

[17th Congress.]

No. 43.

[1st Session.]

**COMPENSATION TO DEPUTIES AND MAIL AGENTS—EFFECT OF STEAMBOATS ON THE REVENUE OF THE POST OFFICE.**

[COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXPENDITURES OF THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, FEBRUARY 28, 1822.]

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *February* —, 1822.

SIR:

I have the honor to enclose a list of the Post Offices, where the amount of compensation exceeds two thousand dollars a year, together with copies of the statements\* of the expenditures of the several Postmasters, as furnished by themselves, so far as they have been received.

Also the amount paid to the several mail agents for the last three years. This includes their pay and travelling expenses. The latter varies, of course, according to the time occupied in travelling. Their employment ceased last autumn.

These are the two statements required by your letter of the 26th ultimo.

In reply to your second question, I have to state, that letters by steamboats are charged with the same rates of postage as those conveyed by land, according to distance. The officers of the boats, it is believed, are generally fair in delivering over the letters which come into their possession; but more persons travel in those boats in consequence of the greater economy and convenience of steamboats, than would do in the land stages. Most of the passengers are charged with letters, and in that way only the product of postages is diminished by the establishment of steamboats. There is no law prohibiting passengers from carrying letters, and the difficulty of effectually enforcing a prohibition, it is believed, has hitherto prevented it. If it could be enforced, there is no doubt but it would occasion a great increase of postages. It would be equitable to make such an arrangement where the expense is gone into of providing posts for the public accommodation; and it appears to me that the experiment ought to be tried at this time, when there is such a great defalcation in the produce of postages. If it should be found, on experience, so difficult of enforcement as to be of little advantage, it can be repealed.

In reply to your third question, I would remark, that some of the larger offices receive actually more than is really necessary at this time; that is, it is believed they employ more clerks than are necessary; and at the last session of Congress it was proposed, but not decided on by Congress, to reduce the rate of commission allowed to Postmasters, that is the commission of eight per cent. to four per cent.; and that for distribution, for all sums over two thousand dollars, from five per cent. to three per cent.; and the allowance for free letters from two cents to one cent each. According to the estimate then made, this regulation would leave to all of them a sufficient allowance for clerk-hire, provided they assisted personally in their offices. Although this would produce not more, probably, than fourteen thousand dollars a year, it is of consideration in the deficient state of our resources. I do not, at present, think of any other reduction that would be useful, and this one it is proposed to communicate to the Committee on the Post Office, who have made a similar inquiry.

A further reduction of the rate of fifty per cent. to forty-five per cent., and of thirty per cent. to twenty-five per cent., would make a saving of nearly six thousand six hundred dollars a year, and has also been proposed to the Post Office Committee.

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

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

Hon. GEORGE DENNISON,

*Chairman of the Committee on the Expenditure of the General Post Office.*

\* These statements, being imperfect, have been withheld from publication.

*A list of Postmasters whose receipts amount in gross to \$2,000 and upwards, from October 1st, 1819, to October 1st, 1820.*

No.	Names of Postmasters.	Post Office.	Gross am't of commissions.	Number of clerks.	Pay of clerks.	Office rent.	Fuel and light.	Other expenses.	Nett compensation.
1	Sol. Southwick, -	Albany, New York.	\$5,881 98	5*	\$2,950 00	\$662 50	\$253 24	\$388 80†	\$1,627 44
2	James Fraser, -	Augusta, Georgia, -	3,335 19	2	1,450 00	500 00	50 00	15 00	1,320 19
3	John S. Skinner, -	Baltimore, Md. -	4,986 83	3	2,222 50	700 00	125 00	310 00‡	1,629 33
4	Aaron Hill, -	Boston, Mass. -	5,158 94	6	2,781 00	300 00	104 75	164 68‡	1,808 51
5	Thos. W. Bacot, -	Charleston, S. C. -	3,888 68	4	2,200 00	†	†	100 00	1,588 68
6	Jonathan Law, -	Hartford, Conn. -	3,469 47	2	1,046 27	100 00	70 31	34 27	2,000 00
7	John T. Gray, -	Louisville, Ky. -	2,438 66	1	532 00	200 00	18 00	-	1,688 66
8	Robert B. Curry, -	Nashville, Tenn. -	3,564 00	3	972 93	360 00	80 00	16 26	2,000 00
9	Theo. Bailey, -	New York city. -	8,968 73	8	5,900 00	1,000 00	145 00	261 97‡	1,661 76
10	Thos. B. Johnson, -	New Orleans, Lou.	4,175 84	3	1,860 00	720 00	24 00	150 00	1,421 84
11	Thomas Shore, -	Petersburg, Va. -	3,543 79	2*	1,030 00	200 00	170 00	145 00‡	1,998 79
12	Richard Bache, -	Philadelphia, Penn.	8,440 63	8	4,607 64	1,200 00	261 63	359 00‡	2,000 00
13	John Johnson, -	Pittsburg, Penn. -	2,671 21	2	1,100 00	250 00	45 00	-	1,276 21
14	Robert Ilsley, -	Portland, Maine. -	2,334 40	3	675 00	80 00	50 22	7 12	1,522 05
15	Gabriel Allen, -	Providence, R. I. -	2,419 20	2	700 00	200 00	24 00	17 00	1,478 20
16	William Murphy, -	Washington, Ky. -	2,995 48	4	740 00	100 00	62 00	15 00	2,000 00
17	Thomas Munroe, -	Washington City, -	8,920 12	5	5,830 00	-	413 62	700 93‡	1,975 57
18	John McRae, -	Fayetteville, N. C.	3,038 84	3	700 00	350 00	120 00	40 00	1,828 84

\* One occasional.

† Stationary, candles, porter, &amp;c.

‡ Including a porter.

*A list of Postmasters whose compensations amount in gross to \$2,000 and over; from October 1, 1820, to September 30, 1821.*

No.	Names of Postmasters.	Post Office.	Amount of compensation.	No. of clerks.	Pay of clerks.	Rent.	Fuel and light.	Other expenses.	Nett compensation.
1	Solomon Southwick,	Albany, N. Y. -	\$5,390 93						
2	Daniel Bryan,	Alexandria, D. C. -							
3	James Fraser,	Angusta, Geo. -	3,209 90	2	\$1,500 00	\$400 00	\$65 00	-	\$1,244 90
4	J. S. Skinner,	Baltimore, Md. -	4,617 28						
5	Aaron Hill,	Boston, Mass. -	5,169 41	6	2,825 66	300 00	94 30	\$67 72	1,881 74
6	T. W. Bacot,	Charleston, S. C. -	3,768 07	5	2,700 00	-	-	100 00	968 07
7	Jonathan Law,	Hartford, Conn. -	3,321 50	2	999 07	100 00	72 07	32 47	2,000 00
8	J. T. Gray,	Louisville, Ky. -	2,350 31						
9	R. B. Curry,	Nashville, Tenn. -	3,191 13	2	1,034 00	360 00	63 50	15 93	1,717 70
10	T. B. Johnson,	New Orleans, Lou. -	4,000 14	3	1,860 00	720 00	124 00	-	1,296 14
11	Theo. Bailey,	New York city, -	8,505 28	8	5,320 00	800 00	145 00	205 00	2,000 00
12	John Johnson,	Pittsburg, Penn. -	2,331 10						
13	Thomas Shore,	Petersburg, Va. -	3,376 21	3	907 00	300 00	100 00	275 00	1,794 21
14	Richard Bache,	Philadelphia, Penn. -	7,706 86	7	4,236 44	1,200 00	217 00	242 38	1,811 04
15	Robert Ilsley,	Portland, Maine, -	2,277 90	3	675 00	80 00	47 25	7 01	1,468 64
16	Gabriel Allen,	Providence, R. I. -	2,382 02	2	813 00	-	-	-	1,569 02
17	William Foushee,	Richmond, Va. -	2,822 87	3	1,680 00	250 00	70 00	30 00	792 87
18	Eleazer Early,	Savannah, Geo. -	2,928 43	2	900 00	600 00	45 50	18 25	1,364 68
19	William Murphy,	Washington, Ky. -	2,519 12	3	694 00	100 00	70 00	16 00	1,639 12
20	Thomas Munroe,	Washington City, -	8,195 20	5	5,275 00	-	353 75	615 42	1,951 03

*Statement of payments made to the following persons, as agents to the General Post Office Department, viz:*

1. Chester Bailey, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 1, 1818, to October 1, 1821, three years, at \$800 is	\$2,400
His account for travelling expenses during the above period, has not been rendered, but he states it will amount to \$400 per annum, -	1,200
	\$3,600 00
2. Ebenezer Backus, Athens, Pennsylvania, October 1, 1818, to October 1, 1821,	- 3,690 52
3. Samuel Hoyt, Port Gibson, Mississippi, do. do.	- 4,801 62
4. Abraham B. Lindsley, Vincennes, Indiana, do. do.	- 5,564 49
5. John P. Neal, Postmaster, Huntsville, Alabama, ninety-three days, at \$6 per day,	- 558 00
6. Charles Bell, Washington City, October 1, 1818, to October 1, 1821,	- 1,508 35
7. James Abbott, Detroit, Michigan Territory, do. do.	- 834 75
8. William Brazier, Postmaster, Edgefield court-house, S. C. April 1, 1819, to Oct. 1, 1821,	- 250 00
	<u>\$20,807 73</u>

## SECURITY OF THE MAILS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 18, 1822.

Mr. BATEMAN, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom was referred a resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 11th of February, directing an inquiry "into the practicability of facilitating the means of discovering thefts, destruction of, or opening, or mutilating letters committed by Deputy Postmasters, their agents, and mail contractors; and also into the propriety of enacting severer and other penalties against those who may be convicted of such offences," reported, in part:

That they consider the safe transportation of the public mails a desideratum of the utmost importance, and that the robberies of late is matter of serious regret and alarm, calling imperatively for a corrective. The committee believe, if this could be effected, it would go far to check the other evils adverted to in the resolution. Impressed with these sentiments, they have carefully examined the model of a new plan invented by Richard Inlay, by which it is proposed to substitute for the leathern bags now in use copper cases, secured in iron chests by inside locks and sliding bars, in such a manner as to render it extremely difficult, and, in the opinion of the committee, necessarily a work of several hours to effect a robbery, and which in no case can be done without much hammering and noise. The first cost of these cases will probably be greater than the bags; but on account of their durability, they have no doubt but that, on the score of economy, the cases are to be preferred.

The committee think the plan at any rate worth a full and fair experiment, and therefore submit the following resolution:

*Resolved.* That the Postmaster General be directed to introduce, as soon as conveniently may be, on one or more of the most exposed routes, Richard Inlay's plan of copper cases, secured in iron chests with inside locks and sliding bars, in such a way as to test its efficacy in preventing robberies of the mail, provided the extra expense for each mail carriage shall not exceed one hundred and fifty dollars; and to charge the cost thereof to the contingent expenses of the Post Office Department.