

20th Congress.]

No. 71.

[1st Session.

POSTAGE ON PAMPHLETS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, ON THE 3D OF APRIL, 1828.

SIR:

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *April 1, 1828.*

I do not know what was the object of the committee of the House of Representatives in reporting the enclosed bill, which provides "that all pamphlets transmitted by mail, under the direction of the State authorities, for the use of schools, shall be charged with the same rates of postage that are now charged upon periodical pamphlets," except what its language imports. The superintendent of public schools for Maryland distributed a large number of circulars through the mail last year, for which letter postage was charged. These circulars were not published in pamphlet form; and if the object of the bill be to exempt such papers from letter postage, the provision will be found inadequate. By the construction which has been given by the Department to the law regulating the postage on periodical pamphlets, they are called periodical if published annually or more frequently. If the committee be desirous of exempting from letter postage all communications by a public agent on the subject of public schools, the provisions of the bill should specify that object; but it is presumed they did not intend to make this exemption.

I know of no objection to the bill, though it will introduce no new principle, from the construction now given to the law, as regulating the postage on pamphlets published annually.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

JOHN McLEAN.

HON. RICHARD M. JOHNSON, *Chairman, &c.*

20th Congress.]

No. 72.

[2d Session.

CONDITION OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

COMMUNICATED TO CONGRESS, BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, DECEMBER 2, 1828.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *November 17, 1828.*

The Postmaster General has the honor to submit to the President of the United States the following statement, showing the gradual increase and present condition of the Post Office Department:

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|------------|-----|---------|----------------------|
| In 1792 there were | 195 | post offices, | a revenue of | \$67,444, | and | 5,642 | miles of post roads. |
| In 1797 do. | 554 | do. | do. | 213,998, | and | 16,180 | do. |
| In 1802 do. | 1,114 | do. | do. | 327,045, | and | 25,315 | do. |
| In 1807 do. | 1,848 | do. | do. | 478,763, | and | 33,755 | do. |
| In 1812 do. | 2,610 | do. | do. | 649,208, | and | 39,378 | do. |
| In 1817 do. | 3,459 | do. | do. | 1,002,973, | and | 52,089 | do. |
| In 1823, ending 1st July, | 4,498 | do. | do. | 1,114,344, | and | 82,763 | do. |
| In 1828 do. | 7,651 | do. | do. | 1,598,134, | and | 114,536 | do. |

The above exhibit shows an augmentation of annual revenue within five years, ending 1st July, 1823, of \$483,790; a sum exceeding by \$18,655 a similar increase for eleven years preceding 1823, and falling short only \$165,418 of being equal to the total revenue of the Department in 1812.

Within the same time there have been established 3,153 additional post offices, being a greater number than was in operation in the United States in the year 1815.

From the most accurate calculation that can be made for the year ending 1st July, 1823, the mail was transported in stages four million four hundred and eighty-nine thousand seven hundred and forty-four miles, and on horseback five million five hundred and eleven thousand four hundred and ninety-six miles, making a total transportation of ten million one hundred thousand two hundred and forty miles annually. Since that period, there has been added a transportation of one million nine hundred and forty-nine thousand eight hundred and fifty miles annually in stages, and on horseback one million six hundred and fifty-eight thousand nine hundred and forty-nine miles; making an increase of three million six hundred and eight thousand eight hundred and forty-nine miles, which adds two hundred and seventy-five thousand and fifty-three miles (more than one-third) to the mail establishment of the country in 1823. And the augmented stage conveyance falls short only two hundred and ninety-five thousand and twenty-two miles of being equal to one-half the entire stage transportation in the Union at that time.

This extension of the mail has been accompanied by great increase of expedition on almost all the important routes. On many of them it is now conveyed at the rate of one hundred miles a day.

As Congress at their last session declined making any appropriation of the surplus funds of the Department, with the expectation, as was believed, that they should be applied in diffusing mail facilities throughout the Union, and increasing them where required by the public interest, an augmentation to the conveyance of the mail of five hundred and thirty-seven thousand two hundred and sixty-four miles in stages, and two hundred and sixty-one thousand seven hundred and four miles on horseback, making a total of seven hundred and ninety-eight thousand nine hundred and sixty miles, has been made the past year. This, with the additional compensation to postmasters, arising from increased receipts, the accumulation of free letters, for which two cents each are paid, and incidental expenses, has added to the expenditures of the Department, within the year, the sum of \$250,094 46. The augmented revenue of the Department since 1st July, 1823, has been sufficient to meet the annual expense incurred by the increase of mail facilities, and leaves the sum of \$187,302 52 unexpended.

It is believed to be good policy to keep the funds of the Department actively employed in extending its operations until the reasonable wants of every community shall be supplied. By withdrawing mail accommodations from all unproductive routes, and substituting a horse for a stage transportation on many others, a very large surplus of funds would annually accumulate; but the public convenience would be greatly lessened, and the means of information withheld from districts of country but sparsely inhabited. There is no branch of the Government in whose operations the people feel a more lively interest than in those of this Department; its facilities being felt in the various transactions of business, in the pleasures of correspondence, and the general diffusion of information. In the course of every year no inconsiderable amount of the active capital of the country, in some form or other, passes through the