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REPORT OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
24th November, 1829.

To the President of the United States:
Sir: I have the honour to submit the following report of the State of this Department.
The General Post Office was established July 26, 1775. There was then but one line of posts, extending from Baltimore in New-England, to Savannah, in Georgia; and the Postmaster General was authorized to establish such cross posts as he should think proper.
In October, 1782, the Postmaster General was required, by act of Congress, to cause the mail to be carried once a week to all the Post Offices; and by the same Act he was authorized to make provision for the transmission of newspapers by mail.

When the Federal Government was organized under the present Constitution, in 1789, the Post Office establishment was revised and perpetuated. There were then, and to the close of 1790, only seventy-five Post Offices in the United States: And the extent of Post Roads in the United States, in 1790, amounted to 1875 miles. Now, the number of Post Offices is eight thousand and four, and the Post Roads amount to 115,000 miles.
The first line of mail coaches in the United States, was established in pursuance of an Act of Congress, passed September 7, 1785, extending from Portsmouth, in New Hampshire, to Savannah, in Georgia. The transportation of the mail in coaches amounts at this time, to 6,507,818 miles in one year, and from the first day of January next, it will be increased to 6,785,810 miles. The whole yearly transportation of the mail in coaches, sulkies, and on horseback, amounts to about 13,700,000 miles.

The whole amount of Postages, (the only source of revenue to the Department,) from 1789 to July 1, 1829, was \$26,441,496
The whole expenses of the Department, during the same period were as follow:

Compensation to Postmasters	\$7,829,925
Incidental Expenses	896,967
Transportation of the Mail,	16,052,513
	24,779,405

Leaving an aggregate amount of revenue, of \$1,662,91
The Revenue of the Department is accounted for, as follow:
Amount of the several payments into the Treasury from 1789 to 1828. \$1,103,063

Amount of the losses in the transmission of moneys during the same period, 17,348
Balance as exhibited on the books of the Department, on the first of July, 1829, 541,680

From this statement it appears that the Department has always been sustained by its own resources and that no money has, at any time, been drawn from the Treasury for the transportation of the mails: but that it has contributed to the revenue of the Government.

Amounts paid into the Treasury by the different Postmaster Generals are as follow:
By Timothy Pickering, from December, 1793 to March, 1795, 47,499
By Joseph Habersham, from June, 1795 to September, 1801, 563,310
By Gideon Granger, from December, 1801, to December 1813, 291,579
By Return-J. Meigs, from March 1814, to June 1823, 387,209
By John McLean, from July, 1823, to December, 1828, 13,466

Making together, the foregoing sum of \$1,103,063

The balance, of \$541,680, exhibited by the books of this Department, on the 1st of July, 1829, covers all the balances due from Postmasters and others, of every description, which have been accumulating for forty years, including those of the most doubtful, and many of a desperate character. The Report of the late Postmaster General exhibited a balance of \$332,105,10, as the amount of available funds, at the disposition of the Department, on the 1st of July, 1828. The amount exhibited by the books of the Department on that day, is \$616,394; from which it appears that the sum of \$284,289, of fold balances, was estimated to be either desperate, or of so uncertain a character, as that no reliance could be had upon any part of it; and it is believed, from examination, that this estimate did not essentially vary from what will prove to have been the actual amount of losses from 1789 to 1828.

To the above amount of \$284,289 Must be added this sum, due for postage prior to July 1, 1828, which is since found to be desperate, \$2,255

Counterfeit money found on hand,	\$2,633
Notes of broken Banks	1,672
	4,306
Making together the total amount of losses by bad debts and bad money,	\$310,830
Which sum, deducted from the above mentioned balance of	541,680

Leaves the actual balance, on the 1st of July, 1829, \$250,850
The fractions in this statement being omitted.
The amount of moneys on hand due from Postmasters, including judgments obtained on old accounts, was reported by the late Postmaster General to be, on the first day of July, 1827, \$370,033 37

He also reported an excess of expenditures beyond the amount of receipts for the year ending the 1st of July, 1828, of 37,927 27

Leaving a balance of moneys on hand, and due from Postmasters, including judgments obtained on old accounts, on the 1st of July, 1828, of \$332,105 10

The amount of postages from July 1, 1828, to July 1, 1829, is found to be \$1,707,418 42

The expenditures of the Department for the same period, are as follow:
Compensation to Postmasters, \$559,337 28
Transportation of the Mail, 1,153,646 21
Incidental Expenses, 60,949 08
1,772,132 57

Shewing, in the amount of expenditures from July 1, 1828, to July 1, 1829, an excess beyond the amount of revenue, admitting that every cent of postage of the last year shall be collected, of \$74,714 13

Add amount of bad debts as before mentioned, \$22,235 50
Add amount of bad money, 4,306 38
26,541 88
\$101,256 03

Leaving the true balance of available funds at the disposal of the Department, on the 1st of July, 1829, provided no farther losses shall be sustained in the collection, viz:
Cash in deposit, \$156,448 86
Balance due from Postmasters and others, 94,400 21
\$230,849 07

It appears, therefore, that the funds of the Department suffered a diminution, from July 1, 1828, to July 1, 1829, of \$101,256 03.
In this result, all the collections made of former debts, as well as all losses ascertained within the year, are comprehended.
The expense for transporting the mail, by reason of the increased facilities contracted for, before the commencement of the present year, from January 1 to July 1, 1829 exceeded the expense for transportation during the corresponding period of the preceding year, \$67,335; and the expenditures of the Department for the same period, being the first half of the current year, had there been no increase of postages, would have exceeded its revenue 68,681, equal to \$137,362, for the year. The actual excess of expenditure, however, owing to the increase of revenue for the half year ending July 1, 1829, amounts to but \$49,778, 55.

When I entered upon the duties of the Department on the 6th of April last, I found the contracts had been made, and the responsibilities of the Department incurred, for the whole of the current year, and from one to four years in prospect, in the most expensive sections of the country. It appeared necessary, therefore, to direct the energies of the Department principally to the great object of sustaining its operations, in the engagements which it had already contracted, by its own resources. This could be effected only by enforcing a strict observance of the law on the part of Postmasters, in preventing, so far as practicable, all abuses, and in accounting, regularly and promptly, for all the moneys coming into their hands, by guarding against all further increase of expense, except in cases absolutely demanded by the public interest;

and by instituting such checks and responsibilities in the mode of transacting the business of the Department, as to secure more effectually a proper application of its funds, and to prevent in all cases, a diversion of any part of them from their legitimate objects. To correct abuses in the privilege of franking, which had prevailed to a considerable extent, and to prevent others, which were beginning to show themselves, it was thought expedient to issue a circular to Postmasters, calling their special attention to the subject, and enjoining renewed vigilance and energy on their part. This circular, bearing date the 18th of May last, has not been without its effect. The Postages accounted for by Postmasters are accumulating in an increased ratio, which promises advantageous results.—The proceeds of postages for the quarter ending June 30, 1829, exceed the amount for the corresponding quarter of 1828, by \$30,376 39. The accounts for the quarter ending the 30th of September last, are not all examined, but so far as the examination has proceeded, it promises a proportionate increase.

The contracts for transporting the mail in the States of Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, and the Territory of Arkansas, constituting one section, will expire with the current year. The rapid increase of population and of business in those sections of country, required considerable improvements in the frequency, the celerity and the mode of transporting the mail on the leading routes, for which provision has been made in the renewal of the contracts. The mail communication between New Orleans and the Seat of the General Government, by way of Mobile and Montgomery, in Alabama, and Augusta in Georgia, will, from the commencement of the ensuing year, be effected three times a week, affording comfortable conveyances for travellers, and the whole trip performed in the period of two weeks, each way, through the capitals of Virginia, North-Carolina, South-Carolina, and Georgia.

Lines of four horse post coaches will also be established from the first day of January next, to run three times a week, both ways, between Nashville and Memphis in Tennessee. This improvement was deemed important to keep a regular and certain intercourse between the Western States and New Orleans, Memphis being a point on the Mississippi to which steamboats can come at all seasons of the year; it being contemplated to extend this line to New-Orleans by steam-boats, so soon as the means of the Department will justify, and the public interest shall require it. To give greater utility to this improvement, a weekly line of coaches will also be established at the same time, from Florence in Alabama, (where it will connect with the line from Huntsville) to Bolivar, in Tennessee, at which point it will form a junction with the line from Nashville to Memphis.

Such improvements are also provided in the transportation of the mail through Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, as that the lines of stages three times a week between Louisville, in Kentucky, and St. Louis, in Missouri, will connect the correspondence and the travelling in a period of two days less than the time now occupied; and continue the line to Fayette, beyond the centre of Missouri, within the same time which is now allowed for reaching St. Louis. A weekly line of stages will also go into operation on the first of January next, from Fayette to Independence, near the Western boundary of that State.

These, with other improvements provided for by the contracts which have just been made, will add \$77,992 miles to the annual transportation of mails in stages.
Notwithstanding the increased expense which these additional services would require, the new contracts have been made, including all the improvements, for \$19,195 37 per annum less than the sum paid under the expiring contracts, for the transportation of the mail in that section. The advantageous terms of these contracts will effect a saving to the Department of about twenty-five per cent, in proportion to the services to be performed.

On entering the department, my attention was, at an early day, drawn to the manner in which its funds were received and disbursed. Circumstances existed at the very threshold of this inquiry, which indicated a looseness and irresponsibility entirely incompatible with that system which ought to characterize every branch of the public service. Moneys had been advanced in different persons contrary to law; and persons, in the immediate employment of the Department, who receive stipulated salaries, defined and appropriated by law, had received moneys in advance from the funds of the Department, beyond the allowances so provided, and which had not been appropriated.

The moneys appropriated were mingled with the general funds of the Department, out of which the expenses of the road were defrayed; and there are now standing on the books of the office, a balance of \$1,405 67 against the first, and against the other of these roads a balance of \$1,946 65; making together, the sum of \$3,352 32, on account of moneys advanced by the Department, and for which it is still accountable as so much money in hand, though these accounts originated twenty-three years since. These facts evinced a radical defect in the system of financial operations of the Department.

It appeared that all the funds of the Department were received and disbursed by one of the assistants, while the Postmaster-General was held responsible in law, for their proper application. The Assistant had it in his power at all times to withdraw, or furnish, for the use of others, the funds of the Department to a large amount, without the knowledge of its head, or of any other person attached to it. There was no check upon any such transactions, nor any thing connected with the system calculated to bring them to light. The Assistant made deposits of part of the funds in different banks, subject to his individual checks; and retained a part in his own hands, but to what amount is not shown by any document, or record in the Department. On the change of the system, there was found in an iron coffer, in his possession, the sum of \$19,876 89, consisting of \$19 94 in specie, and \$19,857 95 in bank notes, certificates, and checks. Of this sum \$2,633 76 were found to be counterfeit, and \$1,672 62 were in notes of broken banks, and of no value. A part of the remainder is of very doubtful character. Such as was not ascertained to be good, has been sent to the different States from which it issued, for the purpose of determining its value, and rendering it available; but what proportion of it will be found worthless or depreciated, is not yet learned.

The necessity of an entire change in the mode of conducting this business, was most obvious.
Directions have been given, that the money appropriated by law for the payment of salaries, shall never be united with the funds of the Department, but that it shall be drawn up by an agent appointed for that purpose, and applied directly to the object for which it is appropriated; so that the persons receiving it, shall have no accounts opened on the books of the Department. This will effectually prevent advances and over-payments on that head in future.

It was important to devise a system by which no moneys should be received or disbursed, or in any manner come within the control of any one individual; but that all moneys should be paid into the Department by certificates of deposit in banks, and that nothing could be drawn from such deposits, not even by the head of the Department, without the signature of two distinct officers of the Department, each acting independently of the other, and both certifying to the correctness of the act. Also, that the transfer of moneys from Postmasters to Contractors, should be subject to the same guard, and require, in like manner, the investigation and signature of two distinct officers of the Department. It was likewise necessary that the system should embrace a rule which should require Postmasters to account promptly for the proceeds of their offices, and prevent an accumulation of postage in their hands. This has been done, and it is believed that the moneys of this Department are now as effectually protected as those of any other Department in the Government.

The observance of the system which has been adopted, will require additional labour, but it is deemed essential to the security and prosperity of this department.
I have the honour to be, with great regard,
your obedient servant, W. T. BARRY.

DOCUMENTS ACCOMPANYING THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Navy Yards—present and proposed.

NAVY COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE,
19th October 1829.
SIR—The Commissioners of the Navy have given to the subjects to which, by your letter of the 19th ult. you were pleased to direct their inquiries, all the attention and consideration which their limited opportunity and time admitted, and they now respectfully submit the result.

The plans of the several Navy Yards indicate the improvements made in each—consisting of officers' quarters, store houses, ship houses, blacksmiths' shops, timber sheds, timber docks, spar sheds, &c. with the dry docks in progress at Norfolk and at Boston; and the paper A will shew the number and description of ships in ordinary, and the state and condition of each.

The query as to the number of Navy Yards now established and in operation, is one of such importance as to command the most earnest attention and investigation. The Commissioners are fully sensible that its discussion may excite strong local feelings—and they are aware of the responsibility of any opinion they may express upon the subject; but referring exclusively to the unbiased dictates of their judgment in the performance of an important official duty, and claiming the indulgence which a liberal community will not fail to ex-

tend to honest efforts, looking solely to the advancement of the public good, they approach the question with a confidence proportioned to the sincerity of their convictions.
"Is not the number of Navy Yards greater than is consistent either with economy, or the wants of the service?"

To maintain any one yard beyond the number necessary for building and equipping our ships with the utmost despatch, can, in no view, be considered as consistent either with economy or the wants of the service.
It is obvious that the greater the number of Navy Yards, the greater must necessarily be the expense. A yard, used for general purposes, that is, for building, repairing, equipping, and victualling a Navy, requires nearly a full set of officers to superintend it, although it may be only occasionally used for such purposes. The principle of accountability in each yard being necessarily the same, the same system of checks must be maintained, whether the amount of the expenditure be large or otherwise. In yards, not constantly used for general purposes, some of the subaltern officers might, probably be dispensed with; but not in sufficient number to affect, materially, the aggregate amount of expenses, if we keep in view the preservation of system.

Were we to disregard economy, plausible reasons might be assigned, even for an increased number of yards. It might be urged that multiplying their number, would multiply the chances of reaching one of them in cases of emergency—such as distress in storms or disasters in battle; but when we look to the localities of our present yards, there are but few of them that can claim a decided preference, even on this, the most favourable, but certainly fallacious view of the subject. The harbour of Boston can be entered only when storms in winter, its fogs in spring and fall, prevent serious, and frequently insuperable difficulties. The same objections apply, with considerable force, to Portsmouth, N. Hampshire, New York, Philadelphia, and Pensacola, are all objectionable, as neither of them is easily accessible; and the two latter cannot be entered by ships of great draught, even at high water.

If the number of Navy Yards were confined to the number necessary for the service, in peace or in war, many advantages would result. The expenses would be reduced, and efficiency greatly promoted; system and uniformity might be more easily preserved, and the accountability of those having the direction, rendered more certain and precise. By reducing the number of yards, more work would necessarily have to be done at each.—This would enable the Government to concentrate artificers, ship carpenters, and other necessary mechanics, and give them constant employment; and the Government would have in its power to select and retain in its service the most valuable, at fixed and moderate wages. We should escape the inconveniences to which we are now exposed, by employing mechanics at so many different points to execute the public works, and discharging them when such works are done.

This state of things not only compels us frequently to pay high wages, but to accept the services of inferior men—those possessing the most skill become discontented when discharged, and will never return, unless from necessity. By having few yards, and those judiciously arranged, and provided with the necessary conveniences, much might be gained in the amount of daily labour performed—Ship carpenters, and other mechanics, working under cover, can not only do more work per day, but lose no time from rainy or other inclement weather—a consideration important to the Government, and calculated to render employment in its service an object of competition with the best men.

While no time would be lost when working under cover, without a cover, it is believed that for six months of the year the work per week would not average more than 4 days, thus occasioning a loss of one-fourth of times to save which, mechanics would readily agree to probably 10 per cent less wages—while a ship built under cover is worth probably 25 per cent more than when built in the open air, constantly exposed to sun and rain.

It would be difficult to estimate fully the value of chosen bodies of mechanics, selected for their skill and industry, and prepared with every necessary convenience, faithfully to execute the public works in the best manner and in the shortest time. In peace economy would be greatly promoted—in war, the highest interests of our country would be subserved.
Among other considerations claiming attention, it may be observed, that, by reducing the number of Navy Yards, many materials suitable for the construction of small vessels would, in the building of large ships, be saved. In the present state of things such materials are distributed among so many Yards that the expense and difficulty of collecting them at any one point, frequently exceeds their value.

Viewing this question then in reference to the expense, and to the efficiency of our present establishment, the Commissioners are decidedly of opinion, that the present number of Navy Yards is "greater than is consistent either with economy or the wants of the service."
The question here arises—what number of Navy Yards does the Navy, viewed in its present and probable future state, require, to secure to it all the advantages and facilities necessary to render it in the highest degree efficient?