

On the 1st July, 1823, balances were due from contractors, postmasters, and late postmasters, amounting to	-	-	-	-	\$391,994 59
There was due to contractors, for services rendered prior to that time, which should be deducted, the sum of	-	-	-	\$26,548 64	
Amount of debts since ascertained to be bad,	-	-	-	27,814 24	
Suits pending, and judgments, amounting to	-	-	-	149,500 00	
Estimated amount of balances, composing a part of the debt above stated, which have been adjusted by credits, -	-	-	-	30,000 00	
					<u>233,862 88</u>
					\$158,131 71
From this sum deduct the amount of expenditures over the receipts for the year ending 1st July, 1824,					<u>12,387 35</u>
					\$145,744 36
Amount of receipts above the expenditures for the year ending 1st July, 1825,	-	-	-	45,476 90	
Excess of receipts over expenditures for last year, -	-	-	-	79,100 61	
					<u>\$270,321 87</u>

This sum is subject to the order of the Department.

As the means of the Department are ample to meet all its engagements, and any reasonable amount of additional expenditure which Congress may think proper to authorize, by the establishment of new routes, it is desirable that its contingent expenses and the salaries of its officers should be paid out of its own funds, and the Treasury be released from the usual appropriations for that purpose.

Fifty thousand dollars might be saved annually by the discontinuance of unproductive post routes.

Under the law passed at the last session of Congress, requiring the mail routes from Columbus, in Mississippi, to Doake's, and from Chatahoochie, in Georgia, to Line creek, in Alabama, to be repaired, contracts have been made, and the work commenced.

19th CONGRESS.]

No. 64.

[2d SESSION.]

## SALARY OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, JANUARY 11, 1827.

Mr. JOHNSON, of Kentucky, made the following report:

The Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom was referred the resolution of the Senate instructing them to examine into the expediency of increasing the salary of the Postmaster General, have maturely examined the subject, and submit, as the result of their reflections, the following report:

No argument is presumed to be necessary to establish the position, that, in a Government constituted like ours, for the benefit of the people, compensation should be given with a reference to the labor and responsibility of the office, and the requisite capacity to fill it.

It may be assumed as a principle of sound policy, that, where the duties of an office are important, and require talents and industry to discharge them, such a compensation should be paid as to command the services of the person who possesses the best qualifications.

And when the whole time of an individual is devoted to the public, in the performance of most responsible duties, he should be relieved from pecuniary sacrifices, by a provision which, economically expended, would afford him a competency. A compensation less than this will fail to secure, for any considerable length of time, the services of an efficient officer. He may have other calls, of a character too imperious to be disregarded, and to which all the motives of a laudable ambition must yield.

The best talents can only be engaged in the public service by extending competition for employment to the poor as well as to the rich. An inadequate salary is a proscription of the former, and throws political power into the hands of the latter.

In examining this subject, the committee have referred to the labor required of the Postmaster General, to the responsibilities which belong to his office, and the talents which its duties require. They have compared these with the duties performed and compensation received by other officers of the Government, and have been brought to the conclusion that to increase the salary of the Postmaster General would be an act of justice to him and to the public.

In the operations of the Post Office Department, about twenty thousand agents are employed. All the other branches of the Executive Government, including the army and navy, fall short of this number. The dispersion of this force into every neighborhood of the Union must add to the labor of controlling it; and as all its acts come under the public inspection, and are immediately connected with their interests, the most unceasing diligence is necessary to give public satisfaction.

The responsibility of the Postmaster General is great. He disburses, at his discretion, about \$1,000,000 annually, for the conveyance of the mail; and to postmasters, who are appointed by him, near \$500,000.

The correspondence of the General Post Office, it is ascertained, amounts to about six hundred communications daily, including all received and sent. Between six and seven thousand postmasters make quarterly returns, which are all examined; and payment is made quarterly to between two and three thousand contractors.

The Postmaster General makes from five to ten appointments daily, besides investigating numerous charges against postmasters and contractors, and deciding many legal questions which arise under the post office law. He is required daily to judge of the expediency of giving additional accommodations applied for, and to correspond on almost numberless topics connected with his Department. Whether the committee consider the labor required of him, the great responsibility of the office, or the talents he should possess, they are brought to the decision that his compensation should be equal to that of any other head of a Department.

There is no officer of the Government in whose labors the people have a deeper interest. On the regularity and safety of the mail, all branches of business, in a greater or less degree, depend. To its custody is annually committed no small share of the active capital of the country. When to this view is added the dissemination of intelligence into every village and thickly populated neighborhood of the Union, an accurate opinion may be formed of the vital interest which the people have in an energetic administration of this Department.

The Postmaster General now receives less compensation, it is believed, in proportion to his arduous duties, than is paid to any other officer of the Government.

In recommending the above increase of salary, the committee consider only what is due to the office. If they were to refer to the present incumbent, and review his administration, the justice of the proposed measure would not

be weakened. As appears from his late report, since the 1st July, 1823, the date of his connexion with the Department, there has been ingrafted on the establishment an amount of revenue, and accommodation in post offices and transportation of the mail, greater than the entire mail establishment in the Union in 1800. This is an increase unparalleled in the annals of the Department, and shows what industry and capacity may accomplish in this important branch of the public service. It is proposed to relieve the Treasury from the appropriations usually made to pay the officers of this Department, and that the same shall be drawn from its own funds. Should this suggestion be adopted, the salary of the Postmaster General, and his assistants and clerks, and the contingent fund, will no longer be a charge on the Treasury.

The great amount of additional mail accommodation and revenue is not the only advantage which the public have derived from a vigilant administration of the Department. There is a degree of regularity and energy in all its operations, which is highly beneficial to the country.

When the committee consider the rapid increase of this Department, the great responsibility of its head, the talents and labor required to manage its concerns, and the interest which all classes of the community have in its faithful administration, a sense of duty requires them to recommend that \$2,000 be added to the present salary of the Postmaster General; and they report a bill containing such a provision.

[19th CONGRESS.]

No. 65.

[2d SESSION.]

## MONEY STOLEN FROM A DEPUTY POSTMASTER.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, JANUARY 19, 1827.

Mr. JOHNSON, of Kentucky, made the following report:

The Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom was referred the bill for the relief of Nathaniel Patten, reported:

That the petitioner sets forth that he was postmaster in the town of Franklin, in the State of Missouri, in and about the year 1820; in which year a considerable sum of money, amounting to about \$800, received for postage, accumulated upon his hands, and remained undrawn for, although he rendered his accounts regularly at the end of each quarter; that he kept the said money carefully, in a small trunk, which was enclosed in a large one, and placed in the room in which he slept; and that on the night of November 2, 1820, the room was entered by some thief or thieves, and the small trunk taken out of the large one, and carried away with its contents, and afterwards found in the woods, cut open, and rifled of the money which it had contained. This petition is supported by the sworn affidavit of the petitioner, and the like sworn affidavits of several witnesses, whose character and respectability are amply vouched for, and in some instances known to the committee, testifying to the good character of the petitioner for honesty, sobriety, prudence, and careful attention to business; stating, moreover, that he is hard of hearing, or considerably deaf; and detailing circumstances connected with the robbery which induce them to believe that it took place as stated. His case is further supported by a written statement, drawn up and signed on the spot, a few days after the robbery, by twelve of the principal inhabitants of the place; among whom may be named two gentlemen of high character, then in the service of the United States, to wit, General Thomas A. Smith, receiver of public money, and Charles Carroll, Esq., of Bellevue, register of the land office; in which they all voluntarily bear witness to the integrity of the petitioner's character, his careful habits, and declare their full belief that the robbery was committed upon him as stated.

Upon this evidence the committee consider the facts as satisfactorily proven that the petitioner exercised due care and diligence in keeping the aforesaid amount of money collected for postages; that he [was robbed] of the same as stated; and that, upon principles of equity, and the practice of Congress, especially in the case of John Hall, [vol. 6, p. 335, of the Laws of the United States,] he is entitled to relief. They therefore return to the Senate, without amendment, the bill which has been referred to them for his relief, and recommend that the same may be passed into a law.

[19th CONGRESS.]

No. 66.

[2d SESSION.]

## TRANSFER OF CONTRACTS, AND THE COST OF TRANSPORTING THE MAIL ON CERTAIN ROUTES.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 28, 1827.

SIR:

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *February 27, 1827.*

In obedience to a resolution of the House of Representatives passed on the 23d instant, directing the Postmaster General to "inform the House whether the printer or editor of any newspaper in the District of Columbia was, or is, a party to any contract or contracts; and, if any assignment of such contract has been made, a copy of such assignment; and that he state to whom, and in what way, the money has been, or is to be, paid by the Department; and, also, inform the House of the sums now paid for carrying the mail between Washington City and Vincennes, Indiana, *via* Wheeling, Virginia, and Lexington, Kentucky, specifying how much is paid to each of the contractors for conveying the mail on said route; the distance carried by each contractor; and the amount paid, and to whom; stating how often per week, and what additional compensation is made to any contractor beyond the sum stipulated in the original contract;" I have the honor to state that, in December, 1823, Duff Green, then of Missouri, but now of this city, and who is editor of a paper called the "United States Telegraph," entered into three contracts, he being the lowest bidder, for the conveyance of the mail in small stages, one trip weekly, from St. Louis to Franklin, a distance of one hundred and seventy-six miles; and thence, on horseback, to Clay court-house, one hundred and nineteen miles.