculated in proportion to the value or sum allowed for the whole number of trips to be performed, shall be deducted from his pay, as a forfeiture for such failure. And a similar deduction shall be made for every trip lost during the continuance of this contract, unless it shall be made to appear, to the satisfaction of the Postmaster General, that such trips were not lost through neglect, but by unavoidable accident.

8. That, upon reasonable complaint made by the Department of the Post Office against any carrier of the said mail, for negligence or misbehavior, such carrier shall be forthwith discharged.

9. That when the said mail goes by a stage wagon, it shall invariably be carried within the body of it: and that when it stops at night, it shall be put in a secure place, and there locked up. A penalty of one dollar a mile shall be incurred for every mile in which the mail, when conveyed by stage, shall be carried out of the body of the carriage, to be deducted from the quarterly pay before stipulated. And if one delay shall occur, equal to a trip lost, the Postmaster General, when satisfied that such has arisen from negligence or misconduct, shall have full right to annul this contract.

10. That the said Postmaster General covenants with the said John, to provide portmanteaus and bags necessary for containing the letters and newspapers which constitute the aforesaid mail, and pay the said John for the carriage thereof as aforesaid, at the rate aforementioned, quarterly, in one month after the expiration of each quarter; the penalties, if any, being first deducted.

11. It is mutually understood, by the contracting parties, that if the route, or any part of the route, herein mentioned, shall, previous to the expiration of the contract, be discontinued by act of Congress, or a line of stages shall be established on the whole or any part of the route, the mail not being carried by stage under this contract, that then this contract, or such part of it as is discontinued, or on which stages shall be established, shall cease to be binding on the Postmaster General, he giving at least one month's notice of such event, and making an allowance of one month's extra pay.

And it is mutually covenanted and agreed by the said parties, that this contract shall commence on the 1st day of January next, and continue in force until the 31st day of December, inclusively, which will be in the year 1816.

Provided, always, That this contract shall be null and void, in case the said John shall become a member of Congress; and also in case any member of Congress is, or shall become, directly or indirectly, himself, or by any other person whatsoever in trust for him, or for his use or benefit, or on his account, interested herein, in the whole or in part; and this contract shall, in all its parts, be subject to the terms and requisitions of an act of Congress, passed on the 21st day of April, A. D. 1808, entitled "An act concerning public contracts."

In witness whereof, they have hereto interchangeably set their hands and seals, the day and year first above written.

JOHN TAYLOE.

Signed, sealed, and delivered, in the presence of P. BRADLEY.

The schedule subject to alteration by the Postmaster General, he previously stipulating what he deems, if any, an adequate compensation for any extra expense that may be occasioned thereby.

Leave Alexandria every day at 5 P. M.

Arrive at Dumfries same day by 12 at night.

Leave Dumfries every day at 9½ P. M.

Arrive at Alexandria next morning by 3 o'clock.

Upon the margin of a copy of this contract, which was obtained at the Comptroller's office, is the following note, viz:

"Colonel Tayloe is to receive the sum of \$2,210 28, for carrying the mail from November 1, to June 1, 1814, instead of the contract pay for that period."

No. 11.

A statement of the moneys paid for transportation of the United States' mail from Washington City to Fredericksburg, in the years 1814, 1815, and 1816, as charged in the abstracts rendered to the Treasury, by the Post Office Department.

Date.	Contractors.	Route.	Specific payments.	Quarterly pay.	Yearly pay.
1814.					
Jan. 1 to April 1,	John Tayloe, George Williams,	Alexandria, Occoquan, and Dumfries, Dumfries and Stafford, -	\$1,578 78 312 50	\$1,891 28	
April 1 to July 1,	William Crawford, John Tayloe, George Williams, Hazlewood Farish,	Washington City and Alexandria, - Alexandria and Dumfries, - Alexandria and Fredericksburg, - Fredericksburg, Dumfries, & Stafford,	251 00 26 36 850 52 3,154 27	4,282 15	
July 1 to Oct. 1,	William Crawford, John Tayloe, George Williams,	Washington City and Alexandria, - Alexandria and Dumfries, - Alexandria and Fredericksburg, -	412 62 947 25 473 63	1,833 50	
Oct. 1 to Dec. 31,	William Crawford, Do. entered above for ferries, &c. John Tayloe, George Williams,	Washington and Alexandria, - Washington and Alexandria, Alexandria and Dumfries, - Dumfries and Fredericksburg, -	260 75 247 50 947 25 473 63	1,929 13	
		Paid for the year 1814,	-		\$9,936 06
1815.					
Jan. 1 to April 1,	William Crawford, John Tayloe, George Williams,	Washington City and Alexandria, - Alexandria and Dumfries, - Dumfries and Stafford, -	260 75 448 46 473 63	1,182 84	
April 1 to July 1,	William Crawford, George Williams,	Washington City and Alexandria, - Dumfries and Stafford, -	260 75 473 63	734 38	
July 1 to Oct. 1,	William Crawford, John Tayloe, George Williams,	Alexandria and Washington City, - Alexandria and Dumfries, - Dumfries and Stafford, -	260 75 666 67 473 63	1,401 05	
Oct. 1 to Dec. 31,	William Crawford, John Tayloe, George Williams,	Washington and Alexandria, - Alexandria and Dumfries, - Dumfries and Stafford, -	660 75 1,012 00 473 63	2,146 38	
		Paid for the year 1815,	-		5,464 65
1816.					
Jan. 1 to April 1,	William Crawford, John Tayloe, George Williams,	Washington and Alexandria, - Alexandria and Dumfries, - Dumfries and Stafford, -	260 75 1,000 00 473 63	1,734 38	
April 1 to July 1,	William Crawford, John Tayloe, George Williams, Hazlewood Farish,	Washington and Alexandria, - Alexandria and Dumfries, - Dumfries and Stafford C. H. - Stafford C. H., Fredericksburg, &c.	260 75 1,000 00 473 63 2,229 96	3,964 34	
July 1 to Oct. 1,	William Crawford, John Tayloe, George Williams, Hazlewood Farish,	Washington City and Alexandria, - Alexandria and Dumfries, - Dumfries and Stafford C. H. - Stafford C. H. and Fredericksburg,	260 75 1,000 00 473 63 1,740 31	3,474 69	
Oct. 1 to Dec. 31,	William Crawford, John Tayloe, George Williams, Hazlewood Farish,	Washington City and Alexandria, - Alexandria and Dumfries, - Dumfries and Stafford C. H. - Stafford C. H. and Fredericksburg,	260 75 1,083 41 473 63 5,159 61	6,977 40	
		Paid for the year 1816,	-		16,150 81
		Total amount,	-		\$31,551 52

No. 12.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE, *February 10, 1821.*

SIR:

I had the honor to receive your letter of yesterday, requesting to be furnished with an authenticated copy of the contract for carrying the mail from Washington to Fredericksburg, for the years 1814, 1815, and 1816; or the original contract, which would be preferred.

In reply, I have to state that it does not appear that a duplicate of the original contract has been rendered to this office by the Postmaster General.

The only document which can be found is the copy of the contract alluded to, as furnished by the Postmaster General, which is enclosed herewith.

I also enclose a similar copy of the contract for carrying the mail from Alexandria to Dumfries, for the same years, being part of the same route.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH ANDERSON, *Comptroller.*Hon. Mr. PHELPS, *Congress.*

No. 13.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE, *January 5, 1821.*

SIR:

I had the honor to receive your letter of the 30th ult. requesting, in behalf of the committee to investigate the affairs of the Post Office Department, an official statement from this office of the following mail contracts, viz:

1. For routes Nos. 8, 15, 34, 60, 64, 130, 135, 136, 177, 178, 182, 183, 184, 185, and 186, all made in the year 1813; to be performed in 1814.
2. For routes Nos. 3, 5, 83, 89, 120, 121, 201, 209, and 226, all made in the year 1814; to be performed in 1815.
3. For routes Nos. 72, 115, 117, 118, 136, 158, 189, 218, 257, 297, 298, 309, and 316, all made in the year 1816; to be performed in 1817.

You observe, the committee also wish me to give the names of the contractors; the amount of their respective compensations; the commencement and termination of the routes; duration of the contract; amount of the lowest proposal for each route; and the name of the person or persons who made it; and to state the time when duplicates of those contracts were lodged in this office.

In reply, I have to state that, on examining the files of this office, I do not find any communication from the Postmaster General, transmitting the documents to which you have reference; but, after a long search among the boxes, containing the accounts of the Deputy Postmasters, a chest was at last found containing documents, which, although not precisely what the committee have called for, still furnish almost the whole of the information wanted: for instance, the original proposals made in 1813, for contracts to be performed in 1814, have been found, but not the copies of the contracts; the information to be obtained from which, however, is found in the list of the proposals, which shows the names of the persons to whom the contracts were given, with the prices to be allowed, as well as the prices at which other persons proposed to take the same contracts.

The original proposals made in 1814, for contracts to be performed in 1815; and those made in 1816, for contracts to be performed in 1817, have been found, except Nos. 120 and 121, for the year 1815, and No. 316, for 1817. The corresponding duplicate contracts have also been found, with the exception only of Nos. 120 and 121.

Believing that the documents themselves will give more satisfactory information to the committee than any extracts which might be made from them, I have concluded to enclose them to you, and have to request that when the committee shall have no further use for them, you will have the goodness to return them to this office.

The documents in question were found in a large box (similar to the boxes in which the Deputy Postmasters' accounts are forwarded) which had been placed in the passage of the second floor of the Treasury building; but in relation to the time when there placed, and by whom, I can give no information, having received no communication at the time from the Postmaster General on the subject, nor any intimation of their having been so placed.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH ANDERSON, *Comptroller.*The Hon. E. PHELPS, *Chairman, &c.*

No. 14.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *February 1, 1821.*

SIR:

In compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 30th ult., I have the honor to enclose a statement furnished by the Fifth Auditor, exhibiting the receipts of the General Post Office from the commencement of the year 1814, to the end of the first quarter of 1819, and the expenditure of that Department for the same period.

It appears, by the letter of that officer, which accompanies the statement, that the accounts of the General Post Office have not been rendered for settlement to a later period than the 31st of March, 1819.

I remain, with respect, your most obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. CRAWFORD.

Hon. J. CULPEPPER.

No. 15.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, FIFTH AUDITOR'S OFFICE, *February 1, 1821.*

SIR:

I have the honor to enclose, in consequence of Mr. Culpepper's letter to you of the 30th ultimo, a statement of the receipts and expenditures of the General Post Office, from the commencement of the year 1814, to the 31st March, 1819, being the latest period to which the accounts have been rendered to this office for settlement. The time when they were respectively rendered is known only with respect to the last three quarters, which is noted in the statement; no memorandum having been kept of the receipts of the preceding quarters.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your most obedient servant,

S. PLEASANTON, *Fifth Auditor of the Treasury.*

Hon. SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

Statement exhibiting the receipts and expenditures of the General Post Office, from the 1st of January, 1814, the year in which Return J. Meigs, Esq. was appointed Postmaster General, to the 31st of March, 1819.

	Balance due at the beginning of the quarter.	Gross amount of postage.	PAYMENTS FOR					Total amount.	Nett amount of postage.	Excess of expenditure.	Payments made into the Treasury by warrants, &c.	Balance due the United States at the end of the quarter.	REMARKS.
			Transportation of the mail.	Incidental expenses of the General Post Office.	Compensation to Deputy Postmasters, incl'd'g contingent expenses.	Way and ship letters.							
1814.													
First quarter,	\$313,086 88	\$176,405 26	\$121,492 07	\$2,947 97	\$56,923 64	\$ 359 61	\$181,723 29	-	\$5,318 03	\$15,000 00	\$292,768 86		
Second quarter,	292,768 85	189,293 29	116,413 77	5,465 98	57,840 05	642 83	180,362 63	\$8,930 66	-	-	301,699 51		
Third quarter,	301,699 31	184,096 33	128,819 73	4,724 85	60,102 29	517 82	194,164 69	-	10,068 36	-	291,631 15		
Fourth quarter,	291,631 15	180,639 39	108,382 56	1,099 45	50,700 45	422 93	169,605 39	11,034 00	-	-	302,665 15		
1815.													
First quarter,	302,665 15	223,611 79	127,125 13	2,966 12	70,080 80	425 86	200,597 91	23,013 88	-	-	325,679 03		
Second quarter,	325,679 03	273,537 31	107,538 55	3,160 16	58,980 58	1,539 95	171,219 24	102,318 07	-	60,000 00	367,997 10		
Third quarter,	367,997 10	270,642 22	119,650 42	2,915 67	56,640 34	1,794 15	181,000 58	89,641 64	-	75,000 00	382,638 64		
Fourth quarter,	382,638 64	273,657 53	129,607 96	1,388 45	56,160 31	2,208 27	189,364 99	84,292 54	-	66,198 43	400,732 75		
1816.													
First quarter,	400,732 75	290,479 54	128,881 87	3,032 40	59,287 57	1,777 48	192,979 32	97,500 22	-	67,000 00	431,232 97		
Second quarter,	431,232 97	215,789 03	133,551 36	4,819 56	63,646 72	2,306 09	204,323 73	11,465 30	-	-	442,698 27		
Third quarter,	442,698 27	218,056 61	128,447 95	5,562 75	64,534 32	2,103 14	200,648 16	17,408 45	-	16,700 00	443,406 72		
Fourth quarter,	443,406 72	236,402 79	134,507 45	2,435 53	69,946 53	2,044 36	208,933 87	27,468 92	-	-	470,875 64		
1817.													
First quarter,	470,875 64	240,244 88	128,434 39	4,674 59	70,693 62	1,660 45	205,463 05	34,781 83	-	19,999 50	485,657 97		
Second quarter,	485,657 97	258,592 36	144,162 70	7,606 95	75,146 55	2,335 66	229,251 86	29,340 50	-	9,272 41	505,726 06		
Third quarter,	505,726 06	254,983 23	169,306 82	7,586 10	76,729 90	2,293 72	255,915 74	-	932 51	100 00	504,693 55		
Fourth quarter,	504,693 55	247,904 52	147,846 04	2,389 16	72,806 57	2,208 17	225,249 94	22,654 58	-	14,070 00	513,278 13	\$229 26 was admitted in gross amount of postage this quarter in last statement from this office.	
1818.													
First quarter,	513,278 13	282,365 92	161,001 16	9,080 79	83,642 24	2,304 40	256,028 59	26,337 33	-	-	539,615 46		
Second quarter,	539,615 46	283,391 28	161,256 54	6,168 12	83,383 99	2,939 58	253,748 23	29,643 05	-	-	569,258 51		
Third quarter,	569,258 51	287,135 54	168,507 93	5,714 05	85,745 57	2,521 59	262,549 14	24,586 40	-	6,000 18	587,844 73	Rendered to the Treasury, May 17, 1820.	
Fourth quarter,	587,844 73	276,910 74	169,856 43	3,325 28	83,706 48	2,185 52	259,073 71	17,837 03	-	-	605,681 76	Rendered to the Treasury, Aug. 15, 1820.	
1819.													
First quarter,	605,681 76	303,831 62	157,047 40	6,651 11	90,125 48	2,197 40	256,021 39	27,810 23	-	-	653,491 99	Rendered to the Treasury, Oct. 27, 1820.	

No. 17.

Statement of the quarterly receipts and expenditures of the General Post Office, from January 1, 1814, to October 1, 1820.

January 1, 1814,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	\$71,264 94	\$189,043 70
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	117,778 76	
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	\$122,845 94	-	
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	30,000 00	-	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	36,197 76	-	189,043 70
April 1, 1814,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	36,197 76	212,883 95
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	176,686 19	
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	152,647 17	-	
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	15,000 00	-	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	45,236 78	-	212,883 95
July 1, 1814,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	45,236 78	163,762 82
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	118,526 04	
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	117,635 56	-	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	46,127 26	-	163,762 82
October 1, 1814,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	46,127 26	174,042 64
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	127,915 38	
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	152,087 21	-	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	21,955 43	-	174,042 64
January 1, 1815,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	21,955 43	138,916 27
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	116,960 84	
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	109,666 62	-	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	29,249 65	-	138,916 27
April 1, 1815,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	29,249 65	181,433 36
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	152,183 71	
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	137,968 17	-	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	43,465 19	-	181,433 36
July 1, 1815,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	43,465 19	213,175 16
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	169,709 97	
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	124,595 40	-	
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	6,000 00	-	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	28,579 76	-	213,175 16
October 1, 1815,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	28,579 76	233,169 21
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	204,589 45	
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	139,984 81	-	
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	75,000 00	-	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	18,184 40	-	233,169 21
January 1, 1816,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	18,184 40	211,952 14
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	191,229 50	
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	145,753 71	-	
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	66,198 43	-	211,952 14
April 1, 1816,	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	245,126 65	245,126 65
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	147,030 83	-	
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	75,953 60	-	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	23,142 22	-	245,126 65

No. 17—Continued.

July 1, 1816,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	\$22,142 23	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	169,762 74	\$191,904 96
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	\$151,034 95		
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	16,700 00		
	Balance on hand,	-	-	24,170 01		191,904 96
October 1, 1816,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	21,170 01	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	151,086 20	175,256 21
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	157,510 65		
	Balance on hand,	-	-	17,745 56		175,256 21
January 1, 1817,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	17,745 56	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	184,539 23	202,284 79
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	161,041 26		
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	19,999 50		
	Balance on hand,	-	-	21,244 03		202,284 79
April 1, 1817,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	21,244 03	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	178,594 61	199,838 64
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	184,755 35		
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	318 81		
	Balance on hand,	-	-	14,764 48		199,838 64
July 1, 1817,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	14,764 48	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	181,183 21	195,947 69
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	162,240 33		
	Balance on hand,	-	-	33,707 36		195,947 69
October 1, 1817,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	33,707 36	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	177,915 69	211,623 05
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	161,464 19		
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	100 00		
	Balance on hand,	-	-	50,058 86		211,623 05
January 1, 1818,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	50,058 86	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	175,715 25	225,774 11
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	170,083 05		
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	14,070 00		
	Balance on hand,	-	-	41,621 06		225,774 11
April 1, 1818,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	41,621 06	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	197,112 46	238,733 52
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	192,963 09		
	Balance on hand,	-	-	45,770 44		238,733 52
July 1, 1818,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	45,770 44	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	167,300 62	213,071 06
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	191,455 96		
	Balance on hand,	-	-	21,615 10		213,071 06
October 1, 1818,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	-	21,615 10	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	-	171,752 36	193,367 46
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	174,636 95		
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	6,000 00		
	Balance on hand,	-	-	12,730 51		193,367 46

No. 17—Continued.

January 1, 1819,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	\$12,730 51	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	212,458 26	\$225,188 77
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	\$183,770 46	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	41,418 31	225,188 77
April 1, 1819,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	41,418 31	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	205,380 02	246,798 33
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	201,874 95	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	44,923 38	246,798 33
July 1, 1819,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	44,923 38	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	222,244 77	267,168 15
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	204,019 12	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	63,149 03	267,168 15
October 1, 1819,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	63,149 03	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	191,090 67	254,239 70
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	196,786 64	
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	71 32	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	57,381 74	254,239 70
January 1, 1820,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	57,381 74	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	212,404 32	269,786 06
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	200,000 57	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	69,785 49	269,786 06
April 1, 1820,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	69,785 49	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	206,738 36	276,523 85
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	219,545 23	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	56,978 62	276,523 85
July 1, 1820,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	56,978 62	
	Amount received this quarter,	-	-	208,433 35	265,411 97
	Amount expended this quarter,	-	-	222,200 34	
	Amount paid into the Treasury,	-	-	2,000 00	
	Balance on hand,	-	-	41,211 63	265,411 97
October 1, 1820,	Cash on hand, - - - -	-	-	41,211 63	

No. 18.

CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF U. S., *January 5, 1821.*

SIR:

In answer to your note of yesterday, requiring me to state *officially* whether the Postmaster General had reported to Congress the contracts which he had made for the transportation of the mail in the year 1818, I have the honor to state that a very careful and minute examination of the records and files of my office resulted in a conviction, and I do accordingly hereby certify, that no such report has been communicated to the *House of Representatives* for that year.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your humble servant,

THOMAS DOUGHERTY, C. H. R.

Honorable ELISHA PHELPS, *Chairman Select Committee to investigate the affairs of the General Post Office.*

FEBRUARY 24, 1821.

The committee, conformably to a previous arrangement with the Postmaster General, received, on the 21st day of February instant, the following written defence.

To one remark, contained in the first paragraph of this defence, the committee would advert. It is that in which it is observed that he "was gratified to learn explicitly from the committee, at that interview, that the cases exhibited were not regarded as charges which had appeared in evidence against the Department, or on which any testimony had been taken," &c. This remark is not correct.

GENERAL POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, February 20, 1821.

To the Honorable Committee of the House of Representatives appointed to investigate the concerns of the General Post Office Department:

GENTLEMEN:

Agreeably to an understanding with the committee at my interview on Friday last, I shall now proceed to give such information and explanations, in relation to the several points proposed by the committee, as I trust will prove entirely satisfactory. I was gratified to learn explicitly from the committee, at that interview, that the cases exhibited were not regarded as charges which had appeared in evidence against the Department, or on which any testimony had been taken; but that some were facts drawn from the official documents that required an explanation to satisfy the committee of the correctness of the proceedings of the Department; and that others were rumors, in relation to which the committee desired the statement of facts.

1st. The first point is, "that the public money has been improperly expended by the Post Office Department, for transporting the mail from Washington to Fredericksburg, in the years 1814, 1815, and 1816."

A plain and simple narrative of the facts, in relation to that case, it is presumed, will fully justify the course which was taken. But, before entering upon the subject, it may not be improper to remind the committee that most of these proceedings were anterior to my official duties as Postmaster General, which commenced in April, 1814.

It appears that a contract was made by my predecessor, with a company of gentlemen, in October, 1813, to transport the mail betwixt Washington and Fredericksburg for the years 1814, 1815, and 1816, with a distinct understanding that the letter mail was to be carried through by express, on horseback, during the winter, while the roads on that route are so bad as to render it impossible for stages to move with any degree of rapidity; and that the mail containing newspapers and pamphlets, which was too heavy to be carried on horseback, should be subject to the more tardy movement of the stages, which occupied nearly two days.

It appears that, in November, 1813, after the above contract had been made, but before the performance under it commenced, the President and Secretaries of Departments thought it advisable, in consequence of the general anxiety which the war excited to obtain the earliest possible intelligence, that the whole mail, newspapers as well as letters, should be carried through by the express. This arrangement, which required much more than double the expense of carrying it agreeably to the plan at first contemplated, entirely vitiated the original contract. It could not be carried with sufficient rapidity in stages, and it was too heavy to be carried on horseback. It became necessary, therefore, to transport it in curricles; an expensive mode, but the only one practicable. After several unsuccessful attempts to have it satisfactorily performed at a low price in curricles, the Department appears to have employed an experienced agent, who purchased horses and carriages, and carried that part of it betwixt Alexandria and Dumfries on account of the Department; that being the worst part of the road, and on which no contractor would perform. An extra price was given to those who carried it on the other parts of the route, in consequence of the extra expense.

In this situation I found it when I came into the Department, in April, 1814. It remained thus until the commencement of 1815, when, finding it troublesome and expensive to transport the mail through an agent of the Department, the property employed on the route was sold, at a fair valuation, to Colonel Tayloe, and a new contract entered into with him, upon terms considerably lower than what it cost the Department while transported by its agent. It has since been advertised, and no other person has proposed to carry it at a lower rate than what was then given.

The rumors of which the honorable committee have spoken were propagated in 1816 by certain malcontents, who were then clerks in this office, when, at my own request, a committee of the House of Representatives was appointed to investigate the fiscal concerns of this Department. That committee, one of whom (the honorable Timothy Pickering) had been Postmaster General, and was perfectly acquainted with the nature of all the operations of the Department, entered fully into this case; and I would respectfully refer the honorable committee to the report then made on this point, which is contained in the following sentence:

"The facts stated in this charge (viz: 'that a contract for carrying the mail from Washington to Fredericksburg had been superseded, by order of the Postmaster General, before it expired, and about double the amount given for the same service,') are admitted to be correct, and the letter of the Postmaster General, (No. 19,) contains a satisfactory explanation of the reasons for altering the terms of the contract. Whether too much was eventually given for the service, under the changes required by the Postmaster General, is a subject not in the power of the committee to decide; nor would they be justified in presuming any misconduct in a transaction which appears to have been so fairly conducted."

2d. The second point is, "that duplicates of all contracts made by the Department, and the proposals respecting them, have not been lodged with the Comptroller of the Treasury."

To this I reply, that, since my time, they have always been regularly lodged in the office of the Comptroller before the accounts and payments relating to them have come before him for examination, so that the spirit and design of the law have been strictly complied with. The letter of the law enjoins what is found impracticable, on account of circumstances which the committee will readily perceive. The number of contracts made at one time is usually between three and four hundred, many of which are with persons at extreme parts of the Union. These contracts are prepared at the Department, and sent to them to be executed; and it often happens, from some misconception on the part of the contractor, or some explanation desired by him, or sometimes from his declining to comply with the conditions, that several communications pass betwixt him and the Department before he returns the contract, which prolongs the time considerably beyond the period specified in the law for lodging them with the Comptroller. They might, indeed, be sent to him one by one, as they are received, but that would not be a literal compliance with the law; and the depositing them together, filed alphabetically, is found much more convenient to the Department, while it furnishes superior facilities to the Comptroller for reference. This subject was regarded of so little importance by my predecessor, that, during the thirteen years of his administration, he made but two lodgments of the duplicate contracts and proposals in the office of the Comptroller. All that were omitted by him I have sent there, and all that have since been made, up to 1818. The remainder require only the formality of removing from one building to another, which will be done, as all others have been, before the accounts growing out of them shall come before the Comptroller.

3d. The third point is, "that the Postmaster General has not rendered, once in three months, to the Secretary of the Treasury, a quarterly account of all receipts and expenditures."

To this I reply, that the law which requires the Postmaster General to render his accounts once in three months, has ever been understood simply to require these accounts to be presented in regular periods of three months each, agreeably to the common rule of the Treasury transactions, and not that they shall be rendered at the close of each quarter, for the three months immediately preceding, for this would be requiring an impossibility. There are 4,669 Post Offices in the United States, the accounts from which, after the close of a quarter, are all to be forwarded to the General Post Office. When received here, they are examined and registered in quarterly accounts current, from which they are posted into ledgers. After this, these accounts current are copied into the proper form for the Treasury. Besides these, there are upwards of a thousand mail routes, on which the mails are transported, at the average rate of 27,559 miles a day, during every season of the year. The payments made to the contractors after the close of a quarter, by remittances to every part of the Union; the obtaining receipts for these payments, to accompany the accounts to the Treasury, as vouchers, necessarily occupy a considerable length of time. As only one person at a time can be employed upon the same book, and as the labor of preparing the accounts, first for the Department, and then for the Treasury, must be performed after the necessary documents have come to hand, it must be obvious that they cannot be rendered at the Treasury till long after the expiration of the term to which they relate. It appears from the documents of the office, that none of my predecessors, from the commencement of the Government, ever rendered their accounts sooner after the transaction occurred than I have done, though the extension of the Department has

increased in a ten-fold ratio. In addition to the above, it may be proper to inform the committee that this part of the business was far in arrears at the commencement of my official duties. When I came into the Department, in April, 1814, the accounts had been rendered to the Treasury only to the 30th June, 1809, being nearly five years behind. By unceasing and laborious exertions, all those arrearages have been brought up, and the whole accounts have been rendered to the Treasury up to the 1st of July, 1819, making a period of ten years prepared and rendered since April, 1814. Others are in a state of forwardness, and will be rendered long before those which are already in the Treasury Department can be gone through and adjusted there.

4th. The fourth point is, "*that the Postmaster General has not paid into the Treasury of the United States the balance due from him.*"

From conversation with the committee, I learned that this conclusion was drawn from the balance which appears against this Department on the books of the Treasury. That balance exhibits not the amount of moneys collected by the Department, but it embraces all balances due to the Department from Postmasters. The General Post Office Department is held accountable to the Treasury Department for the whole amount of postages throughout the United States; and almost the whole of the Auditor's balance remains due to this office, as will appear from the list furnished the House on the 23d of January, and for an explanation of which I would refer the committee to my letter accompanying the same. The balances have been promptly paid over as they have been collected, reserving only a sufficiency to meet such current expenses and contingencies as are daily arising; a practice sanctioned by the example of all my predecessors, and demonstrated by experience to be necessary to the successful operations of the Department. I find that the whole amount paid over to the Treasury by this Department from the organization of the Government in March, 1789, to March, 1814, a period of twenty-five years, is \$702,388 40, making an average of \$28,095 53 a year. Since I came into the Department, from March, 1814, to March, 1820, a period of six years, the different payments to the Treasury amount to \$379,411 76, making an average of \$63,235 29 a year; more than double the average for the former period. But, owing to the increased length of the mail routes, principally through new and very thinly populated regions of the country, added to the general pressure which is felt, it is very doubtful whether it will be possible, for a considerable time, in future, to collect more than will be required to pay for the transportation of the mail, or even sufficient for that purpose.

5th. The fifth point is, "*that he had loaned the public money to John G. Jackson and Benjamin Tallmadge.*"

At my interview with the committee, they informed me that no evidence of these transactions was before them, but rumor had repeated the circumstance; and a statement of facts was desired in relation thereto. This rumor appears to be a re-echo of what was brought before the committee of 1816, which committee had this subject before them; and, after a thorough investigation of the facts, embraced it in the third article of their report, to which I would also respectfully refer the committee. The transactions were anterior to my time, and I can only inform the committee of what appears to have been their nature.

I find that as early as 1806, those gentlemen, being members of Congress, frequently made collections for their constituents, principally from offices of the Government, and that it was common for them, through the Assistant Postmaster General, to remit such collections by draughts from this Department, in lieu of which he received either moneys or draughts upon places where he had occasion to make remittances to pay contractors; and as, in some instances, the draughts thus exchanged, did not exactly correspond in amount, he kept a memorandum of the difference, which, for the purpose of keeping more regularly, he transferred to the books of the office; the former in 1809, the latter in 1812. When I came into the office, I found these accounts still open, and that the balances had been always very inconsiderable, sometimes in favor of the individuals, and sometimes in favor of the Department. One of the accounts was finally closed in 1814, the other in 1816; since which time, no account has been kept with any individuals who were not connected with the Department. It was suggested also by the committee, that rumor informed them that these exchanges were made at a time when a depreciation had taken place in the currency which was received. In answer to this, I will assure the committee, that only one payment was ever made to General Jackson after the banks had stopped specie payment, and that was made in the depreciated notes of this District; and that only one payment was ever made to Colonel Tallmadge after I came into the Department, and that was made at New York, when all the banks were paying specie; and (the very reverse of a *loan*) it was in payment of a balance which was found due to him, to close his account.

6th. The sixth point is, "*that in his reports to Congress of contracts made by his Department, he has not reported them conformably to law.*"

On this point I will only remark that, as the object of the last section of the law referred to appeared to be to show to Congress whether any of the members of either House were contractors, in making the reports which it required, this point was principally kept in view; and all contracts entered into by this Department have been publicly advertised, with their dates and duration. In preparing the statements required by the law, there appears to have been an inadvertent omission of the date and duration of the contract, a circumstance in no degree surprising, amidst the great mass of business to be performed; and an omission in no degree affecting the object of the report. In all other respects, it is believed both the letter and spirit of the law have been strictly adhered to in such reports.

7th. The seventh point is, "*that he has not annually reported to Congress the contracts made by his Department.*"

To this I reply, that the contracts made by this Department have always been annually reported to Congress, except one instance, in which, owing to an accidental omission of one of the clerks, the report was not made at the time required, but the omission was subsequently discovered, and the report sent to the House.

In addition to the foregoing points, the committee asked an explanation of a difference which appears between the Fifth Auditor's statement of the Post Office accounts, and the accounts of receipts and disbursements furnished by this Department.

In relation to this, the committee will observe, that the Auditor's report states the "*gross amount of postages*" in the United States for a given time. From this *gross amount* is deducted the whole amount of Postmasters' commissions, and contingent expenses of their respective offices. The remainder constitutes the amount of balances arising in favor of the Department for that time. The report furnished from this office exhibits, not the *amount of postages*, but the *amount of payments actually made by Postmasters and received by the Department*. The difference, therefore, must always be considerable; and if it should so happen that the whole amount of balances arising in favor of the Department within a given time should be paid over to this office within that time, yet the difference between the *gross amount of postages* and the *actual receipts by the Department* would be equal to the whole amount of Postmasters' commissions and contingent expenses of their offices.

I have the honor to be, with respect, your obedient servant,

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

A.

A statement of the credits allowed *Hazlewood Farish*, mail contractor, for carrying the mail for the year 1816.

FIRST QUARTER.					
Stafford court-house to Fredericksburg,	-	-	-	-	\$473 63
Fredericksburg to Charlottesville,	-	-	-	-	600 00
Fredericksburg to Bowling Green,	-	-	-	-	816 08
For passing by Barbourville once a week,	-	-	-	-	17 50
A second mail to Barbourville,	-	-	-	-	22 75
					\$1,929 96
SECOND QUARTER.					
Stafford court-house to Fredericksburg,	-	-	-	-	473 63
Fredericksburg to Charlottesville,	-	-	-	600 00	
Additional allowance from April 1,	-	-	-	300 00	
					900 00
For passing by Barbourville once a week,	-	-	-	-	17 50
Second mail to Barbourville,	-	-	-	-	22 75
Fredericksburg to Battle's,	-	-	-	-	408 08
Battle's to Bowling Green,	-	-	-	-	408 00
					2,229 96
THIRD QUARTER.					
Stafford court-house to Fredericksburg,	-	-	-	-	473 63
Fredericksburg to Charlottesville,	-	-	-	-	900 00
Passing by Barbourville once a week,	-	-	-	-	17 50
Second mail to Barbourville,	-	-	-	-	22 75
Fredericksburg to Battle's,	-	-	-	-	146 30
Battle's to Bowling Green,	-	-	-	-	180 13
					1,740 31
FOURTH QUARTER, ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1816.					
Stafford court-house to Fredericksburg,	-	-	-	-	473 63
Fredericksburg to Charlottesville,	-	-	-	-	900 00
Passing by Barbourville,	-	-	-	-	40 25
Fredericksburg to Battle's to December 1, at \$146 30 per quarter,	-	-	-	-	97 54
Fredericksburg to Battle's, from 1st to 31st December, at \$408 08 per quarter,	-	-	-	-	136 02
Battle's to Bowling Green, to December 1, at \$180 13 per quarter,	-	-	-	-	120 09
Battle's to Bowling Green, from December 1st to 31st, at \$408 08 per quarter,	-	-	-	-	136 00
For carrying the President's mail from June 7, 1816, to Oct. 7, 1816, 122 trips, at twenty dollars each trip,	-	-	-	-	2,440 00
For allowance for carrying the mail in sulkies instead of stages, from Fredericksburg to Battle's, from July 1 to Dec. 1, 1816, at \$408 08 per quarter,	-	-	-	680 14	
Deduct already credited, same time,	-	-	-	243 84	
For similar allowance from Battle's to Bowling Green for the same period, at \$408 per quarter,	-	-	-	680 00	436 30
Deduct already credited, same time,	-	-	-	300 22	
					379 78
					5,159 61
Total amount to the credit of H. Farish, for the year 1816,	-	-	-	-	\$11,059 84

GENERAL POST OFFICE, February 27, 1821.

I certify that the foregoing is a true statement of the credits of *Hazlewood Farish*, as they stand on the books of this office, for the year 1816; and that the same was compared with the books by the honorable Mr. Culpepper, one of the members of the Committee of Investigation.

I further certify that the credit given to *Hazlewood Farish*, for the last quarter of that year was, merely for the sake of brevity, entered, in the Account Current for the Treasury, "Stafford c. h. and Fredericksburg," but was, in fact, composed of the various items, as entered in this statement, and as they stand recorded on the books of this office.

ANDREW COYLE, *Chief Clerk.*

It will be obvious to the committee that the foregoing explanation applies, with equal force and propriety, to any other quarter of the year embraced in this statement as to the fourth, (which, being the largest, was selected as the strongest case,) where all the routes on which Mr. Farish carried the mail are not enumerated on the Treasury account current. For example: In the first quarter he has credit for \$1,929 96, of which only \$473 63, (being one small item in the amount,) was credited for carrying the mail from "Stafford c. h. to Fredericksburg," whilst the balance, \$1,456 33, was credited for other routes, as appears by the statement. In the second quarter, whilst he has credit for \$2,229 96, only the sum of \$473 63, as before, was credited for the above route; and, in the third quarter, whilst he has credit for \$1,740 31, the same sum (\$473 63) was credited as before.

ANDREW COYLE, *Chief Clerk.*

B.

Transportation Dr. to Sundries for carrying the mail, viz:

To WILLIAM CRAWFORD.

1816 For carrying the mail from Washington to Alexandria:					
First quarter,	-	-	-	-	\$260 75
Second quarter,	-	-	-	-	260 75
Third quarter,	-	-	-	-	260 75
Fourth quarter,	-	-	-	-	260 75
					\$1,043 00

To JOHN TAYLOR.

1816 For carrying the mail from Alexandria to Dumfries:					
First quarter,	-	-	-	-	1,000 00
Second quarter,	-	-	-	-	1,000 00
Third quarter,	-	-	-	-	1,000 00
Fourth quarter,	-	-	-	-	1,000 00
Allowed for extra expenses at Hunting-creek bridge and Occoquan bridge,	-	-	-	-	83 41
					4,083 41

To GEORGE WILLIAMS.						
1816 For carrying the mail from Dumfries to Stafford court-house:						
First quarter,	-	-	-	-	-	\$473 63
Second quarter,	-	-	-	-	-	473 63
Third quarter,	-	-	-	-	-	473 63
Fourth quarter,	-	-	-	-	-	473 63
						\$1,894 52
To HAZLEWOOD FARISH.						
1816 For carrying the mail from Stafford court-house to Fredericksburg:						
First quarter,	-	-	-	-	-	473 63
Second quarter,	-	-	-	-	-	473 63
Third quarter,	-	-	-	-	-	473 63
Fourth quarter,	-	-	-	-	-	473 63
						1,894 52
Total amount credited in 1816 for the carriage of the mail from Washington City to Fredericksburg, in Virginia,						\$8,915 45

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *February 27, 1821.*

I certify that the foregoing is a true statement from the books of this office, and that no greater sum was paid, or any other credits given for the carriage of the mail from Washington City to Fredericksburg, during the year 1816 than those mentioned in this statement, and that the same was compared with the books by the honorable Mr. Culpepper, one of the members of the Committee of Investigation.

ANDREW COYLE, *Chief Clerk.*

GENERAL POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *February 2, 1821.*

SIR:

In obedience to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 30th November, 1820, I have the honor to report the names of those persons who were indebted to this Department on the 31st day of December, 1816, and the amount then due from each person. Also the names of those who, since that time, have become and were indebted to this Department on the 30th day of September last, and the amount then due from each person.

It will be perceived that these documents embrace all the Postmasters and late Postmasters whose accounts were not then closed, contractors and agents of every description, throughout the United States, who have any connexion with the Department.

Remarks in relation to each particular account would have been too tedious, and have occupied too much time to have permitted me to make the report in due season; but some general explanatory remarks may not be unworthy the notice of the House.

Most of these balances are against Postmasters who were in office at the time, whose accounts were still running, and continually varying. In most of these cases the balances were intentionally left, as deposits, in the hands of the Postmasters, (especially where branches of the United States Bank were not convenient,) to meet the claims of contractors which were becoming due; as this method of deposit is found more safe than to incur the risk of transmitting the money to the Department, and from the Department back to the contractors.

So far as these balances are against contractors, they are on account of payments made to them while performing the services; but the amount due to them for these services is regularly placed to their credit on the 1st of January, 1st of April, 1st of July, and 1st of October, in each year; so that when balances appear against them, as in those cases on the 30th of September and 31st of December, it should be recollected that the services, in most cases, have been actually rendered, for which they will be credited on the following days.

These lists comprise all the unsettled balances which have arisen since the first establishment of the Department, in 1789; and they, as well as the balances of all others who are no longer in office or employment, up to July 1, 1818, are stated for settlement, and payment has been called for; most of them, subsequent to that date, are in a train for collection. Seven hundred and twenty-five suits have been instituted for the collection of balances prior to the close of the last year, six hundred and eleven of which have been directed since I took charge of the Department, in March, 1814. Two hundred and twenty-six have been prosecuted to a final settlement, and four hundred and ninety-nine remain unsettled, some still pending, others passed to a judgment, and executions issued, which are in the hands of marshals for collection.

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

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

HON. JOHN W. TAYLOR, *Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

17th CONGRESS.]

No. 42.

[1st SESSION.]

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES FROM 1816 TO 1821, INCLUSIVE.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 28, 1822.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *February 25, 1822.*

SIR:

Conformable to the directions of a resolution of the House of Representatives, passed the 24th of January, 1822, I communicate the statement therein required.