

From St. Stephen's to Natchez the distance is 247 miles. A slow mail, once a week, is established on this road. For a tri-weekly quick mail it would cost \$28 a mile, additional; equal, for a year, to \$6,492.

On the whole, the establishment of a quick mail, three times a week, from Milledgeville to Natchez, would cost \$13,166, additional; and, if it commences at Fredericksburg, Virginia, it would probably cost more than \$30,000, additional.

The committee will permit me to remark that the post roads have been increased so rapidly within a few years past, that the expenses of the establishment exceed the produce, and there has been great difficulty in collecting money sufficiently fast to meet the demands upon the office. Congress, at the last session, established 6,366 miles of new post road, and discontinued 620 miles of old, leaving an increase of 5,746 miles. These routes went into operation on the first day of this year, and could not have been paid if the prices of a number of old contracts, which expired with the last year, had not been considerably reduced. With that reduction the Department may probably meet its engagements the current year; but it is quite impossible that it can be done if any further expenditure is made, either by the establishment of new routes or increase upon the old ones. And, if any is thought necessary by the committee, it is to be hoped they will say in what manner the expenditure is to be provided for.

I am, with great esteem,

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

The Hon. MONTFORT STOKES,
Chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads.

18th CONGRESS.]

No. 50.

[1st SESSION.]

NUMBER OF DISTRIBUTING OFFICES.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DECEMBER 24, 1823.

SIR: POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, December 24, 1823.

In obedience to a resolution of the House of Representatives of the United States, passed on the 16th of December instant, directing the "Postmaster General to lay before the House a list of the Post Offices designated 'distributing offices,' in the several States and Territories; also, the duties required to be performed by Deputy Postmasters at such offices, with the regulations adopted for securing a direct conveyance to letters, &c. destined for offices on intermediate post routes," I have the honor to report, that there are forty-eight distributing Post Offices in the United States and Territories, viz:

Abingdon, Va.	Cumberland Gap, Ten.	Nashville, Ten.	Salem, N. C.
Albany, N. Y.	Easton, Pa.	Natchez, Mis.	Savannah, Geo.
Ashville, N. C.	Edenton, N. C.	New York, N. Y.	Sharon, Con.
Athens, Pa.	Erie, Pa.	Norfolk, Va.	Shawneetown, Illi.
Augusta, Geo.	Fayetteville, N. C.	Northampton, Mass.	Stamford, Con.
Baltimore, Md.	Gallipolis, O.	Petersburg, Va.	Walpole, N. H.
Bennington, Vt.	Hanover, N. H.	Pittsburg, Pa.	Washington, D. C.
Brattleborough, Vt.	Hartford, Con.	Portland, Me.	Washington, Ken.
Buffalo, N. Y.	Huntsville, Ala.	Portsmouth, N. H.	Wilmington, Del.
Chambersburg, Pa.	Louisville, Ken.	Philadelphia, Pa.	Winchester, Va.
Chillicothe, O.	Marietta, O.	Providence, R. I.	Windsor, Vt.
Creek Agency, Geo.	Middlebury, Vt.	St. Stephen's, Ala.	Wheeling, Va.

Postmasters of distributing offices are required to open all mails which are directed to the State in which their offices are situated, and give the proper direction to each letter.

All letters destined to places beyond the next distributing office are carefully enclosed in a strong envelope, and directed, so as to be conveyed, on the most direct route, to their places of destination. These are placed in a portmanteau, which is called the principal mail bag, which is opened and examined only at the distributing offices. An account is kept at the distributing offices of all the letters forwarded, and they are accompanied by post bills, in which are stated the charges for postage. Letters which are to be delivered at the offices between the distributing offices, are placed in a separate portmanteau, called the way-bag, which is opened and examined by the Postmasters of the intermediate offices.

To give greater security to the principal mails, locks, entirely different from those used on the way-bags, will be placed on the portmanteaus containing the principal mails, so that they can only be opened, without violence, at the distributing offices.

Respectfully submitted.

JOHN McLEAN.

Hon. H. CLAY, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

18th CONGRESS.]

No. 51.

[1st SESSION.]

COMPENSATION OF POSTMASTERS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 27, 1824.

SIR: POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, January 24, 1824.

In obedience to a resolution of the House of Representatives of the United States, at their last session, which "directed the Postmaster General to report, at an early period of the next session of Congress, what further measures are necessary to provide for a more equitable compensation to Deputy Postmasters, according to the duties and services rendered by them," I have the honor to report, that the present mode of compensating Deputy Postmasters,