

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,

by giving them a graduated per cent. upon moneys received by them, is believed to be, in most cases, the most equitable that can be adopted. So far as this compensation extends, it is generally proportioned to the labor required, and the responsibility incurred.

Deputy Postmasters, with a few exceptions, receive less for their services than any other officers of the General Government. But as competent persons, to discharge the duties of Postmasters, have been found willing to serve, in every part of the country, and as the present embarrassment of this Department requires the utmost economy in its expenditures, it is believed that the public interest would not, at this time, be promoted by a general increase of their compensation. A small addition of pay to each Postmaster would afford but little benefit to the individual, whilst it would take from the receipts of the Department an amount so considerable as to render an appropriation from the Treasury indispensable. There are, however, some Post Offices where the labor is great, and the perquisites so small, that, unless some additional compensation be given, it is feared competent persons cannot long be found to discharge the duties.

I have endeavored, though unsuccessfully, to fix upon some rule, which would give additional compensation, where it seems to be indispensable, without extending the provision so far as to render the amount objectionable. It is believed that no provision can be made, embracing a class of cases, so as to give an increase of pay, in the just proportion which the services require.

There are several hundred offices, at which packages are distributed, for which no additional compensation is given. In some cases this duty is very laborious, whilst the perquisites of the offices are very small. An increased per cent. upon the moneys received by each, would not graduate the pay in proportion to the service required, as, at some offices, which receive not more than one hundred and fifty dollars, this service is as laborious as at others where more than a thousand dollars are received. If, in such cases, an increase of ten per cent. were given, the compensation to some would be more than six times greater than to others.

More than seventy offices distribute packages after ten o'clock at night, and before five in the morning. Postmasters who discharge this duty are entitled to consideration, not only on account of the labor which they perform, but the unseasonable hours in which they are required to perform it. But, in these cases, an additional per cent. on the moneys received would not do equal justice, as the disproportion of compensation for similar services would be as great as above stated.

A specific sum given to each Postmaster for this service would not compensate in proportion to the labor performed, as the labor at some offices is ten times greater than at others.

If the means of the Department would authorize the measure, an increase of pay to Postmasters, who separate packages, and to some others, would be neither unjust nor impolitic; but, at present, it seems to be necessary to confine any provision for an increase within very narrow limits.

On a full consideration of the subject, it is believed that a special provision, in each case, where an increase of pay shall be deemed indispensable, can be made with more justice to the Postmaster, and less injury to the revenue of the Department, than any other mode which can be adopted.

Which is respectfully submitted,

JOHN McLEAN.

Hon. HENRY CLAY, *Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

18th CONGRESS.]

No. 52.

[1st Session.]

REMISSION OF A PENALTY.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 26, 1824.

Mr. McKEAN made the following report:

The Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom was referred the petition of Henry Lightner, have had the same under consideration, and have come to the following report:

The petitioner states that he was appointed Postmaster at Landisburg, in Pennsylvania, about the year 1812, and that he resigned the office in 1815; that he believed he had fully paid all arrearages due and owing the Government, and under that impression suffered his receipts and other papers to be lost and destroyed; that, in August last, two judgments were rendered against him in the United States district court, at Philadelphia, one for \$20 75, and the other for \$150: the first being for arrearages claimed, which, on account of the loss of his papers, he could not disprove; and the latter for penalty, for not making his return according to law. He states the village was small, and the business of the office but trifling; he prays to be relieved from the penalty, having paid the arrearages.

The Postmaster General states that the petitioner was appointed in 1812, and made his quarterly returns, at irregular periods, to the 1st April, 1814, after which he never made any; that the accounts, thus failed to be rendered, were estimated, and he was called on for payment, and refused; the estimate was doubled, and suit brought. He states the amount of debt and penalty to be

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$180 33
And the amount of the penalty to be	-	-	-	-	-	-	85 00

\$265 33

The committee, under all the circumstances of the case, have come to the conclusion to remit the penalty, on the payment of the principal; and herewith report a bill to that effect.