

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

And the amount of the penalty to be	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$180 33
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	85 00
								\$95 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.