

The Committee [Mr. Joseph Jones, Mr. Thomas Bee, Mr. Daniel Carroll] on William Pickles letter find that Congress came to the following resolution 10th July 1780, that a copy of the capitulation of the inhabitants on Lake Pontchartrain dated the 16 October, 1779, and copies of the letters of his Excellency Bernardo de Galvez, Governor of Louisiana, the one to the President of Congress dated 8th of May last and the other to Oliver Pollock dated 21 October last be transmitted to honorable John Jay.¹

MONDAY, MARCH 11, 1782

On a report of a committee, consisting of Mr. [Joseph] Montgomery, Mr. [Samuel] Osgood, Mr. [Thomas] Bee, to whom was referred a letter of 27 February, from the postmaster general:

Resolved, That John Durham Alvey, appointed by the postmaster general with the main army, be, and he is hereby entitled to receive from the paymaster general, on a warrant from the Commander in Chief, the sum of 35 dollars per month for his services, and that he shall also be entitled to one ration per day:²

The said committee having reported an Ordinance for regulating the Post Office, the same was read a first time, and Thursday next was assigned for a second reading.

~~By the United States in Congress Assembled, Be it ordained and be it farther ordained by the authority aforesaid~~

That the Post Master General for the time being, and his assistant, or Clerk, shall be under oath for the faithful performance of the Duties of their respective offices.

¹ This report, in the writing of Daniel Carroll, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 137, I, folio 345. It is undated. The indorsement of the letter of February 21 from the Superintendent of Finance, enclosing Pickles's letter, which was referred to the committee, states that the report was read on this day. The Superintendent's letter is in No. 137, I, folio 337.

² This report, in the writing of Joseph Montgomery, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 19, I, folio 69.

That it shall be the duty of the Post Master General to superintend the whole Department of the Post office; to appoint such and so many Deputies (for whose fidelity in office he shall be accountable) as to him may seem proper and necessary, to whom he is hereby authorised to allow such commission per cent upon all letters belonging to their offices, as he shall think their respective services merit, so as that the said commissions do not in the whole exceed Twenty per cent. To cause the mail to be carried with all Dispatch, at least once a week; to discontinue such post offices and Post Roads as he shall find to be unnecessary, and which encrease the public expence without yielding a compensation—to see that his deputies keep, and transmit to him, quarterly, regular accounts of the Incomes and Expenditures of their respective offices; and to keep regular and just accounts of the general state of the Post office as to receipts and expences, which he shall deliver annually to the Comptroller of accounts for examination.

July 26, 1775.

Oct. 19, 1781.

Oct. 19, 1781.

July 26, 1775.

That whereas it may be necessary for the Post Master General, or his assistant, to visit the several Post Offices in the United States or otherwise to travel for the performance of the duties aforesaid, the person so traveling shall be allowed, over and above his stated Salary, four dollars per day, during his necessary absence from home upon the business aforesaid; which said allowance, shall be in full for horse hire, traveling expences, and all other expences attending the transaction of the said business.

Dec. 12, 1780.

Oct. 17, 1777.

That there be an Inspector of Dead Letters, who shall be under oath for the faithful and impartial Discharge of the Duties of his office; It shall be his Duty to Inspect, at the expiration of each quarter the dead Letters which shall be returned, to the General Post Office; to communicate to Congress, or to such persons as shall be by them appointed for that purpose, all such Letters as contain intelligence, the communication of which he may think will be advantageous to the Public; To preserve, very carefully all valuable Papers which he may find enclosed in any of the dead Letters, for which he shall be accountable; To keep a book containing an exact account of all such papers so found—the Date of the Letter accompanying them; from whence, and by whom written, and to whom directed, and at the expiration of each Quarter, to publish, in one of the Newspapers printed in such Place where Congress may be sitting, a notification that such

papers are in his possession; to the end that they may be recovered by the owners of them; to whom they shall be delivered without the payment of any other Fee or Reward than the Postage due for such papers, and the Letters in which they were found, according to the rates established by Congress: and the said Inspector is hereby enjoined to take no Copy of any letter whatever. For the performance of the above Services he shall be allowed a Salary of Two hundred and fifty Dollars per annum.

Aug. 8, 1776.

That, Whereas it is necessary for the regular and Speedy Conveyance of Letters and Intelligence, that the business of the Post Office should be diligently attended,

Aug. 30, 1776.

which cannot be if the persons employed in it are liable to the performance of such public services as are incompatible therewith, the Post Master General, his assistant and Deputies, and all Post Riders shall be exempted from Military Duty, and from serving as Jurymen, and Constables.

May 12, 1777.

That, the Post Master General shall annually pay to the Treasurer of the United States the Profits of the Post Office; and if the necessary expences of this Establishment should exceed the Produce of it, the Deficiency shall be paid by

July 26, 1776.

to the Post Master General, at the expiration of each Quarter, to enable him punctually to fulfill his Contracts with the Riders.

That no person whatsoever, except the stated Post Riders in Public Service, shall carry any Letters or Packets upon the Post Road, for which he shall receive Pay,

Nov. 5, 1776.

upon penalty of one hundred Spanish Milled Dollars for each offence: and if any person in the Service of the United States who may occasionally employ an Express Rider, shall knowingly permit such Express Rider to carry with him any other Letters than such as relate to the particular Business upon which he is sent (such Letters as shall be sent from the Post Office only excepted) the Person employing such Rider, and so offending shall forfeit three months' pay, which the person from whom he receives his pay is hereby authorised and directed to retain in his hands for the use of the United States, upon the offender's being legally convicted in any Court within the State where such offence shall happen.

That all Express Riders in the public service, which may be necessarily employed upon any emergent occasion shall (if a post office is established in the place) be hired by the Post Master General, or his deputy, and set out from and return to the Post office, to the end that the expence of several Expresses destined to the same place,

at the same time, may be avoided, and the person desiring that an Express Rider may be employed, shall furnish the Post Master General or his Deputy with money to defray the expence.

That if any person shall rob the Post, or an Express Rider, of his Mail or Dispatches, upon the Road, or in an house, such Robber shall upon conviction, be adjudged guilty of Felony, and suffer accordingly.

That all Ferry Keepers and Ferrymen shall carry the Post Riders and Expresses without charge across their respective Ferries in preference to every other person, and immediately upon application for that purpose, or as soon after as is possible.

Nov. 5, 1776.

That to avoid danger from Enemies the Post go not out of his regular and usual course in order to pass by Head Quarters; but if Head Quarters should not be upon the stated Post Roads, the Post Master to the Main Army shall have authority to hire a Rider upon the best terms he can, who shall carry the Mails to and from Head Quarters, from and to the nearest Post Office on each side of them, and shall report to the Post Master General his proceedings herein.

Oct. 17, 1777.

That all Masters of vessels having Commission from the United States, shall immediately upon their arrival at any port within the said States, lodge all Letters and Packets brought by them from abroad, in the Post Office of the said port (if a Post Office shall be established there) on Penalty of the forfeiture of their Commissions: and the Post Master at such port shall not demand or receive any greater reward for his care and trouble in receiving and delivering out such of the said Letters and Packets which shall belong to such Port, than one penny for each of them.

May 5, 1780.

That the price to be paid for the Postage of Letters be the same as at the Commencement of the present War.

Oct. 19, 1781.

That the Salary of the Post Master General be 1250 Dollars per annum, and that of his assistant or clerk 800 Dollars per annum.

Oct. 19, 1781.

That as the Letters and Packets which are allowed to pass free of Postage, are a great incumbrance upon the Post Office, and render it necessary for the Post Master General to be furnished with Money (to pay arrearages) which is much wanted for the Supply of other Departments, all Acts, and Resolutions of Congress exempting Letters and Packages from the payment of Postage, be and they are hereby repealed.

That all Letters and Packets, to and from such members of Congress who have taken their Seats, and are actually attending their duty therein, shall pass and be Carried free of postage, the Members having engaged upon honor not to frank or enclose any Letters but their own.

Nov. 8, 1775.

That all Letters and Packets to and from the Commander in Chief of the American Army or the Commander of a Seperate Army on public service pass and be carried free of postage, ~~but none are to be inclosed therein or franked by him which would otherwise be liable to the payment of it.~~

That the Deputy Post Master at such place where Congress shall be sitting shall keep an exact account of the postage, which would be payable for the Letters and Packets to and from the Members of Congress, were they chargeable with postage, and at the expiration of each quarter, shall deliver it to the Post Master General: In like manner the Deputy Post Master in the Main Army shall keep an exact account of the postage of all Letters and Packets sent to and from the Commander in Chief, and shall transmit it at the expiration of each Quarter to the Post Master General and (Provided that the Incomes of the Post office are not sufficient to defray the expences) the Post Master general shall apply to the Superintendant of Finance for a warrant to the Treasurer of the United States for the payment of the amount thereof, which warrant the said Superintendant General of Finance is hereby authorised and required to grant upon application as aforesaid.

That the Post Master to the Main Army, and the Rider to be employed by him when Head Quarters are not upon the stated Post Road, shall receive their pay from the Pay Master General or his Deputy.

That all prosecutions for Breaches of this ordinance, shall be commenced and carried on by the Post Master General, or some Person authorised by him for that purpose in writing under his hand and seal; and the United States will Indemnify the said Post Master General for all Costs, and necessary charges he may incur by doing his duty therein.

~~The said prosecutions shall be conducted and the penalties imposed hereby shall be recovered in the State in which the offence shall be committed, agreeable to the Regulations and according to the laws thereof.~~

The penalties and forfeitures hereby declared and imposed shall be sued for and recovered in the State in which the Offence may be committed and all suits and prosecutions for recovery thereof shall be according to the Laws and Customs of such State in similar Cases.

That all Acts and Resolutions of Congress, respecting the Post Office, which have been heretofore passed, be, and they are hereby repealed.¹

The committee, consisting of Mr. [Arthur] Lee, Mr. [John Morin] Scott and Mr. [Thomas] Bee, to whom was referred a letter of 26 February, from the Secretary for foreign affairs, report,

The Committee having taken into consideration the Letter from the Secretary for foreign affairs, dated 26th Feby. touching the prize money of the Crews of the *Bon-homme Richard* and the *Alliance* Frigate are of opinion—

“That the Secretary for foreign affairs should be directed to draw up a memorial, on the subject of the prize money due to the officers and crews of the *Bon Homme Richard* and the *Alliance* frigate, in the hands of the Sieur le Ray de Chaumont in Paris, and to request of the minister of France to transmit the same with the vouchers to support it, to his Court; and obtain the interposition of his Court to have immediate justice done to the claimants, by the payment of the prize money into the hands of the consul general of these United States in France, for the use of and to be distributed among the said officers and crews, agreeably to the rules of the navy of the United States; and that the Secretary for foreign affairs do write to the consul general of the United States in France, to exert himself in obtaining justice for the claimants.”²

On the question, Congress agreed to the said report.

¹ This report, in the writing of Joseph Montgomery, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 59, III, folio 413. The dates indicate when the recommendations were previously adopted.

² This report, in the writing of Arthur Lee, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 25, II, folio 83. The resolution was also entered in the manuscript Secret Journal, Foreign Affairs.