

REPORT

FROM

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *December 5, 1840.*

SIR: I submit a report, showing the service of this department the past year, its present condition, and future prospects.

The extent of the post-routes in the United States covered by mail service, on the 30th June last, as near as can be ascertained, was 155,739 miles.

The annual transportation on these routes, at the rate existing on the 30th day of June last, was about 36,370,776 miles.

The annual cost of transportation, estimated at the rate of pay existing at the close of the year, was \$3,296,876, viz:

	Miles.	Cost.
By horse and sulkey - . . .	- 12,182,445	\$789,668
By stage and coach - . . .	- 20,299,278	1,911,855
By steamboat and railroad - . . .	- 3,889,053	595,353
Total - . . .	- 36,370,776	\$3,296,876

In addition to this service, the mails by steamboats and other vessels, under the 5th and 6th sections of the act of 1825, are estimated to have cost, the last year, about \$9,000; and there has been paid for ship and way letters about \$26,000.

The resolution of Congress of May 14, 1835, authorized the Postmaster General to extend the term of the then existing contracts for six months, so as to have them terminate on the 30th of June, instead of the last of December. In pursuance of this authority, the contracts which would have expired with the present year were extended to the 30th June, 1841; in consequence of which, the lettings that would otherwise have fallen into the year 1840 will not take place until the spring of 1841. The advertisement for this service has been prepared, and will soon be published.

The new routes, amounting to about seven hundred, established by the act of the 7th July, 1838, have been put into operation during the past year, and have made considerable addition to the expenditure for the transportation service. This extension, with the belief that the usual increase of revenue would not be realized, has indicated a policy of retrenchment rather than general improvement; but, since I took charge of the department, some improvements have been effected on some of the most important routes, which the public interest seemed to demand, and where little additional expense was incurred. I have also executed contracts for additional service on a few railroad and steamboat routes, where retrenchments could be made on other routes nearly equivalent to the new liabilities assumed. These

changes have given some additional expedition to the great north and south mail as well as to several large mails connecting with it at important points.

The number of contractors in the service during the last year was about 2,100. The number who have been fined, or had deductions made from their pay for delinquencies in the performance of their engagements, is 628. The fines and deductions, during the year, exclusive of the remissions, amount to \$60,685 60.

In general, the transportation service has been performed faithfully, and in a commendable spirit of energy, perseverance, and devotion to the public interest. The obstacles which, for a time, occasioned irregularities in the large mail south of this city, it is believed, have been removed.

The number of post offices on the 1st day of July, 1838, was 12,519; the number on the 30th day of June, 1839, was 12,780; on the same day of the present year, the number was 13,438; showing an increase, during the year, of 688. There have been established, during the year, 959 post offices; and 271 discontinued. The number this day is 13,638. There have been, during the year, 3,231 postmasters appointed, of whom 959 were for new offices.

The revenue of the department, for the year ending June 30, 1840, as appears from the settlement of the accounts of postmasters in the Auditor's office, was—

Letter postage	-	-	-	-	\$4,003,776 07
Newspapers and pamphlets	-	-	-	-	535,229 61
Fines paid to postmasters for violations of law	-	-	-	-	260 00
					<hr/>
					4,539,265 68

The expenditures of the department for the same period were—

For compensation to postmasters	-	\$1,028,925 92
For wrapping-paper, office furniture, advertising, mail-bags, mail locks and keys, and stamps, mail depredations and special agents, blanks, clerks for offices, and miscellaneous	-	441,778 96
For ship, steamboat, and way letters	-	35,410 81
For transportation	-	3,252,995 16
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		4,759,110 85
Excess of expenditures	-	<hr/> <hr/> \$219,845 17

The revenue, as compared with the preceding year, shows an increase of \$61,651 64, being a fraction over one per cent.

The average annual increase of revenue from 1832 to 1839, inclusive, has been about 10 per cent. But as this period includes the two years ending June 30, 1837, of extraordinary augmentation of revenue, amounting to 15 per cent. the first year, and 20 per cent. the second, ten per cent. is considerably above the ordinary annual increase, which may be estimated at about 6 per centum. The decline in the revenue, therefore, the past year, may be estimated at about 5 per cent., or \$225,000.

Statement of the revenue and expenditures of the Post Office Department for the eleven years ending 30th June, 1839.

Year ending	Revenue.	Expenditure.
June 30, 1829	\$1,707,418 42	\$1,782,132 57
1830	1,850,583 10	1,932,707 95
1831	1,997,811 54	1,936,122 87
1832	2,258,570 17	2,266,171 66
1833	2,617,011 88	2,930,414 87
1834	2,823,749 34	2,910,605 08
1835	2,993,556 66	2,757,350 08
1836	3,408,323 59	2,841,766 36
1837	4,100,605 43	3,303,428 03
1838	4,235,077 97	4,421,837 16
1839	4,477,614 04	4,654,718 42

From this tabular statement, it appears that while the expenditures of the department have been steadily advancing, with few exceptions, its revenues have been very fluctuating, varying from a mere nominal increase to an advance of 20 per cent. in a single year.

The extension of the mail service, and the advance in the population and business of the country, are the causes of the ordinary increase in the revenue. But temporary and extraordinary circumstances often counteract these more permanent sources of increase, so far as to prevent any material advance. This has been the case the past year; during which a combination of causes has operated to impair the revenue of the department to nearly the extent of the average annual increase.

But the present unfavorable condition of the finances of the department is not wholly to be attributed to the *decline* of the revenue the past year; it is, in part, the result of the too sudden and large extension of the service during the years 1837, 1838, and 1839, occasioned by the extraordinary surplus which accrued in 1836 and 1837. This surplus, on the 30th June, 1836, was \$641,842.

The Postmaster General, in his annual report of that year, recommended a reduction of the rates of postage. Congress did not sanction that measure; but, by the act of the 2d July, 1836, established about seven hundred new post routes, which it became the duty of the department to put into operation. The action on this subject by Congress was considered as indicating its desire that the surplus which had accrued, and which might accrue, should be expended in providing additional mail accommodations. The causes which had produced the above surplus on the 30th June, 1836, continued to operate during the remainder of that year, and a part of the year 1837; and as the new contracts did not go into operation until after the 1st February, 1837, the revenue continued to exceed the expenditure; and, on the 30th June, 1837, the surplus amounted to \$756,208. During the session following, Congress, by the act of the 7th of July, 1838, established about seven hundred additional routes, which were to be put in operation on the 1st July, 1839, or before, if the revenues of the department would justify it. The second section of the same act provides "that every railroad within the limits of the United States, that now is, or may hereafter be, made, shall be a post-route; and the Postmaster General shall cause the mail to be transported thereon, provided he can have it done on reason-

able terms, and not paying therefor, in any instance, more than 25 per centum over and above what similar transportation would cost in post-coaches."

The very liberal construction given to this act by the Postmaster General, favorable to the interests of the railroad companies, did not satisfy the spirit of cupidity which belongs to corporate monopolies; and it was found impracticable to obtain contracts from several of the railroad companies. And Congress, by the act of 25th January, 1839, extended the maximum rate of compensation for railroad service to three hundred dollars per mile.

The new routes established by the act of 7th of July, 1838, were mostly put into service in 1839; and contracts have been made for service on the railroads then in existence, and most of those which have since been completed, at rates of compensation varying from twenty-five to three hundred per cent. above what had been paid for coach service on the same routes. In England, the average rate of compensation for railroad service is about ninety dollars per mile; and the highest sum paid on the most important routes is one hundred and seven dollars per mile; and the contractors are required to convey mails as often, and at such times, as may be ordered by the Postmaster General. Here, with a rate of compensation nearly two hundred per cent. higher, it has been found impracticable, on many of the routes, to obtain that control over the time of the departure and delivery of the mail, which is so essential to the service, and is exercised on other routes. In addition to the compensation paid to the railroad companies, there are considerable incidental expenses incurred for traveling agents on the more important routes, for conveying the mail to and from the cars at the ends of the routes, and for supplying intermediate offices, not on the line of the roads. The substitution of railroad for coach service has borne very heavily on the revenues of the department.

The new routes established in 1836 and 1838, being, many of them, in sections of the country where the roads are bad and the settlements sparse, have yielded an income bearing but a small proportion to the expense of the transportation.

This great extension of the service, and the substitution of a higher and more expensive for a cheaper grade, under the acts of Congress referred to, and the improvements on other routes, which the public interests seemed to demand, since 1836, have carried the expenditures of the department, for three successive years, beyond its accruing revenue.

In the year ending on the 30th June, 1838, the expenditures were	\$4,621,837 00
The revenue which accrued was	4,235,077 00
Excess of expenditure over the revenue	<u>\$386,760 00</u>
The expenditures in the year ending June 30, 1839, were	\$4,654,718 00
The revenue which accrued was	4,477,614 00
Excess of expenditure	<u>\$177,104 00</u>

The excess of the expenditures for these two years was met by the surplus funds which had accumulated in 1837, and nearly exhausted all that surplus which was available.

In the annual report of my predecessor, made in December, 1838, he

says: "The general financial disasters of last year have not reduced the revenue, as might have been expected; but have prevented most of the anticipated increase, and thrown the department upon its surplus, to sustain most of its extensions. The indications now are, that there will be a slight improvement in the revenue of the current fiscal year, over the preceding; but not enough to produce any material effect. An advance somewhat greater may be reasonably expected next year, but not great enough to meet the increasing cost of mail service, and put into operation the new routes established at the last session of Congress. It will hence be seen that, for more than a year to come, the curtailment, rather than the extension, of service on routes now in operation, is to be expected."

The anticipated increase during the year 1839 was realized, and amounted to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., producing \$241,560. But the greater increase looked for in 1840 has essentially failed; and the quarter ending 30th of September last exhibits an actual declension in the revenue, as compared with the corresponding quarter of last year, of about 5 per cent. This unfavorable result has been occasioned mainly by the second suspension of the banks, in a large section of the Union, followed by a general depression of the commercial interests of the country; which appears to have been apprehended at the close of the last year, as the Postmaster General then said: "It is possible that the recent suspension of specie payments by the banks, in a large portion of the Union, may again check the increase in the revenue of the department, so as to make retrenchments necessary; but, in any event, they will be inconsiderable."

But the present apparently unfavorable financial condition of the department need occasion no anxiety. It can be sustained upon its own resources, and soon placed in a safe and prosperous condition. Yet, to afford it temporary relief, curtailments of service, to a limited extent, are necessary. This has already been commenced, and will be continued as far as may be found requisite to place its finances in a sound condition. The curtailments, or suspensions of service, will be made so as to occasion as little inconvenience to the public, or injustice to the contractors, as such an operation will admit of. As periodical retrenchments are unavoidable, it deserves consideration whether it would not be wise for Congress to prescribe some rule by which all general curtailments are to be effected, so as to remove executive discretion, and secure an equal apportionment of the reduction of service among the different sections of the country.

In examining the causes which have placed the department in its present condition, we discover its resources, and its ability not only to sustain itself, but probably, with the aid of some remedial legislation, to admit of a prospective reduction of the tariff of letter postage, which public sentiment seems to demand.

These causes are to be found in the unexampled fluctuations, since 1834, in the financial interests and commercial business of the country. The period of unprecedented overaction in trade, from the fall of 1834 to the spring of 1837, occasioned an extraordinary increase of revenue, which produced the large surplus that existed in 1836 and 1837. This surplus formed the basis of the great extension of the mail service since 1836, which so far exceeded the limits to which it could have been carried by the ordinary increase of revenue, as to absorb nearly the whole of this surplus in two years. When the reaction came on, which, under any circumstances, would have depressed its revenues, the department had to sus-

tain itself with an extent of service beyond its natural limits; which had originated from the extraordinary increase of its revenues in 1836 and 1837. But the unusual increase of revenue over the expenditures during those two years, was not entirely owing to the great activity of trade. The contracts for transportation, during that period, had mostly been made when prices were low, and the revenue accruing from their performance was received when prices had advanced from fifty to one hundred per cent. The department, therefore, enjoyed the advantages of an excited state of business, without the drawback which, under other circumstances, the advance in prices would have occasioned.

On the other hand, the excess of the expenditures over the receipts for postages the last three years is not more to be attributed to the depression of the revenue from the state of the times, than to the circumstance that all the existing contracts were made during the high state of prices, and at an average advance of about fifty per cent. above the rate of compensation paid prior to 1836,

Should prices not vary essentially from their present standard, it is reasonable to suppose that the future lettings can be made at greatly reduced rates of compensation. This is an important resource, which in a few years, without any retrenchment of service, could hardly fail of placing the finances of the department in a prosperous condition. But it cannot be made immediately available; so that a suspension or curtailment of service, to a limited extent, becomes necessary.

The restoration of commercial activity, so confidently anticipated, may reasonably be calculated to produce a considerable improvement during the two last quarters of the current fiscal year, and a much greater increase the next year.

With a reasonable expectation of a reduction in the expenses of the transportation, and nearly a certainty of a considerable increase in its revenues, the future prospects of the department are highly satisfactory.

The present is a peculiar crisis in its financial affairs, resulting from the operation of causes which I have endeavored partially to explain, and which are not likely, in the same degree at least, again to occur.

There are other causes, of a more limited influence, which have contributed to impair the revenue the past year. The greatly enhanced expense of the transportation of the mail on railroads is not the only way in which they affect the revenues of this department. The great facilities which they afford for the transmission of letters and newspapers out of the mail, have evidently diminished the receipts from postage. This is proved by the sudden falling off of the revenue at points where these facilities have recently been provided. Information has also been received from the agents of the department, showing that letters, packets, and newspapers were extensively conveyed out of the mail, on the railroad and steamboat lines, and on many of the stage and coach routes. So far as these practices are detrimental to the income of the department, were believed to be in violation of law, I endeavored to suppress them; regarding it as my highest duty to enforce the laws. And, in respect to letters conveyed by carriers and drivers, those efforts, it is believed, have been generally effectual; but there is no prohibition against persons conveying letters and packets, who may pass over mail-routes in the same vehicle which transports the mail; and the railroads afford great facilities for sending letters in this way.

For fifteen years preceding the introduction of the new system in Eng-

land, the postage tax had rather declined, notwithstanding the increase of population and business. This was by many ascribed to the high rate of the tax, but the better and more prevailing opinion attributes it to the numerous railroads which have gone into operation.

The practice of carrying newspapers out of the mail, without having secured the privilege in the contract, I found to be so general that it could not be suppressed without great inconvenience to the public; and, as the ambiguity of the law admitted of doubts in regard to the restriction, I concluded that I should best discharge my duty by permitting these practices to continue, and leave it for Congress either to remove the prohibition, or to make the law more explicit for its enforcement. As it is probable that the enforcement of the prohibition would have the effect of stopping the carrying of newspapers on the mail-routes, rather than causing them to be conveyed in the mail, it would seem both just and politic to abolish the restriction entirely.

Another source of detriment to the revenue, the past year, has been the exercise and abuse of the franking privilege to an unprecedented extent. During the last three quarters, the free matter constituted a very large portion of the entire mails. As the contracts had been made without reference to this extraordinary addition to the bulk and weight of the mails, the burden of the transportation was thrown upon the contractors. The free matter is not only conveyed without compensation, but the department is subjected to the charge of two cents for every free letter or sealed packet delivered at offices where the postmaster's commissions do not exceed five hundred dollars per quarter. At some offices, this allowance to the postmaster has absorbed his whole quarterly balance.

The books of the department furnish no data for determining the number of free packets conveyed in the mail, as a large portion of them are not entered on the post-bills. At the post office in this city an account was taken of the number and weight of free letters and packets during three weeks ending the 2d day of May, the 2d day of June, and the 7th day of July last. There were 22,038 free letters and packets from the executive departments; 20,363 free letters from members of Congress; and 392,268 public documents and other franked packets: making in all 434,669. The public documents and packets from Congress, exclusive of the letters, weighed 32,689 pounds—nearly sixteen and a half tons. Taking this as the average of the session of thirty-three weeks, it would appear that the free letters and packets sent from the office in this city during the late session of Congress amounted to 4,781,359; and the two cents allowed to postmasters for the delivery of free letters would be \$95,627. This is probably above the average of the session; and the two cents are not paid at offices where the postmaster's commissions exceed five hundred dollars per quarter.

It may be estimated that there has been abstracted from the revenue, the past year, in the allowance of the two cents to postmasters for the delivery of free letters and packets, and the two cents paid for advertising free letters, the sum of \$151,000.

And there are facts that have come to the knowledge of the department, which show that great abuses have been practiced by those enjoying the privilege, in the highest as well as the lowest stations, in covering the correspondence of others, to the great injury of its revenue. This and other abuses of the privilege appear to be rapidly increasing, and imperiously de-

mand a remedy, either by its entire abolition, or such restrictions upon it as could be enforced by the department.

The provision in the act of 1825, allowing two cents to postmasters on free letters, should be abolished, as it is unreasonable that those enjoying an exclusive privilege should derive a revenue from the same privilege possessed by others. Postmasters might be properly restricted, in sending and receiving free letters, to their own offices. It is in the nature of all exclusive privileges to run into abuse; and hence we find that, of the twelve acts of Congress relating to the franking privilege of its members and officers, all, with one exception, have served to enlarge the right.

The collection and disbursement of the revenues have been conducted with success and convenience by the agents of the department, with little trouble to them, and without charge upon its means. The act of the 4th July last has occasioned no material change in the financial system of this department, except substituting the receivers general for the postmasters, at some important points, as the depositories of its funds. But the penal provisions of the act, which make the using or loaning the public moneys a conversion and embezzlement of them, and punishable as a criminal offence, are applicable to postmasters, and cannot fail of having a salutary influence in promoting prompt payment of the quarterly balances, (of which there has been great improvement the last few years, (and in preventing defalcations.

The revision of the tariff of postage, with the view to reduction and convenience, has, for some years past, attracted the public attention, and, on several occasions, been brought under the consideration of Congress, without any definite action. At the second session of the twenty-fifth Congress, the House of Representatives adopted resolutions calling on the Postmaster General to state "what, in his opinion, would be the effect, on the revenues of the department, of the establishment of the following tariff of postages on letters: On letters conveyed 80 miles and under, five cents; over 80 miles, and not exceeding 200, ten cents; over 200, and not exceeding 400, fifteen cents; over 400 miles, twenty cents: and to state what other tariff, (fixing the rates in federal money, and having in view the greatest reduction consistent with the necessary means of the department,) if any, in his judgment, would be more just than the above. And that he also state what alterations, if any, may be made in the present rates of postage on newspapers, pamphlets, and periodicals, so as to promote the circulation of information, without detriment to the revenues of the department."

It is supposed that this resolution, in connexion with the prevailing interest then felt in the success of the experiment making in England by what is called the penny system, induced the late Postmaster General to commission George Plitt, Esq., one of the special agents of this department, to visit Europe for the purpose of collecting such information concerning the new system in England, and the mail establishments in other European countries, as might conduce to the improvement of our own system.

Mr. Plitt left the United States on this special service in June, 1839, and returned in August last. The results of his inquiries are contained in the report prepared by him, which is herewith submitted. It contains extensive details, tending to show the condition and management of the mail establishment in several of the most important countries in Europe, and many interesting facts and valuable suggestions for the improvement of the system in the United States. Many of the reforms and improvements suggest-

ed are deserving of consideration. It will be seen that he recommends an entire change in our tariff of postage, and to have all mail matter taxed by weight—letters not weighing over half an ounce to be rated at five cents for any distance less than 500 miles, and ten cents over that distance; and the same rates for every additional half ounce when pre-paid, and double those rates when not pre-paid. As such a change would give great relief, not only to the commercial interest, but to the whole community, it is to be regretted that neither the present condition nor future prospects of the establishment seem to justify so great a reduction in the postage tax.

It is apparent that no essential change in the rates of postage should be made without great consideration. The post office establishment is different from any other branch of the public service. It is a fundamental principle in its organization, that it is to be sustained by its own revenues. This principle not only avoids any charge upon the Treasury, but serves to limit and regulate the action of the department. Should its expenses, in whole or in part, be thrown upon the Treasury, even for a single year, it might be difficult to return to the present principle; and such are the temptations to enlarge the circle of its action, that it would not be easy to prescribe any reasonable limit to it. And such a change in the principle of the department, embracing, as it does, such a vast extent of private interests, both in number and amount, would open a door to extensive abuses, wasteful to the public revenue, extending its patronage, and at the same time removing the checks upon it which now exist. Without enlarging on this point, it is believed that no one will be disposed, either partially or temporarily, to throw the department for its support on the National Treasury.

Any sudden and material reduction of its revenue, therefore, would render it necessary to make a corresponding curtailment of the mail service, which all must see would be attended with the most serious inconvenience to the whole community. And as the present revenue, with the reasonable increase that may be anticipated, is barely sufficient to support the department with the existing service, and such necessary improvements and extensions as will be required, it is evident that there can be no reduction of its aggregate revenues.

The question, therefore, of the reduction of its revenue, is excluded from consideration; and the only matter for inquiry is, whether the same amount of revenue can be collected with the proposed or any other reduced rates of postage? There may be cases, in every branch of indirect taxation, in which the reduction of the tax will increase the amount of revenue; but this result can only be realized when the duty is so exorbitantly high as to either occasion gross evasions of the law, or to check the business on which the tax falls. And although the reduction of the rate of postage would increase correspondence, there is, in my judgment, no reason to believe that the addition of revenue from that source would equal the loss from the reduction of the rates. The experiment now making in England appears to afford little support to a contrary opinion, for, if unofficial information can be relied upon, the revenue there has fallen off more than 50 per cent., or about 840,000 pounds sterling, upon a revenue of less than 2,000,000.

Shall we, then, be forced to the conclusion that the present high rates of letter postage are to be permanently maintained?

This would seem to be the case, unless there be a change in the system, by which the expense of the transportation may be reduced, the correspondence increased, and the postage on newspapers and printed matter be

equalized and raised. All these objects are practicable, and their united influence would probably admit of a greater reduction in the rates of letter postage than is proposed in the resolution of the House of Representatives.

Such a reform in the system, in my judgment, is demanded by views of public policy, and the higher considerations of private justice. The institutions of this country are based on the principles of justice and equal rights; and any legislation, and more especially any system of taxation, which is a manifest violation of those principles, can only be sustained by the forbearance of public opinion in subjecting it to that test by which all public measures must stand or fall.

A slight examination of our tariff of postage, in comparison with the expense of the mail establishment, is sufficient to show its manifest injustice.

The quarterly returns of postmasters furnish no data for determining the relative proportions of the different kinds of matter conveyed in the mail. During one week in the month of June, 1838, an account was taken of the number and weight of the letters, and the weight of the newspapers and other printed matter received to be conveyed in the mail, at the offices in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington city, and Richmond. The tabular statement containing these facts is herewith submitted. There were some omissions, and, no doubt, some inaccuracies in the process; but the results are sufficiently correct for the present purpose.

The whole weight was 55,241 pounds: of which, 44,468 pounds consisted of newspapers; 8,837 of periodicals and pamphlets; more than five-eighths of which being public documents, or other free packets, deposited in the office at Washington city; and the letters, both taxable and free, amounted to only 1,922 pounds—being something less than four per cent. The proportion of printed matter received at these offices, and especially during the session of Congress, may have been something greater than that of the whole mails in the United States.

It will not be far from the truth to estimate the printed matter as constituting ninety-five per cent. of the whole mails, whilst it pays but about twelve per cent. of the whole gross revenue, and but about eight per cent. of the net revenue; the commissions on the postage from newspapers and pamphlets being more than on that from letters.

In the transportation, constituting the principal expenditure of the establishment, there are three main elements of price:

1. The bulk and weight of the mail;
2. The expedition with which it is conveyed;
3. The mode of conveyance, when not controlled by the bulk and weight of the mail, but in reference to accommodating the public travel.

As the expense of expedition depends mainly on the weight of the mail, these two elements of price are, essentially, resolved into one; so that the expense of transportation depends on the bulk and weight of the mail, and the mode of conveyance, where it has reference to the public travel, and is of a higher and more expensive grade than the mail service would require.

The services of postmasters depend on the amount of mail-matter, the number of packets which are received, distributed, or delivered, at their respective offices. But the letters, being made up into mails, require some more labor than the newspaper and other packages not sent in that form.

From this analysis, it is apparent that nearly the whole expenditure of the mail establishment is thrown upon correspondence; it pays the whole expense of the free matter, the greater portion of that of newspapers, peri-

odicals, and pamphlets, and the entire additional expense incurred for accommodating the public travel.

With all these burdens, not properly belonging to it, thrown upon correspondence, the high rate of postage on letters cannot be surprising; nor can it be reduced, and keep up the present extent of the mail service, with the improvements and additions which will be required, without some portion of those burdens are removed by a change in the system.

Nothing can be more apparent than the palpable injustice of our present system of postage tariff.

The objections against a high protective tariff on importations apply with still more force to our tariff of postages, both in respect to principle and the degree of injustice. In the former, the whole community are indirectly taxed for the benefit of a particular class, and the whole interests of the country are burdened to relieve a particular interest; but, the tax being indirect, those on whom it falls may, in some way, derive an incidental advantage from it. This, at least, is contended by its advocates. The postage tariff is a direct tax upon one man, for the benefit of another; a direct burden on one class, for the relief of another class.

What principle of justice or public policy can sustain a law which taxes a correspondent in New York, who has occasion to send a letter by mail to New Orleans, two hundred and fifty per cent. more than the service is worth, or costs, to enable a subscriber in New York to a newspaper in New Orleans to have it conveyed to him by mail eighty-eight per cent. less than the actual cost of the service? And what adds to this injustice is the fact that the mail establishment is a Government monopoly, which, by prohibiting private posts, compels the correspondent to send his letter by the public conveyance.

Our system of postage tariff was derived from England, where postage was a tax for revenue analogous to the stamp-tax, as, like that, it was a tax on business. Here, it is not a tax; but in the nature of freight, or a charge for the service performed. The injustice, therefore, is much greater where the postage is levied, not for revenue, but for defraying the expense of the mail service.

The low rates of postage on newspapers and other printed matter originated in considerations of public policy, and were designed to promote the general dissemination of intelligence among the people. But the reasons for this policy, if admitted ever to have been just, have in a great measure ceased to exist. When the mail establishment was first organized, printing was confined to the large cities, and there were few other channels of conveying newspapers but the mail. Now, there are printing establishments in almost every village; and railroads, steamboats, and other lines of communication, afford cheap and convenient channels for conveying newspapers and other publications, the greater portion of which are distributed among the people without the agency of the mail.

With the view to remove many of the growing evils of the mail establishment, and to secure the reduction of letter postage, I respectfully propose a change in the system, on the following bases:

1. The entire abolition of the franking privilege, as an exclusive personal right, with the exception of the Executive and the heads of departments.
2. A limitation by law of the maximum rate of compensation for all steamboat, railroad, and coach service.
3. The equalization of postage on newspapers and other printed matter, with an advance of one hundred per cent.

4. A revision of the tariff of letter postage, with a reduction of twenty-five per cent.

The effect of the first of these changes would be to greatly diminish the bulk and weight of the mails, and to increase the postage. Probably two-thirds of the mail matter now going free would be excluded, and what remained would be charged with postage; and the two cents paid for the delivery of free packets would be saved.

The newspapers received by printers in exchange might be exempted from postage, with a limitation by law of the number. Letters addressed to a postmaster exclusively on the business of his office, it might be reasonable to except from the postage tax; and also all letters written by postmasters exclusively on official business, provided they are unsealed, (except when addressed to another postmaster or agent of the department,) so that the office of delivery may be enabled to decide whether the letter is legally and properly entitled to go free. The postage on letters received by members of Congress might be paid from the contingent fund of the two Houses, and on those sent by them during the session, limited to a certain number daily; or such limited number per day, sufficient for their official correspondence, might be permitted to go free of postage; and public documents, printed by order of either House of Congress, to possess the privilege they now do, when sent by a member, with his certificate that they are public documents.

Such a modification of their privilege would relieve members of Congress from much correspondence very burdensome to them, and, in general, of very little public utility. It would tend to arrest the concentration at the seat of Government of those influences which, for some time past, appear to have directed and controlled the politics of the country, and to add to that stimulus which aggravates political excitements. The unlimited extent of the franking privilege is among the causes which have produced the centralization of political influence, by enabling it to exert its power, with a view to a definite purpose, over the country.

The effect of the second change would be to reduce the expense of transportation, and on many routes to substitute a lower and cheaper grade of service, as wagon, sulkey, or horse, in the place of stage or coach service.

The effect of equalizing and raising the postage on newspapers and other printed matter, would be to diminish the bulk and weight of the mails, and increase that branch of the revenue about one hundred per cent.

The revision of the tariff of letter postage on the basis of a reduction of twenty-five per cent. would increase correspondence, yet add little to the bulk or weight of the mails; and the postage on the additional letters conveyed would supply, in part, the loss to the revenue from the reduction on the rates.

The effect of the whole would be to lighten the mails, and render their bulk and weight more uniform; to cheapen the transportation, and secure more regularity in the service; and, by reducing the tax on correspondence, relieve the commercial interest, and benefit the whole community.

The tariff of postage on newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets, is almost as unequal and unjust as the comparative rates of postage upon letters and printed matter. This inequality and injustice have arisen from the great changes which have taken place in the manufacture of paper, whereby the former distinctions as to dimensions have been lost, and a corresponding change in the forms of publications introduced.

All newspapers now pay the same postage, although some are ten times the dimensions and weight of others. This is not only unjust to those who pay the tax, but equally so to the publishers. It gives an undue advantage to the large establishments in the commercial cities over the penny papers in the same places, and over the country newspapers, which are more removed from sinister influences, and, in general, are the most independent channels of sound public opinion. There seems no good reason for the difference in postage between periodical and non-periodical pamphlets; and the distinction, in fact, is often difficult to determine. By the present law, all printed matter, except newspapers, is taxed by the sheet; and, from the change in the forms of publications, the postage is not, and cannot be, collected with any uniformity, from the difficulty experienced by postmasters in classing the various publications. Sixteen pages of octavo, or twenty-four of duodecimo, constitute a sheet, although it is often nearly impracticable to distinguish between them.

To remove all these difficulties, and to establish a uniform rate of postage on printed matter, the best rule would be to tax it by weight. But if there should be objections to so great a change, newspapers could be divided into three classes, according to their dimensions, on the plan recommended by the late Postmaster General in his annual report in 1836. To tax other printed matter by weight, it is believed there can be no objection. Whether the other more important reforms which have been recommended be effected or not, the tariff of postage on newspapers and printed matter urgently demands a radical revision. The advance on the postage of newspapers and other printed matter, although regarded as eminently just, is not deemed indispensable to the object in view; as a revision and equalization of the tariff, taking a common-sized newspaper of about 550 square inches as the basis, would make a large addition to this branch of the revenue of the department.

The tariff of letter postage proposed in the resolution of the House of Representatives would occasion a reduction in that branch of the revenue, without reference to the increase of letters, of from twenty to twenty-five per cent. This reduction, therefore, would amount to about \$900,000. The increase of revenue, from the modification and restriction of the franking privilege, may be estimated at \$250,000; and that from an increase of correspondence, at an equal sum. The saving in the transportation cannot well be estimated; but it would no doubt amount to several hundred thousand dollars. The increase of gross revenue from postages on newspapers and other printed matter, with the advance on the postage as proposed, would probably amount to \$500,000. Without the advance, the revision and equalization might be estimated to produce half that sum.

These changes in the establishment could therefore be made not only with safety to its finances, but they could hardly fail of placing them in a more flourishing condition.

The full benefit of these improvements could not be realized under four years; that period being requisite to enable all the contracts to be made with reference to them.

It may be deemed an inauspicious time, when the finances of the department are low, to revise the tariff of postages on the basis of a reduction. It is believed, however, that it can be most safely and judiciously done at such a period. If attempted when the revenue is rapidly increasing, the new tariff would unavoidably be, in some degree, based on a state of revenue

which would be found to be only temporary. But, from the present condition of the finances, it would be necessary to postpone the reduced tariff of letter postage until the 1st of July, 1842. And, by the other changes taking effect immediately, less retrenchments would be required, and the finances of the department placed in a prosperous condition at the period the new tariff was to go into operation.

These changes in the system, when their benefit shall have been fully realized, with such improvements as will naturally suggest themselves, it is confidently believed will admit of a still further reduction of the rates of letter postage, and ultimately bring them down fifty per cent.

The great inconvenience in the transaction of its business, to which, for several years, this department has been subjected, for the want of a public building adapted to its uses, and the constant exposure of its books and papers, will soon be removed by the completion of the building now erecting for it. I have adopted such measures as were within my control to protect the present building and public property from fire. The building now erecting for the Post Office Department, if the contractors do not obtain from Congress a further extension of the time for the performance of their contracts, will be fit for occupation in the course of the ensuing autumn.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN M. NILES.

To the *PRESIDENT of the United States.*

Table of mail service for the year preceding July 1, 1840, as exhibited by the contract arrangements in operation at the close of the year.

States and Territories.	Length of routes.	ANNUAL TRANSPORTATION AND COST.						Total transportation.	Total cost.
		Horse and sulkey.		Stage and coach.		Railroad and steamboat.			
		Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.		
Maine	4,010	276,016	114,747	767,104	878,727	-	-	1,043,132	893,474
New Hampshire	2,873	134,090	6,196	821,725	64,310	-	-	955,815	70,506
Vermont	2,552	106,493	5,045	685,342	55,868	-	-	792,235	60,903
Massachusetts	4,075	140,192	8,580	1,296,032	107,061	396,604	834,139	1,832,899	149,790
Rhode Island	444	6,240	472	119,986	9,182	64,844	3,115	191,070	12,769
Connecticut	2,499	130,416	6,631	661,040	44,278	169,608	10,887	961,064	61,796
New York	14,598	1,102,106	63,101	3,203,060	261,135	619,160	73,308	4,924,326	397,544
New Jersey	1,962	123,552	5,929	364,024	19,536	125,428	22,265	613,604	47,730
Pennsylvania	11,092	949,584	44,706	2,036,823	149,885	275,461	40,521	3,261,808	235,112
Delaware	423	34,440	1,625	83,408	4,751	27,179	8,743	145,427	15,319
Maryland	2,339	266,482	16,852	259,790	44,546	249,845	55,992	776,117	117,390
Virginia	12,028	1,072,504	54,743	961,382	86,223	344,936	47,412	2,378,822	184,378
North Carolina	7,390	567,638	31,631	755,259	71,748	283,608	44,467	1,597,104	147,446
South Carolina	4,779	317,599	27,293	561,353	73,778	155,064	36,945	1,033,946	138,016
Georgia	6,285	490,090	35,001	860,620	103,475	145,392	31,150	1,406,102	171,626
Florida	1,772	90,688	10,271	75,416	15,476	99,424	18,840	265,528	44,587
Ohio	11,528	942,836	44,988	1,496,103	127,717	105,908	9,262	2,544,447	181,967
Michigan	3,627	322,434	19,366	296,920	22,578	104,794	6,074	796,139	49,018
Indiana	7,870	640,003	38,400	765,622	61,692	55,692	6,714	1,461,316	107,206
Illinois	9,805	578,877	44,180	1,107,392	112,774	73,788	9,097	1,760,057	166,051
Wisconsin	1,718	152,728	13,461	64,898	6,456	-	-	217,624	19,917
Iowa	949	90,008	7,333	3,224	4,012	-	-	119,232	11,345
Missouri	5,775	468,469	32,398	308,360	36,113	10,556	1,905	787,364	70,416
Kentucky	6,927	592,742	31,909	796,308	64,914	121,938	16,792	1,510,988	113,615
Tennessee	8,597	685,490	35,772	771,378	71,432	25,336	4,571	1,482,204	111,775
Alabama	7,902	592,668	52,656	728,000	120,631	106,194	42,878	1,426,682	216,135
Mississippi	5,286	624,330	61,670	268,216	56,591	101,338	16,839	997,884	135,100
Arkansas	3,616	370,916	36,118	140,192	31,917	63,336	11,429	574,444	79,464
Louisiana	2,419	318,084	37,994	13,104	3,689	159,640	42,008	490,828	83,091
Total	155,739	12,192,445	799,668	90,899,978	1,911,855	3,889,053	595,353	26,370,776	3,294,876

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[1]

Condensed statement of mail-matter sent from the post offices at New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D. C., and Richmond, Va., for one week.

[1]

LETTERS CHARGED WITH POSTAGE.				FREE LETTERS.		FREE PAMPHLETS.	PAMPHLETS.	NEWSPAPERS.	TOTAL.
Offices.	Week ending	Number.	Weight.	Number.	Weight.	Weight.	Weight.	Weight.	Weight of mail-matter.
			Pounds oz.		Pounds oz.	Pounds oz.	Pounds oz.	Pounds.	Pounds.
New York - - -	1898, June 13	42,734	792 7	1,407	111 4	31 8	1,644 0	16,642	19,221½
Philadelphia (1) - -	June 17	20,193	357 8	981	30 3½	7 0	2,020 4	18,433½	20,844½
Baltimore (2) - - -	June 13	9,776	186 0	420	20 0	4 0	-	2,510	2,720
Washington, D. C. (3) -	May 9	-	-	7,585	341 0	5,131 0	-	Not reported.	} 9,515½
Washington, D. C. -	June 9	2,325	43 15½	-	-	-	Estimated at	4,000	
Richmond, Va. (4) - -	June 16	3,032	48 6½	178	4 6½	None.	-	2,883	2,935½
Aggregate - - -	-	78,060	1,428 4½	13,571	506 14	5,173 8	3,664 4	44,468½	55,241½

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• Public Documents.

NOTES.

- (1) The postmaster reports the total weight of mail-matter from his office as less than the average would be, if several successive weeks were tried. The weight of chargeable pamphlets sent in the first week of each month is greater by 100 per cent. than is shown by his report of June 17, owing to the greater number of their periodicals being published on the 1st of every month.
- (2) The postmaster gives no separate [report] of pamphlets, but includes them with the newspapers. The proportion of the former sent from his office is believed to be small.
- (3) There is no report of the newspapers sent from this office. The weight is estimated. The postmaster estimates the weight of public documents reported as less than the average of the session, but not more than the average of the year. The free letters he considers as exceeding, both in weight and number, the average of the year, though less than the average of the session of Congress.
- (4) The newspapers and pamphlets are reported together, as in the Baltimore office

Report of George Plitt, special agent of the Post Office Department.

WASHINGTON, November, 1840.

SIR: Your predecessor in office having honored me with a commission to visit Europe, "for the purpose of collecting and reporting useful information in relation to the mail arrangements which long experience, as well as modern improvements, have introduced into the post office establishments of the principal nations on that continent," I now beg leave to submit, for your consideration, the following report, as the result of my investigations:

I left New York on the 13th of June, 1839, and returned on the 9th of August, 1840. During this period of my absence, I visited the Post Office Departments of England, Scotland, France, Belgium, Saxony, Prussia, Austria, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden, and the free Hanseatic cities of Frankfurt, Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck.

In many of the countries my stay was necessarily short; yet, owing to the great facilities which were freely afforded me by the liberality and kindness of the various distinguished gentlemen at the heads of the different departments, I have been enabled to collect a mass of information, which will, I hope, prove useful with reference to any alteration which may hereafter be made in the post office system of this country. My warmest thanks are due to each and all of these gentlemen, and, were it practicable, it would give me pleasure to name them individually in such terms of praise as is deservedly merited by them; but especially am I indebted to Rowland Hill, Esq., the distinguished founder of the penny-post system in England, and to Lieutenant Colonel Maberly, the able and talented secretary of the Post Office Department in London, for much valuable information which they communicated most freely, and with marked courtesy and kindness.

POST OFFICE IN LONDON.

The general post office and the city office are not, as with us, separate and distinct from each other, but are connected; the city office being under the immediate direction of the general post office. The interior organization of the department is as follows:

Secretary's office,	containing	-	-	-	20 clerks
Mail coach office,	"	-	-	-	36 "
Solicitor's office,	"	-	-	-	4 "
Receiver general's office,	"	-	-	-	11 "
Accountant general's office,	"	-	-	-	27 "
Money order office,	"	-	-	-	12 "
Dead letter office,	"	-	-	-	17 "
Ship letter office,	"	-	-	-	8 "
Marine guard,	"	-	-	-	13 "
Inland office,	"	-	-	-	113 "
Messengers	-	-	-	-	51
Letter carriers and sub-sorters	-	-	-	-	345

Two-penny post office, containing	-	-	-	88 clerks.
Letter receivers	-	-	-	428
Letter carriers	-	-	-	724
Messengers	-	-	-	6
Total	-	-	-	<u>1,903</u>

The above comprises all the letter carriers and receivers employed within a circle of twelve miles from the post office. In this circle letters are delivered at the residence of the person addressed, and taken up from the receiving-houses *five* times per day. There is, besides, an inner circle of *three* miles from the post office, within which there are *seven* deliveries per day, and also *seven* collections from the receiving-houses, to go by the general post, as late as 5 o'clock, P. M.

Arrival and departure of the mails.

The mails, for every direction, leave the General Post Office every day, except Sundays, at 8 o'clock, P. M.; and are made to arrive, as nearly as may be, at 6 o'clock, A. M., Sunday excepted.

[The office is not opened on Sunday, either for the delivery of letters or for receiving or despatching the mails. This is, however, the only office in the United Kingdom where Sunday is so strictly observed.]

Some innovations, as to hours of departure and arrival, have lately been allowed, for the particular accommodation of the railroad companies.

Rates of postage.

Since the 10th of January, 1840, the uniform rate of postage upon every letter weighing not more than half an ounce, for any part of the United Kingdom, has been *one penny*; letters of one ounce, *two pence*; and so on, adding *one penny* for every additional *half-ounce*. Packets are limited in weight to sixteen ounces; but, according to the law, there is no restriction as to *size*. Persons disposed to give trouble, therefore, might encumber the mail with parcels of *wool* under a pound weight, or might even insist upon sending a *cane fishing-rod*.

The offices of the department have already been greatly annoyed in this way; and doubtless the law will be altered, in this particular, during the present Parliament.

Upon all *foreign* letters, either coming into or going out of the kingdom, the old rates of postage are continued, with some modification. For instance: all letters from the United States, to any part of the country, weighing half an ounce, a uniform rate of *one shilling* is charged if arriving in a packet-ship, and *eight pence* if in a merchant or transient vessel.

Franking privilege.

This privilege is *entirely abolished* under the late law. [For a list of those who formerly enjoyed the franking privilege in England, you are respectfully referred to my letter No. 3, dated London, 30th July, 1839. You will there perceive that the members of Parliament were restricted as to the *number* of letters they were allowed to frank each day, and were,

besides, obliged to put *the day of the month* upon each letter franked by them.]

Newspapers.

These are sent *free* to any part of the kingdom, provided they be mailed within eight days after they are printed. All foreign newspapers are charged with postage at the rate of *two pence* each. Every newspaper published in England pays a stamp duty of *two pence*; it would, therefore, seem scarcely right to tax it again when sent by mail.

Transmission of funds.

There being no bank notes in England of a less denomination than five pounds, the department, for the convenience of those who wish to transmit small sums by mail, have a *money order office*, where all sums under two pounds are insured for a small premium. Drafts are drawn upon the respective postmasters at the offices where it is desired to remit money, and notices of such drafts are made out and forwarded to these officers the day previous to the remittance of the drafts themselves.

Transportation of the mail on railways.

Contracts for carrying the mail are made by the Postmaster General with the respective railway companies, in the same manner as in this country. Each company, however, is *obliged by law* to carry a mail *whenever* desired to do so by the Postmaster General, no matter whether it be *night or day*. Should the company and the Postmaster General disagree as to the compensation to be allowed, the matter is referred to three disinterested individuals, whose award is *final*.

At present, the mail is carried upon *nine* different railways, at an average price of *ninety dollars* per mile per annum. On the great road from London to Liverpool, upon which the large mails for Ireland, Scotland, the British Provinces in North America, and for the United States, are carried, the price paid per mile per annum is \$107 50, and the contract time for the performance of the whole distance of 210 miles is *twenty-three miles* per hour; leaving London at half-past 8 o'clock, P. M., and arriving in Liverpool on the following morning at about half-past 5, being altogether night service.

Railway post offices.

Each railway company provides a separate car, when desired to do so by the Postmaster General, for the exclusive use of the mails. As with us, these cars are fitted up with boxes, to facilitate the distribution and reception of the way-mails. On the London and Liverpool road, it requires the constant and active employment of *two clerks* to assort, receive, and hand out the mails; such is the rapidity of travel, and so numerous are the post offices upon this route. No letters or papers are received at the cars and mailed, as with us. Every thing must come through the post office.

To all the mail cars there is an ingenious machine attached, intended to catch and drop a mail at the same time, at places where the train would

not otherwise be obliged to stop. This I have seen successfully done several times, while travelling at the rate of 30 miles an hour; but it has been frequently known to fail—the mail to be taken in dropping upon the road, and the train proceeding without it. Such mail, however, would be picked up and forwarded by the next train, by an officer stationed to receive the mail left.

Making up and despatching mails.

The hours for closing the mails for the evening despatch are as follows :

At the receiving houses, 5 o'clock P. M.

At the branch offices, 6 o'clock P. M.

At the principal office, 6½ o'clock P. M.

All the principal mails for the kingdom, as well as for every part of the world, are sent off by this despatch. The hour for departure is 8 o'clock, thus leaving only one hour and a half for assorting and making up this immense mail. For a fee of *sixpence*, letters can be mailed at the principal office until half past 7 o'clock P. M. Newspapers and pamphlets must be in the office by 6 P. M.

Number of letters and newspapers.

The average number of letters received *daily*, for delivery in the London Post Office, is 75,350.

The average number of newspapers received *daily*, for delivery in the London Post Office, is 11,460.

The average number of letters sent, *daily* posted in London, is 80,370.

The average number of letters *daily* distributed and forwarded is 22,310.

The average number of newspapers *daily* posted in London is 83,510.

The average number of newspapers *daily* distributed and forwarded is 3,000.

In the London district *post*, the average number of letters received and delivered *daily* is 68,000; number of newspapers, 3,500.

Delivery of letters.

As all the principal mails arrive in London in the morning, there are but three deliveries a day by the carriers of the general post. These carriers are distinguished from those belonging to the *twopenny* post, or city delivery, by wearing the livery of the department, viz: a scarlet coat with a blue collar, and buttons stamped with an impression of the royal arms. The carriers of the *twopenny* post wear the common citizen's dress.

When the mails coming in the general post are ready for delivery, the carriers are taken to their respective walks in omnibuses belonging to the department. Comparatively, there are very few letters delivered from the window of the post office at London. At Liverpool, and some other of the larger towns, boxes are put up similar to those in our cities, which are sold by the postmaster, and is one of his perquisites. The advantage to the owner of the box is, that he receives his letters much earlier than by waiting for the carrier.

All letters by the general post are delivered by the carriers without any additional charge.

Besides the letter carriers, there are also attached to the general post ninety-five bellmen, who call at every house in their walk for letters to go by the evening despatch. They carry a locked bag, with an aperture large enough to drop in a letter, which can only be opened at the post office. Any person having letters to go by the mail may drop them into the bag himself, pay the bellman his fee of one penny for each letter, and then may rest assured that they will be despatched by the mail of the same evening.

The letter carriers belonging to the *twopenny post* (still so called, to distinguish it from the general post, although the postage is only *one penny*) assemble at the several branch offices in their respective districts, where each receives the letters for his walk every two hours.

The letters are assorted at the principal office, and sent to the branch offices.

In Paris, where there are six deliveries of the "petite poste" per day, the carriers of the *general* and "petite poste" letters are the same. In a report made by Rowland Hill, Esq., on the French post office, in October, 1839, speaking of this plan, he says: "The plan of employing one set of letter carriers for the delivery of *all* letters, appears to work exceedingly well in Paris; and all whom I consulted on the subject gave it a decided preference over our plan of employing two sets of letter carriers—one to deliver the general post, and another the twopenny post letters. All that I saw and heard in Paris tends to confirm the opinion I have already expressed: that great convenience and economy would result from the union of the two bodies in London."

The establishment of receiving houses in some of the larger cities in the Union, upon a plan similar to those of London and Paris, and having carriers to deliver letters three or four times per day, would undoubtedly be a great convenience to the people, and would add considerably to the correspondence of those cities. It could be done, in my opinion, without loss to the revenue of the department. The receivers in London are generally men engaged in a business, the duties of which oblige them to have some one constantly in attendance; and, therefore, they can afford to do the duty of receiving letters, and taking the pay for them, for a very small commission. The houses in London are principally drug stores, groceries, stationers, small retail shops, &c. &c.

Mail transportation.

The number of miles upon which the mail in the United Kingdom is annually carried by mail coaches, horse, and foot posts, is	7,464,250
By railways,	936,590
The annual cost of which, for the former, is	£302,659
“ “ for the railways, is	19,940

Post offices.

The number of post towns in the United Kingdom and their dependencies is as follows:

England and Wales,	640
Sub-offices and receiving houses,	1,821
Ireland,	339

Sub-offices and receiving houses,	-	-	-	506
Scotland,	-	-	-	229
Sub-offices and receiving houses,	-	-	-	403
Total in the United Kingdom,	-	-	-	<u>3,938</u>

Accounts.

The general post office in London has accounts opened only with the 640 offices called *post towns*, in England and Wales, and with the post offices of Dublin, in Ireland, and Edinburgh, in Scotland. Mails are made up in London for the whole of Ireland, to the post office at Dublin, where they are distributed, and separate bills made out for each office. In like manner, the sub-offices in Ireland make up their mails direct to Dublin. So also in Scotland. The office in Edinburgh is, in fact, the post office department for Scotland. That office compares all the bills as they are returned, (which is done *daily*), collects all the moneys due, and *finally* settles the account with each sub-office under its jurisdiction. If there should be any discrepancy between the account of any sub-office and the office at Edinburgh, the bills are sent to the general department at London for decision. The accounts between the larger offices, such as Dublin, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester, &c., are sent to the department at London and settled *monthly*.

It might be worthy of the serious consideration of the department, whether a plan, somewhat similar to this, could not be beneficially introduced into the United States. The rapid increase in our population, the enormous extension of mail routes, and the vast accumulation of post offices, make it absolutely necessary that the labor required of the department at Washington, *to be effective*, should be *divided*. It is well known that, *even at this time*, it is entirely impossible to examine and compare all the post bills which are returned quarterly to the department, and that consequently there is no *effectual check* upon a single post office in the Union. What will it be if the same state of things is suffered to continue a few years longer? If three or four *sub-departments*, with limited powers, were established in different quarters of the Union, the existing evils of the present system would doubtless be remedied. Of course, these *sub-departments* should be under the direction and control of the general department at Washington.

Mail-guards.

Every mail, of any importance, leaving or coming into London, is accompanied with a guard, who has the especial charge of the mail while on the road. He delivers and takes in all the mails at each office upon his route. He is employed by the department, and, like the letter carriers of the general post, wears its livery when on duty. The guard is also furnished with a chronometer, set exactly with the post office time, which is locked, so that it cannot be altered by him. Being furnished with a way-bill containing the time of arrival at each office upon his route, and having the entire control of the coach, he scarcely ever fails to be within the time specified. He is armed with a blunderbuss and pistols furnished by the department.

Steamboat mails.

Mails are carried, in steamers, by contract with the department at London, to Boston, via Halifax. A copy of the contract with Mr. Cunard, and a notice of the days of sailing, from the secretary of the general post office, are hereto annexed, (marked A.) Letters *post paid* to Boston, from any part of the Union, will be sent by these steamers to England or France, without any additional charge on this side. When they reach England, each letter not weighing more than half an ounce, will be charged with *one shilling* postage, and at this rate for every additional half ounce, no matter to what part of the kingdom it may be addressed. If destined for France, the French postage will be added—20 sous, or cents, for every half-ounce.

A conventional arrangement is now existing between England and France, a copy of which is annexed, (marked B,) by which letters can be sent to and from either country, without the pre-payment of postage; which was not the case some time since. Similar arrangements are about being made between England and Belgium, Prussia, and some other of the German kingdoms.

Upon leaving England, the Chancellor of the Exchequer informed me that propositions of a like nature had been forwarded to the English minister at Washington, to be laid before our Government.

Steamboat mails are also sent from London to Rotterdam, and to Hamburg and Bremen, semi-weekly. An agent from the department accompanies the mail each trip, under whose especial charge it is placed.

Penny postage.

A comparative statement, showing the number of letters delivered in the United Kingdom, for one week during the existence of the old law, and one week under the operation of the present law, was published on the 7th of July, 1840, by order of the House of Commons, and is as follows, viz:

Whole number of letters delivered during the week ending 21st June, 1840	3,221,206
Whole number of letters delivered during the week ending the 24th November, 1839	1,585,973
	<hr/> <hr/> 1,635,233

Being an increase of more than double in favor of the new law, in the first six months of its operation.

Stamps of *one penny* and *two pence* each were first introduced on the 6th of May, 1840; and since that period there has been an increase of nearly 300,000 letters, taking the week ending on the 26th April, and comparing it with the week ending 21st June. Some of these stamps are annexed. They are a great convenience to the corresponding public, as they can at all times be carried in the pocket, and, by wetting them slightly, they will adhere most closely to the letters upon which they are placed. Envelopes of half a sheet of paper are also in use. The price of these is 1½¢ each; but they are by no means as convenient as the stamp. They have, however been used as a medium of *advertising*, by many persons

having their notices printed on the inside. When this is the case, they are sold at the stationers for ten and eleven pence per dozen.

It is proper to state, that the estimated deficiency in the revenue of the department, for one year from the commencement of the new law, will probably be nearly one million of pounds sterling. Admitting this estimate to be correct, the department would still have a surplus revenue for the year of upwards of six hundred thousand pounds sterling.

General duties.

In the British post offices the detail of duties is very similar to our own, with the exceptions already given. Their system seems to work exceedingly well in their own country, where there are, comparatively, few post offices and no bad roads to contend against, and is, perhaps, as nearly perfect as it can be made. They have the advantage of long experience, and of laws to meet any exigency that might have a tendency to retard the operations of the department.

I cannot close this part of my report without again expressing my obligations to the gentlemen at the head of the British Post Office Department. My thanks are also due to the chiefs of the several bureaux, all of whom, without an exception, took pleasure in showing and explaining to me the operations in their respective divisions. I should feel that I was neglecting a portion of my duty, if I did not take this occasion to bear testimony to their extreme kindness and liberality.

FRENCH POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

The following answers to numerous interrogatories, in relation to the interior organization and the divisions of duty in the Post Office Department, were obligingly furnished by order of M. Conte, the head of the department; to whom I respectfully beg to express my grateful acknowledgments.

Interrogatories of Mr. George Plitt, agent of the United States Post Office Department, from the Post Office Department of France.

Question 1. In what manner are the accounts of the Post Office Department kept and settled?

Answer. There is no office of accounts, properly so called, in the General Post Office. The accounts of the post office form one of the branches of the general items of the Minister of Finance, in whom the financial concerns of every portion of the Government centre. In the Post Office Department there is simply one office to ascertain the proceeds, and another the expenses. All the expenses are under the immediate orders of the Minister of Finance

* The questions proposed by Mr. Plitt, touching all the details of the Post Office Department in France, it would be difficult to answer in a single note. It has therefore been deemed proper to attach to this document, to facilitate explanation, a collection of instructions and regulations of the Post Office Department, comprising—

1. General instructions, three volumes.
2. Particular instructions relating to distribution, one volume.
3. Ordinance of November, 1835, one volume.
4. Manual of the franking privilege, one volume.
5. Post Office dictionary, three volumes.
6. Post Office book, one volume.

In each territorial department, a postmaster is bound to include in his own account those of the other postmasters in the same department. This postmaster, who is called the "*accounting postmaster*," is himself amenable only to the tribunal of accounts.

The results, both as to receipts and expenditures, verified each day by the postmasters on their books, are reported by them on a manifest or duplicate, at the end of every month, and transmitted to the "*accounting postmaster*" of their department.

At the same time, the "*accounting postmaster*," uniting to his operations those verified by the monthly certificates of the other postmasters, makes out an abstract or recapitulation, which, with the certificate for a voucher, he forwards to the general accounting department of the ministry. One of the duplicates of certificates is forwarded to the postmaster whom it concerns, through the "*accounting postmaster*," with such corrections as there may be, so as to correspond with his own statements; the other remains at the general department of accounts. One of the duplicates of abstract or recapitulation is returned to the "*accounting postmaster*," together with the certificate, and serves as a voucher to his credit.

Evidences of credit form the basis of the monthly and annual accounts made out by the "*accounting postmaster*."

The evidence required by the general financial department, in relation to the monthly returns, has for its object principally to ascertain if the receipts as well as the expenditures agree exactly with the classification and employment regulated by the budget. The details belong more particularly to the examination of the central administration upon the particular accounts, and form the elementary accounts, serving as a basis in the establishment of these accounts by the board on the estimate of the receipts.

Every postmaster, without exception, must produce at the end of each month the following special accounts :

1. Account of the regular receipts of postage.
2. Account of receipts of postage in country mails.
3. Account of receipts for passengers in the mail coaches.
4. Account of silver articles received, and the duty of five per cent. upon them.
5. Account of silver articles paid.
6. Account of dead letters sent to the General Post Office.

The special accounts are forwarded directly to the General Post Office. By the verification to which they are subjected, each accountant may have his account (if regular) approved of, or may be forced to acknowledge receipts or deficits; the whole of which is notified to him by an order of the court, and which he is to include in the account of the succeeding month.

The result of the special accounts is transmitted every month, by the general post office, to the financial department, by means of certificates, the contents of which serve to regulate the statements of the directors or postmasters in their monthly exhibits.

[For details respecting the mode of the establishment, and the certificate of the accounts, see the 1st volume of "*General Instructions*," 12th part, under the title of "*Accounts*," from page 330 to the conclusion; also, "*Rules*," 3d vol.]

Question 2. How often, and in what manner, do postmasters pay their dues to the department?

Answer. It has been stated before, that the accounts of postmasters are kept monthly, and renewed every year by the "accounting postmaster."

As to the disposable funds, the postmasters are bound to pay them over into the treasury of the financial department thrice, twice, or once a month, (according to the amount or the importance of their receipts,) reserving only such funds as may be strictly necessary for the expenses of their establishment.

Question 3. What are the checks upon postmasters, to prevent them from defrauding the department?

Answer. As far as regards the receipts upon postage, the check is on the exhibits of the post office of destination, contrasted with those of the forwarding post office, on the post bill, which reciprocally accompanies every despatch. In the mean time, each postmaster having the right of correcting, be it more or less, the amount of postage placed to his charge by his correspondent, it may happen that an unfaithful agent may charge mistakes which do not exist, in order to lessen so much the amount of receipts for which he would be accountable; but such a proceeding could not be habitually practised, without being effectually checked.

Notwithstanding, certain portions of the receipts of postage escape control; among others, the receipts of postages to and from the same district, which necessarily are subject to the good faith of the postmaster, especially in those cases where he himself performs all the duties. But the department has endeavored to fortify the proofs of receipts, by precautions calculated to make defaulting difficult; and this has been particularly the aim of the regulations of November, 1835, hereto annexed.

The profits arising from seats in mail coaches are exhibited by the record of travellers on the way-bill, which is in the custody of the courier, and which is inspected by the postmasters on the principal points of the route.

The profits of silver articles are ascertained by the receipt and order delivered to the depositors.

As regards expenses, they cannot be paid by the postmasters except by an order from the Minister of Finance, and a sub-order of the general post office; and for their voucher, they must have the receipt of the party paid.

Finally, each postmaster is obliged to give a bond to the Treasury Department, before entering upon his duties, proportioned to the responsibility of his trust, which remains as a security for his acts until a final settlement of his accounts; which bond cannot easily be forfeited by a deficit, when you take into account the obligation imposed upon the postmasters, as has been before stated, to keep no more funds on hand than may be absolutely necessary for the expenses of the establishment.

Question 4. What is the annual pay of postmasters, and how often are they required to render their accounts?

Answer. Postmasters are divided into two classes: postmasters with fixed salaries, and postmasters who receive a per centage on income.*

* "Postmasters with fixed salaries" are so called because they are composed of several agents at fixed rates; and those who receive a per centage are managed by a single postmaster, receiving a compensation proportionate to the income; excepting, however, a fixed allowance has been granted to certain postmasters who come under the class of those receiving a per centage. It is not equal to establish fixed salaries to all offices whose receipts amount to twenty thousand francs.

Besides the fixed allowance paid to them monthly, the postmasters of the salaried offices receive every three months the expenses incurred for clerk-hire, rent, stationary, &c. There is, however, 5 per cent. taken from the salary of these officers, which is placed in the retiring pension fund.

The pay of the postmasters of the salaried offices varies from six and eight hundred francs a year to seven thousand francs; and [they] are allowed for rent and office expenses, from three and four hundred to fifteen thousand francs.

The pay of the postmasters of the "per centage offices" is regulated by the receipts of letter postage, and the duty of 5 per cent. on silver articles, as follows:

On the amount of five thousand francs, or under, the allowance is 20 per cent.; all above five thousand francs, 5 per cent.

Whenever the receipts do not amount, during a whole year, to two thousand francs, the postmaster is entitled to a fixed minimum of four hundred francs.

The four fifths of the remittances only are taken into consideration in the estimate of the salary, and, as such, subjected to the tax of 5 per cent. for the benefit of the retiring pension fund; the other one-fifth, not subject to the 5 per cent., is considered as a substitute for office expenses, rent, &c.

Independently of the amount allowed hereinbefore specified, the postmasters of the "per centage offices" receive, according to location and the importance of their duties, remuneration for the expenses of night service, expenses of distribution of letters from house to house, and expenses of assistants; perquisites which average to each postmaster two hundred francs a year.

Answers to the second part of the 4th interrogatory will be found in the 1st and 2d interrogatories.

Question 5. What is the tariff of postages upon letters?

Answer. Letters sent from one post office to another are charged in proportion to an estimated ratio of distance and weight.

Estimated ratio of distances.

Forty kilometres (about 25 miles) inclusive, (2 decimes,) about	4 cents.
From 40 to 80 kilometres	3 " " 6 "
" 80 to 150	4 " " 8 "
" 150 to 220	5 " " 10 "
" 220 to 300	6 " " 12 "
" 300 to 400	7 " " 14 "
" 400 to 500	8 " " 16 "
" 500 to 600	9 " " 18 "
" 600 to 750	10 " " 20 "
" 750 to 900	11 " " 22 "
" 900 and above	12 " " 24 "

Estimated ratio of weights.

Under 7½	grammes, (about ¼ ounce,) 1 postage.
From 7½ to 10	" " 1½ "
" 10 to 15	" " 2 "
" 15 to 20	" " 2½ "

and so on, for every 5 grammes, half a postage additional.

All letters mailed in a town for delivery in the same place, are rated as follows :

Under 15	grammes (1 decime)	2 cents.
From 15 to 30	" 2 "	4 "
" 30 to 60	" 3 "	6 "

and for every 30 grammes above, 2 cents additional.

The charges for the city of Paris form an exception; the following is the ratio :

Under 15 grammes,	3 cents.
From 15 to 30	" 5 "
" 30 to 60	" 7 "

and for every 30 additional grammes, 2 cents more.

Letters to and from places where there are no post office establishments, carried by special agents, called "country agents," pay two cents to the post office of such district. When destined to a post office out of that district or place, they are subject to the postage of the office in that district, and also to two cents more for the office out of the district.*

Samples of goods pay one-third letter postage. Letters despatched by special charge (that is, registered letters for which a receipt is given) are subject to double postage. They must be post paid.

Question 6. Are letters charged by weight, or by the number of sheets?

Answer. Letters are charged by weight, as has been just stated, without regard to the number of sheets of which they may be composed, or which they may contain.

Question 7. What is the postage upon newspapers and pamphlets?

Answer. The postage on newspapers and periodicals sent from one department to another, is 4 centimes a printed sheet of 30 square decimetres (about $1\frac{1}{4}$ foot) size, and 4 centimes for every additional 30 decimetres, or any proportion thereof.

Extras, which may be published on account of abundance of matter, are exempt.

The postage on newspapers and periodicals, with their extras, circulating within the department where they are published, is two centimes only, ($\frac{2}{3}$ of a cent.) The postage on unbound books, pamphlets, catalogues, prospectuses, advertisements, and notices of different kinds, is—

5 centimes	for each printed sheet;
$2\frac{1}{2}$ "	every half sheet; and
$1\frac{1}{4}$ "	every quarter-sheet.

The postage on newspapers and printed sheets *must always be paid in advance*. These articles cannot be despatched without wrappers.

[For postage on periodicals, and letters in general, see the 1st vol. of "General Instructions," 3d part, from page 35 to page 76.]

Question 8. Who enjoys the franking privilege? and to what extent is it practised?

Answer. The franking privilege is allowed only to certain public officers, and to them only in their public correspondence. It is granted by the Minister of Finance, on the request of ministers, or the principal officer of the department to which these public officers are attached, and by the advice of the board of the general post office. It is more or less exten-

*These regulations are not applicable to the country villages in the department of the Seine.

sive, according to the number of agents with whom each officer holds correspondence.

[For the conditions of the franking privilege, and the list of officers to whom it is granted, see the "Manual of the Franking Privilege," hereto annexed.]

Question 9. Upon what terms is money sent? and does the department insure its safe transmission?

Answer. The transmission of coin is done at an average of 5 per cent. on the amount deposited.

A declaration of deposit, and an order payable at any of the post-offices in the kingdom, is delivered to the forwarder, in place of the sum deposited. The order is sent to the one who is to receive it. The declaration of deposit is kept by the forwarder. It is a lien in case of non-payment.

To the amount of 100 francs, the orders are payable at sight; over that sum, they are not paid, except by authority of the Post Office Department.

No sum of money under 50 centimes can be received.

The orders above 10 francs are subject to a stamp-tax of 35 centimes, independently of the duty of 5 per cent.

The transmission is insured. In case of the loss of the orders, the money is refunded, on due proof, to the depositor.

[See "General Instructions," 8th part, from page 231 to page 355.]

Question 10. What is the average cost of the transportation of the mail per mile per annum?

Answer. The average price by the league, for the transportation of the mail, is detailed as follows:

Statement on the 31st December, 1839.

	Number of leagues travelled annually.	General expenses of transportation.	Average rate p. league of 4 kilometres.
Mail coaches -	1,554,000	*6,022,000	3 frs. 87 c.
In stages -	3,760,000	1,761,000	46
On horseback -	3,119,000	1,076,000	34
On foot -	1,420,000	328,000	23
	9,853,000	9,187,000 frs.	1 fr. 7 c.

Question 11. Is the mail carried by contract with citizens, or by the Government?

Answer. The transportation of *despatches* is done by the Government, on economical principles, according to the exhibit hereinafter made, (No. 12;) and also by contract, in stages, on horseback, or on foot, in the manner hereinbefore shown, in the other parts of France.

* In the amount of 6,022,000 francs under the above head, are comprised the expenses of conveying travellers. The income of seats being 1,564,000 francs, the actual expense of the transportation of letters is reduced to 4,460,000 francs; average by the league, two francs eight y-seven centimes.

The transportation of despatches by the Government is effected by "mail coaches," drawn by two or four horses; the proprietor of the horses receiving, as pay for this service, 1 franc 75 centimes per horse, 1 franc 50 centimes more for drivers, and some other perquisites, for every myriametre, (equal to six miles.) [See the Post Book hereto annexed; also, the Register of General Expenses of transportation of despatches by mail, established for the year 1841.]

Question 12. How far is the mail carried per hour upon the principal leading roads?

Answer.—Rate of travelling at present in mail-coaches.

FIRST SECTION.		Distances in kilometres (about of a mile.)	Time employed. hours.	Average of travelling by the hour.
From Paris to	Besançon	399	33	12.00
	Bordeaux	556	38	14.63
	Brest	594	44	13.24
	Caen	223	14	15.93
	Calais*	270	17	15.90
	Forbach	378	23	13.50
	L'Havre*	213	13	16.39
	Lille	237	17	13.94
	Lyons	461	35	13.17
	Marseilles	780	65	12.00
	Nantes	392	27	14.70
	Sedan	255	19	13.40
	Strasbourg	453	36	12.59
Toulouse	679	54	12.57	
Valenciennes*	208	13	16.00	
		6,098	453	13.46
SECOND SECTION.				
From Bordeaux to	Bayonne	228	16	14.25
	Toulouse	256	17	15.06
From Lyons to	Avignon*	225	15	15.00
	Strasbourg	454	36	12.61
From Moulins to	Clermont	95	8	11.87
From Toulouse to	Bayonne	289	21	13.76
	Marseilles	443	36	12.28
From Troyes to	Muthausen	315	24	13.13
		2,305	173	13.32

* The routes marked with an asterisk are travelled by light coaches, drawn by two horses. These coaches take no passengers. They are called "express mails," (mailles esafettes.)

Question 13. Are there any mails carried on horseback or on foot? If so, how much is paid per mile per annum?

Answer. For an answer to this interrogatory, see No. 10.

Question 14. Are there any secret travelling agents of the department? If so, what are their particular duties, and what is their annual compensation?

Answer. The department has no secret agents. The superintendence of the service is, both in law and fact, managed by postmasters and inspectors stationed on the lines of the mail routes.

The department has especial care, before establishing a mail, to have the route explored by special agents, instructed to determine upon the time absolutely necessary for travelling from one relay to another, and for changing the mails at each office.

From the report of these agents a way-book is prepared, a printed copy of which is given to each mail driver at the time of his departure, and upon which he is obliged to record, in writing, at each station, the exact time of his progress, and to set down explicitly the causes of his delay which may have accidentally occurred, and which must be verified by the attestation of the postmasters or the local authorities.

There is, also, kept by the department a "registry of control" on the travelling route, in which the mail-drivers are classed, and which serves as the authority for their promotion.

Those who are guilty of habitual delays are put at the bottom of the list for one, two, or more trips; and if they continue in being behind time, they are transferred to a route of insignificant importance.

When the duties of a mail-driver are not regularly performed, or when he is suspected of fraud, the inspectors of the department keep a close watch upon him. (*ad hoc.*)*

Question 15. How are post offices established, and under what circumstances are they discontinued?

Answer. The conditions which the department generally requires for the establishment of a post office are the following:

The village must be about from three to four leagues (twelve to sixteen kilometres—eight to twelve miles) from any post office.

The probable annual income of the post office must amount to at least 4,000 francs.

Finally, the request must be made by the *town council* of the village, on proper deliberation, and approved of by the *préfet* of the department.

This last condition is indispensable; the other two yield occasionally to considerations of public interest, when it would be advantageous to the trading or Government interests to encourage the correspondence of any particular place. It sometimes happens that a post office establishment is transferred from one place to another, but never (or very rarely) is it abolished.

In situations, the importance of which depends upon certain facilities for correspondence, and by a direct intercourse without possessing the requisites of a post office establishment, properly so called, a distribution office is established; the duties of which are not essentially different from those of a post office.

* In the central department there are three inspectors especially commissioned to keep the drivers in order, and to whom are intrusted the duties of this portion of the service.

Any distribution office is subordinate to a post office, from which it receives and despatches mails, and to which it must account for the receipts of each day.

[See "Instructions on the Distribution Service," hereto annexed.]

Question 16. By whom are postmasters appointed, and what are their duties?

Answer. The following are appointed by the minister, on the recommendation of the Postmaster General, and by the consent of the council, viz :

The inspectors and sub inspectors.

The "accounting postmasters" of the department.

The "postmasters at a fixed salary," and "those at a per centage," whose emoluments amount to, or exceed, 2,000 francs; and, also, the mail contractors.

The Postmaster General appoints to all the other offices.

The postmasters are the responsible heads of their particular offices. They order and direct all proceedings, and distribute the various portions of duty among the agents, in conformity with the general regulations, and with a particular regulation for each post office, as set forth by the department.

The principal duties of a postmaster may be stated thus :

1st. General superintendence.

2d. Correspondence with the department, and a faithful performance of his duties to the authorities and to the public.

3d. To keep the books, and render an account of the proceeds of his office.

4th. Collection of the accounts for the department in his district. (This duty belongs only to the "accounting postmaster.")

5th. Sundry writings.

6th. Opening and ascertaining the contents of the mails as they arrive, in conjunction with the sub-inspector, or some one employed for that purpose.

7th. Distribution of the amount of postages to be collected by the various agents intrusted with the delivery of letters.

The other duties—such as the receiving of pre-paid letters, and making up and despatching mails, the sorting and taxing of letters, &c.—are divided among the clerks.

Question 17. What kind of mail-bags and locks are used?

Answer. Leather bags or portmanteaus, fastened with a padlock, are used for mails sent on horseback, on foot, or by stages.

The letters carried in mail-coaches are placed thus : Those destined to the principal post office stations, are put into the hind boot of the coach, the key of which is kept by the postmasters only ; those for other offices, called "way-mails," are put into separate bags, under the care of the driver.

Whatever may be the mode of transportation, the letter-packets are first enclosed in thick paper envelopes, tied, and sealed with the seal of the forwarding office.

Question 18. Are the mails frequently robbed?

Answer. Very rarely. There are some instances of loss, and yet the letters are commonly recovered.

Question 19. How are lost letters traced?

Answer. Search is immediately and simultaneously set on foot in all the

offices through which it was to pass. The department is aided by the evidence of the person laying claim, and by the lists, and circumstances, according to the case, by which the letter has been described.

A particular scrutiny, in case of need, is made by agents appointed for this purpose, who have authority to question all persons through whose hands the letter may have passed, or who may have been engaged in its transmission.

Question 20. What is done with dead letters, and what is their average annual amount?

Answer. Dead letters are returned to the general post office as follows, viz :

Every day, (daily dead letters.)

Letters refused by public officers.

Letters without superscription, or the superscription of which is illegible or incomplete.

Letters not paid for those countries to which it is indispensable that postage should be paid.

Letters not distributed, for any cause, bearing the private stamp of a commercial house; and others, an enumeration of which would be too numerous to mention.

Every ten days, (ten-day dead letters.)

Letters directed to persons unknown.

Every month, (monthly dead letters.)

After being kept three months.

Letters refused by individuals.

Letters addressed to persons known, but whose present residence is unknown.

Letters addressed "*poste restante*," (to remain in the post office until called for.)

Letters addressed to persons deceased, without any known heirs.

The "*daily dead letters*" are opened in Paris immediately on their arrival, and sent back to the writers—without postage if the letters relate to the public service, and with postage if they relate to private concerns. In every case, letters becoming dead, from not being paid, or from a defective superscription, are always returned free of postage.

Letters, the writers of which cannot be discovered, are destroyed, after lying in the dead-letter office for six months.

The "*ten-day dead letters*," after exhausting every means of discovering the persons to whom they are addressed, are opened and returned under separate envelopes to their places of destination, if there be any; if not, to the writers, stamped with the postage of the place of destination.

The "*monthly dead letters*" are kept in Paris for three months; and at the expiration of that time they are opened, and destroyed, provided they do not contain matters of interest or value; in which cases, they are returned to the writers, charged with postage.

All letters containing matters of interest, or important documents, which cannot be sent to the owners or returned to the writers, are destroyed at the expiration of five years, dating from the time of their being put into the post office. [See "*General Instructions*," from page 156 to page 171.]

In 1837, out of about 85,000,000 letters, there were 2,200,000 dead letters, to wit :

Refused	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,400,000
Persons unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	685,000
Never called for (<i>poste restante</i>)	-	-	-	-	-	-	60,000
Not paid	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,000
Unintelligible superscription	-	-	-	-	-	-	43,000
							<u>2,200,000</u>

In 1838, the number out of 88,000,000 was 2,400,000.

Question 21. What is the average number of letters received at the post office in Paris daily?

Answer. About thirty-four thousand.

Question 22. What is the average number of letters sent daily from and through the post office of Paris?

Answer. About forty thousand.

Question 23. What is the average amount of newspapers and pamphlets received daily at the post office at Paris?

Answer. From four to five thousand for Paris, and as many more through Paris.

Question 24. What is the average amount of newspapers and pamphlets sent daily from and through Paris?

Answer. About one hundred and twenty thousand.

Question 25. Are letters coming in the general post charged with any additional postage, when carried out by the penny post?

Answer. By no means. The letters to and from the country towns only where there are no post offices, as has been already stated, are subject to an additional postage of two sous.

Letters to and from the colonies, and parts beyond seas, are subject to the same additional postage.*

Letters to and from foreign countries, which are not required to be paid at the several frontiers, are charged with French postage, in addition to the foreign postage.

[See what is stated before, relative to the postage of letters.] ✓

[See, also, in relation to postage on letters carried by the Levant packets, the rates of the same hereto annexed. "Post Book," page 280.]

Question 26. How often per day do the carriers deliver letters in the city of Paris?

Answer. Six times a day during the week, and but five times on Sundays and holidays.

Question 27. How many letter-carriers are there?

<i>Answer.</i> For the city	-	-	-	-	-	248
For the Court, the Chamber of Peers, the Chamber of Deputies, &c.	-	-	-	-	-	31
Supernumeraries	-	-	-	-	-	127

Total 406

* The additional two cents upon letters to and from parts beyond seas, is paid by the department to the commanders of vessels carrying the letters.

Question 28. How many receiving-houses, where letters can be mailed, are there in Paris?

Answer. Besides three letter-boxes at the general post office, there is one at each of the twelve ward-offices of the city, viz :

Office A,
 " B,
 " C,
 " D,
 " E,
 " F,
 " G,
 " H,
 " I,
 " Chamber of Peers,
 " Chamber of Deputies,
 " King's palace,

and one at the Exchange. Besides these, there are 245 distributed in the different quarters of Paris; making, in all, 261 boxes.

Question 29. Does the Post Office Department engage to transport passengers?

Answer. The mail coaches of the first section carry three passengers, besides the mail carrier or guard. The Lyons mail takes four. On the Calais, Havre, and Valenciennes mail routes, light vehicles are used called "*express mails*," (*malles estafettes*), which carry no passengers. There is but one passenger seat in the mail coaches of the second section. The fare for seats is estimated at the rate of 1 franc 15 sous a *myriametre*, (about 6½ miles.)

Question 30. What is the average amount of revenue collected by the Post Office Department annually?

Answer. In 1838, 42,383,000 francs.

Question 31. What is the average annual amount expended by the department?

Answer. In 1838, 23,062,000 francs. Excess of income, 19,321,000 francs.

Question 32. What is done with the overplus, if any?

Answer. The overplus belongs to the public treasury.

Question 33. Are there any railroad companies employed in carrying the mail, and on what terms?

Answer. Since the enactment of new laws on the subject, the companies are bound to transport the mails free of charge. The system under the old laws stipulated an average rate of 8 sous a league, (4 kilometres.)

Question 34. What is the punishment of persons detected in robbing the mail?

Answer. Removal from office, if he be an agent of the Government, without interfering with the punishment pronounced by the tribunals, according to the circumstances of the robbery. Article 187 of the Penal Code reads thus :

"Every retention and opening of letters put into the mail, committed or connived at by an officer or any agent of the Government, or of the Post Office Department, shall be punished by a fine of from 16 francs to 300 francs. The offender shall, moreover, be excluded from any agency

or public employment for at least five years, and not longer than ten years."

If the suppressed letters contain matters of value, which the offender intends to appropriate to his own use, the punishment is regulated by the 169th, 171st, and 172d articles of the same code.

Article 169th: "Every receiver, or person intrusted with the duties of a receiver, depositary, or public accountant, who may have diverted or abstracted public or private moneys or valuable effects, in possession or reversion, writings, titles, deeds, and personal property, which may be in hands by virtue of his office, shall be punished by hard labor, according to the offence. if the property purloined shall exceed in value the sum of 3,000 francs."

Article 171st: "If the property withheld or purloined shall be less than 3,000 francs, the punishment shall be imprisonment for two years, at least, and not exceeding five years; and the offender shall, moreover, be declared incapable of ever afterwards holding any public office."

Article 172d: "In the instances laid down in the foregoing articles, a part of the judgment against the offender is a fine. the *maximum* of which shall be a restitution of one-fourth part, or an indemnity therefor, and the *minimum* the one-twelfth part."

Articles of the Penal Code applicable to the robbery of letters committed by private individuals.

Article 254th: "As respects the withholding, destruction, or purloining of any criminal records or other documents, or papers, requisites, deeds, and effects, contained in the public records, court offices, or public offices, or sent to a public depositary, in such cases the punishment of the clerk, recorder, notary, or other depositary so offending, shall be from three months to one year imprisonment, and a fine of from 100 to 300 francs."

Article 255th: "Whoever shall be found guilty of the withholding, purloining, or destruction mentioned in the foregoing articles, shall be punished by solitary confinement."

Article 256th: "If the withholding, purloining, or destruction of articles have been committed, accompanied with violence towards any one, the punishment shall be hard labor, according to the offence; exclusive of higher punishment, if the case should require it, according to the nature of the violence, and the other crimes accompanying said offence."

Article 353d: "Robbery, committed on the highway, shall be punished by hard labor for life."

General instructions.

Article 416th: "If a driver be attacked, he must defend the mail at the risk of his life."

Article 419th: "Every driver, whose mail has been robbed or broken open, is deprived of his situation if his reasons be not satisfactory."

PRUSSIAN POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

The annexed paper contains the answers to numerous interrogatories, in relation to the mail arrangements and interior organization of the Post

Office Department of Prussia, politely furnished by direction of Baron de Nagler, the distinguished head of that department; to whom my thanks are no less due for the interesting information he has given, than for his kindness of manner during my stay in Berlin.

Answers to questions proposed by Mr. George Plitt, agent of the Post Office Department of the United States of America, respecting the regulations of the Prussian Post Office.

BERLIN, November 26, 1839.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: I do myself the honor to forward the answers to questions put by desire of Mr. George Plitt, agent of the Post Office Department of the United States of North America, respecting the regulations of the Prussian Post Office; and I have further enclosed five documents, with a view of affording a clear and more distinct development of the subject.

I have the honor, &c.

NAGLER.

To Mr. FAY,
Chargé d'Affaires of the United States of America.

Question 1. How are the accounts kept and settled?

Answer. It is the invariable rule in Prussia to charge the postage of a letter at the place to which it is directed, whether it may have been previously paid or not. The same rule applies both to packages and moneys.

The receipts, consequently, of each post office consist exclusively of the postage for letters delivered.

The postage for unpaid letters is collected by the offices from which they are delivered; and the amount of those paid for on being despatched is drawn for, monthly, from the offices that received the same. Hence, a settlement of accounts takes place every month between the different post offices, of the respective sums to be received or disbursed by them.

The letter bills are the primary vouchers for the receipts of postage in the different post office establishments.

In Prussia, entries are made of all the letters in the letter bills, as may be seen by the enclosed document.

The sums to be charged by the post office, on arrival of the letters, consist of the aggregate amount of the items of postage contained in the second column of the enclosure.

The amount is added together each day at the post office to which the letter bill is directed, and the aggregate of these items constitutes the amount of the receipts of the post office.

A book of receipts and expenses is kept by each post office.

Each month an extract of these items is prepared and forwarded to the general post office at Berlin, accompanied by a remittance of the surplus on hand. Should there, however, be a balance in favor of the post office, the amount is made good by the cashier of the general post office.

Every fourth month a general statement, specifying each sum in the order in which they may have been received or paid on each successive post day, is drawn up for the treasury of the general post office, to which it is forwarded, accompanied by the necessary quittances and vouchers.

These four monthly accounts are then forwarded to the audit office

(*verificateur*.) and passed, if found to be supported by the necessary vouchers.

A yearly statement extending till the middle of March of the following year, based upon the four monthly statements, is drawn up by each post-master, and forwarded to the accountant branch of the general post office.

From the annexed work, entitled "An Exposition of the Rules by which the Treasury and the Accountant Department of the Prussian Post Office is governed in its proceedings," will be shown the exact method pursued in keeping the books and arranging the accounts; and it likewise contains the different directions issued on the subject by the general post office.

Question 2. What is the charge of postage for each letter? is it regulated by weight, or by the number of sheets?

Answer. Postage in Prussia is regulated by *distance* and *weight*.

The charge for postage increases in proportion to distance, according to the following scale:

Scale for charge of postage according to distance.

A distance of 2 miles, 1 silver grosch.			
From	2 to 4	"	1½
"	4 to 7	"	2
"	7 to 10	"	2½
"	10 to 15	"	3
"	15 to 20	"	4
"	20 to 30	"	5
"	30 to 40	"	6

and so on, calculating a silver grosch for every additional 10 miles.*

As regards weight, the scale is as follows:

Letters not exceeding $\frac{3}{4}$ of a loth† in weight pay a single postage.

From $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 loth, 1½ postage.

" 1 to 1½ " 2 "

" 1½ to 2 " 2½ "

and so on, an additional half charge of postage being made for every additional half loth in the weight.

The last charge, however, is only for letters forwarded by the fast-letter (or courier) post. If they be sent by the wagon, (which is generally the case with letters exceeding 2 loths in weight, unless marked by the sender outside "to be forwarded by the fast-letter or courier post,") this charge extends only to letters weighing two loths; while those weighing from 2 to 8 loths, inclusive, pay the postage of three letters; from 8 to 16, of four letters.

Written documents weighing upwards of 16 loths must be made up in a distinct packet, and continue to pay fourfold postage until the amount reaches double the charge for packages.

Package charges.

Packages and money are forwarded by the travelling and luggage post; but, at the request of the sender, and on payment of an additional half charge of postage, they may be conveyed by the fast post.

* About 4½ English miles make one German. † Two loths make one English ounce.

The package (or packet) postage is subject to a progressive increase of $\frac{1}{4}$ silver grosch per pound weight for every 5 miles.

A double charge of postage, however, continues to be made on small packages, until it amounts to more than is fixed in the above scale.

Each package must be provided with an address. However, several packages may be included under one and the same address; and, in that case, the carriage is charged according to their collective weight, provided that it be not under the weight requiring a threefold postage.

Money carriage.

The scale for the carriage of silver is as follows:

To the amount of 1 rixdollar, a single postage is charged.

From 1 to 20, a double.

From 20 to 50, a treble.

Above 50, the same as charged for a full hundred of dollars.

With sums of 100 rixdollars and upwards, until they amount to 1,000, a progressive increase takes place of 4 silver grosch per cent. for every five German miles; and beyond this amount, 3 silver grosch are charged for every additional hundred.

Gold and drafts pay only one-half what is charged for silver. Copper coin is charged according to its weight.

Small sums, amounting to 100 rixdollars, are frequently forwarded in mixed quantities; *i. e.* silver in a letter, drafts, and gold, mixed up together. This is allowed for any weight not exceeding 8 loths. The charge is double postage if the weight be not above 4 loths, but is treble if the weight amount to 8 loths.

The details of the royal regulations respecting the Prussian Post Office are contained in the Post Hand-Book for Berlin, from page 356 to 374.*

Question 3. Who enjoys the franking privilege, and to what extent is it practised?

Answer. This privilege is enjoyed by the King and royal family, and the Postmaster General for the time being. All Government officers, in carrying on a correspondence in the discharge of their respective duties, (the postage of which would have to be paid out of the Government treasury,) possess this privilege likewise.

The Postmaster General is empowered to grant the privilege of franking for purposes of public utility; *i. e.* societies engaged in promoting interesting and beneficial objects, and to societies of arts and sciences, &c. The number of such is not limited; and the only restriction is, that in some instances the correspondence must be carried on *unsealed*. This privilege is granted by the Postmaster General, on the object and tendency of such society being stated to him.

The postage sacrificed in this manner is about one-third of the whole amount received.

Question 4. What postage is charged upon newspapers and pamphlets?

Answer. If the newspaper be forwarded to the post office by the publisher or sender with a cross envelope, bearing the address of the party to whom it be sent, and provided its weight do not exceed 16 loths, only

* Received by Mr. Plitt.

one fourth of the postage which its actual weight would subject it to, is charged.

If the weight exceed 16 loths, the charge is determined according to the scale fixed for packages.

In the provinces, the newspapers are generally delivered by the post office to the subscribers. The post office furthers orders for newspapers to the post office at the place where the publisher resides; but for pamphlets, that come *via* Berlin, they must apply to the newspaper office at Berlin.

The following is the rate of postage paid by subscribers:

For inland newspapers:

For the whole sheet, 4 pfennings;

For the half sheet, 2½ pfennings;

For the quarter sheet, 1½ pfenning;

For the whole supplement, 1½ pfenning;

For the half supplement, 1 pfenning.

For foreign newspapers:

For the whole sheet, 5 pfennings;

For the half sheet, 4 pfennings;

For the quarter sheet 2½ pfennings;

without any deduction being allowed for the supplements.

These charges apply to all parts of the country, without reference to distance.

A copy of the regulations for the year 1821, respecting the rates of postage upon newspapers, is annexed.

Question 5: Upon what terms is money sent by mail? and does the department insure its safe transmission?

Answer. Hard cash is, in reality, *not* forwarded by the letter post. The travelling post is employed for the conveyance of moneys and packets.

Letters with money must not exceed 8 loths in weight, and must be encircled with a cross envelope, and are to have five seal impressions upon them.

Heavy packages with money must be packed in strong bags and sealed. They are forwarded to any amount, and the post office is responsible for any damage or loss, and is bound to make good the same, although the same may have been accidentally occasioned.

In every instance restitution is made to the amount declared on delivery of the sender, provided the loss took place within the Prussian dominions.

On delivery of money parcels at the post offices, the sender is furnished with a quittance, for which an additional charge of 2 grosch is made; and, in case of accident, on production thereof he is enabled to make good his claim, and which is unconditionally satisfied, so soon as the injury or loss is satisfactorily proved.

It then rests with the post office to investigate the cause of the accident, and to proceed against those by whom it may have been occasioned.

Question 6. What is the average cost of the transportation of the mail, per German mile, per annum?

Answer. The average expense of the letter post is fifteen silver grosch per horse per mile. It is sometimes, however, though rarely, as low as twelve and a half silver grosch.

Question 7. Is the forwarding of the mail effected by private contract, or is it managed by the Government?

Answer. The forwarding of the different posts is performed by contract with private individuals.

The general post office concludes with them a contract, (a copy of which is annexed,) in which their remuneration is fixed, and which is effected in the following manner :

The contractors receive a remuneration of twelve and a half (see answer to 6th query) silver grosch per mile for every letter post, or fast post, and ten silver grosch for every luggage post, that passes through their respective stations.

Besides this, the contractor has the extra profit arising from forwarding private carriages, post chaises, the extra post, couriers, and estafettes, which are only conveyed with post horses.

The above emoluments are, in many instances, insufficient to yield a fair return for the capital embarked in the undertaking. The expense for postillions, horses, harness, carriages, and the rent for stables, must be taken into consideration.

On account of this, it has latterly been fixed as a rule to make the contractor a yearly allowance for each horse, at a nominal rate, calculated according to the prices of corn and other necessaries, which may rise in the different provinces; *i. e.*, ascending from 180 rixdollars (as in Posen and in the Marck) to 240, 250, and even as much as 280 rixdollars, as in the provinces on the Rhine.

The following are the items for which contractors are entitled to compensation :

1. The interest, calculated at five per cent., of the capital embarked in the undertaking.

2. From twenty to twenty-five for wear and tear.

3. The keeping of horses. Oats reckoned at an average price.

4. The maintenance of postillions—exclusive of clothing and beer-money allowed for driving the fast travelling and luggage carriages, which are issued from the royal treasury.

5. Repair of harness and carriages; (the principal carriages belong to the crown;) rent for the hire of stables, and charges for shoeing, &c. &c.

The items from 1 to 5 constitute the real amount for which a contractor is entitled to reimbursement; but, in addition to this, he is entitled—

6. To a remuneration for the superintendence and management of the post station, which is likewise included in the rate of from 180 to 280 rixdollars per horse.

An experience of several years shows that the above indemnity upon every horse kept by him is sufficient to enable him to keep the post station in an effective state, without his deriving any undue profit at the expense of the royal treasury.

To prevent this from occurring, it is necessary to ascertain the precise number of horses for which the above allowance ought to be granted.

To effect this object, each post office must keep a register, specifying the number of letter, fast, travelling, and luggage posts; and also of the extra chaises, couriers, and estafettes, for which horses may have been daily required. This register is forwarded every year to Berlin, and from it may be discovered the maximum number of horses required to be kept by the contractor, so as to meet the demands for every description of conveyance.

Guided by these data, the general post office is enabled to determine and fix the number of horses for which the above nominal rate is to be granted.

The contractor, moreover, receives a further allowance so soon as the price of grain exceeds the limits at which it was fixed at the time of the contract.

The contractor is relieved from the payment of the usual taxes charged upon horses employed in labor. His horses and carriages cannot be seized for the payment of his debts. The contractor, however, is subject to the payment of the following contributions to the post office treasury :

1. For the post poor fund, one per cent. from the allowance for carriages granted to him by the contract.

2. A deduction of two and a half silver grosch made from every dollar received for the conveyance of extra post, couriers, and estafettes.

3. A deduction of two and a half silver grosch for every extra post, courier, and estafette, appropriated to the payment of the coach conductors. The engagement of the postillions is subject to the approval of the general post office.

The expenses for their support are embraced in the nominal rates allowed. (See article 4 of this section.) The number of them is fixed by the general post office. The contractor is bound, by his agreement, to pay them monthly a fixed rate of wages, without reference to the allowance for beer-money which they receive.

The allowance for beer-money is as follows :

1. From three to four pfennings per horse per mile is paid by the royal treasury for driving the fast and travelling post, and about one silver grosch for the luggage post.

Beer-money is not usually allowed for driving two-horse carriages.

2. With respect to the extra post, the allowance for beer-money is proportioned to the rate fixed for travellers.

Each postillion kept by the contractor, according to agreement, receives from the royal treasury, through the chief post office magazine at Berlin, the following *major* articles, for equipment :

For every two years—1 cloak, 1 jacket, 1 hat, 1 body girdle, (belt), and a horn brace. When the journeys performed are long, the belt and the horn brace are renewed annually.

For every four years, 1 post trumpet is allowed. Where the stations are long, a stable cap and jacket are allowed every two years.

The *minor* articles of equipment consist of the leathern breeches, overalls, boots, spurs, whip, neck collar, &c., and are provided by the postillion himself, out of the beer-money allowance which he receives.

Though the postillions are merely viewed as private servants to the contractor, yet he is bound to dismiss such of them as the general post office may require. This right, however, is very rarely enforced, except in cases of aggravated misconduct.

The contractors are required to give security for the fulfilment of their contract.

The contracts are usually concluded for a term of from four to six years, but upon long stations from ten to twelve years. Under certain circumstances, the term of their duration is unfixed.

The contractors are not entitled to any claim for the loss of horses. However, in the event of a horse being killed in the service of the post office, a moderate indemnification is allowed.

Question 8. Are there any post office agents, or surveyors of the roads, whose duty it is to superintend the operations of the department in different parts of the kingdom? If so, how much are they paid?

Answer. 1. The post inspectors and luggage overseers are intrusted with the duty of controlling and seeing the business of the post office duly and regularly performed.

The following are the duties with which the post inspectors are intrusted :

They are required constantly to visit the different post office establishments within their circuit, (which generally embraces a whole province,) and, as often as they may deem it necessary, to revise the post arrangements, the post office funds, the station-houses, and, in obedience to the official regulations, to keep a watch over the contractor, the inferior servants and postillions, as also to report to the general post office on the state of the roads and horses, or any irregularities that may exist. They are likewise required to suggest any improvements that may be conducive to the amelioration of the service.

The post inspectors are permanent commissioners for the general post office, and are frequently intrusted with special duties, such as taking cognizance of the complaints of travellers, concluding contracts, and the establishing of new stations. They are required to reside in the circuit over which their superintendance extends.

The post inspector is entitled, gratis, to every description of post conveyance. The contractor is bound to furnish, without demanding payment, two extra post horses, when he is travelling in the performance of his duties.

The post inspectors have a fixed salary, amounting to from 600 to 1,000 rixdollars per annum, and an additional allowance of 2 rixdollars per diem when they are travelling.

2. The luggage overseers are under the direction of the post inspectors. Their duty is to prevent and detect impositions on the part of porters, carriers, ferrymen, carters, travellers, and all subordinate servants, such as conductors, coachmen, and packers.

Each province has a luggage overseer. He is bound to move to any spot to which the general post office, the post inspector of the province, or any other authorized officer, may deem it most expedient to send him. On his arrival at any station, he must report himself to the post office intendant, and is bound to follow his instructions, as far as they are consistent with his official duties. He must also watch that the ostlers and postillions do not surreptitiously admit unbooked persons secretly, or forward letters or packages of money.

The luggage overseers are mounted, wear the dress of the subordinate officers, and are provided with a sabre. When employed on special business, they wear a private dress, to prevent their recognition by the post office officials; and on these occasions they are provided with a particular description of legalized medal.

The luggage overseers are provided with a horse by Government, and have a fixed yearly salary of from 300 to 400 rixdollars, and when employed in travelling they have an allowance of 1 rixdollar per diem. Out of these allowances, they must provide for the keeping of their horse themselves.

3. The general post office occasionally employs confidential officials in travelling through the provinces and along the post stations, for the purpose of taking cognizance of such irregularities as may exist, and of reporting upon them. To avoid being recognised, they frequently travel under feigned names.

Question 9. How are postmasters appointed, and what are their duties?

Answer. The postmasters in post towns are selected from among practical officials, who, from long service, have acquired a general knowledge of post office affairs.

The titles of these postmasters are as follows :

1. Court postmasters—of which there are two : one at Berlin, and the other at Königsburg.
2. Chief directors—in the larger towns.
3. Post directors ; and
4. Postmasters.

The title of post director is merely a distinction conferred upon such postmasters as may have distinguished themselves by the length or fidelity of their service, and the knowledge which they have acquired.

Postmasters of the third and fourth classes are appointed by the Postmaster General himself ; but the appointments of the first and second classes must be confirmed by the King. These four classes all stand in a similar category with reference to the Postmaster General.

In virtue of a royal regulation of ancient date, a certain number of individuals in the Prussian military service, who have acquired a claim to be provided for in the civil service, must be admitted to postmasterships ; and this number amounts to 132.

The post situations are classed according to the extent and importance of the duties :

1. Situations to be filled by staff-officers.
2. By captains.
3. By lieutenants.

It frequently happens, though the postmaster title, together with the emoluments, are enjoyed by these military officers, that, with the sanction of the Postmaster General, the whole management of the business of the post office is transferred to the secretaries, in whose favor a certain portion of the emolument is relinquished. The remaining number of the postmasterships, amounting to 113, (including the court and chief postmasterships,) are filled by practical officials, who are usually selected from among the oldest, the most experienced, and the most skillful of the post office secretaries. The new postmaster having already acquired a knowledge of the duties of the office, all that remains to be done is to remind him of them, and of his oath of office.

The post inspector of the province, or an older postmaster in the neighborhood, is charged by the Postmaster General with the duty of introducing the newly appointed postmaster to his office, of putting him in possession of the post-house and its appurtenances, and also of presenting him to the official secretaries, as their future chief.

The duties of a postmaster are : to conduct and superintend the affairs of the post office ; to carry on the correspondence, inspect the cash accounts, and revise them monthly ; to survey the post-house and the different buildings connected with it ; to write out all the time-bills ; to sign the quittances for money letters and other letters delivered for conveyance ; and to examine the cashier's books and the accounts kept by the post secretary.

The duty of the postmaster is likewise to report every month, to the general post office, all important occurrences that may have taken place within his district.—(Newspaper intelligence.)

Question 10. How are post offices established, and how and when discontinued?

Answer. The classification of post establishments in Prussia is as follows:

1. Post towns, or town post offices. (*Chief post office* merely an appellation applied to post offices in the principal cities.)
2. Post administrations.
3. Sub-offices.
4. Receiving houses.

The classes 1 and 2 communicate directly with the general post, excepting as regards the accounts, which can only be forwarded direct to Berlin by class 1. The classes 2, 3, and 4, are always under the direction of the town post offices, which, after revising the accounts of those classes, incorporate them with their own.

Offices for the conveyance and collecting of letters are established, whether the inhabitants apply or not to the general post office, as soon as it becomes evident, either from letter bills or from representations made by any of the postmasters, that the correspondence of the place has increased so much as to render such an establishment desirable, and provided the probable future receipts are likely to cover the expense of its organization and management.

When these kinds of offices are established, the direction of them is intrusted to some confidential domiciliated inhabitant of the place—usually the tax-gatherer, or even the burgomaster, and, in many cases, the tradesman, who may have been recommended to the postmaster general by the postmaster of the post office to which it is to be attached.

The person to whom it is intrusted, though the necessary time be devoted to the performance of the post office duties, will view it as a mere auxiliary employment, it being seldom very extensive. The allowance made to such conveyancer is 120 rixdollars per annum. After the appointment has been approved of by the Postmaster General, the post conveyancer is taught to prepare the letter bills, and is made acquainted with the system of despatching and receiving the letters, &c., and is so initiated into the most important branches of the post office business.

All conveyance offices of this description are furnished by the chief post magazine in Berlin with a tin-plate coat-of-arms, with the eagle, the post horn, and the superscription, "The royal post conveyance," or "The royal letter collecting office," and also with the necessary number of scales and weights, (for weighing the letters, letter packets, and money and other packages,) letter stamps with stamp apparatus, post bills, list of post charges and post office laws and regulations, with a book of the post stations, a list of the different post offices, &c., and a general post map of the kingdom of Prussia, accompanied with the necessary printed forms of letter bills and accounts.

Each post conveyance and collecting office has its particular post charges, calculated according to their distances from other post establishments in the kingdom of Prussia. These distances are measured according to a correct map, drawn up in the route department of the general post office at Berlin.* Of these scales of charges drawn up by the post office accountant at Berlin, one copy is sent to the newly organized office,

* The relative charges are then fixed by the post office accountant at Berlin.

another to the superintending post office, and a third is kept by the account audit office at Berlin. A superintending post office, or sub-post office having a more extensive circle of business than a conveyance, the postmaster of the former is not selected from among private individuals, but is, as is the case in post towns, selected by the Postmaster General from among the post office officials, and is generally one who has held the situation of secretary. The Postmaster General is invested with the power of forming conveyance into sub-offices, and sub-offices into post offices, and *vice versa*. Post offices are in some places entirely abolished so soon as the trade thereof becomes so trifling as no longer to justify the expense of such an establishment, or as soon as other similar establishments in the neighborhood can be rendered available for such place.

The abolition of post office establishments, however, takes place but very rarely; on the contrary, they are established not only whenever they are required, but even whenever a wish for their establishment is expressed.

It rests entirely with the Postmaster General to decide, according to circumstances, as to the expediency of abolishing old or establishing new offices.

Question 11. What description of mail bags are used? Are they of leather, and secured by a lock?

Answer. The bags are usually of strong linen drill, and at long stations they are made of leather.

The linen drill bags are made in one piece, without any sewing; and are durably manufactured by various manufacturers, who supply the general post office with them on reasonable terms.

The general post office department point out those manufacturers whose articles are most durable and reasonable.

The post establishments must provide these bags at their own expense. They are, however, allowed a yearly compensation for them, as well as for all other expenses; such as those incurred for writing materials, materials for packing, wood, candles, lamps, candlesticks, articles for lighting the fires and for cleansing the office and passenger rooms, inkstands, penknives, scissors, &c.

This indemnification is made good from the postage collected for the carriage of newspapers mentioned in answer to query 4th.

After the letter bills have been filled up, and an extract of them made and annexed to the letters, they are packed up together, and then securely tied up by the despatching clerk.

The packets are then put into the linen or leathern bag; the opening of which is then tied and sealed, so that they cannot again be opened without breaking the seal.

The collective number of letter-bags for the same delivery, from the different chief and sub-offices, are then placed in large leathern trunks, also secured with cords, and the straps pulled round and buckled and sealed twice, so that they cannot be easily opened without the seals being broken.

Letters, either containing money or without, are packed up in paper securely sealed, and then weighed; after this, they are placed in a letter-bag and again sealed and weighed, and subsequently enclosed in a leather trunk and sealed again for the third time. Thus the conveyance of letters is rendered perfectly secure. Locks are never made use of. If the letter-bags contain any letters of value, they are always weighed.

Question 12. Are the mails frequently robbed?

Answer. No: this seldom, if ever, happens with the one or two-horse post carts, driven by a single postillion, unaccompanied by a guard, and which only carries one letter trunk.

All other descriptions of conveyance, and also those with money and packages, are in most instances accompanied by a guard and persons on horseback. Robberies seldom occur in these cases.

Question 13. How are lost letters traced?

Answer. The loss of letters seldom occurs, as all letters are alphabetically arranged in the letter bills, and are therefore subject to considerable control. The senders of letters can at any time ascertain whether their letters were regularly despatched, and through what sub-office they were forwarded; whether any delay was occasioned thereby, where the detention may have occurred, and whether they finally reached their destination.

Should a sender of a letter complain that it has been lost, and request information on the subject, the post office establishment at the place where he resides despatches along the same line of road on which the letter must have been taken a circular (or running note) to the place to which the letter was addressed.

The post office to which it was directed ascertains from the letter bill whether the letter has reached its destination or not, and then returns the circular by the most expeditious conveyance, with the necessary report thereon. In cases where no blame attaches to the post office, and in which the person at whose request the circular is despatched does it merely to ascertain whether the letter has really reached its destination, he is required to pay five silver grosch for each post-stage; and this charge is made according to the rate noted on the letter bill. If the sender only wishes to ascertain whether his letter has been duly despatched, or in the event of any mistake having occurred at the post office, no charge is made. (Such instances for the circular, see Post Hand Book, page 370, paragraph 77.)

For every letter of importance recommended by the sender, he receives a quittance, whereby he is enabled to found his claim.

For the loss of recommended letters, the post office awards an indemnification of twenty rixdollars.

Question 14. What is done with dead letters, and what is the average annual amount?

Answer. In Prussia the sender of a letter is bound, in case the person to whom the letter is addressed is not to be found, to take back the letter and pay the single postage for its return. Letters to persons who cannot be traced are kept fourteen days at the post office; if, however, they are directed "*poste restante*," they are kept three months. In the interval, the post office, and, if necessary, with the aid of the police, endeavor to trace out the person to whom it is addressed.

After the expiration of the time allowed, the letters are returned to the place from whence they were sent.

If the sender can be traced, either by means of the handwriting or the impression of the seal, the letter is restored to him, and he is required to pay the return postage. Should, however, the sender of the letter be unknown, the post office causes the returned letter, with its address, to be advertised in the newspapers, so that the sender thereof may recover it.

Such letters as are not claimed, are forwarded every fourteen days to the dead-letter office at Berlin.

Here, by virtue of the exclusive power vested in this department, the letters are opened without the contents being read. The names of the writers are noted on the reversed sides in *red ink*, and again closed and sealed up with an official seal; after which, they are returned to the office from which they were forwarded, in order that they may be delivered to the senders of them.

Should the writer, after all, not be found, (of which fact a certificate from the police of the place must be produced,) the postage of the letter, with which the office from whence it was originally despatched as yet continues chargeable, must be liquidated at the general post office, by the transmission of the said letter; which, after the lapse of a year, is burnt at the dead-letter office at Berlin.

The number of undeliverable letters yearly forwarded to the dead-letter department amounts to about 45,000; of which, however, more than two-thirds are delivered after the name of the writer has been ascertained. So that the annual total number of undelivered letters amounts to somewhat less than 15,000.

Question 15. What is the annual pay of a postmaster, and how often is he required to render his accounts?

Answer. The salary of a postmaster differs according to the extent of the business of the office, and varies from 500 to 4,000 rixdollars.

The duty of every post office superintendent is to render the accounts, and he is held particularly responsible for their correctness.

A general statement of receipts and issues, according to their respective classification, is made out monthly, and sent to the general post office treasury at Berlin. At the same time, the overplus forwarded to the treasury, or the additions sent by the treasury to the post office, must be round sums in dollars.

Every four months each post officer must prepare a special statement of his receipts and issues.

The *receipts* for postage and fares, for each distinct post day, and the total amount of each item of receipt and expenditure, must be accompanied by the necessary voucher.

For instance: the letter bills and fare-tickets must be annexed, to enable the accountant department of the general post office at Berlin to verify the receipts for fares and postage.

The issues must, in like measure, be specially notified. They come under the heads of—

No. 1. Regular or usual expenditure.

No. 2. Occasional or unfixed expenditure.

The expenditures No. 1 consist chiefly of the allowances to the postmasters and secretaries, and the salary of the masters of the post-horses.

The only vouchers required for these payments are the receipts of the persons to whom they have been made.

The expenditures No. 2 consist of the other incidental expenses made in the course of the four months on account of the management of the post office, which cannot be sanctioned without the authority of the general post office; therefore the accountant department must be furnished by the post offices with the general post office orders and quittances for the sums paid.

The statements respecting the unfixed expenses must be prepared in duplicate. One of the copies, after approval, is returned to the post office; while the other is retained by the post office comptroller as a control for the annual account.

After the receipts and expenditures of the post office have been thus controlled, and the most minute calculations made of every item, the surplus, if any, must be transmitted to the general post office treasury at Berlin; or, should the claim be in favor of the postmaster, it is accordingly remitted.

Each post office must prepare, besides this monthly statement of the receipts and expenses, and the four monthly settlements with the general post office treasury, (which must be always rendered at Berlin by the middle of the ensuing month,) a yearly account, that must be laid before the general post office accountant.

Question 16. How do postmasters pay their dues to the department?

Answer. As stated at query 15, by transmission of hard cash; or by draft on banks, where there are such institutions.

Question 17. How far is the mail carried, per hour, upon the principal leading roads?

Answer. The mail carts travel at the rate of 40 or 45 minutes per German mile upon the Macadamized roads, and 60 minutes upon the common roads.

The fast mail travels with the same degree of speed.

The stages proceed at the rate of a mile per hour. The wagons at the same rate; but are subject to considerable detention at each station, on account of the revision of the packages. The time lost by these detentions is inserted in the time-bills at each station. At every post the time of arrival and departure is marked down in the time-bills.

The last post office is obliged every month to forward the time-bills to the road department of the general post office. This department examines these time-bills, and lays a statement of the time unnecessarily lost before the general post office, which generally decides the fine, (usually a silver grosch per minute,) which is appropriated to the post poor fund.

Question 18. Are there any mails carried upon horseback, or on foot? if so, how much is paid per mile per annum?

Answer. The posts, which are exclusively letters and newspapers, are conveyed in one or two-horse post chaises.

The expense for them is, upon an average, 15 silver groschen per horse per mile.

Even the smallest places have regular communication with the nearest post establishments by post foot-carriers, or country foot-carriers, as well for the conveyance of letters as of money, to the amount of 50 rixdollars, and small packages weighing six pounds. The total weight which they carry cannot exceed 50 pounds.

The post office includes them in the contract with the general post office, respecting the post contractors, and in which their allowance is fixed—usually regulated, according to the scale, at five silver groschen per Prussian mile.

A copy of such contract is enclosed.

Question 19. Do the receipts of the post office establishment equal the expenses?

Answer. The annual receipts have hitherto exceeded the expenses. Though the excess amounted, in the year 1821, to only about 700,000 rix-dollars, this sum has, in consequence of the alterations and improvements in every branch of post office concerns, commensurate with the great increase of traffic and the wants of the country, increased to a net annual surplus of one and a half million of dollars.

1. *Number of post offices in the Prussian kingdom at the end of the year 1839.*

236 Post towns.

53 Sub post towns, 1st class.

1,012 Sub post towns, 2d class.

100 Receiving houses in small towns and boroughs.

32 Stations.

1,433 Post offices.

2. *The number of mails, mail-carts, mail-coaches, and other post-coaches, at the same time, was—*

83 Mails conveyed by one or two horses, and carrying only letters.

91 Mail-coaches conveyed by three or four horses, carrying letters and passengers.

209 Mail-coaches conveying chiefly passengers, not quite so fast as the preceding.

301 Mail-coaches conveying only packets and the guard.

309 Mail-coaches upon smaller distances, and ordinarily only with one or two horses.

292 Foot posts.

1,285 Posts.

The number of miles made by the different sorts of posts in the year 1838, was 2,395,056.

Question 1. What is the average number of letters received daily in the post office at Berlin?

Answer. This number is stated to be 8,200.

Question 2. What is the number of letters sent daily from and through the office at Berlin?

Answer. This number has been given to somewhat more; *i. e.*

1. Letters sent from Berlin originally, 9,000.

2. Letters sent through the post office at Berlin, 9,000.

The daily number of two-penny post letters at Berlin is 2,000.

Question 3. What is the average amount of newspapers received daily in the post office at Berlin?

Answer. The number is 18,201.

Saturday, (with those which are only published weekly—in all, 614 different sorts of newspapers,) 34,273.

Question 4. What is the average amount of newspapers sent daily from and through the office at Berlin?

Answer. This number is 15,930.

PRINTED DOCUMENTS.

The department will, herewith, receive printed reports from various committees appointed by the British House of Commons, (in London,) numbered from 1 to 20, upon the subject of the post office department, commencing with an early period of its history, down to the year 1838; also, all the laws passed in relation to it, as well as instructions to post-masters issued by the department itself, numerous blanks, &c.; also, the printed laws, instructions, blank forms, &c., used by the *post office department of Belgium*. [The regulations and organization of this department are so nearly alike to the department of France, that it is deemed unnecessary to make a separate report upon them.]

This is also the case with the post office departments of Austria, Saxony, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden, and the free towns of Germany.

The post office system in each of these countries is so nearly alike to that of Prussia, that it is deemed superfluous to give the detail of the duties of their respective departments. Printed laws and instructions from each of these departments are herewith annexed. They were obligingly furnished by the gentlemen at the head of the respective departments. It may be well to add, however, that in all these countries, where railroads exist, the respective companies are obliged, by law, to carry the mails *free of expense*, at such hours as will suit the convenience of the departments.

 POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

Before closing this report, I most respectfully beg leave to suggest, for your consideration and for that of Congress, some alterations in the existing laws relative to the Post Office Department of the Union. Having been an agent of the department for a period of seven years, during which time I have visited the principal post offices in most of the States of the Confederacy, as well as in the Territories, the defects of the present organization of the department have been frequently and forcibly impressed upon my mind; and my recent investigations abroad have strengthened my opinion as to the necessary remedy. The rapid increase in the population of the country, extending to the remotest parts of our western States and Territories, and the consequent pressing demands upon Congress to create mail-routes, and upon the department to establish additional post offices, make it imperative that something should speedily be done *to lessen the weight of the mails*, in order that they may be conveyed more rapidly over the country. To do this without injury to the public, I have no hesitation in recommending the following as improvements upon the present system, viz:

1. *An entire abolition of the franking privilege.*

There is no desire to charge any particular class of individuals with an abuse of this privilege under the existing law; yet it is well known by every one having connexion with the department, that abuses do exist, and are of daily occurrence. It is a fact, within my own knowledge, that gentlemen high in office, not being able to frank as often as they desired, for want of time or some other cause, have actually procured substitutes to write their names; and yet these gentlemen did not suppose they were violating any law upon the subject. This I know to have been the case in a particular instance.

The actual number of franked packages sent from the post office of Washington city during the week ending on the 7th of July last, was 201,534; and the whole number sent during the last session of Congress amounted to the enormous quantity of 4,314,948! All these packages are not only carried by the department into every section of the country *free of charge*, but it is actually obliged to pay to every postmaster, whose commissions do not amount to \$2,000 per annum, *two cents for the delivery of each one!* Supposing all the above to have been delivered, the department would lose from its revenue, for this one item, upwards of \$80,000, besides paying for the mail transportation. In addition to this, suppose many of these free packages are not called for, but remain in the offices until they are advertised, (for which *two cents* is paid on each,) then, if afterwards taken out, *the delivery of such package actually costs the department four cents!* Each one of the 13,500 postmasters in the Union has the franking privilege to an unlimited extent as regards *numbers*, being only confined in *weight*. Suppose the average number to be one letter a day for each postmaster which is sent free in the mail, the amount in one year would be nearly *five millions*; so that, taking this data to be correct, the department annually pays for the *delivery of matter which it carries gratis* about \$150,000!

Besides this, many of these packages, even when taken out, are rarely read; for the reason, that the newspapers containing the same document or speech have anticipated their arrival. For instance: it is well known to every member of Congress, and to every one connected with a post office, that, long after the President's message has been published in every newspaper throughout the whole country, and when there is reason to suppose there is scarcely a man in the Union who reads at all that has not seen it, thousands upon thousands are still sent daily under frank from Washington. It is thus, also, with the annual reports of the respective heads of departments, and with numerous reports and speeches made in both Houses of Congress. Were the franking privilege abolished, the postage upon letters could be greatly reduced, without any diminution of the revenue of the department. I am much mistaken in the patriotism of the gentlemen composing the present Congress if they would not readily sacrifice a small personal privilege to effect a great public good.

2. Letters to be charged by weight.

This is so obviously just, that comment upon it is scarcely necessary. By the present regulations of the department, if a *single* letter is rated with *double* postage at the office where mailed, the postmaster at the office where it is delivered has no right to make any abatement of the postage, unless it be opened in his presence, or in the presence of one of his assistants. This cannot be done in nine cases out of ten, and consequently there is often great injustice done to individuals; and, in the end, the department is no gainer by it, for it more frequently happens that letters are *undercharged*. Besides, the present mode of charging letters holds out a temptation for clerks to become dishonest. For instance: a letter coming to a delivery-clerk, rated with *single* postage, and he perceiving it to be *double*, demands proportionable postage from the person to whom it is addressed. This he has an indisputable right to do. If the person refuses to pay it, he is obliged to open the letter in the presence of the clerk; and then, should it turn out that the letter was not only *double*, but *treble* or *quadruple*, he

would be compelled to pay postage accordingly. The surplus, whatever it might be, could be kept by the clerk without fear of discovery, and without defrauding the postmaster of the office to which he might be attached. The postmaster would only be answerable to the department for the amount charged upon the bill which accompanied the letter; the department would therefore be the loser, without even knowing that a fraud had been committed upon it. To charge letters by *weight* would be an effectual check upon frauds of this kind, if any exist, and would, besides, be equally just to the department and to the public.

3. Only two rates of postage for the whole Union.

If the franking privilege should be abolished, and the law amended with regard to newspapers, I feel fully convinced that the following rates of postage for letters could safely be adopted, without decreasing the revenue of the department, viz :

For all letters weighing not more than half an ounce, for any distance under 500 miles - - - - - 5cents;

For any distance over 500 miles - - - - - 10 cents, with the addition of 5 cents for every additional half ounce, when under a distance of 500 miles, and 10 cents when over that distance. In all cases, *the postage to be paid in advance*; when not so paid, double these rates to be charged. No package weighing over one pound to be admitted into the mail; none, also, of an inconvenient size, or containing any thing that would tend to injure or destroy the other portions of it. For the convenience of the public, small cards, prepared for the purpose, of an adhesive nature, to be affixed upon the face of the letter mailed, of the denomination of 5 and 10 cents each, might be issued by the department, and sold at all the post offices, which would be evidence of the pre-payment of postage.

The number of letters now carried by private individuals, particularly between the larger cities connected by railroads and steamboats, is almost beyond belief. I have been repeatedly informed by intelligent gentlemen, that it would be but fair to suppose that at least *one half* of the correspondence between New York and Boston never goes into the mail. This is doubtless the case between other cities, and is owing to the present high rates of postage. Were the postage reduced as here recommended, all inducements to evade the law would be taken away. Nearly every person would prefer paying 5 or 10 cents to seeking for a private opportunity at the railroad depots or steamboat landings.

By the pre-payment of all letters, the number of dead letters would be greatly diminished, and thus the department would save a vast amount, in weight, of unnecessary mail-transportation. At present, the average number of dead letters returned to the department quarterly amounts to about 275,000, which, at an average postage of fifteen cents for each letter, exhibits a loss to the department, quarterly, of \$41,250. These letters are collected from every section of the Union, and all of them are carried *twice* in the mails, without the department being in the slightest degree benefited by their transmission.

From the gradual and steady increase in the number of letters delivered in England since the introduction of the universal penny postage law, I think I am warranted in saying that in another year the British post

office revenue will be nearly or quite as much as it was under its former organization. Compared with this country, it should be borne in mind, that, although the population of England is much larger, and confined to a smaller compass, yet the reduction made in the postage of that Government is nearly ten times as great as what is here proposed. It would be but fair to presume, therefore, (notwithstanding our sparse population, and the distance we are obliged to carry the mails,) that this reduction in the postage can be made in our country without loss to the department.

4. *Newspapers and printed matter of every description to be charged by weight, and to be pre-paid.*

The transportation of newspapers, pamphlets, and other printed matter, is by far the most burdensome portion of the mail, and for which the department receives a very inadequate compensation. The price paid to a contractor is generally in proportion to the *weight* of the mail; and, consequently, that portion for which the least compensation is received, the highest price is paid for its transmission. To remedy this, in some measure, I would earnestly recommend that all newspapers and printed matter of every description should be charged by *weight*. There is no reason or justice in the present law, so far as regards the transmission of printed matter by mail. Why should one of the smaller newspapers pay as much postage as some of the mammoth sheets published in New York and elsewhere, which are perhaps six feet square? It is positively unjust to the publishers, the public, and the mail service. If newspapers were charged by weight, both the publishers and the department would be benefited by the change; for the publishers would then be careful to see that every paper should be *well dried* before it was sent to the post office, thus securing its transmission without being rubbed or defaced; and it would, at the same time, aid in decreasing the weight of the mails.

The postage upon all newspapers should be *paid in advance*, except when sent to offices within the county, district, or parish in which they are published; in that case, they might be sent *free*. Publishers of newspapers ought not to be allowed to send their *exchange papers* FREE of postage, as at present. As well might the merchants demand from the department a free exchange of their prices current; or any other class of citizens be allowed to send, free of postage, every thing in relation to any particular branch of business in which they might be engaged.

As the country extends and increases in population, the attention of the department will necessarily be turned to one great object—the most effectual manner of decreasing the weight of the mails with the least injury to the public; in order that it may be enabled to convey them with the speed that seems to be demanded by the increasing wants and enterprise of the country. This can be done without lessening the circulation of any paper to legitimate and reading subscribers, by excluding from the mail only such matter as is now transported from one section of the Union to another, without being taken from the post offices. As evidence of this, the following statement of the average number of newspapers remaining *weekly* in the post offices of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore, will be sufficient proof, viz :

	No. of papers
In New York, - - - - -	750
In Philadelphia, - - - - -	400
In Boston, - - - - -	500
In Baltimore, - - - - -	400

The number of periodicals and other publications remaining dead in these post offices is in about the same proportion. If the postage upon these papers and pamphlets had been paid in advance, the probability is that they would have been called for; or, if not, the department would at least have received its legal equivalent for their transportation. Suppose that the 13,500 post offices in the Union have a proportionate quantity of *dead* printed matter respectively, and that all this could and would be excluded from the mails if pre-payment were demanded, what an immense weight would at once be taken away!

A newspaper the size of the "Globe," "National Intelligencer," or "Philadelphia Inquirer," will weigh, *when dry*, with a wrapper, about *two ounces*. If papers are allowed to go *free* within the *county* in which they are published, a pre-payment of *one cent* per ounce postage would be *big* a reasonable charge for those that are *sent* beyond the limits of the county. For other printed matter of all kinds, *two cents* per ounce might be charged for a distance of 500 miles, and *three cents* for any distance beyond. This would be a reduction upon the present prices, and yet the revenue of the department would be augmented.

As one great desideratum is to *lessen the weight* of the mails, all publishers might be allowed the privilege of sending their newspapers by private conveyance, or otherwise, even over a mail route.

5. *Special agents.*

At least one intelligent and experienced agent should be employed by the department for each of the larger States in the Union. His duty should be to visit, from time to time, every post office in his district; instruct postmasters in their duty; inform the department where new post offices might be advantageously established, and where existing ones should be discontinued; recommend the removal of unworthy incumbents; observe that the contractors faithfully perform their duty; recommend the discontinuance of such mail routes as are useless; and, in short, to keep a vigilant eye upon all the operations of the department within his district. Such an agent, capable of giving instruction upon all points in relation to the duties of each individual attached to the department, constantly and actively engaged himself, would save much of the labor of the officers in the department at Washington, (who have already more than they can well attend to,) and would be the means of preventing many depredations upon the mail, and impositions upon the department, which are now, for want of such a surveillance, of constant occurrence. Two or three of the smaller States might be connected; one agent would be sufficient for such a district.

6. *Mail-guards.*

No mail of importance ought to be without a guard. He should have the entire control of it while on the road; receive and deliver the mails

at each office upon his route ; have a schedule of the time of arrival and departure at the end of the route, and report every failure at the moment of its occurrence, with the reasons, if any. He should be well armed, and be employed and paid by the department. Within a few years, there have been several robberies of the great leading southern, western, and northern mails, while upon the road. The loss to individuals, by these robberies, was much more than would defray the expenses of keeping an efficient mail-guard upon all the leading roads for the next twenty years.

In so large and so rapidly increasing an establishment as the post office, *simplicity* in the detail of its duties should be the study of every one connected with it. The more complicated the system is, the more difficult will it be to manage it with accuracy. *Regularity* and *certainty* in a post office, are essential to effect the object for which it was established. Knowing, from long experience, the mistakes that are of daily occurrence in nearly every post office in the country, and the impossibility of avoiding them under present regulations, it has been my aim in this report to recommend such alterations in the law as not only to reduce very considerably the present high rates of postage without injury to the revenue, but also to insure *correctness*, *regularity*, and *despatch*, in the transmission and delivery of the mails.

I have the honor to be, with high regard, your obedient servant,

GEO. PLITT.

To the Hon. JOHN M. NILES,
Postmaster General.

Documents accompanying the report of George Pitt.

A.

Articles of agreement, made this 4th day of July, in the year of our Lord 1839, between the commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, for and on behalf of her Majesty, of the one part, and Samuel Cunard, of Halifax, in Nova Scotia, Esquire, of the other part, witness: That the said Samuel Cunard doth hereby, for himself, his heirs, executors and administrators, covenant, promise, and agree with and to the said commissioners, that he, the said Samuel Cunard, his executors and administrators, shall and will, during the continuance of this contract, diligently, faithfully, and to the satisfaction of the said commissioners for the time being, and with all possible speed, convey her Majesty's mails and despatches, twice in every calendar month, from Liverpool, in the county of Lancaster, in that part of the United Kingdom called England, to Halifax aforesaid, and also twice in every calendar month, from Halifax aforesaid, to Liverpool aforesaid, by means of a sufficient number of good, substantial, and efficient steam vessels; each of such vessels being supplied and furnished with engines of not less than *three hundred horses power*. And also will, in like manner, convey her Majesty's mails and despatches twice in every calendar month, to and from each of the undermentioned places, viz.: From Halifax aforesaid, to Boston, in the United States; from Boston aforesaid, to Halifax aforesaid; and when and as often as the river St. Lawrence is unobstructed by ice, or navigable, in the opinion of the naval officer, or other person having the charge of her Majesty's mails and despatches, from Pictou, in Nova Scotia, to Quebec, in Canada, and from Quebec aforesaid, to Pictou aforesaid, by means of a sufficient number of good, substantial, and efficient steam vessels; each of such lastmentioned vessels being supplied and furnished with engines of not less than *one hundred and fifty horses power*. And that all the vessels to be and while employed in the performance of this contract, shall be supplied and furnished with all necessary and proper apparel, furniture, stores, tackle, boats, and fuel, and manned with competent officers and engineers, and a sufficient crew of able seamen and other men, to be in all respects as to vessels, engines, equipments, and crew, subject to the approval of the said commissioners, or such other person or persons as they shall from time to time appoint for that purpose.

And that for the purpose of conveying such mails and despatches, one of such vessels, with engines of not less than three hundred horses power, and so equipped and manned, shall, twice in every calendar month, during the continuance of this contract, on such day and at such hour as the said commissioners shall appoint, proceed from Liverpool aforesaid, without loss of time, direct to Halifax aforesaid; and another of such lastmentioned vessels shall also, twice in every calendar month, during the continuance of this contract, on such day and at such hour as the said commissioners shall appoint, proceed without loss of time, direct from Halifax aforesaid, to Liverpool aforesaid, with the said mails and despatches on board.

That twice in every calendar month, during the continuance of this contract, as soon as possible after the arrival at Halifax of each successive ves-

nel, bringing the said mails and despatches from England, one of such vessels, of not less than *one hundred and fifty horses power*, so equipped and manned as aforesaid, shall, without loss of time, proceed direct to Boston aforesaid, with the mails and despatches for that place on board, where such last-mentioned vessel shall remain for the purpose of receiving any return mails, but not so long as to run any risk of her not arriving at Halifax, with such mails and despatches from Boston, previously to the departure from Halifax of the vessel which ought next to convey such mails and despatches to England.

And, also, that twice in every calendar month, during the continuance of this contract, as soon as possible after the arrival at Pictou aforesaid of her Majesty's mails and despatches from Halifax, one of such steam vessels, with engines of not less than *one hundred and fifty horses power*, and so equipped and manned as aforesaid, shall be in readiness to leave, and shall forthwith proceed from Pictou, without loss of time, with the said mails and despatches on board, direct to Quebec aforesaid, where such vessel shall remain for the purpose of receiving any return mails not less than twenty four hours, but not longer than will ensure her return to Pictou with her Majesty's mails and despatches in time to allow such mails and despatches being put on board the steam vessel which, in performance of this contract, ought next to leave Halifax with the first return mail for England.

That the said commissioners for the time being shall be at liberty, and have full power, to appoint the day and hour for the said vessels originally leaving all the said places from whence the said mails and despatches are to be conveyed, and from time to time, on giving three months' notice, in writing, under their hands, or the hand of their secretary, to the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, to alter, as the said commissioners may think fit, the time of departure of all or any of the said vessels; it being, nevertheless, expressly understood that the said commissioners, or any one of their officers or agents, shall be at liberty, and have full power, at any time during the continuance of this contract, to direct that any one or more of such vessels so conveying her Majesty's mails and despatches from any of the said ports or places shall delay her or their departure for any period not exceeding twenty-four hours beyond the period which may have been previously fixed for the departure of such vessel or vessels; and a letter addressed to the commander of the vessel so to be delayed, shall be a sufficient authority for such detention.

That if at any time, from stress of weather, or other unavoidable circumstances, the vessel conveying the said mails and despatches from Halifax aforesaid shall not be able, in the opinion of the said naval officer, or other person duly authorized by the said commissioners, to fetch the river Mersey at Liverpool aforesaid, without considerable loss of time, then, and in every such case, her Majesty's mails and despatches, with the officer or person having the charge thereof, shall be landed at any of the undermentioned places, at the discretion of such naval officer, or other person so authorized as aforesaid, viz: Bristol, Falmouth, Plymouth, Southampton, Portsmouth, Dover, or Deal.

That the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall receive, and allow to remain on board, on all and each of the vessels to be employed in the performance of this contract, while they are so employed, and also while remaining at any of the said ports or places for return mails, an officer in her Majesty's navy, or any other person, to be appointed by the said commissioners, and also a servant of the said officer or other per-

son as aforesaid, if required; and that every such officer or other person shall be recognised and considered, by the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, and his and their officers, agents, and seamen, as the agent of the said commissioners in charge of her Majesty's mails and despatches, and as having full authority, in all cases, to require a due and strict execution of the conditions of this contract on the part of the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, his and their officers, servants, and agents, and to determine every question, whenever arising, relative to proceeding to sea or putting into harbor, or to the necessity of stopping to assist any vessel in distress or to save human life; and that the decision of such officer or other person as aforesaid shall, in each and every of such cases, be final and binding on the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, unless the said commissioners, on appeal from the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall think proper to decide otherwise. That a suitable first-rate cabin, with appropriate bed, bedding, and furniture, shall, at the cost of the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, be provided and appropriated by the said Samuel Cunard for and to the exclusive use and for the sole accommodation of each and every of such naval officers or other persons authorized as aforesaid; and also a proper and convenient place of deposit on board, under lock and key, for her Majesty's mails and despatches; and that each and every of the said officers or other persons, as aforesaid, shall be victualled by the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, as a chief cabin passenger, without any charge being made either for his passage or victualing; and that, should all or any of such officers or other persons require a servant, such servant shall be also provided with a proper and suitable berth, and be victualled by and at the cost of the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, without any charge being made for the same. And that, if the said commissioners shall at any time during the continuance of this contract think fit to intrust the charge and custody of her Majesty's mails and despatches to the commander or commanders of all or any of the vessels to be employed in the performance of this contract between Halifax and Boston, or Pictou and Quebec, or any of them, or between any of the ports and places herein mentioned, that such commander or commanders shall take due care thereof, and shall make the usual declarations required, or which may be required, by her Majesty's Postmaster General in such or similar cases; and such commander or commanders having the charge of such mails and despatches shall, immediately on the arrival at any of the said ports and places of any vessel so conveying the said mails and despatches, himself deliver the said mails and despatches into the hands of the postmaster of the port or place where such mails and despatches are to be delivered, or into the hands of such other person as the said commissioners shall direct and authorize to receive the same.

That, at each and every of the said ports or places where her Majesty's mails and despatches may be delivered or received, the said naval officer, or such other person having, or authorized to have, the charge of the said mails and despatches, shall, whenever and as often as by him deemed practicable or necessary, be conveyed on shore, and, also, from the shore to the steam-vessel employed for the time being in the performance of this contract, together with or (if such officer or person considers requisite) without her Majesty's mails and despatches, in a suitable boat, of not less than four oars, to be provided and properly manned and equipped by the said Samuel Cu-

nard ; and that the directions of the said naval officer, or of such other person having, or authorized to have, the charge of the said mails and despatches, shall, in all cases, be obeyed as to the mode of receipt and delivery of the said mails and despatches.

That, if any vessel, having her Majesty's mails and despatches on board, shall stop, linger, or deviate from the direct course on her voyage, or shall delay starting at exact time, or shall put back into port after starting, without the sanction, in each and every case, of such officer or other person authorized to have the charge of the said mails and despatches as aforesaid, then, and in each and every of such cases, and as often as the same shall happen, the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall and will pay unto her Majesty, her heirs and successors, the sum of one hundred pounds ; and that if a vessel which ought to leave Liverpool for Halifax, or Halifax for England, in the performance of this contract, shall not proceed on her voyage for twelve hours after the proper and appointed time, the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall and will, so often as any such omission shall happen, pay unto her Majesty, her heirs and successors, the sum of five hundred pounds ; and, also, the further sum of five hundred pounds for every successive period of twelve hours which shall elapse until such vessel shall proceed on her voyage in the performance of this contract : and that if a vessel, with engines of not less than one hundred and fifty horses power, which ought to leave Halifax, Boston, Pictou, or Quebec, in performance of this contract, shall not proceed on her voyage for twelve hours after the proper and appointed time, the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall and will, so often as any such omission may occur, pay unto her Majesty, her heirs and successors, the sum of two hundred pounds ; and, also, the further sum of two hundred pounds for every successive period of twelve hours which shall elapse until such vessel shall proceed on her voyage in the performance of this contract.

That the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall and will, at all times during the continuance of this contract, at his and their cost, provide and keep sea worthy, and in complete repair, a sufficient number (not less than four) of good, substantial, and efficient steam vessels, of not less than three hundred horses power each ; and, in like manner, a sufficient number of good, substantial, and efficient steam-vessels, of not less than one hundred and fifty horses power each, for the service hereby agreed to be performed by him ; and, at the like costs, adequately provide and furnish all and every of the vessels to be and while employed in the performance of this contract, with all tackle, stores, oil, tallow, fuel, provisions, machinery, engines, anchors, cables, two efficient boats, fire pumps, and all other proper and requisite means for extinguishing fire, and all other furniture and apparel, and whatsoever else may be requisite and necessary for equipping the said vessels and rendering them constantly efficient for the said service.

That the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall and will, from time to time, and at all times during the continuance of this contract, make such alterations or improvements in the construction, equipments, or machinery of the said vessels, which shall be used by him or them in the performance of this contract, as the advanced state of science may suggest, and the said commissioners may direct.

That any naval officer, or other person authorized to have the charge of her Majesty's mails and despatches, shall, either alone, or with such other

persons as he may consider necessary, have full power and authority, whenever and as often as he may deem it requisite, to examine and survey, in such manner as he may think proper, all and every or any of the vessels employed, or to be employed, in the performance of this contract, and the hulls, machinery, and equipments thereof, on his giving notice in writing, to the commander for the time being of the vessel about to be examined, of such his intention; and if any defect or deficiency be ascertained, and notice thereof, in writing, be given to the master or commander of the vessel in which such deficiency or defect may be found, and if the said master or commander shall not immediately, or as soon as possible, thereupon remedy, replace, or effectively repair the same, he, the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall, in every such case, pay to her Majesty, her heirs and successors, the sum of £100; but the payment of such penalty shall not in anywise release or discharge the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, from remedying, replacing, or effectively repairing such deficiency or defect. And that the said commissioners shall also have full power, and be at liberty, whenever and as often as they may deem it requisite, to survey, by any other of their officers or agents, all and every the vessels employed, and to be employed, in the performance of this contract, and of the hulls thereof, and of the engines, machinery, furniture, tackle, apparel, stores, and equipment of every such vessel. And if any such vessel, or any part thereof, or any engines, machinery, furniture, tackle, apparel, boats, stores, or equipments, shall, on any such survey, be declared by any of such officers or agents unseaworthy, or not adapted to the service of this contract; or, if such officers or agents shall deem it necessary or expedient that any alteration or improvement shall be made therein, or any part thereof, in order to keep pace with the more advanced state of science, the vessel which shall be disproved of, or in which such deficiency, defect, or want of improvement shall appear, shall be deemed inefficient for any service hereby contracted to be performed, and shall not be employed again in the conveyance of her [Majesty's] mails and despatches until such defect or deficiency shall have been repaired or supplied, or the alterations or improvements, as the case may be, shall have been made to the satisfaction of the said commissioners; and, if employed before such defect or deficiency shall have been supplied, or such alterations or improvements (as the case may be) shall have been made to the satisfaction of the said commissioners, the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall pay to her Majesty, her heirs and successors, the sum of £500.

That the said Samuel Cunard, and all commanding and other officers of the vessels to be employed in the performance of this contract, and all agents, seamen, and servants of the said Samuel Cunard, shall, at all times during the continuance of this contract, punctually attend to the orders and directions of the said commissioners, or of any of their officers or agents, as to the landing, delivering, and receiving her Majesty's mails and despatches.

And it is hereby agreed, by and between the parties hereto, that all and every the sums of money hereby stipulated to be paid by the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, unto her Majesty, her heirs and successors, shall be considered as stipulated or ascertained damages; and should the same, or any of them, become payable and not be discharged forthwith on the application of the said commissioners, or their agent, each and every of such sums of money may be deducted and retained by the said commissioners out of the moneys payable to the said Samuel Cunard, his

executors or administrators, under this contract, or the payment thereof enforced, with-full costs of suit at the discretion of the said commissioners.

That the said Samuel Cunard, his executors and administrators, shall and will, when and as often as in writing required so to do by the said commissioners, or by such naval or other officers or agents as may be authorized by them to act in that behalf, (such writing to specify the rank or description of the person or persons to be conveyed, and the accommodation to be provided for him or them,) convey, provide for, and victual, on board each and every, or any, of the vessels to be employed in the performance of this contract, in addition to the naval officer or other person who may be in charge of her Majesty's mails and despatches, any number of officers in the navy, army, or civil service of her Majesty, not exceeding two as chief cabin passengers, and any number not exceeding two as fore-cabin passengers, and any number of soldiers, seamen, or marines, not exceeding ten, charging for such passengers the following sums only, namely: for each chief-cabin passenger from Liverpool to Halifax, or from Halifax to Liverpool, the sum of thirty pounds; for each fore-cabin passenger, the sum of fifteen pounds; and for each soldier, seaman, or marine, the sum of four pounds; and from Halifax to Boston, or from Boston to Halifax, also from Picton to Quebec, or from Quebec to Picton, for each chief cabin passenger the sum of five pounds; for each fore cabin passenger, the sum of three pounds; and for each soldier, seaman, or marine, the sum of two pounds.

And that the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall and will receive on board each and every of the said vessels employed in the performance of this contract, any number of small packages containing astronomical instruments, charts, wearing apparel, or other articles, and convey the same to, from, and between all or any of the said ports or places to or from which her Majesty's mails and despatches are to be conveyed in the performance of this contract, when, as, and as often as directed by the said commissioners, or their secretary or agents duly authorized, free from all costs and charges. And, also, shall and will receive on board each and every of the said vessels, and convey to, from, and between all or any of the same ports or places, any naval or other stores, not exceeding five tons in weight, at any time, at the usual rate of freight charged by the said Samuel Cunard for private goods, on receiving from the said commissioners, or their secretary for the time being, two days' previous notice of its being their intention to have such stores so conveyed.

And the said commissioners, in consideration of the premises, and of the said Samuel Cunard, his executors and administrators, and his and their officers, servants, and agents, at all times during the continuance of this contract strictly and punctually performing the covenants and agreements hereby entered into by him, the said Samuel Cunard, do, for and on behalf of her Majesty, her heirs and successors, agree with the said Samuel Cunard, his executors and administrators, that they, the said commissioners on behalf of her Majesty, will pay, or cause to be paid, to the said Samuel Cunard, his executors and administrators, by bills at sight payable by her Majesty's paymaster general, a sum after the rate of £60,000 per annum, by quarterly payments; and with a proportionate part thereof, should this contract terminate on any other day than a day of quarterly payment.

And it is hereby agreed and declared, that this contract shall commence on the first day of June, 1840; or, if agreed between the parties hereto, on such earlier day as they may mutually arrange; and shall continue in

force for seven years from the commencement thereof, and thenceforward until twelve calendar months' notice in writing shall be given by either of the said parties to the other of them that the same shall determine, and at the expiration of such notice this contract shall determine accordingly; but not so as to prevent either of the said parties availing themselves of this contract for recovering any sum of money, or damages, should there have been any breach of the contract previously to the determination of the same.

And it is hereby further agreed and provided, that the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, shall not assign, underlet, or otherwise dispose of this contract, or any part thereof; and that in case of the same, or any part thereof, being assigned, underlet, or otherwise disposed of, or of any breach of this contract on the part of the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, it shall be lawful for the said commissioners, (if they think fit.) by writing under their hands, or under the hand of their secretary for the time being, to determine this contract, without any previous notice to the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, or his or their agents; nor shall the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, be entitled to any compensation in consequence of such determination.

And it is also agreed, that the notices or directions which the said commissioners, or their secretary, officers, or other persons, are hereby authorized and empowered to give to the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, officers, servants, or agents, may, at the option of the said commissioners, or their secretary, officers, or other persons, be either delivered to the master, or commander, or other officer, agent, or servant of the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, in the charge or management of any vessel to be or while employed in the performance of this contract, or be left for the said Samuel Cunard with his agent, Mr. John Brouley Foord, at No. 52 Old Broad street, London, or at the last known place of business or abode of the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators; and any notices or directions so given or left shall be as binding on the said Samuel Cunard, his executors or administrators, as if duly served upon, or left with, him or them.

And in pursuance of the directions contained in a certain act of Parliament, made and passed in the twenty-second year of the reign of King George the Third, intituled "An act for restraining any person concerned in any contract, commission, or agreement made for the public service, from being elected or sitting and voting as a member of the House of Commons;" it is hereby expressly declared and agreed, and these presents are upon this express condition, and the said Samuel Cunard doth covenant for himself, his heirs, executors, and administrators, that no member of the House of Commons shall be admitted to any share or part of this contract or agreement, or to any benefit to arise therefrom.

And, lastly, for the due and faithful performance of all and singular the covenants, conditions, provisoes, clauses, articles, and agreements hereinbefore contained, which, on the part and behalf of the said Samuel Cunard, are or ought to be observed, performed, fulfilled, or kept, the said Samuel Cunard doth hereby bind himself, his heirs, executors, and administrators, unto our sovereign lady the Queen, in the sum of £15,000, of lawful British money, to be paid to our said lady the Queen, her heirs and successors, by the way of stipulated or ascertained damages agreed upon

between the said commissioners and the said Samuel Cunard, (over and above such extra cost and expenses as hereinbefore mentioned,) in case of the failure of the said Samuel Cunard in the due execution of this contract, or any part thereof.

In witness whereof, the said parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

T. TROUBRIDGE,	[L. s.]
DALMENY,	[L. s.]
S. CUNARD,	[L. s.]

Signed, sealed, and delivered, (being first duly stamped,) in the presence of—

JOHN JAMES.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC AND INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL POSTMASTERS.

Mails for North America.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *June*, 1840.

The packet mails for North America will in future be despatched by steam-vessels from Liverpool, instead of Falmouth. The first mail will be made up in London on the 3d July, the second on the 3d August, and after that period (commencing with September) they will be made up in London on the 3d and 18th of every month, except when either of these dates fall on the Sunday, and then on the succeeding day. The packets will depart from Liverpool the next morning, as soon after the arrival of the London mail as possible. In the winter months, however, viz. November, December, January, and February, but *one mail in the month*, (that of the 3d) will be despatched.

Mails by these packets will be made up for British North America, viz : Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward's island, and Newfoundland, and for the United States; the postage remaining as at present, viz : a uniform charge of 1s. the single letter, 2s. double, and so on, in whatever part of the United Kingdom the letter may be posted or delivered.

Those postmasters whose instructions direct them to send their letters for Liverpool by cross post, will of course forward the correspondence intended for these mails in the same manner.

By command :

W. L. MABERLY, *Secretary.*

To all Postmasters.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *July*, 1839.

In accordance with the convention concluded with France, for sending the Indian mail through that country, mails will be made up in London, for India, via Marseilles, on the 12th August, 16th September, 14th Octo-

ber, and, after that time, on the 4th of every month, except when it happens to fall on Sunday, when the mail will be made up the following day.

The uniform rate on single letters to and from India, by this route, will be 2s. 8d.; and so on in proportion. On newspapers, the rate will be 2d.

The postage, both on letters and newspapers, must be paid in advance.

For the present, a mail will be made up for India, via Falmouth, according to the existing regulations, every fourth Saturday; upon the letters sent by which, the present rates of postage will be taken, viz: 2s. 6d. single, and so on in proportion; and the letters must be specially addressed by that route.

With respect to the rate to be taken on letters for India, &c., through France, you will observe that the principle adopted with French letters must be followed; and, upon this point, I must refer you to your instructions of 20th July, 1836, and 31st August, 1837.

It must be borne in mind that the 2s. 8d. to and from India, through France, is composed of three rates: a uniform rate of 10d. to Calais, a uniform French rate of 10d. for the transit through France, and a uniform packet rate of 1s. between Egypt or Syria and India; making a rate of 2s. 8d. to be taken on single letters. The charge on double and treble letters will be in proportion. You must also bear in mind that the rate to Calais, and the packet rate of 1s., are British rates.

By command:

W. L. MABERLY, *Secretary.*

To all Receivers.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *July 25, 1839.*

With reference to the instructions on the subject of charging foreign letters when sent to or through France, I beg to explain that it was not intended to deprive the public of any advantage they enjoyed from the mode of charge in this country; and, consequently, a letter consisting of one piece of paper, not exceeding an ounce weight, is still chargeable as single only; a letter with one enclosure, not exceeding an ounce weight, is chargeable as double only; and a letter with more than one enclosure, not exceeding an ounce weight, is chargeable as treble. This applies to British rates only.

The British rates on such letters are only to be charged by weight when it is advantageous to the public at large: thus, a letter containing one or more enclosures, not exceeding a quarter of an ounce, is to be charged single only; a letter with more than one enclosure, above a quarter of an ounce, and not exceeding half an ounce, is to be charged double only; and (according to the former practice) a letter with more than one enclosure, exceeding half an ounce, and not exceeding an ounce, is to be charged treble.

There is a difference between the British and French mode of calculating the fractions of the weight. According to the English practice, a letter does not become chargeable with a higher rate of postage unless it *exceeds* the weight specified, by turning the scale; whereas, according to the French system, if it *reaches* the weight named, it instantly becomes liable to the

increased rate. For instance: a letter is not liable to two British rates unless it exceeds a quarter of an ounce; or to three rates, unless it exceeds half an ounce; or to four rates, unless it exceeds an ounce. But in charging the French rates, if the letter weighs the quarter of an ounce, although it does not exceed it, it must be charged with two rates; if it weighs half an ounce, with three rates; if it weighs three-quarters of an ounce, with four rates; and if it weighs an ounce, with five rates; and so on for every quarter of an ounce.

By command :

W. L. MABERLY, *Secretary.*

To all Letter Receivers.

With reference to a "*notice to the public*," that has been sent to you relative to the convention concluded with France, for sending the India mail through that country, "*via Marseilles*," I think it right, for your guidance, to give you more distinct instructions as to the rates of postage you are to charge on letters forwarded under this convention.

A French rate of 10*d.* is to be received on every letter under the weight of a quarter of an ounce; 1*s.* 8*d.* on every letter weighing a quarter of an ounce and under half an ounce; 2*s.* 6*d.* on every letter weighing half an ounce and under three-quarters of an ounce; and one additional rate for every quarter of an ounce above that weight.

In addition to the above, the inland and Red Sea packet rates, (together 1*s.* 10*d.*) are to be added, according to the usual method of single, double, &c.; with this difference—that a *double letter* is only to be charged as such when it exceeds in weight a quarter of an ounce, a *treble letter* is to be charged as such only when it exceeds half an ounce; but any letter *exceeding one ounce weight* is liable to *four rates*, whether it contains any enclosures or none.

By these instructions, the letter receivers will see that the rate of postage for any letter under the weight of a quarter of an ounce will be 2*s.* 8*d.*

The inland and Red Sea packet postage is to be marked in *one sum* on the left-hand upper corner of the letter, and the French postage under it, and added together as thus :

1	..	10
		10
<hr/>		
2	..	8
<hr/>		

A. B.

Calcutta.

Newspapers to India, under the usual restrictions, will be subject to a rate of 2*d.*

After this regulation comes into operation, all letters for India are to be forwarded through France, unless *specially addressed "via Falmouth,"* or "*by private ship.*"

The twopenny post rate is to be received, *in addition*, on all letters posted beyond the three mile circle; and the postage, in all cases, must be received in advance.

The supplementary instructions to postmasters on the principle of charging French letters not having been circulated to you when they were issued to the postmasters, I annex a copy of them, for your better information.

By command:

W. L. MABERLY, *Secretary.*