

REPORT

OF

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
November 25, 1844.

SIR: It will be gratifying to you, and no doubt to the country, to be informed, as preliminary to a detailed report of the operations of this department during the past year, and of its present condition, that for the time it has been under the superintendence of the undersigned, and during the whole of your administration, its current expenses have been met by its current revenue, and the amount of service is now greater than at the commencement of the year 1841.

A further extension of the usefulness of the department would have been made, but for embarrassments and difficulties it had to encounter by the operations of private mails established upon the leading lines of post roads connecting the important commercial cities and towns of the United States.

In the absence of that legislation heretofore suggested as necessary to protect the department against the inroads upon its revenue, there is cause of congratulation, if not surprise, that I have not yet been compelled to curtail the service below its present amount.

The total transportation of the mail by horse, and in stages, railroads, and steamboats, for the year ending the 30th June, 1844, supplying 14,102 post offices, at a cost of \$2,938,551, was 35,409,624 miles, exceeding the transportation for the year 1841 by 413,100 miles.

The income of the department for the year ending the 30th June, 1844, was as follows:

Letter postage	-	-	-	-	-	\$3,676,161 53
Newspaper postage	-	-	-	-	-	549,743 83
Fines	-	-	-	-	-	135 00
Miscellaneous receipts	-	-	-	-	-	11,245 47

'Total revenue reported	-	-	-	-	-	<u>\$4,237,285 83</u>
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The total amount of expenditure settled and paid for the same period is \$4,296,867 70. The year which has passed has been distinguished in many portions of the country, particularly in the south and west, by excessive rains and floods, interposing obstructions to the regular transit of the mails, which it was impossible for the most vigilant and enterprising contractors to overcome. With exceptions of this kind, the service has been generally well performed by contractors.

The revenue collected by postmasters, with very few exceptions, has

been promptly paid and accounted for ; and it is worthy of remark, that of the \$17,488,087 18 collected by postmasters within the last four years, no material loss has been, or will be, sustained by the government.

Contractors, and all others having legal claims upon the department, have been, during the same period, promptly paid.

It gives me pleasure to say of the disbursing agent of this department, that he has discharged his trust with a commendable fidelity. The whole amount of appropriations for the last four years, which have been disbursed by him, is \$404,852 68. His accounts have been regularly settled at the treasury up to the 30th September, 1844, and every dollar legally and properly accounted for.

The various duties of the assistants and clerks of the department have been well and efficiently performed.

The report of the First Assistant Postmaster General, of the extent and nature of the service for the last eight years, with costs of transportation, accompanies this report. I refer to this report as containing valuable statistical information of the amount of capital employed in the transportation of the mail. It will also be seen by the same report, that at the recent lettings of the middle section, without any injurious alterations of the service, the sum of \$91,471 has been saved, compared with the amount paid under the former contracts.

The number of cases of mail depredations reported to the department for three years preceding the 12th October, 1844, is nineteen hundred and thirty four. Amount of alleged loss, \$462,135. Amount of money recovered, or loss satisfactorily ascertained, \$304,242. One hundred mail depredators have been arrested and tried during the same period.

I am warranted in the expression of the opinion, that the number of mail depredations has been diminishing within the last few years, and greater security, by greater vigilance, has increased public confidence in this mode of transmitting money from one portion of the country to the other.

From the above facts, it may be inferred that the special agents of the department have not been altogether unmindful of their duty. It is not alone to silent investigations into cases of losses by mail, that their labors have been confined. They are charged with a general out-door superintendence of the service, and the preservation of the public property of the department.

The necessity and importance of such supervision, and the advantage of a strict system of responsibility, may, in some degree, be known from the value and amount expended annually for a portion of this public property. Take, for instance, the item of mail bags. The amount expended for this purpose, for the four years, (including the amount of accounts suspended prior to the 1st of July, 1840, which amount of suspended accounts was paid in 1841 and 1842.) was \$216,889. The amount actually expended for the four years preceding the 1st of July, 1841, is \$70,558 40.

The members of the convention who framed the constitution of the United States felt the necessity that the power to establish post offices and post roads, and to conduct the operations of the mail, was one which, to be useful, and commensurate with the wants of our extended country and diversified interests, must be exclusively vested in the Congress of the United States, whose legislative functions and supervision would pervade the whole sphere of the operations of that power.

The expense of the system must be sustained by the same power which created and controls it.

For reasons obvious to those who founded the post office system of the United States, the principle that it must sustain itself by its own operations was engrafted into the first, and has been adhered to in every subsequent act of legislation concerning the department. Whilst it has ever been required to sustain its own expenses, unlike the system in some other countries, it has not been regarded as a source of revenue to the general treasury.

Our predecessors seemed to have adopted the rule, that those who used the Post Office Department for private or individual purposes or benefits, should defray the expenses of transporting and delivering their letters; that, as it had to be sustained by a tax of some sort, the mode of collecting that tax by postage on letters, &c., being voluntary, was deemed most equal, and has heretofore proved acceptable to the community.

It was thought, in the infancy of our republic, that it was wise, if not unjust, that those who did not use the post office should be directly taxed for the benefit of those who did. Hence they imposed such a tariff of postage as, in their judgment, would best attain the great object of sustaining the department at the least practicable amount.

The wisdom and justice of this rule are not overturned by the fact that the mode of collecting the revenue has been changed from a system of direct taxation and excise, to the imposition of a revenue tax upon imports.

If the department is to be continued under the control of the general government, as it should, I cannot imagine any mode by which its expenses can be met, more equitable, more just, than by the collection of as much postage, and no more, upon the matter which passes through the mail, as will be equal to the demands of the service.

It is to the fact that the Post Office Department has been compelled to rely upon its own energies and resources, that its great and rapid extension and usefulness are mainly to be attributed.

The head of this department, feeling his responsibility to the public, would not permit the service to expand without a correspondent increase in its receipts, which would, at the same time, furnish evidence of extended usefulness. His responsibility to the government, and a just regard for his own reputation, would admonish him so to regulate the service, that, while it gave the greatest possible benefits to the country, it should produce an amount of revenue equal to its wants.

If the department, in accordance with the views of some, recently promulgated, should be made an annual charge upon the general treasury, and its head required to disburse the amount appropriated, from year to year, relying upon Congress to appropriate whatever sum the real or imaginary wants of the community might demand, it may be well questioned whether much of that vigilance, so necessary to superintend a department complicated and extended as this is, would not be lost in the simple routine of duty in expending whatever Congress may have appropriated, no matter whether usefully or not, so that the expenditure be properly vouched.

The very nature of the operations of this department, if its uncertain demands are to be met by annual appropriations from the treasury, would generate abuse and extravagance both in the appropriating and disbursing power. The limit of appropriation would be regulated alone by the imaginary wants in the various sections of the Union, each section vying

with the other to obtain the greatest possible amount to be expended within its limits.

Upon the most mature and deliberate reflection, I am satisfied it would be unwise to abandon the principle of requiring the department to sustain its own expenses. An adherence to this principle is not at war with a prudent and discreet reform in the rates of postage.

Public opinion seems to demand a reduction in the rates of letter postage. But, so far as I have been enabled to understand that public opinion, it is based upon the necessity and propriety of adhering to this vital principle, and sustained by the argument that a reduction of postage would be followed by an increase of mail-matter, producing an amount sufficient to sustain the department in all of its legitimate expenditures.

I am sustained in the expression of this opinion, not only from the ordinary channels of public information, but by the judgment of the very intelligent and highly respectable chamber of commerce of the city of New York, as expressed in their letter to the department; a copy of which, and the reply to it, accompanies this report.

In the views which I have heretofore expressed upon the subject of the reduction of postage, and particularly in my report to the Senate on the 5th of January, 1843, recommending a reduction to the two rates of five and ten cents, upon the conditions therein stated, I have abstained from recommending the adoption of the postal arrangements now in operation in England, because I was satisfied that system would not yield the amount of revenue necessary for the service of the department, and in many of its features it was unsuited to the United States.

Prior to the reduction of postage in England, the Post Office Department yielded a revenue to the crown, over and above its whole expenses, of about \$7,000,000. It was just, if not wise policy in the English government to release this amount of net revenue from postage, operating as a severe tax on the correspondence of the country, if its exchequer could sustain it, or the subject was willing to have that exchequer replenished by the substitution of other taxes, such as excise upon paper, &c.

The mode of managing and conducting the post offices in the kingdom of Great Britain is not only different from, but much less expensive than, that in the United States.

In England, the postmaster and his clerks, if any, are paid an annual salary or stipend. In this country, postmasters and their clerks are paid by a commission on the amount of postage collected.

Post offices in England are managed by postmasters who consider themselves amply compensated by salaries much less in amount than would command the services of competent postmasters in the United States.

If the same mode and ratio of compensating postmasters were adopted in England which has been adopted in the United States, it might be well questioned whether the amount of post office revenue in England would equal the expenses of the service.

I am convinced, upon a most thorough examination into the habits, condition, and business of the people of the two countries—the circumscribed limits and dense population of the one, the extensive boundaries and sparse population of the other—that nothing like the same ratio of increase of the correspondence in this country would follow the like reduction of postage as has taken place in England.

It may be asked, What is the nature and character of the reduction of

postage which it is deemed by the department prudent and safe at this time to be adopted?

The answer to this inquiry will depend mainly upon the fact how Congress will settle the question now mooted, as to the best mode of defraying the expenses of the department. Shall it, as heretofore, be required to sustain itself; or shall it be thrown as an annual charge upon the treasury?

If the department is to be left to lean on its own resources, I am prepared to recommend a reduction of letter postage to five and ten cents the single letter, as heretofore recommended by me in a report to the Senate of the United States of the 5th January, 1843, upon the terms and conditions indicated in that report, to which I respectfully ask leave to refer you.

In previous reports, I have had the honor to express to the President of the United States, and through him to Congress, the opinion that it was unjust that the whole expense of transporting the public correspondence of the government should be charged upon the business and friendly letters of the citizen; also, to urge the necessity of repealing or modifying the franking privilege. These opinions remain unchanged.

I also suggested the mode by which the government should compensate the department for the transmission and delivery of its public correspondence, and the franked letters of public functionaries. That mode was the assumption, by the government, of the amount paid by the department for railroad transportation, either by the purchase of the right permanently, or by annual appropriations.

This portion of expenditure for transportation being fixed, or nearly so, and not of a character to be unnecessarily increased under the influences of local feelings or jealousy, (not unfrequently invoked in legislation, on subjects affecting local interests,) would not greatly exceed, if at all, in the course of time, the amount of postage which should be charged upon the government, and legally franked letters of public officers.

By existing laws, all railroads, when completed, are declared to be mail routes, and are, from necessity, adopted by the department as the means of transporting the mail. There is no danger that they will be unnecessarily multiplied by Congress, as is too often the case with ordinary mail-routes.

It was thought, then, by the undersigned, that a sound public policy dictated the propriety of making permanent contracts with such of the railroads as the government was obliged to employ. It is only in this mode that the department can ever hope to control the hours of departure and arrival of the cars from and to given points; without which power, it is utterly impracticable at all times to give a continuous and regular transit of the public mail.

The reasons which prompted that recommendation, independent of the question of reduction of postage with which it was connected, have been strengthened by subsequent experience in the making and executing and performing contracts for transporting the mail with railroad companies.

The amount now paid for railroad transportation, and transportation by steamboats forming essential connecting links in railroad lines, is \$750,569 per annum.

If Congress will relieve the department from the payment of this amount, either by permanent contracts with the companies, or by annual appropriation from the treasury, as a consideration for transporting the public correspondence of the government, &c., protect the department against the abuses of the franking privilege, and the inroads upon its revenue by private ex-

presses or posts, the rates of postage may safely be reduced to five an cents ; which rates will yield a sufficient revenue to defray the remaining expenses of the department, and allow its gradual extension as the demands of the community may require.

If, upon a fair experiment, based on the reduction proposed, it was ascertained a further reduction could be made, and produce a revenue equal to the wants of the service, that reduction could be hereafter ordered by Congress.

It is believed the mode here proposed, by which the government shall contribute its fair proportion of the expenses of the department, is preferable to that which has been elsewhere suggested, viz : of requiring accounts to be kept with each department, and the postage to be paid out of their contingent fund. It is more simple, less complex, and possesses the advantage of certainty, by which the department, at all times, will be enabled to regulate its engagements for the remainder of the service in each year.

The only evil likely to follow from a reduction of the postage on the terms proposed, (particularly if the franking privilege be taken from deputy postmasters,) which at present occurs to me, and which I think it my duty to state, will be the difficulty of obtaining competent men to discharge the duties of postmasters in the smaller post offices, which, though not productive in themselves, are useful to the country, and cannot be well dispensed with.

Whether it shall be the pleasure of Congress to reduce the rates of postage, or to permit them to remain as they now are, it is a duty, which I cannot omit, again to recommend further legislation by Congress, in order to protect the department in the exercise of its legitimate functions. A spirit, generated by the condition of the country, at war with the observance of existing laws, has defied the power of the general government over the subject of post offices and post roads.

The laws heretofore enacted to restrain the establishment of private mails or posts, have been found inadequate to deter the lawless and irresponsible from openly or covertly embarking in the business of transporting letters over and upon mail-routes.

The extent of loss to the revenue of the department arising from this cause alone, cannot be accurately stated. An estimate of the amount, approximating to probable certainty, may be made by reference to the great reduction of the income of those offices upon, and adjacent to, the lines of railroad connecting the important commercial cities and towns of the United States.

Prosecutions have been instituted against many of these violators of existing law. In some of the courts of the United States, they have been discharged by the judges, mainly upon the ground assumed in the opinion of the court, that the evidence did not bring the offence charged within the provisions of the acts of Congress ; or that the law itself did not prohibit the transportation of mail-matter over mail routes by individuals, in the mode which these depredators have adopted.

The district courts of Maryland and Pennsylvania pronounced judgments against such of the offenders as have been tried before them. The penalty of \$50, imposed for the offence, is too small, if the defendants were in a situation to have it enforced, to deter them from prosecuting successfully their illegal business.

In one of the cases recently tried in the district court for Pennsylvania,

the question of the constitutionality of the laws of Congress prohibiting the citizen from establishing a private post, &c., was directly raised by the counsel for the accused, and the exclusive power of Congress over the subject of post offices and post roads denied. The point was overruled by the intelligent judge who presided. The case, I understand, is to be taken to the Supreme Court. Nevertheless, the party convicted still continues his business very extensively—in some places openly, in others covertly—upon the leading post routes.

I will not, in this report, undertake to discuss this question. On a former occasion, I ventured to obtrude upon you a condensed argument on this subject, the object of which was to prove that the framers of the constitution, when they granted to Congress the power to establish post offices and post roads, did not leave, or intend to leave, the power to be exercised either by the States or the people.

The very nature of the power granted—the objects to be attained by its exercise—would indicate clearly, if the language were equivocal, that it must be exclusive. The duties required to be performed, cannot well be performed by any other power than that which, *pro hac vice*, pervades the whole sphere of post office operations.

It will not do for Congress to await the decision of the Supreme Court upon this question—a question which has been regarded as settled, not only by judicial decisions, but by the legislation of the country, and acquiesced in by the States and the people for near a half century. A power of punishment and restraint sufficient to maintain the supremacy of the laws of the land, and suited to the present condition of affairs, should at once be vested in the judiciary department.

I cannot concur in the opinion I have heard often expressed, that the only remedy for this evil is a reduction of postage. There is no rate of reduction which prudent legislation can at this time make, that will prevent successful competition in the business of carrying letters, by individuals, over post roads. If we take the system as a whole, the government has conveyed, and will convey, letters as cheap as it can be done by individuals. But if private mails are permitted to occupy the most productive routes, it is conceded that individuals can transport letters cheaper on these routes than the department.

No rate of revenue upon imported merchandise, however low, will prevent smuggling, if the penal sanctions of the law against it be repealed.

Without further legislation by Congress upon this subject, it is idle to expect the department to sustain itself at any rate of postage. The failure to pass some act amendatory of the existing laws, at the last session, quadrupled the number of private mails then in operation. Prompt and efficient legislation on this subject is demanded by every consideration of public policy.

The nature of the service and amount of costs of portions of the steamboat mail service, particularly between New Orleans and Mobile, and Charleston and Wilmington, have fully impressed my mind that it would be sound policy, both in a national and economical point of view, for the government to authorize the construction of steamboats suited to this service, to be employed as mail steamers in time of peace, and so constructed that they could, in time of war, be converted into a portion of the marine defence of our bays and harbors.

The policy of employing such vessels in the mail service of other gov-

ernments has been adopted. May it not be the part of wisdom to profit by their example?

Under existing laws, the Postmaster General is not authorized to contract for transporting the mail on the high seas, or beyond the limits of the United States. The necessity and public utility of a regular mail between this country and Cuba, and other foreign ports, must be apparent to all; and such mail would have been put in operation by me long since, if the power to do so had existed. I respectfully suggest the power to contract for the transportation of mails to foreign ports be authorized, and the rates of postage fixed by law.

This policy will be more obvious if we take into consideration the amount of postage paid for letters which now pass to and from the United States in foreign vessels. The number of letters which are transported in the Cunard line of steamers alone, between Boston and Liverpool, is about 60,000 per month, charged with a postage of \$15,000, equal to \$180,000 per annum—the greater part of which is a tax upon American citizens and American commerce. Would it not be better that this sum should be paid to American citizens, thereby encouraging and sustaining American enterprise and the American commercial marine, than the marine of any foreign power?

Such a power at this time is peculiarly desirable, should the enterprise, now in contemplation, of establishing a line of American steamers between the United States and Liverpool and Havre be consummated.

Congress at the last session passed a resolution authorizing the Postmaster General to enter into regulations with certain governments for the interchange of mail-matter, and the pre-payment of postage on letters to and from the respective countries. Not having the means appropriated which would enable me to send an agent to Europe to make the necessary investigations and preliminary arrangements to carry into effect the intention of Congress, the only mode which seemed practicable or likely to accomplish the purposes indicated, was to avail myself of the kind offices of some of our resident ministers abroad. To two of them (Mr. Everett in London, and Mr. King in Paris) I addressed communications, and submitted certain propositions, with a request that they would submit them, in that mode most acceptable to themselves, to the post office departments of the two governments; copies of which accompany this report.

From Mr. King I have received a communication informing me that he had submitted the *projet* to the post office department of France, and he had reasons to believe that this, or some mode like it, would be acceded to by that government.

A more simple arrangement could be made if the Postmaster General were vested with power to execute and issue stamps to be used on foreign letters, and authorized to exchange stamps or purchase them from foreign governments. If, during the session of Congress, I shall be informed of the favorable result of the proposition submitted, I shall submit to you, to be communicated to that body, a further communication, with the plan in detail, suggesting such legislation as may be deemed necessary to carry it into effect.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,
C. A. WICKLIFFE.

To the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
Contract Office, November 23, 1844.

SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith the table of mail service for the year ending June 30, 1844. It shows that the post-routes of the United States in operation on that day extended over a distance of 144,687 miles; that the annual transportation thereon was equal to 35,109,624 miles, and that the contract annual cost thereof was \$2,938,551.

The saving effected in the southern section by the change from the old to the *new* contracts, (the first year's service under which is exhibited in this table,) is at the rate of \$18,743 a year. The retrenchments ordered in the other three sections of the Union, during the year, are at the rate of \$67,516 a year. The additional allowances, and the new service on old routes ordered in said sections, amount to \$51,283 a year. The new service put in operation upon the *new* routes created by the act of August 31, 1842, including those in the southern States, as well as the other sections, amounts to \$29,911 per annum. Subtracting from this sum \$3,698, the annual cost of the new routes put in operation in the southern section, and which item is embraced in the calculation that exhibits the saving made in the change of contracts in that section, the changes here stated exhibit a reduction of total cost of transportation for the year ending June 30, 1844, upon the corresponding expense of the preceding year, of \$8,768.

This reduction results from the more favorable prices at which the horse and coach conveyance of the mails has been let to contract, and not from a reduction of service; for the aggregate annual transportation, instead of being lessened, is greater for the last than the preceding year, by 156,819 miles.

In comparing the last table with that submitted for the year ending June 30, 1843, it will be seen that the line of posts has been extended 2,392 miles; that the horse transportation has been increased 227,723 miles, whilst the cost of that transportation was diminished \$24,361; that the coach transportation is lessened 125,857 miles, and its cost reduced \$52,726; that the railroad and steamboat conveyance of the mail is increased 54,953 miles, and the expense of that conveyance augmented \$68,319. Total increase of transportation 156,819 miles; total decrease of cost of transportation \$8,768.

An examination into the operations of this office for the first quarter of the current year presents the following indications:

A reduction of cost on the routes in the middle section of the United States, between the expense arising under the old contracts which expired on the 30th of June last, and the new contracts that took effect on the 1st of July, equal to per year		\$91,221 00
This is caused in part by a curtailment of the horse and coach service, but in a much greater degree by a reduction of compensation in those grades of service.		
The curtailments ordered in the other sections during said first quarter of the <i>current</i> year, amount to		11,210 00
		102,434 00

The additional allowances in said quarter, excluding the middle section, are - \$6,848 00
 The new service ordered on old routes 4,115 00

\$10,963 00

Saving upon the results in the annexed table, as indicated by the operations of the first quarter of the *present* year 91,471 00

Agreeably to your direction, I subjoin a comparative table of mail service, exhibiting the aggregate extent and cost for each year for the last eight years; also, a statement of the railroad service, together with the steamboat transportation performed in connexion with the railroad lines now in operation.

In September last, you issued a circular to contractors on the coach and horse routes, desiring them to state the number of carriages and their value; the number of horses, with their harness and value; the number of persons engaged, and their wages per year; and their annual expenses for repair and keeping of carriages, harness, and horses which they necessarily employed in transporting the United States mail, under their contracts with the department respectively, and to return their statements to me. I have collated the returns, and find that about 40 per cent. in number of the contractors to whom the circulars were addressed have not made answers—owing, no doubt, to want of time. The returns made exhibit the following results:

Sections.	Number of carriages.	Their value.	Number of horses.	Their value.	Annual expenses.	No. of persons employed.	Their annual wages.
New England . . .	746	\$151,491	2,569	\$219,576	\$427,350	684	\$156,249
New York . . .	479	91,736	1,426	123,950	242,963	532	72,096
Middle section . . .	466	179,79-	4,350	326,986	784,467	1,438	141,441
Southern section . . .	368	104,835	2,440	204,332	357,808	909	158,829
Northwestern section . . .	204	54,750	1,504	58,926	173,314	599	69,708
Southwestern section . . .	166	57,917	1,580	131,111	252,675	474	71,424
	<u>2,429</u>	<u>640,527</u>	<u>13,869</u>	<u>1,104,789</u>	<u>2,238,577</u>	<u>4,636</u>	<u>669,747</u>
Add the following estimates for contractors who have failed to answer:							
New England, 21 per cent. . .	156	\$31,813	539	\$45,110	\$89,743	143	\$32,811
New York, 53 per cent. . .	254	48,619	755	65,673	128,769	281	37,209
Middle section, 32 per cent. . .	149	57,635	1,392	104,635	251,029	460	45,961
Southern section, 32 per cent. . .	117	33,547	780	65,386	114,498	290	50,825
Northwest'n section, 35 pr. ct. . .	71	19,162	526	34,624	60,659	209	24,397
Southwest'n section, 61 pr. ct. . .	101	35,329	963	79,921	154,131	289	43,568
	<u>848</u>	<u>226,005</u>	<u>4,955</u>	<u>395,349</u>	<u>798,829</u>	<u>1,672</u>	<u>234,073</u>
	<u>2,429</u>	<u>640,527</u>	<u>13,869</u>	<u>1,104,789</u>	<u>2,238,577</u>	<u>4,636</u>	<u>669,747</u>
Total of stock, its value, and annual expense, and of employees and their wages, returned and estimated, on the horse and coach mail routes in the United States	<u>3,277</u>	<u>\$866,532</u>	<u>18,824</u>	<u>\$1,500,138</u>	<u>\$3,037,406</u>	<u>6,308</u>	<u>\$903,710</u>

It will be observed that the foregoing appertains but to two grades of mail transportation. The results in the total footings of the returns are, I am satisfied, under rather than over-stated. As a comparative statement between the several sections, the exhibit is doubtless inaccurate, for it is manifest that different principles of listing the stock, (particularly the carriages, and probably the persons employed,) also, of appraising the property, and estimating the annual expense, have prevailed. In the major part of the returns there has been, I think, a greater liability to fall short of, than to exceed the true amounts. Where the reports have not been received, the omission has been supplied by estimate, though it is admitted that the particulars are of such a character as to render that mode of approximating to accuracy doubtful. The estimates, I judge, have rather exceeded the true amounts, whilst the returns have fallen short; so that the total results are doubtless more accurate than the particular statements of the sections.

Most respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. R. HOBBIE,

First Assistant Postmaster General.

Hon. CHARLES A. WICKLIFFE,
Postmaster General.

Table of mail service for the year ending June 30, 1844, as es

States and Territories.	Length of routes.	Annual transportation and rate			
		On horse.		In coaches.	
	<i>Miles.</i>	<i>P. les.</i>		<i>Miles.</i>	
Maine - - -	4,024	236,295	\$14,671	706,124	\$49,836
New Hampshire - - -	2,367	124,733	4,732	470,428	36,820
Vermont - - -	2,437	130,372	6,045	583,690	40,186
Massachusetts - - -	3,340	236,254	9,558	685,227	59,502
Rhode Island - - -	363	15,444	965	71,256	4,600
Connecticut - - -	1,935	130,340	5,743	418,458	33,066
New York - - -	12,936	872,637	39,534	2,890,581	214,792
New Jersey - - -	2,050	109,709	4,786	403,626	21,597
Pennsylvania - - -	10,293	971,262	41,737	1,614,616	103,778
Delaware - - -	619	48,786	2,428	109,324	5,875
Maryland - - -	2,322	226,680	13,141	280,072	39,516
Virginia - - -	10,056	1,042,092	42,601	895,592	75,598
North Carolina - - -	7,301	566,248	25,530	650,940	62,298
South Carolina - - -	4,490	333,476	18,904	521,768	52,020
Georgia - - -	6,385	470,730	27,466	639,912	61,847
Florida - - -	2,410	56,120	4,322	162,300	22,112
Ohio - - -	11,781	92,493	43,008	1,698,173	140,683
Michigan - - -	3,742	301,278	13,013	329,068	15,657
Indiana - - -	6,424	576,288	24,172	605,072	44,930
Illinois - - -	7,010	377,986	22,261	1,024,344	93,954
Wisconsin - - -	1,951	137,072	8,369	83,834	4,883
Iowa - - -	764	99,373	4,351	55,016	3,463
Missouri - - -	8,686	52,668	27,448	503,010	34,629
Kentucky - - -	7,507	530,616	23,207	695,656	74,174
Tennessee - - -	6,743	542,118	20,801	661,532	70,009
Alabama - - -	6,661	558,936	36,842	672,954	118,001
Mississippi - - -	4,394	550,916	38,678	332,072	51,234
Arkansas - - -	3,655	389,044	25,544	112,914	18,482
Louisiana - - -	2,041	227,916	24,843	7,488	2,100
	144,687	11,373,952	577,703	18,288,317	1,558,842

* The entire service and pay of the route are set down to the State under which it is numbered, though extending into other States, instead of being divided among the States in which each portion of it lies.

hibited by the state of the arrangements at the close of the year.*

of cost.		Total annual transporta- tion.	Total annual rate of cost.	Remarks.
By railroad and steamboats.				
Miles.		Miles.		
36,100	\$5,000	1,034,819	\$69,507	
73,632	2,958	663,793	44,510	
- <i>a</i>	-	714,262	46,231	<i>a</i> The steamboat route on lake Champlain is under a New York number.
510,556	59,993	1,632,037	129,053	
29,952	1,800	119,652	10,365	
209,330	14,261	754,124	53,073	
1,027,534	105,065	4,790,752	359,391	
220,228	35,636	733,563	62,019	
429,056	38,354	3,014,934	186,869	
- <i>b</i>	-	158,110	8,303	<i>b</i> The Baltimore, Wilmington, and Philadelphia railroad is under a Maryland number.
373,290	94,371	840,012	147,028	
402,447	80,470	2,310,131	198,669	
347,272	87,200	1,564,160	175,028	
149,240	41,200	1,004,484	112,124	
285,948	54,730	1,396,590	147,043	
55,624	11,450	271,044	37,884	
205,262	11,722	3,024,924	195,613	
156,684	14,100	787,030	42,770	
-	-	1,181,360	69,102	
35,776	4,234	1,438,146	120,449	
-	-	220,906	13,252	
-	-	154,349	7,817	
390,000	6,240 <i>c</i>	1,422,678	68,317	<i>c</i> This embraces the steamboat service from St. Louis to New Orleans.
517,772	28,920 <i>d</i>	1,771,044	126,301	<i>d</i> This embraces the steamboat service from Louisville to Cincinnati, and from Louisville to New Orleans.
-	-	1,203,630	90,810	
146,848	73,000 <i>e</i>	1,378,738	227,813	<i>e</i> This includes the route from Mobile to New Orleans.
38,061	5,699	921,052	95,611	
31,200	10,000	533,228	54,026	
45,240	12,600	240,611	39,543	
5,717,355	802,006	35,109,624	2,938,551 [†]	

[†] Add expenses of mail agencies incidental to the railroad and steamboat mails, and payable under the head of transportation, \$29,714. The other expenditures incident to transportation, such as amounts paid for ship, steamboat, and way letters, locks, &c., are not included in this table, because they are the subjects of separate appropriation and account.

S. R. HOBBIE,
First Assistant Postmaster General.

Comparative table of mail service for the last eight years, exhibiting the aggregate extent and cost for each year.

Years ending	Length of routes.	On horse.		In coaches.		By railroad and steamboat.		Total annual transportation.	Total annual cost.	Remarks.
		Transportation.	Cost.	Transportation.	Cost.	Transportation.	Cost.			
	<i>Miles.</i>	<i>Miles.</i>		<i>Miles.</i>		<i>Miles.</i>		<i>Miles.</i>		
June 30, 1837	141,442	11,939,369	8861,578	18,004,700	81,726,600	1,723,024	8307,444	32,507,006	82,405,622	
June 30, 1838	134,818	11,573,916	831,029	20,651,432	1,886,157	2,556,852	401,123	34,368,302	3,131,307	
June 30, 1839	133,992	11,447,147	864,569	19,653,676	1,900,451	3,296,055	540,602	34,496,878	3,305,622	
June 30, 1840	155,739	13,182,445	789,669	20,499,778	1,911,465	3,489,053	595,353	36,370,776	3,396,476	
June 30, 1841	155,026	13,088,862	791,597	18,361,813	1,791,635	3,946,450	585,813	31,996,825	3,159,375	
June 30, 1842	149,732	11,644,693	737,605	18,767,036	1,700,510	4,424,362	619,681	34,635,991	3,067,796	Add expenses of mail agencies incident to the railroad and steamboat service, and payable under the head of transportation, \$22,967.
June 30, 1843	142,995	11,146,326	692,064	18,414,174	1,611,568	5,692,402	733,687	35,252,806	2,947,319	Add agencies as above, \$86,965.
June 30, 1844	144,687	11,373,359	577,703	18,988,317	1,558,842	5,747,356	804,006	35,409,624	2,928,551	Add agencies as above, \$29,744.

* These amounts are estimated. They do not appear in any report.

S. R. HOBBIE,
First Assistant Postmaster General.

Statement of railroad service, with that portion of the steamboat service that is performed in connexion with railroad lines, now in operation in the United States.

Termini of routes.	Mode of transportation.	Miles.	Trips per week.	Annual pay.	Remarks.
New York to Greenport	By railroad	97 1/2	9	\$5,000 00	
Greenport to Stonington, Conn., and Allyn's point	By steamboat	28 1/2	6		
New York to Stonington, Conn.	do	125	6	15,500 00	
Stonington to Providence, R. I.	By railroad	48	6		
Providence to Boston, Mass.	do	43 7-16	18	7,006 00	Embracing side supply.
Boston, Mass., to Portsmouth, N. H.	do	54	13	10,068 50	Embracing side supply.
Portsmouth, N. H., to Portland, Me.	do	50	12	5,000 00	
Boston, Mass., to North Berwick, Me.	do	74	6	5,969 00	
Boston, Mass., to Lowell, Mass.	do	26	18	3,600 00	
Lowell, Mass., to Concord, N. H.	do	49	12	2,958 00	
Boston, Mass., to Concord, Mass.	do	20	6	-	No separate compensation; service embraced in a coach contract.
[There is soon to be an extension of this route to Fitchburg.]					
Boston, Mass., to Worcester, Mass.	do	45	13	8,500 00	
Worcester, Mass., to Albany, N. Y.	do	155	12	18,250 00	
Mansfield, Mass., to Taunton	do	12	12	1,500 00	
Taunton to New Bedford	do	21	12	2,100 00	
New Bedford to Nantucket	By steamboat	65	6	3,000 00	Service in packet on part of route in the winter.
New York to Norwich, Conn.	do	142	6	4,239 00	
Norwich, Conn., to Worcester, Mass.	By railroad	59	9	6,203 00	
New York to New Haven, Conn.	By steamboat	80	6	8,000 00	With right to send daily by steamboat to Hartford.
New Haven, Conn., to Hartford, Conn.	By railroad	36	14	6,319 00	Embracing side supply.
[There is soon to be an extension of this route to Springfield, Mass., 26 miles further.]					
New York to Bridgeport, Conn.	By steamboat	60	6	-	This service is for local supply of Bridgeport and connecting points; compensation by the week, in commutation of 2 cents per letter—\$3 per week.
Bridgeport, Conn., to West Stockbridge, Mass.	By railroad	96	6	3,945 00	

Termini of routes.	Mode of transportation.	Miles.	Trips per week.	Annual pay.	Remarks.
New York to Troy, N. Y. - - - -	By steamboat -	150	7 t., with 6 additional in summer.	\$15,000 00	
Albany, N. Y., to Schenectady - - - -	By railroad -	16	7 t., with 7 additional 8 months of the year.	3,200 00	
[There is to be a small extension of this route, in consequence of the change, to avoid inclined planes.]					
Schenectady to Utica - - - -	do -	78	do	15,600 00	
Utica to Syracuse - - - -	do -	53	do	9,275 00	
Syracuse to Auburn - - - -	do -	26	do	4,725 00	
Auburn to Rochester - - - -	do -	78	do	13,650 00	Embracing side supply.
Rochester to Attica - - - -	do -	44	do	6,320 00	
Attica to Buffalo - - - -	do -	36	do	3,800 00	Embracing side supply.
Buffalo to Toledo, Ohio, and Detroit, Mich. - -	By steamboat -	385	7 t. separately to each point, for about 7 months of the year.	12,000 00	With service by Mackinac to Milwaukee and Chicago, about 3 times a week.
..					
Detroit, Michigan, to Jackson, Michigan. [Service is to be extended to Marshall, 33 miles further.]	By railroad -	79	6	5,000 00	
St. Joseph to Chicago, Illinois. [This is placed on this list, though not in immediate connexion with the railroad, as it is the terminating link in the line of railroad communication rapidly extending to lake Michigan.]	By steamboat -	69	6 times during navigation.	2,900 00	
Detroit, Michigan, to Pontiac - - - -	By rail- -	25	6	500 00	
Monroe to Hillsdale - - - -	do -	68	6	3,000 00	
Toledo, Ohio, to Adrian, Michigan - - - -	do -	33	6	1,650 00	
Buffalo, N. Y., to Lewiston - - - -	do -	29	7 t., and additional 7 t. 2 months.	1,100 00	
Lewiston to Lockport, with a branch from Niagara falls Junction with the Albany and Buffalo road to Skaneateles - - - -	do -	27	7	1,000 00	
Geneva, N. Y., to Salubria - - - -	do -	5	7	300 00	
Troy to Schenectady - - - -	By steamboat -	38	6	2,139 00	
Schenectady to Saratoga springs - - - -	By railroad -	14	6	212 00	
	do -	22	7 t., and additional 7 t. 2 months.	1,375 00	The additional service, 2 months, is from Troy, by Ballston, to Saratoga springs.

New York, N. Y., to Paterson, N. J. - - -	do -	17	13	1,500 00	
New York to Morristown, N. J. - - -	do -	32	12	1,585 00	
New York to Piermont - - - -	By steamboat -	25	6 }		
Piermont to South Middletown - - - -	By railroad -	52	6 }	1,486 00	
New York, N. Y., to Philadelphia, Pa., with a daily branch from Trenton, N. J., 30 miles - - -	do -	89	14	32,666 00	
Philadelphia, Pa., to Baltimore, Md. - - -	do -	97	13	30,600 00	
Baltimore, Md., to Washington, D. C. - - -	do -	40	17½	12,730 00	
Washington, D. C., to Aquia creek, Va. - - -	By steamboat -	54	7	12,752 00	
Aquia creek, Va., to Richmond, Va. - - -	By railroad -	76	7	19,500 00	Embracing side supply and special service.
Richmond, Va., to Petersburg, Va. - - -	do -	24½	7	5,818 50	
Petersburg, Va., to Weldon, N. C. - - -	do -	64	7	15,200 00	
Weldon, N. C., to Wilmington, N. C. - - -	do -	160	7 }		
Wilmington, N. C., to Charleston, S. C. - - -	By steamboat -	170	7 }	75,000 00	
Charleston, S. C., to Augusta, Ga. - - -	By railroad -	139	7	33,012 50	
Augusta, Ga., to Social Circle, with a branch to Warrenton, 3½ miles. - - -	do -	122	7	29,325 00	
Uphaupee, Ala., to Montgomery, Ala. - - -	do -	40	7	-	No separate compensation; service is covered by coach-route contract.
Mobile, Ala., to New Orleans, La. [This is not in immediate connexion with the railroad; but it is placed in this list because an important link in the great Atlantic line, a comparatively small portion of which is covered by coach conveyance] - - -					
Elizabethtown, N. J., to Somerville - - -	By steamboat -	164	7	70,000 00	
Philadelphia, Pa., to Lancaster - - -	By railroad -	26	7	1,800 00	
Lancaster, Pa., to Harrisburg - - -	do -	70	14	12,200 00	
Harrisburg to Chambersburg - - -	do -	36	14	6,390 00	
Chambersburg to Hagerstown, Md. - - -	do -	52	7	9,100 00	
Philadelphia, Pa., to Pottsville - - -	do -	20	6	1,000 00	
Port Clinton to Tamaqua - - -	do -	98	6	10,500 00	Embracing side supply.
Williamsport to Rallston - - -	do -	20	6	655 00	Estimated.
Summit to Johnstown - - -	do -	25	6	1,286 00	
Blossburg to Corning, N. Y. - - -	do -	19	3	200 00	Horse service during winter.
Baltimore, Md. to Columbia, Pa. - - -	do -	37	3	906 00	Estimated.
Columbia to Lancaster - - -	do -	72	6	7,000 00	
Baltimore to Cumberland, with a branch to Frederick, 3 miles - - -	do -	12	14	1,504 00	
Baltimore to Norfolk, Va. - - -	do -	179	7	43,225 00	
Norfolk, Va., to Weldon, N. C. - - -	By steamboat -	200	6	7,157 00	
	By railroad -	80	7	8,000 00	

Statement of railroad service—Continued.

Termini of routes.	Mode of transportation.	Miles.	Trips per week.	Annual pay.	Remarks.
Harper's Ferry, Va., to Winchester - - -	By railroad -	32	6	\$3,200 00	
Junction with Washington road to Annapolis - -	do -	20	6	2,200 00	
Junction with Richmond road to Gordonsville, Va. -	do -	50	7	4,500 00	
Petersburg, Va., to City Point - - -	do -	12	7	500 00	
Raleigh, N. C., to Gaston - - -	do -	87	7	8,700 00	
Franklin depot to Plymouth - - -	By steamboat -	103	3	3,500 00	
Charleston, S. C., to Savannah, Ga.—[This service is engaged, and is to go into operation on 1st December.]	do -	110	7	9,000 00	
Savannah to Macon - - -	By railroad -	192	6	20,580 00	
Macon to Griffin - - -	do -	58	6	5,000 00	
Branchville, S. C., to Columbia - - -	do -	68	7	8,187 50	
Union Point, Ga., to Athens - - -	do -	41	6	3,600 00	
Monroeville, Ohio, to Sandusky - - -	do - (estimated.)	12	6	409 00	
Decatur, Ala., to Tusculum - - -	do -	44	6	3,000 00	
Jackson, Miss., to Vicksburg - - -	do -	53	6	5,300 00	
		5,853½		750,569 00	

S. R. HOBBIE,
First Assistant Postmaster General.

NEW YORK, August 22, 1844.

SIR: The undersigned, a committee of the chamber of commerce, feel great satisfaction in tendering their thanks to your department for having, in accordance with the request of the chamber, in aid of public convenience, and without interfering with that of any portion of our citizens, established the principal office for the general mail delivery in the commercial or business part of our city. The mercantile community have always claimed the earliest receipt, and the latest period for depositing their letters, not merely as a matter of accommodation, but as a right absolutely required by the interests of commerce; as the time unnecessarily lost to them in the receipt and despatch of the mails, under the system of the lower or branch office, at so important a point as New York, has always been productive of more or less disadvantage—often of serious injury—not only to merchants, who are the agents of commerce, but to all concerned in the general trade of the country.

The undersigned beg leave to avail themselves of the present occasion to press upon the consideration of your department the urgent necessity of an early and material reduction in the rate of postage. The Post Office Department, it is understood, has always been expected to maintain itself, and we think all regulations for its government should have this object in view; and we entirely accord with your opinion, as expressed to Congress, that "this is a safe and sound principle" on which to place the department, in furtherance of the public good, and the maintenance and security of so important and necessary a branch of the public service. If, however, in consequence of that reduction in the rates of postage so loudly called for by public opinion, and so imperiously required by the permanent interests and future usefulness of the post office, its expenses should be found, for a time, to exceed its revenues, we think the duty would devolve on Congress, as a matter of course, to make the necessary appropriation to supply the deficiency. The chamber of commerce desires to see the Post Office Department maintained in efficiency and vigor. The conveyance of letters by private expresses, even if legal, is not considered a proper source to be permanently relied on for so responsible a trust. This mode will only be adopted on such routes as are most convenient, and continued only so long as they may prove profitable; and there is always danger that, before long, competition may not only hazard the security, but, perhaps, terminate the existence of the system itself. But, if this system of private expresses, in consequence of the facilities afforded by railroads, should continue to be conducted with despatch and regularity between some of our principal cities, still the distant routes, composing the greatest portion in extent of the mail service of the Union, can only be continued at a very heavy expense to the national treasury. The authority and the shield, no less than the responsibility and the means of the national government, applied and administered under wise, liberal, and protective laws, are considered the only proper and efficient safeguards whereby to secure to all portions of the Union the prompt, safe, and regular conveyance of the mails, under the power vested in Congress "to establish post offices and post roads." But, in order to meet the expectation, and regain the confidence and favor of the public, the committee would respectfully recommend that the rates of postage be reduced as soon as possible, and with special reference to supersede private expresses, to 5 cents for a single letter for any distance

under 500 miles, and to 10 cents for all greater distances; entertaining no doubt that increased correspondence, at this reduction, would soon increase the revenue of the post office more than any higher rate of postage. With regard to newspapers, pamphlets, and other mailable matter, the experience of the department would best enable it to recommend the course to be adopted with that portion of the mail service; the committee having only to express a hope that, in this respect, a proper liberality may be extended, and to suggest the expediency of the pre-payment of all transient newspapers, which would relieve the mails from much cumbersome matter, and the department from a heavy expense, as large masses of such newspapers, we are informed, are never taken from the offices. To enable the post office to sustain itself under this cheap system of postage, the exclusive right to carry letters for hire should be given to the United States mail service; and any infringement of the right should be guarded against, by clear and positive acts of Congress. Annual appropriations should be made for the transportation of the letters and documentary correspondence of the several departments of government, as it does not seem reasonable that the social and business correspondence of the country, which is to support the mails, should also be taxed for the services performed for government. The franking privilege, also, so important and necessary in itself, has become, in consequence of gross abuse, a serious burden on the service, and a heavy charge on the post office. The interference of Congress to regulate and restrict the use of this valuable privilege is required to protect the essential rights of the department.

The undersigned cannot close this communication without acknowledging the promptness displayed in conveying and delivering the letters by the last foreign steamer from Boston. And, in making the suggestions herein contained, with the sanction and approbation of the chamber of commerce, they would also ask to be favored with your own views on this important subject; assuring you that their sole aim and object is to sustain the post office, and, at the same time, obtain relief from the present heavy and onerous tariff of postage.

We have the honor to remain your obedient servants,

JAS. D. P. OGDEN,	} Committee.
JAMES G. KING,	
C. W. LAWRENCE,	
JAMES LEE,	

Hon. C. A. WICKLIFFE,

Postmaster General, Washington.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
New York, August 22, 1844.

At a meeting of the chamber, held this day, the preceding communication of a committee, addressed to the Hon. Charles A. Wickliffe, Postmaster General of the United States, was presented for the sanction of the chamber, and unanimously adopted.

Extract from the minutes:

JAS. D. P. OGDEN, *President.*

Attest:

PROSPER M. WETMORE, *Secretary.*

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
August 26, 1844.

GENTLEMEN : I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor under date of 22d inst., written under the sanction of your board ; and I lose no time in replying to the same, in accordance with your request.

I am gratified to know that the recent arrangements for the post office in your city meet with your approbation ; and I must be permitted to express the satisfaction I feel upon the information received from all quarters, that it is approved by the whole community, whose interest and convenience, connected with the safety and security of the public property, constituted the principal objects of the change.

I did not take this important step without the advantages of a personal examination of the localities of the various sites proposed, as well as the suitability of the buildings ; and, in arriving at the adjustment of the matter, so satisfactory to all concerned, it is due to a faithful public officer to state that I have been greatly aided by the indefatigable exertions of the postmaster of your city, who has manifested great zeal for its accomplishment, and much anxiety that the accommodation of all portions of your extensive and extended population should be locally and permanently secured.

My highest ambition, in the administration of the complicated duties of this department, is to extend its usefulness, and render its operations acceptable to the public, so far as I can consistently with the laws made for its government, which it is my duty to regard and enforce.

You have, in your letter, been pleased to communicate your views, and those of the chamber of commerce, whom you represent, upon the question of the reduction of postage, and the necessity of maintaining and protecting the department against the inroads upon its revenue by the agency of private expresses or mails, which threaten to impair, if not ultimately to destroy, its usefulness ; and you desire to have my views on this important subject.

I have no objections, gentlemen, to express to the chamber of commerce the opinions which I have long entertained, and which I have officially expressed in reply to a resolution of the Senate of the United States in January, 1843.

I am gratified to find that our opinions harmonize so well ; for I cordially concur in the opinion with the chamber of commerce, that the business of establishing post offices and post roads rightfully belongs to Congress, and can be best conducted under the control of the federal government—a power which, in its appropriate sphere, pervades the whole Union.

Individual enterprise, or cupidity, may be invoked to take charge of the correspondence of the country upon railroad and steamboat routes, and between our great commercial cities ; but distant and scattered portions of our population—the towns and villages whose business tends to swell the tide of our national commerce—would be wholly neglected. A merchant in New York would find it difficult to get one of these private letter mail expresses to transport his letters from New York to the town of Independence, in Missouri, at ten times the rate now charged by government ; and this example fully illustrates what would be the effect of these private mail expresses upon at least ten thousand of the fourteen thousand post offices,

and on the corresponding portion of the thirty-five millions of miles of mail transportation now in operation.

I fully agree with the chamber, also, upon another important principle which lies at the foundation of the post office operations, and on which the legislation of Congress for fifty years has been based, viz: "that the Post Office Department has always been expected to sustain itself, and that all regulations for its government should have this object in view. This is a safe principle."

I will not detain you by reference to statistics to exhibit the deplorable financial condition of the department in 1841, when I assumed its administration; neither is it necessary that I should remind the chamber of commerce of the then bankrupt condition of the public treasury, or the general depression of business of all kinds; the latter condition of affairs then operating powerfully on the receipts of the Post Office Department.

The principle above announced, the depressed state of the revenue of the department, and the laws of Congress, admonish me of the necessity of a strict economy, as well as the rigid enforcement of those laws in relation to postage; and I have earnestly essayed to give the best service which the means of the department afforded, and have sought to increase those means only by the enforcement of constitutional laws.

It may be safely assumed as a fact, that, with you, all the advocates for the reduction of postage maintain the principle that the expenses of the department should be defrayed by its own revenues; and I have witnessed no manifestation by Congress of an intention to abandon this principle.

I am aware that it has been imputed to me that I am opposed to all reduction of postage, upon any terms or conditions. The gross injustice done me in this, will appear by reference to facts, and to public documents, which may have escaped your attention. Neither has my opinion in reference to the franking privilege and its abuses, to which you refer, been concealed or withheld when it was fit and proper to express it.

In the official report of the department to Congress in 1842, looking to the wants of the service, and the intimations of public opinion upon the subject of the reduction of postage; and with a desire to place the department, in reference to its liabilities and revenue, in a condition to adopt a system of reduced postage, I urged upon Congress the propriety of relieving the department from the expense of railroad transportation of the mail, by some permanent and suitable arrangement with these companies, as a consideration for the transportation of the public correspondence, and the franking privilege granted to the public officers.

From this report I beg leave to make the following extract:

"The great question involved is, whether Congress should make these contracts, and pay the consideration, out of the resources of the government; or, whether the department shall levy the amount, by continuing the present rates of postage upon letters; and in all time to come devote so large a portion thereof to the payment for railroad transportation, as to deny to the more distant and less favored portions of the country any increased mail facilities? The cost of railroad transportation for the last year stands at \$432,568. I repeat the inquiry made on a former occasion: Is it just that the whole burden of the correspondence, now nearly equal to half a million of dollars annually, should be sustained by a tax upon the business and friendly correspondence of the community? If the government exact from our citizens no more than the cost and expense of transmitting their

letters, they have no right to complain; but when an additional sum is needed to defray the expense of the correspondence of the government and its officers, that sum, like the tax for every other public service, should be drawn from the common resources of the country.

"It is proposed that, in lieu of an annual drain from the treasury to pay the postage upon the public correspondence, the United States now secure and pay for the perpetual right to transport the mails over railroads. Can this right be now secured upon fair and reasonable terms? is a question worthy to be tested by fair experiment. I am of opinion it can be secured upon most, if not all of the important roads, upon reasonable terms, and upon ample guaranties."

The Senate of the United States, in July, 1842, passed a resolution "directing the Postmaster General to communicate to the Senate, at the commencement of the session, an estimate showing what reduction of the number of miles on which postage is now charged in the several cases designated by law, would be necessary to introduce the federal coinage, so as not to diminish the aggregate revenue of the Post Office Department."

The better to enable me to comply with this resolution, I called to my aid the practical experience of the postmasters at Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. After having given the facts and opinions required by the resolution, I thought it a fit and proper occasion to present the question of the further reduction of postage direct, based upon the principle that the department should sustain itself. From this report I make an extract: "If Congress will relieve the department from the amount now paid annually for railroad transportation, by a permanent arrangement with the great leading lines of intercommunication, and also regulate the franking privilege, and restrain it within proper limits,—then I am prepared to meet the demands of the public sentiment, and recommend a further reduction upon letters to 5 and 10 cents."

That report proceeded to show the effects of this reduction upon the revenue, and reiterates my former opinions, that Congress should assume the responsibility of meeting the amount required to defray the expense of railroad transportation, then estimated at half a million of dollars annually. In the conclusion of the report, I repeated the expression of my opinion, that the reduction of the postage to 5 and 10 cents should be preceded or accompanied "by specific legislation, whereby the department should be relieved from the amount paid for railroad transportation, and by a total repeal of the franking privilege, or a strict confinement of it to official business, and ample protection against inroads upon the revenue by private expresses, and other modes of evading the payment of postage." In this recommendation, I had the united and hearty concurrence of Mr. Gordon, postmaster of Boston; Mr. Graham, postmaster of New York; and Mr. Montgomery, postmaster of Philadelphia.

The Congress to which this recommendation and report were made, not having adopted any measure in relation thereto, at the commencement of last session of Congress, in my annual report upon the condition and operations of the department, I confined myself, so far as related to the reduction of postage, to a statement of the facts and results which belonged to the question of the reduction of the postage in England. I did not venture to recommend the adoption by the United States of the system of Great Britain, because I was satisfied, from the sparseness of our population, the denseness of theirs, and the immensely increased distances and worse roads

over which our service extends ; and the fact, that in England business is chiefly conducted by correspondence, while most of our internal trade is personally transacted ; the postage system of England, if adopted in this country, would not yield, by any means, a sufficient revenue to defray the expenses of the department. This opinion remains unchanged : it was not hastily formed, but was the result of a most laborious examination of the penny system of England for the time it had been in existence, and with the most anxious desire that my judgment would enable me to recommend its adoption by the United States.

While the principle of requiring the department to maintain itself is adhered to, it is indispensable that any great reduction of the rates of postage should be accompanied by a provision to supply any deficiency in the revenue of the department which might thence result. Such provision for the temporary deficiency which may occur being thus provided for, the tariff of postage might at once be reduced.

The bill which passed the Senate at the last session of Congress was objectionable in many particulars ; but that feature of it which established the rate of postage by weight, while it would have been destructive to the revenue of the department, would have operated most unjustly upon the community ; since the writer of a single letter would have been charged with the same amount as would have been paid by another, who could transmit six letters under one cover, if written upon paper of a light texture,—absorbing, in this manner, the increased number of letters, which is relied upon as the sole means of sustaining the revenue of the department under the reduced system of postage. And I cannot reconcile to my views of justice to the citizen, that the extensive franking privilege which it reserved to the members of Congress and others, should, under the reduced system, be thrown as a burden upon the business and domestic correspondence of the country. I was also satisfied, from the best data which the statistics of this department afforded, that the Senate bill would not produce revenue sufficient, by \$1,500,000, to defray the expenses of the service ; and the bill contained no provision to supply such deficiency.

I have thus gone into details, to comply with your request to “ favor you with my views on this important subject,” regretting that such details have been indispensably necessary to make them fully known to you, and, *through you*, to the chamber of commerce ; who, I trust, will see, in the course I have pursued, an entire willingness on my part to meet the demands of a just public sentiment by a reduction of the rates of postage ; while, as the head of so important a branch of the public service, I should have been justly obnoxious to censure, had I recommended any such reduction without the adoption of the corrective measures to which I have called your attention, with the evidence before me that they were necessary to save the department from bankruptcy, and the public from the evils incident to a defective and unsatisfactory exercise of its functions.

C. A. WICKLIFFE.

MESSRS. J. D. P. OGDEN,
JAMES G. KING,
C. W. LAWRENCE,
JAMES LEE,

Committee of Chamber of Commerce, New York.

Report from the Postmaster General, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate, on the subject of adapting the rules of postage to the federal currency, without diminishing the revenues of the department.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *January 5, 1843.*

SIR: The Senate of the United States, by resolution of the 27th of July last, required that "the Postmaster General be directed to communicate to the Senate, at the commencement of the next session, an estimate showing what *reduction* of the number of miles on which postages are now charged, in the several cases designated by law, would be necessary to introduce the federal coinage, so as not to diminish the aggregate revenue of the Post Office Department."

I find it difficult, if not impossible, to comply with this resolution, if regard be had to its literal import.

A "reduction of distance in the different classes of the rates of postage, so as to introduce the federal coinage," and at the same time preserve the present aggregate revenue, could not be well accomplished, without a very considerable increase of postage upon some of these classes, covered by the *reduction* of distance.

I have therefore assumed that the Senate meant by this resolution to require an estimate, &c., showing what change of the distances and rates of postage could be made, so as to introduce the coin of the federal government, and at the same time preserve the present aggregate average revenue, without, in any considerable degree, increasing the postage upon the present given lines.

In obedience to the resolution, thus understood, I have the honor to make this report.

For the sake of easy reference, I submit a table exhibiting the present rates of postage, and the distances and probable number of letters, and amount received upon each class of letters, compiled from data furnished by this department in 1836.

The law of 1825 imposes the following rates of letter postage:

Upon single letters sent through the mail any distance not over 30 miles, six cents.

Upon single letters sent through the mail any distance over 30 to 80 miles, ten cents.

Upon single letters sent through the mail any distance over 80 to 150 miles, twelve and a half cents.

Upon single letters sent through the mail any distance over 150 to 400 miles, eighteen and three-quarters cents.

Upon single letters sent through the mail any distance over 400 miles, twenty-five cents.

Of the first class, it is estimated that 5,328,600 letters are sent through the mail, producing	-	-	-	\$319,716
Of the second class, at 10 cents	7,992,890	producing	-	799,289
Of the third class, at 12½ cents	5,328,600	"	-	666,075
Of the fourth class, at 18¾ cents	3,992,896	"	-	748,668
Of the fifth class, at 25 cents	1,865,008	"	-	466,252

Total letters - - - 24,507,994

Total amount of letter postage - - - 3,000,000

It may not be out of place here to observe—lest a conclusion not altogether correct be drawn from the fact, that the highest rates of postage produce the smallest aggregate amount of revenue—that the great commercial points of the Union approach each other within the range of the two distances of 80 or 150 miles.

In lieu of the distances and rates of postage fixed by the act of 1825, in order to accomplish the views of the Senate, as understood to be expressed in the resolution above, it is proposed that the following scale of distances and rates of postages be adopted, viz :

Upon all single letters sent by the mail any distance not over 30 miles, five cents.

Upon all single letters sent by the mail any distance over 30 to 100 miles, ten cents.

Upon all single letters sent by the mail any distance over 100 to 220 miles, fifteen cents.

Upon all single letters sent by the mail any distance over 220 to 400 miles, twenty cents.

Upon all single letters sent by the mail any distance over 400 miles, twenty-five cents.

Assuming the data given in the first table as correct, or as approximating to correctness, the probable receipts from each class of letter postage, if the above scale be adopted, may be estimated as follows :

On the class under 30 miles	5,328,600 letters, at 5 cents	\$266,430 00
“ over 30 to 100 miles	9,515,390 “ 10 “	951,539 00
“ over 100 to 220 miles	4,924,111 “ 15 “	738,616 65
“ over 220 to 400 miles	2,874,885 “ 20 “	574,977 00
“ over 400 miles	1,865,008 “ 25 “	466,252 00
		<hr/> 2,997,814 65 <hr/>

This calculation exhibits a probable loss of aggregate letter postage of \$2,185 35.

A too confident reliance, however, upon the accuracy of the result produced by this calculation should not be entertained. Without an increase of correspondence and mail-matter between the points embraced within the range of distances upon which a reduction of postage from 12½ to 10 cents, and from 18½ to 15 cents, takes place, the aggregate amount of revenue will sustain a loss greater than \$2,185 35.

In some degree to guard against this probable reduction of revenue by the change of distance and rates of postage, I would recommend that the lowest rate of letter postage be imposed upon what are denominated “drop letters,” where the postage is not prepaid. This is a class of letters which are usually sent from one place to another by private conveyance, and are “dropped” or deposited in the post office for delivery. Besides the intrinsic justice of imposing upon such letters postage, where the department is charged with the risk and trouble of delivery, it is believed that such an imposition of postage would tend to lessen the temptation to seek for channels of private conveyance over mail lines, to avoid the payment of postage. It is not proposed to prohibit, as is done in most of the European governments, the sending by private conveyance a letter; but if a letter so sent shall be deposited by the bearer in a post office, to be delivered, then to charge it with postage.

It would be difficult to estimate the amount which would be derived from this new class of letter postage; but it is the opinion of some intelligent postmasters, that not less than \$50,000 would thereby be added to the revenue.

Under the hope that Congress will, at its present session, by proper legislation, protect the department against innovations upon its rights, and consequent loss of revenue, I respectfully recommend the adoption of the distances and rates of postage above, in lieu of the present.

If Congress will relieve the department from the amount now paid annually for railroad transportation, by a permanent arrangement with the great leading lines of intercommunication, and also regulate the franking privilege, and restrain it within proper limits, then I am prepared to meet the demands of public sentiment, and recommend a further reduction of letter postage to ten cents upon all letters over 30 miles.

The inquiry, what effect such a reduction would have upon the revenue of the department, appropriately suggests itself. The answer to be given involves several considerations.

In the first place, the department should be relieved in its expenditure of the sum (now nearly equal to a half million per annum, and which is liable to be increased at each period) for the renewal of contracts for railroad transportation. Deduct this sum from \$4,235,052, the current expenditure of 1842, and it leaves \$3,802,484 as the probable future expenditure, upon the present basis of service. Upon the hypothesis that the letter correspondence through the mail shall, under this reduced rate of postage, increase at the rate of 20 per cent. only upon the number of letters sent through the mail in 1836, the revenue from letter postage may be estimated at \$2,621,243 28; to which is to be added the amount to be received from newspaper postage, \$572,228, and the amount from fines and forfeitures, \$766. This will give a gross revenue of \$3,194,237.

It must be admitted that this reduction of postage will be followed by a considerable increase of mail matter. The rate of increase is matter of opinion and speculation. I confess that I do not allow myself to hope for a greater increase than 20 per cent. for years to come; though others, whose opinions are entitled to respectful consideration, estimate a greater increase, varying from 20 to 50 per cent.

Assuming the increase of mail-matter to be 20 per cent. consequent upon the proposed reduction, the amount of gross estimated revenue will be as above

Total amount of expenditure for 1842, exclusive of	\$432,568
paid to railroads	3,802,484

This \$3,802,484 may, therefore, be assumed as the average amount of future expenditure.

It will be seen that, by calculating the revenue upon the amount of mail-matter in 1836, and the future expenditure by that of 1842, the proposed reduction of postage would cause a reduction of revenue of over half a million of dollars below the expenditure of the department.

If, however, the increase of mail-matter shall be equal to 40 per cent. upon the basis of 1836, as some confidently believe, this would give a further sum of \$436,873 88. To which amount may be added \$50,000, the probable income from the proposed postage on "drop letters."

In the foregoing estimate of income and expenditure, I have adopted the amount of mail-matter of 1836, and the amount of expenditure for 1842.

There has been no account taken of the number of letters which passed through the mail during the last year. An estimate of the number may be made by the amount of letter postage received during the year 1842. That amount was \$3,953,319 34. To produce this sum would require 32,295,972 letters charged with postage to have been delivered through the mail.

A calculation of revenue, based on this number of letters, upon the supposed reduction of postage, and the probable increase of mail matter, will be more likely to give the revenue to be received, than upon the number of letters delivered through the mail in 1836.

Postage on 7,021,900 letters under 30 miles, at a rate of	
5 cents on a single letter	\$351,095 00
On 25,274,072 letters, at 10 cents	2,527,407 20
Add 20 per cent. for probable increase of 10 cent letters	505,481 55
From newspapers	572,228 00
From fines and forfeitures	766 00
Total aggregate revenue	3,956,977 75

Average future expenditure, exclusive of railroad transportation	3,802,484 00
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The rate of reduction here proposed, is not equal to the ratio of reduction recently made in England; and, consequently, the ratio of increase of mail-matter will not be so great as in England.

There is an additional reason why it will not be in the same ratio of increase; and that is, the power which is exerted in England to force the entire correspondence of the kingdom through the post office.

The reduction here proposed, and any other, should be preceded by specific legislation, whereby the department is to be relieved from the amount paid for railroad transportation; secondly, by a total repeal of the franking privilege, or a strict confinement of it to official business; and an ample protection against inroads upon the revenue by private expresses, and other modes of evading the payment of legal postage.

Respectfully, your obedient,

C. A. WICKLIFFE.

Hon. W. P. MANGUM,
President of the Senate.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, July 6, 1844.

SIR: I regret that your communication, covering your correspondence with Mr. Mabery, upon the subject of my letter to you, asking for some alterations in the making up the mail in England for the United States, remains unanswered until this time. Various reasons for this delay might be assigned; but the main one is, that it was expected Congress would, at its recent session, have made some important changes in the present post office laws and rates of postage. No change, however, has been made, and I proceed to reply. You rightly conceived the object of my communication. It was not to seek a benefit to the department, or for the United States, that I made the suggestion as to the mode of assorting the mail destined for the

United States. It was to benefit the English and commercial correspondence south of Boston ; it was designed to prevent a detention of the British mail at Boston twenty-four hours, which often occurred, upon the arrival of the steamer ; and I regret that his lordship, the Postmaster General, could not consent to the regulation desired by me, for the reason that, under existing circumstances, he could not afford any more facilities than those now rendered to the United States post office.

The suggestion for a postal treaty between the two countries, accompanied by the draught of such treaty, has been considered by me. I have examined the said draught, and am unable to perceive the necessity for such a treaty, as it proposes to do no more to facilitate the correspondence by private vessels, than is now done in the United States, except the formality of exchanging receipts, between the two post offices, for the letters which may be received. All that is desirable to be done between the two governments, may be done by mutual arrangements, I presume, between the post office departments of the two countries ; and, for that purpose, I enclose to you a draught for such regulations, which you may submit to the department of the British post office for its assent, with such additions or alterations as may be deemed advisable.

I need not in this communication elaborate any explanation of the proposed arrangement.

It may not be unprofitable to say that this mode of arrangement is to be preferred to that by treaty, because it may be altered, in the same summary mode, as experience shall dictate ; or it may be abandoned, by consent, if found inconvenient, or incompatible with the interests of either government, without the formality usual in the alteration or abrogation of treaties.

The main features of the plan are : 1st. That letters and papers from England, or passing through England, to the United States, shall be charged with no higher or greater postage in the United States, than is imposed on the letters sent by the mail from one point in the United States to any other point in the same.

This plan leaves each government at liberty to regulate its postage ; but whatever rates of postage either may adopt, the correspondence of the other country shall be subject to, and no more.

The other regulation relates to the transmission of the diplomatic correspondence between the two countries.

It is due to myself I should say to you, that, soon after receiving your communication upon this subject, I addressed a note to Mr. Fox, from whom I received no answer. Upon the arrival of Mr. Pakenham, I spoke to him upon this subject, and invited his attention to my note to Mr. Fox. From him I received a communication, a copy of which I send you. It would seem, from his reply, that the British post office department would not, in all probability, be willing to assent to the arrangement proposed in the last article, though he said he would transmit the proposition to his government, or to the Postmaster General. For my own part, I can see no objection to the arrangement, which proposes, in a spirit of national courtesy and perfect security, to transmit the despatch bag of the two countries upon equal and national terms of freedom ; and at a saving of unnecessary expense, without increase of costs to the two countries. If, however, this shall be declined by the post office department of Great Britain, it will not be insisted upon. The mutuality of postage between and in the two countries is most desired.

I therefore, sir, submit this subject to you, to be managed as you may best judge prudent, with full powers to sign my name to the arrangement proposed. If alterations or additions are proposed by the Postmaster General of Great Britain, they will have to be sent here for my examination, and, if approved, I will send them back to be incorporated by you.

It is matter of some interest to me that this arrangement, if effected, should be done with as little delay as practicable, so that I may be enabled to report the same to the next Congress. I hope, therefore, you will, if consistent with your views, call the attention of the Postmaster General of Great Britain to the subject, at as early a day as practicable.

With sentiments of respect,

C. A. WICKLIFFE

Hon. E. EVERETT,
Minister to London.

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DRAFT.

An arrangement made between the Post Office Department of her Britannic Majesty's kingdom, and the Post Office Department of the United States, for interchange of mails and posted letters between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and her dependencies, and the United States of America.

1st. It is agreed that upon letters, newspapers, or packets, sent from the kingdom of Great Britain, or any of her dependencies, or from any other portion of the world, through the said kingdom and her dependencies, to the United States and her territories, there shall be charged by the United States Post Office Department, for conveying and delivering said letters, papers, or packets, in the United States mail, no greater or higher postage than is imposed upon letters, newspapers, or packets, written in the United States, and sent through the United States mail for the like transportation and delivery.

2d. Letters, newspapers, or packets, sent from the United States, or her territories, in the English mail, to be delivered in the United Kingdom, or any of her colonies or dependencies, or to be conveyed through the same, in the mail, to any other country, shall be charged or rated with no higher rates of postage than are, or may be, imposed upon the letters, newspapers, or packets, sent through the mail from one portion of the kingdom, or her provinces or dependencies, to another portion of the same, for the like transportation and delivery; except that, as Great Britain, in lieu of postage on newspapers, imposes an excise of one penny on each sheet of newspaper published, the postage of one penny on each sheet of newspapers published in the United States, and sent by mail to or through any portion of the kingdom of Great Britain, shall, or may be, imposed or collected.

The object of the two foregoing articles is to provide that no greater postage shall be imposed upon American mail-matter, sent through the British mail, within the kingdom or her provinces, than is imposed upon British mail-matter; and that no greater postage shall be imposed upon British mail-matter sent to or through the United States or her territories, than is imposed upon the like American mail-matter sent through the United States mail.

It is agreed, also, that the diplomatic despatch bag, under the seal or lock of the British legation at Washington, may be sent through or by the mail of the United States, to or from Washington, and to or from any part of the United States, and delivered to the legation, or its agent, without charge. In like manner, the diplomatic despatch bag of the United States legation at London, under the seal or key of the legation, may be sent to or from London, to or from any port in England, or the United States, by the English mail, and delivered to the American legation, or its agent, without charge.

4th. These regulations may be changed or altered as experience shall prove to be expedient; or they may be terminated at any time, by either party notifying the other of a desire to terminate the same, at the expiration of six months from the reception of such notice.

C. A. WICKLIFFE, *Postmaster General*,
by E. EVERETT, *Minister*, &c.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
August 7, 1844.

SIR: Congress, at its late session, passed a resolution (a copy of which I enclose) upon the subject of the interchange of postal matter between the United States, and France and other states of Europe; by which you will perceive I am authorized to enter into certain regulations for the prepayment and collection of foreign postage, &c. Prior to the passage of this resolution, I had been engaged, under the general powers given the Postmaster General by the act of 1825, in projecting a plan to be agreed upon between France and this government, in the shape of mutual regulations between the two departments. The passage of the resolution by Congress caused me to modify the proposed regulations, so as to meet the views of Congress and the wants of our citizens engaged in carrying on a correspondence with citizens of any other state or government on the continent of Europe with whom France may have postal arrangements, by which she can meet the requirements of the citizens and subjects of the two countries corresponding through the territory of France.

Before I attempt any explanation of the several clauses, allow me to say that the present mode is proposed in lieu of a formal treaty between the two governments, as equally efficacious, more easily consummated, and more easily changed, or altered, or abandoned, as experience or circumstances may point out, than if the two governments, by the treaty-making power, had stipulated to do the same things.

I trust, therefore, no objections as to the form will be entertained, either by yourself or the government authorities of France. Regulations not unlike these proposed, in many respects, have existed between this department and the Postmaster General of the British provinces in North America, for years, (alterations and additions to which have been adopted by the two Postmasters General,) with despatch, and greatly to the advantage of the postal intercourse between the two countries.

I may be permitted to add, also, that I have had several interviews with M. Pageot, the minister of France at Washington, who, upon explanation

by me, concurs fully in the opinion that it is better to do by regulation whatever the countries, or the two departments, agree upon, than by the formality of a treaty. I have also read and explained to him the paper containing the proposed regulations; and he expressed himself highly gratified at the hope that his government would see no substantial objection to the plan proposed. The paper is sent to you, with the approbation of the President, under the hope that you will feel no objection on your part to undertake to conclude this business for me. I have no means to send a special agent to perform this duty; consequently, I have to call on you.

If France designs to establish her line of steam mail packets between Havre and the United States, this arrangement insures to her the transportation of all the mail-matter between the United States and the continent of Europe, which now passes by the British post. More especially will this be the case, if Great Britain adheres (as I am inclined to believe she will) to her high discriminating rate of postage on foreign letters passing into and through her kingdom from the United States.

The three first sections propose equality of postage between the two countries; that is, American letters in France, and French letters in America, shall pay no higher postage than the letters of the respective countries sent by the mail of the two.

In the next stipulation you will observe that I have left a blank, not knowing with what countries France has postal arrangements. The names are to be inserted; the blank to be filled in reference to the French posts.

The next provision relates to the rating and collecting of postage in the two countries. As it is understood France has postal arrangements with some, if not all the principal governments on the continent, for the collection of the postage due on letters sent to France, this provision proposes to effect, through France, the object which Congress had in view in relation to Belgium, Holland, &c. It requires that, upon mailing the letters for the United States, the whole amount of postage (French and German, for instance) shall be aggregated and rated in the coin or rates of coin of France. You, sir, will readily perceive the necessity of this, when you reflect how few of the American deputy postmasters are competent to convert the coin of Austria, Holland, Prussia, &c., into American coin, so as to know how much to collect as postage when the letter is delivered. If the whole is stated in the coin of France, but few would find any difficulty in ascertaining the amount in American coin to be collected.

The United States Post Office Department will pay the whole amount of postage to France, who will, of course, have kept an account at the post office of the port of embarkation, of the amount of postage on the letter due to other countries from which the letter is sent.

I have, I trust, said enough on this subject to enable you fully, and without difficulty, to comprehend it, and to explain the same more fully, should it become necessary.

The other regulations are merely auxiliary to the above, and will fully explain themselves.

The regulations in relation to the despatch-bags of the respective legations, your own experience will enable you fully to explain. In my judgment, it would be an arrangement mutually beneficial and courteous, and unattended with any additional expense.

May I ask you, sir, to try and bring this subject to a close, in time for

me to communicate the result to the next Congress? I feel anxious to have it perfected before I retire from my present laborious position.

Respectfully, your friend,

C. A. WICKLIFFE.

Hon. WILLIAM R. KING,

Envoy Extraordinary and

Minister Plenipotentiary to France.

N. B. It may be well for you to say to the Postmaster General of France, that if, upon adopting these regulations, they are found to work well, no objection is perceived, should it be desirable on the part of France, to give them hereafter the form of a treaty between the two countries.

Post office regulations made between C. A. Wickliffe, Postmaster General of the United States, by virtue of the power vested in him by the acts of Congress of the United States, on the one part; and

for and on behalf of the post office department of the kingdom of France, in virtue of authority in him for such purpose vested.

It is agreed as follows: That all letters, newspapers, or packets, *sent in the vessels of France*, from the kingdom of France to the United States, by or through the French mail, or vessels of France engaged in transporting the mail, or sent by the same conveyance from any port or place within the dominions of France, or from any other portion of the world, shall be transported through and by the United States, within the United States, at no greater or higher rate, or charge of postage, than is charged upon the letters, packets, or newspapers written and sent through the United States mail, from one place to another in the United States, according to rates and distances fixed by the laws of the United States, with the addition which may be authorized by law for the expense of sea letters when paid by the United States to the captain of the vessel, on delivery, for the use of the post office department of France.

2d. In like manner, the letters, newspapers, or packets, which shall be sent from the United States to the dominions of France, shall be transported to and through the kingdom of France and its dependencies, at no greater charge or rate of postage than is imposed upon the letters, newspapers, or packets, in proportion to distance, passing in the mail from one portion of the kingdom of France to any other portion thereof, except the charge for sea transportation, which charge shall be uniform.

When letters, newspapers, or packets are brought to the United States in a public vessel of France, or a private foreign vessel, if delivered by the United States post office at the port of entry, no additional postage is to be charged by the United States, except that allowed by law of 1825; but if sent to other post offices of the United States for delivery, the said letters, newspapers, or packets, are to be charged with two cents each, in addition to the inland American postage.

No packet weighing over three pounds, or bound book, can be sent in the mail of the United States, under the existing laws.

3d. The two foregoing regulations shall apply, as well to letters, newspapers, or packets, sent through the respective territories of the two gov-

ernments to other kingdoms and countries with which the two governments have postal arrangements, as to the letters, newspapers, or packets sent and delivered in the two governments of France and the United States.

In order further to facilitate the correspondence by postal communications between the United States and France, and to states on the continent of Europe, viz :

with which France has already made, or may hereafter make, postal arrangements for such purposes, it is agreed that the postage charged, including as well the postage charged by the French government, as that which may be charged by the other European governments on the continent, on letters, newspapers, or packets, sent from France, by any vessel, from the following ports in France, viz : Havre, which shall arrive in the following ports of the United States, viz : New York, Boston, Providence, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and New Orleans, shall be collected by the post office department of the United States, and accounted for to the post office department of France; and the postage charged on letters, newspapers, or packets, sent from the United States to any of the ports of France above enumerated, whether said letters are to be delivered in France, or to be sent to any of the governments above named, with which France has postal arrangements, shall be collected, and accounted for, by the post office department of France, as may be herein specified, or hereafter agreed upon by mutual engagements.

All letters and mail-matter sent to the two respective countries, from the ports or places aforesaid, shall be made up, with all the postage due the respective governments plainly charged on each letter, newspaper, or packet, in the rates of coin of the French government, or of the United States government, as the case may be, accompanied by a way-bill descriptive of the mail-matter and amount of postage charged.

The whole amount of postage upon any letter to be charged by the government of France, and the other governments above enumerated, may be prepaid in the United States, at the offices of the United States where mailed, to be accounted for by the United States; and the letters and packets thus prepaid shall be transported and delivered to the persons addressed, either in France, or in the other governments enumerated above, on the continent of Europe, without other or additional charge.

In the same way, the American postage on letters and packets sent from said governments to the United States, may be prepaid in the countries whence sent; and the postage thus prepaid shall be accounted for and paid by the French post office department to the United States post office department.

All letters and packets thus prepaid shall be so marked, and the amount of postage prepaid stated on said letters, newspapers, or packets, distinguishing between the American and French or foreign postage, accompanied by a way-bill stating the number of such letters, newspapers, or packets, and the aggregate amount of postage so prepaid. The account of postage collected by each government for the other shall be settled every six months, viz : on the 30th June, and 30th December, in each year; and the balance paid and remitted to the Postmaster General of that government to which it may be found due, upon such semi annual adjustment.

In case any of the letters or packets sent as aforesaid shall not be ta-

ken from the post office of delivery, the same shall be returned, without being opened, semi-annually, to the general post offices of the respective countries of France and the United States, and the amount of postage charged thereon shall be credited to the appropriate government.

The post office department of the government of France shall be authorized to charge and retain twenty per centum upon the whole amount of postage by them collected as due to the United States, charged on the letters, newspapers, or packets sent to and through the kingdom of France as aforesaid; and, in like manner, the post office department of the United States shall be entitled to charge and retain twenty per centum upon the amount of postage collected upon the letters, newspapers, or packets sent, as aforesaid, from or through France.

To enable the post office department of France to receive the United States postage upon prepaid letters, whether prepaid in France, or any of the other kingdoms or countries enumerated, as aforesaid, the Postmaster General of the United States will furnish the post office department of France with the rates of postage in the United States, to be charged and received in France, or at such other place or places as may be designated.

In like manner, the *Postmaster General of France* shall furnish to the United States post office department a tariff, or rate of postage, as well of France, as of the other governments on the continent with which France has postal arrangements, stated and reduced into the rates of coin of France, to enable the post office department of the United States to charge and receive the postage upon letters, packets, &c., to be paid to France.

This arrangement shall apply only to mails sent to and from the two countries of France and the United States in the vessels of the respective countries.

This arrangement to go into effect within six months from the date it shall be signed and approved by the Postmaster General of the United States, and _____ of France, and may be discontinued at the pleasure of the post office department of either government, upon giving six months' notice of such desire to the other contracting party. While it continues in force, it is subject to be altered, changed, or added to, as experience may point out.

It is further mutually agreed between the two post office departments of the two governments, that the despatch diplomatic bag of each government shall and may be sent, under the lock or seal of the respective departments, from and to the ports of the two countries, and transported in the mail unbroken and without charge.

That is to say: when the minister of France desires to send a despatch-bag from Washington to Paris, it may be sent, under his lock or seal, in the mail, to the postmaster of the port of debarkation, and delivered to the captain of the vessel, or agent of the department, to be transported to France. And upon the arrival of a despatch bag at any of the ports of the United States, the same shall be transported in the United States mail to Washington city post office, to be delivered to the minister plenipotentiary of France resident at Washington.

In like manner, the despatch diplomatic bags of the United States to the minister of the United States resident at Paris, shall be conveyed in the French mail to and from Paris, under the seal or lock of the State Department.

PARIS, *September 30, 1844.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge your communication of the 7th August, with its accompanying papers, relating to the establishment of certain reciprocal regulations regarding the interchange of postal matter between the United States and France. In conformity therewith, I have addressed a proposition to the French government; and I am not without reason to hope that an arrangement, such as you desire, and which will promote the facilities of correspondence between the two countries, may be effected. Rest assured, sir, that no efforts shall be spared on my part to bring so desirable an object to a speedy and satisfactory termination.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM R. KING.

Hon. C. A. WICKLIFFE,
Postmaster General.