

That General Washington be directed to publish a proclamation, offering pardon to such as have deserted from the continental army, and shall, on or before such day as he shall think proper to fix in his proclamation, return to their respective corps, or surrender themselves to the officers appointed to receive recruits and deserters in the respective states, or to any other continental commissioned officer.¹

Some packets being brought from Martinico, and laid before Congress, directed to Willing, Morris, & Co. and Mr. Morris being absent, and there being strong reasons from the information of the messenger who brought the said packets, that they contained public despatches for Congress, or some of its committees:

Ordered, That the covers be opened.

The committee on the post office brought in a report.
Adjourned to 4 o'Clock.

FOUR O'CLOCK, P. M.

Congress took into consideration the report of the committee on the post office; Whereupon,

Resolved, That the post master general be authorized, during the present exigence, to appoint two additional surveyors of the post office, and that all the surveyors be allowed six dollars a day each, in full consideration of travelling expences, and all other allowances:

That the tour of the whole be as follows: one from Casco Bay to Philadelphia, or, during the enemy's being in possession of that city, to Lancaster; one from Philadelphia or Lancaster, to Edenton, in North Carolina, and the third from Edenton to Savannah, in Georgia:

¹This report, in the writing of Elbridge Gerry, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 21, folio 135. The proclamation by Washington was issued October 24. See *Writings of Washington* (Ford), VI, 139n.

That an inspector of dead letters be appointed, with a salary of one hundred dollars a year: to examine all dead letters at the expiration of each quarter; to communicate to Congress such letters as contain inimical schemes or intelligence; to preserve carefully all money, loan office certificates, lottery tickets, notes of hand, and other valuable papers enclosed in any of them, and be accountable for them; and to keep a book containing an exact account of such papers, &c. so found, the date of the letters, from whence and by whom written, and to whom directed; that he be under oath faithfully and impartially to discharge the duties of his office; that he be enjoined to take no copy of any letter whatever, and not to divulge their contents to any but Congress, or those whom they may appoint for the purpose:

That the post go not out of his regular and usual course in order to pass by head quarters, but that the post masters on each side of head quarters, and nearest to them, have authority to hire expresses for the purpose of carrying letters for the army to the post office there:

~~That the rate of postage be increased fifty per centum above its present rate, as the present profits of the office fall far short of the expence created by it.~~

Resolved, That an allowance of 250 dollars be made to the present survivor of the post office, for past extraordinary services.

~~*Resolved*, That 3,000 dollars be advanced to the Postmaster general for Post office expences, he to be accountable.¹~~

Resolved, That the Committee of Intelligence be authorized to take the most speedy and effectual measures for getting a printing press erected in this town || York town, || for the purpose of conveying to the public, the intelligence that Congress may, from time to time, receive.

¹ This report, in the writing of Richard Henry Lee, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 61, folio 443.