



**Journal of the Continental Congress**  
*Excerpts Related to the Post Office*  
Rev. 1 (1-2011)

The *Journals of the Continental Congress* are the records of the daily proceedings of the Congress as kept by the office of its secretary, Charles Thomson. All Acts, Resolves and other information relating to the running of the Government are contained within its pages or references. The Journals were transcribed and published by the Library of Congress in 34 volumes issued from 1904 to 1937.

About 25 years ago, I spent about a week at the Library of Congress making photocopies of anything relating to Post Office operations. These have been invaluable in understanding how the Post Office functioned from 1775 until 1792.

These Journals have now been digitized and are available on the Library of Congress website at:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwjc.html>

This file includes the transcripts of those records relating to the Post Office that I've found to date. I'm continuing to add to this file, so it should be considered a work in progress. Entries marked with {Rev1} were added during that revision.

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## **Journal of the Continental Congress 1774-1789** *Excerpts Related to the Post Office*

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1774, A.M.**

An address from William Goddard to the Congress was read and lie on the table. <sup>1</sup>

**MONDAY, MAY 29, 1775**

As the present critical situation of the colonies renders it highly necessary that ways and means should be devised for the speedy and secure conveyance of Intelligence from one end of the Continent to the other,

Resolved, That Mr.[Benjamin] Franklin, Mr. [Thomas] Lynch, Mr. [Richard Henry] Lee, Mr. [Thomas] Willing, Mr. S[amuel] Adams, and Mr. P[hilip] Livingston, be a committee to consider the best means of establishing posts for conveying letters and intelligence through this continent.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 1775**

The report of the committee being read and debated,

Resolved, That a General be appointed to command all the continental forces, raised, or to be raised, for the defence of American liberty. That five hundred dollars, per month, be allowed for his pay and expences.

The Congress then proceeded to the choice of a general, by ballot, when George Washington, Esq. was unanimously elected.<sup>2</sup>

**FRIDAY, JULY 21, 1775 (Franklin's Articles of Confederation) {Rev1}**

In a volume of the Papers of the Continental Congress No. 9, containing a history of the Confederation, the first entry in the writing of Charles Thomson reads:

*"July 21. 1775. Agreeably to Order the Congress resolved itself into a Committee of the whole to take into Consideration the State of America, when doct. B. Franklin submitted to their Consideration the following Sketch of Articles of Confederation."*

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<sup>1</sup> Probably a scheme for a post office. Ward says the congress on this day also "considered of non-importation."

<sup>2</sup> These resolutions were printed in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, 11 December, 1775. Washington was nominated by Thomas Johnson of Maryland, and the election was unanimous. The attitude of the Congress and the causes leading to this choice are fully described in the *Diary and later correspondence of John Adams*.

*The original Ms. is in No. 47, folio 1. It has long been believed that the trade propositions submitted by Franklin on this day originally formed part of the Articles of Confederation, and the two documents are usually printed together. In 1775 a British vessel captured copies on their way to South Carolina and the two papers were published as one; and again in the Archives of New Jersey, vol. X, p. 691. But Thomson's sentry must be conclusive. The Articles were probably submitted by Franklin of his own motion.]*

Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union, entered into agre proposed by the Delegates of the several Colonies of New Hampshire, &c &c, in general Congress met at Philadelphia, May 10, 1775.

Art. I. The Name of this Confederacy shall henceforth be The United Colonies of North America.

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Art. V.

That the Power and Duty of the Congress shall extend to the Determining on War and Peace, to sending and receiving ambassadors, and entring into Alliances, [the Reconciliation with Great Britain;] the Settling all Disputes and Differences between Colony and Colony about Limits or any other cause if such should arise; and the Planting of new Colonies when proper. The Congress shall also make and propose such general Regulations Ordinances as tho' necessary to the General Welfare, particular Assemblies from their local Circum cannot be competent to; viz. such as may relate to those that may relate to our general Commerce; or general Currency; to the Establishment of Posts; and the Regulation of our common Forces. The Congress shall also have the Appointment of all General Officers, civil and military, appertaining to the general Confederacy, such as General Treasurer, Secretary, &c.

## **TUESDAY, JULY 25, 1775**

The Committee appointed to consider the ways and means of establishing posts, bro't in their report, which was read, and ordered to be taken into consideration to Morrow.

Resolved, That the following Gentlemen be appointed and fully authorized to sign the same, viz. Luke Morris, Samuel Meredith, Judah Foulke, Samuel Morris, Frederic Kuhl, Robert Strettle Jones, Thomas Coombe, John Morton Ellis Lewis, John Mease, Thomas Lawrence, Robert Ritchie Daniel Clymer, John Maxwell Nesbit, Thomas Barclay, John Bayard, William Craig, Thomas Bartow Junr., John Shee, Isaae Hazelhurst, Robert Roberts, Anthony Morris, Mordecai Lewis, George Mifflin, Robert Tuckuiss Andrew Bunner, William Jackson, Joseph Sims, James Milligan, and James Reed.

That each of the continental bills be numbered and signed by two of the above gentlemen.

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 1775

Agreeable to the order of yesterday, the Congress resumed the consideration of the report of the Committee on the post office; which being debated by paragraphs, was agreed to as follows:

That a postmaster General be appointed for the United Colonies, who shall hold his office at Philada, and shall be allowed a salary of 1000 dollars per an: for himself, and 340 dollars per an: for a secretary and Comptroller, with power to appoint such, and so many deputies as to him may seem proper and necessary. That a line of posts be appointed under the direction of the Postmaster general, from Falmouth in New England to Savannah in Georgia, with as many cross posts as he shall think fit.

That the allowance to the deputies in lieu of salary and all contingent expences, shall be 20 per cent. on the sums they collect and pay into the General post office annually, when the whole is under or not exceeding 1000 Dollars, and ten per cent. for all sums above 1000 dollars a year.

That the rates of postage shall be 20 pr cent less than those appointed by act of Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

That the several deputies account quarterly with the general post office, and the postmaster general annually with the continental treasurers, when he shall pay into the rect of the Sd Treasurers, the profits of the Post Office; and if the necessary expence of this establishment should exceed the produce of it, the deficiency shall be made good by the United Colonies, and paid to the postmaster general by the continental Treasr.

On motion made, Resolved, That it be recommended to the postmaster general to establish a weekly post to South Carolina.

That it be left to the postmaster general to appoint a secy and comptroller. The Congress then proceeded to the election of a postmaster general for one year, and until another is appointed by a future Congress, when Benjamin Franklin, Esqr. was unanimously chosen.

That each gentleman who signs the continental money, be allowed and paid out of the continental treasury, one Dollar and one third of a dollar for each and every thousand bills signed, and numbered by him.

That the gentlemen appointed to number and sign the Bills, do give their receipts for the same, expressing the number and denomination of them; and after numbering and signing them, shall deliver the same to the continental Treasurers, taking their receipts for the bills so delivered.

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<sup>3</sup> *Suspended September 30.*

On motion, Resolved, That Mr. S[amuel] Adams, Mr. [Richard Henry] Lee, and Mr. J[ohn] Rutledge, with the Secretary, be a committee to revise the Journal of the Congress, and prepare it for the press.

#### **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1775**

A letter from Genl Washington, dated the 21 of Septr, with sundry enclosures, being recr by express, was laid before Congress and read.<sup>4</sup>

The Committee of Accounts produced sundry accots. which they reported as just, viz.

John Powell's, for riding express, a ballance due to him amounting to forty-five dollars and one-third of a dollar.

Matthias Slough, for money advanced to the riffle companies, amounting to seven hundred and ten dollars and sixty-four ninetieths of a dollar.

James Alexander for riding express, a ballance due to him, amounting to one hundred and seventy-two dollars and twenty-six ninetieths of a dollar.

Ordered, That the above accounts be paid.

#### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1775**

It being represented to the Congress, that from the present situation of affairs and the correspondence now carried on through N. A., it is apprehended that if the rate of postage is lowered agreeable to the resolution of Congress, the proceeds of the office will not support the necessary riders; and as the people in general are well satisfied with, at least no complaints have been made with regard to, the rates lately paid for the postage of letters,

On motion, Resolved, That the resolution of Congress respecting the lowering the rates of postage be suspended until farther orders from this Congress.

#### **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1775**

Lee moves that parliamentary or ministerial posts may be stopped, as a constitutional post is now established from New Hampshire to Georgia. Langdon seconds the motion.

Willing thinks it is interfering with that line of conduct which we have hitherto prescribed to ourselves; it is going back beyond the year 1763. Lee, When the Ministry are

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<sup>4</sup> *This letter is in Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 152, I, folio 119, and is printed in Writings of Washington (Ford), III, 137.*

mutilating our correspondence in England, and our enemies here are corresponding for our ruin, shall we not stop the ministerial post?

Willing looks upon this to be one of the offensive measures which are improper at this time. It will be time enough to throw this aside, when the time comes that we shall throw every thing aside; at present, we don't know but there may be a negotiation.

Dyer. We have already superseded the Act of Parliament effectually.

Deane is for a recommendation to the people to write by the constitutional post; not forbid a man to ride.

S. Adams thinks it a defensive measure; and advising people not to write by it, looks too cunning for me. I am for stopping the correspondence of our enemies. Langdon. Administration are taking every method to come at our intentions. Why should not we prevent it? Duane. I shall vote against it. It may be true that we are come to the time when we are to lay aside all. I think there should be a full representation of the Colonies. North Carolina should be here. Deane seconds the motion for postponing it.

Zubly. The necessity of this measure does not appear to me. If we have gone beyond the line of 1763 and of defence, without apparent necessity, it was wrong; if with necessity, right. I look upon the invasion of Canada as a very different thing; I have a right to defend myself against persons who come against me, let them come from whence they will. We, in Georgia, have gained intelligence, by the King's Post, that we could not have got any other way. Some gentlemen think all merit lies in violent and unnecessary measures. S. Adams. The gentleman's argument would prove that we should let the post go into Boston. Morton. Would not this stop the packet? Would it not be ordered to Boston? Does the packet bring any intelligence to us that is of use? Lee, No intelligence comes to us, but constant intelligence to our enemies. Stone thinks it an innocent motion, but is for postponing it, because he is not at present clear. He thinks that the setting up a new post has already put down the old one. Paine. My opinion was, that the ministerial post will die a natural death; it has been under a languishment a great while; it would be cowardice to issue a decree to kill that which is dying; it brought but one letter last time, and was obliged to retail newspapers to bear its expenses. I am very loth to say that this post shall not pass.

Lee. Is there not a Doctor, Lord North, who can keep this creature alive?

R. R. Livingston. I don't think that Tory letters are sent by the royal post. I consider it rather as a convenience than otherwise; we hear five times a week from New York. The letters, upon our table, advise us to adopt every conciliatory measure, that we may secure the affections of the people of England.

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1775**

On motion made, Resolved, That all letters to and from the delegates of the United Colonies, during the sessions of Congress, pass, and be carried free of postage, the members having engaged upon their honour not to frank or enclose any letters but their own.<sup>5</sup>

Ordered, That this be published.

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1775**

On motion made, Resolved, That all letters to and from the delegates of the United Colonies, during the sessions of Congress, pass, and be carried free of postage, the members having engaged upon their honour not to frank or enclose any letters but their own.<sup>6</sup>

Ordered, That this be published.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1775**

Resolved, That all letters to and from the commander in chief in the continental army, or the chief commander in the army in the northern department, pass and be carried free of postage.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1775**

On motion made, Resolved, That two small swift sailing vessels be provided for packets, to be under the direction of the Congress.

Ordered, That Mr. R[obert] Morris of this city, be appointed to provide said vessels, and that he be directed to get one ready to sail as soon as possible, and the other in a month hence.

That a Committee of three be appointed to devise ways and means for employing these vessels to the best advantage.

The Members chosen, Mr. [Thomas] Lynch, Mr. R[obert] Morris, and Dr. [Benjamin] Franklin.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *This resolution was printed in the Pennsylvania Packet, 10 November.1775.*

<sup>6</sup> *The last two paragraphs were printed in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 13 November, 1776.*

<sup>7</sup> *In the "Corrected Journals" these four paragraphs are marked "Secret."*

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 1776**

Resolved, That no postage be paid for any letters to or from private soldiers, while engaged in actual service in the defence of the United Colonies; and that such letters be franked by some person authorised for that purpose, by the commanding officer of the department.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1776**

The Congress took into consideration the report of the committee on establishing posts or expresses, and after debate,

Resolved, That the same be referred for farther consideration; and that, in the mean while, Dr. [Benjamin] Franklin be directed to write to post masters, and enquire on what terms expresses can be procured.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1776**

That no postage be paid for on officers letters, they engaging on honor to frank or enclose no letters but their own.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 1776**

The Congress, taking into consideration the letter from the committee of Baltimore, and the papers enclosed, came to the following resolutions:

Whereas information has been this day laid before Congress, from which there is great reason to believe, that Robert Eden, Esqr. governor of the colony of Maryland, has lately carried on a correspondence with the British ministry, highly dangerous to the liberties of America;

Resolved, therefore, That the council of safety of Maryland be earnestly requested, immediately to cause the person and papers of Governor Eden to be seized and secured, and such of the papers as relate to the American dispute, without delay, conveyed safely to Congress; and that copies of the intercepted letters from the Secretary of State, be enclosed to the said council of safety. Resolved, That the council of safety of Maryland be requested to cause the person and papers of Alexander Ross to be immediately seized and secured, and that the papers be sent safely to Congress.

And to prevent the said Alexander Ross having any opportunity to escape, Resolved, That the like request be made to the committees of observation for Baltimore and

Frederic counties in Maryland, in one of which counties the said Alexander Ross probably now is.<sup>8</sup>

"After the minutes of the preceding day were read, the President began reading the anonymous letter; but he had not proceeded far before he came to a part desiring that it might not be made known to the Congress, but, as I think, to such only as the President might think proper to trust with the contents. The President hesitated; for he had not before read the letter, and seemed desirous of running his eye over it; but, on being desired to read out, he did so. \* \* \*

"As soon as the letter was read, a motion was made to send the original, or a copy of it, to you; which was warmly supported. But it was put off till to-day, to make way for the consideration of the subject of the express; and in the meantime, all was ordered to be secret. Messrs. Stone and Alexander who had been delayed in writing letters by the post, came into the Congress in this stage of the affair, and are, as well as myself, privy to the after transactions." Thomas Johnson, Jun. to Maryland Council of Safety, 17 April, 1776. Force, American Archives, Fourth Series, V. 965.

Whereas much inconvenience may be derived to the public from committees, others than the committees of safety in each colony, on the public post roads, stopping and opening the mails, and detaining letters from the constitutional post; It is therefore,

Resolved, That no committee but the council or committee of safety in each colony, or such person as they shall, on extraordinary occasions, authorize, should stop the constitutional post, open the mail, or detain any letters therefrom.<sup>9</sup>

#### **FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 1776**

Resolved, That letters which are directed for any general in the continental service, commanding in a separate department, be carried free of postage, by the constitutional post.

#### **MONDAY, JULY 8, 1776**

Resolved, That the post masters, while in office, be excused from all military duty.

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<sup>8</sup> *"Yesterday morning, just before the meeting of Congress, the letters from Baltimore, which occasioned the resolution of yesterday, came to the hands of the President. By the same express, and, as I believe, under the same cover, came an anonymous letter, referring to a copy therein enclosed from General Lee to Mr. Samuel Purviance. I saw and read the copy, which was in Purviance's handwriting. Lee strongly urged the immediate seizing and securing of the Governour.*

<sup>9</sup> *Printed in the Pennsylvania Evening Post, 18 April, 1776.*

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1776**

Resolved, That James Brisben, who is employed in the post office, be excused from military duty.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 1776**

Resolved, That the post riders be exempted from military duty.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 1776**

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to devise ways and means of regulating the post office, and of establishing advice boats between the southern colonies and Philadelphia, so as to facilitate and expedite the conveying of intelligence from one part of the continent to another:

The members chosen, Mr. [Thomas] Heyward, Mr. [Thomas] Jefferson, and Mr. [Robert] Morris.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 1776**

The committee for regulating the post office, brought in their report, which was taken into consideration; Where-upon,

Resolved, That the communication of intelligence with frequency and despatch, from one part to another of this extensive continent, is essentially requisite to its safety; that, therefore, there should be employed on the several post roads, a rider for every twenty five or thirty miles, whose business it shall be, to proceed through his stage three times in every week, setting out immediately on receipt of the mail, and travelling with the same, by night and by day, without stopping, until he shall have delivered it to the next rider; and that the post master general be desired, either by the use of way bills, or by such other means as he shall find most efficacious, to prevent delays in the riders, or to discover where they happen, that such dilatory riders may be discharged.

And, as it is requisite that the deputy post masters should attend with punctuality at their several offices for the receipt and delivery of letters, Resolved, That it be recommended to the assemblies and conventions of these states, to consider how far it may be consistent with the policy and the good of their respective states, to excuse such deputy post masters from those public duties, which may call them from attendance at their offices, and to proceed therein as to their wisdom shall seem best.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Printed in the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, 14 September, 1776.

Resolved, That three advice boats be established; one to ply between the state of North Carolina, and such port as shall be most convenient to the place at which the Congress shall be sitting; one other between the state of South Carolina and the said port, and one other between the state of Georgia and the same port; that such advice boats be armed, and put under the direction of the Secret Committee, who are empowered to freight them with such merchandise or commodities, as, without retarding their passage, may, together with the usual postage on letters, and other papers transmitted by them, contribute to defray the expences of the said boats.

#### **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1776**

Resolved, That the part of the said report, which relates to the establishing a post between Philadelphia and Ticonderoga, be referred to the committee for regulating the post office. That the remainder of the report lie on the table:

#### **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1776 {Rev1}**

A letter from Mr. [Richard] Bache was read:

Resolved, That it be referred to a committee of three. The members chosen, Mr. [George] Wythe, Mr. [Robert Treat] Paine, and Mr. [Philip] Livingston.

#### **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1776 {Rev1}**

Ordered, That the committee on the post office to whom Mr. Bache's letter was referred, report, as soon as possible, ways and means of establishing expresses, and conveying intelligence to and from the army, with safety and despatch.

#### **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1776**

Resolved, That for obtaining early and frequent intelligence from the camps at White Plains and Ticonderoga, or such other places as the armies now, or lately there, may march, or have marched to, and forwarding despatches to the commanding officers with the like expedition, the post master general do immediately employ so many more riders, between Philadelphia and head quarters of these armies, as he shall judge will most effectually perform that very important, and, at this time more especially, necessary service; and that he endeavour, to the utmost of his power, to procure sober, diligent, and trusty persons to undertake it; and guard, in the best manner he is able, against robberies of the mails, or losses of their contents otherwise:

That all ferry keepers be enjoined, as much as they are able, to expedite the passage of post riders and other persons charged with letters, despatches, or messages, from and to

Congress; and that it be recommended to the several legislatures of the United States, to enforce the observance of this resolution:

That expresses and special messengers, employed in the public service, taking and carrying private letters or packets, ought not to receive the wages they would otherwise be entitled to:<sup>11</sup>

That the deputy post master at head quarters be allowed four rations, every day, out of the public stores there, for the subsistence of himself, and his riders, and servant.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1776 {Rev1}**

That there should be paid to Richard Bache, Esqr. post master general, as an advance, for the use of the post office, 2,666 60/90 dollars:

Ordered, That the same be paid.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 1777**

It being represented in Congress, that persons disaffected to the American cause, have, through inadvertence, been employed as deputy post masters and post riders; which, if true, must be attended with the most mischievous effects;

Resolved, That the post master general be, and hereby is directed to transmit to Congress, a list of names of the persons so employed, and by whose recommendations they were introduced, that Congress may consider, and, if necessary, take order thereon; and that he assign reasons why the late resolves of Congress, for regulating the post office, are not carried into execution.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 1777 {Rev1}**

A letter, of the 18, from R[ichard] Bache, post master general, was received and read.<sup>12</sup>

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1777**

Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed to revise the regulations of the post office, and report a plan of carrying it on, so as to render the conveyance of intelligence more expeditious and certain.

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<sup>11</sup> *The last two paragraphs were printed in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 13 November, 1776.*

<sup>12</sup> *This letter is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 1.*

The members chosen, Mr. [Thomas] Heyward, Mr. J[ohn] Adams, Mr. [John] Witherspoon, Mr. R[ichard] H[enry] Lee, and Mr. S[amuel] Adams.

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1777**

The committee on the post office brought in a report, which was read:

The Committee for revising the Regulations of the Post Office, Report,

That the Post Master General should be directed forthwith to appoint two Surveyors of the Post, One to proceed immediately from Philada. to the Northward and the other to the Southward to carry effectually into Execution the following Regulations:

That the Grand Line of Post to the Northward extend from Philada to Easton, from Easton to Fishkill, from Fishkill to Hartford, from Hartford to Boston, from Boston to Portsmouth, from Portsmouth to Falmouth.

That the Grand Line of Post to the Southwd extend from Philada to Annapolis, from Annapolis to Williamsburgh in Virginia, from Williamsburgh to Halifax in N. Carolina, from Halifax to Wilmington, from Wilmington to Chs Town So. Carolina, from Chs Town to Savanna in Georgia.

That the Post Master General be directed to contract with proper persons to act as Deputies in each of the said Towns and at such intermediate Places as he shall think proper, and that such Cross Posts be established as Places or Circumstances seem to admit or require.

That the Mail be regularly made up and sent to and from the aforesaid Towns twice in every Week, and for the expeditious Conveyance of the same, proper Riders shall be employed at suitable Distances, who, on receiving the said Mail, shall immediately proceed therewith by Night or by Day, so that the same may be carried at least 100 Miles in 24 Hours, excepting only the necessary Delays at Ferries.

That before any Surveyor of the Posts, Deputy Post-Master or Rider shall enter on the Execution of their respective Offices, they shall take the Oath of Fidelity to the United States, and also an Oath of Office, and the Post-Master General shall once in 6 Months make Returns to Congress of the Names of such Surveyors of the Post, Deputy Post-Masters and Riders throughout the Continent.

That a Salary of 500 Dollars per annum be allowed to each Surveyor of the Post, and 200 Dollars to the Surveyor of the Northern Department, and 300 Dollars per annum to the Surveyor of the Southern Department, to defray travelling Expences; that a Sum not exceeding 200 Dollars per annum be allowed to each Deputy Post Master, in addition to the Allowance already made by Congress, if from particular Circumstances the Post-Master General shall find the same to be necessary; that the several Riders shall be

allowed so much as shall appear reasonable according to the Circumstances of the respective States in which they may be employed.

That 5,000 Dollars be advanced to the Post Master General to enable him to carry the foregoing Resolves into speedy and effectual Execution, he to be accountable; and if the Profits of the said Post-Office shall not be sufficient to defray the expences of the same, the Deficiencies shall be supplied out of the Continental Treasury.<sup>13</sup>

Ordered, To lie on the table.

### **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 1777**

A memorial from Jonathan Hastings respecting his salary as postmaster,<sup>14</sup> was read:

Ordered, To lie till the report on the post office be taken up.

### **SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1777**

The Committee on the Post Office brought in a report, which was taken into consideration; Whereupon,

Resolved, That the post master general be authorized to make an additional allowance to the deputy post masters, of any sum not exceeding 200 dollars per annum, when he shall find the same to be absolutely necessary.

That 2,000 dollars be advanced to the post master general; he to be accountable.

### **MONDAY, MAY 12, 1777.**

RESOLVED,

THAT all Post-Masters, Post-Riders, and Persons immediately concerned in conducting the Business of the Post Office, ought to be exempted from all Military duties; and that it be recommended to the Legislatures of the different States, to exempt such Persons accordingly.

Extract from the Minutes.

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<sup>13</sup> *This report, in the writing of Thomas Heyward, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 445. It is without date, and has 1776 endorsed upon it, as has also the manuscript of the report printed under October 17, 1777, post. It is possible that it does not belong in this place, but Heyward, as chairman of the committee, appointed February 17, 1777, ante, would naturally have prepared the report.*

<sup>14</sup> *This memorial is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 41, IV, folio 13.*

CHA. THOMSON, Secy.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 1777 {Rev1}**

Resolved, That there be advanced to Richard Bache, Esqr. post master general, 2,000 dollars, for which he is to be accountable:

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1777**

The Committee on the Treasury brought in a report, which was taken into consideration; Whereupon,

Ordered, That there be advanced to Ebenezer Hazard, Esqr. surveyor general of the post office of the United States, 3,000 dollars, for the use of the said department, and for which he is to be accountable:

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:

That an inspector of dead letters be appointed, with 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 shall of the expence created by it Resolved, That an allowance of 250 dollars be made to the present survevor of the post office, for past extraordinary services.

Resolved, That 3,000 o dollars be advanced to the Postmaster general for Post office expences, he to be accountable.<sup>15</sup>

#### **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1777**

Ordered, That a warrant issue in favour of Richard Bache, Esqr. post master general, to be paid to James Bryson, one of the surveyors of the post office, the sum of three thousand dollars, for the use of the post master general's department, who is to be accountable:

#### **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 1778**

The committee appointed to devise effectual means to prevent persons disaffected to the interest of the United States from being employed in any of the important offices thereof, brought in a report:

The Committee appointed to devise effectual means to prevent persons disaffected to the interests of the United States from being employed in any of the important Offices thereof, beg leave to report the follow Resolutions: Resolved, That all Commissioned officers in the Army or Navy of these United States; the Commissioners of the Navy boards; the Quarter Master General, Deputy Quarter Master generals; Commissaries of forage, forage master; Commissaries of Stores, deputies and assistant quarter masters; the Commissary General and deputy Commissary generals of Purchases and issues, and their Deputies and assistant Commissaries; all Commissaries of other departments; all Officers of the Staff in the Army; the Treasurer, auditor general, Deputy auditor general and all other auditors and Commissioners of accounts; the Post Master, Surveyors and Comptroller general of the Post office, Postmasters and post riders; the Clothier General and his Deputies; the Director General deputy directors and all Surgeons and Physicians of the Hospitals and Army; and all clerks in every public office and Department, who are

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<sup>15</sup> *This report, in the writing of Richard Henry Lee, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 443.*

already appointed, shall within one month after notice hereof, and all such as may hereafter be appointed and accept of their appointments, immediately thereupon, previous to acting therein, severally take and subscribe the following oath (or if one of the people called quakers, Affirmation) (filling up the blank with their name and Office).

I --, do solemnly swear, or affirm, that I acknowledge the thirteen United States of America, namely, New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia to be free Sovereign and Independant States, and that the people thereof owe no Allegiance or obedience to George the 3rd, King of Great Britain, and that neither the said King, nor the Parliament of Great Britain, nor any foreign Prince, Power or Potentate whatsoever, ought to have any power, right, Authority or jurisdiction over the said United States or any of them, or the Subjects thereof. And that I will to the utmost of my power support maintain and defend the said United States against the said King George the third, his heirs and successors, and his and their agents, abettors and assistants, and will faithfully serve the said United States in the office I now hold, and in any other office, which I may hereafter hold by their appointment or under their Authority, according to the best of my Skill and understanding. So help me God.

Which oath or Affirmation the Commander in Chief or any Major General or Brigadier General is authorized and directed to administer to all Officers of the Army, or in any of the above mentioned Departments, whose business require their attendance with the Army. And all officers of the Navy to take the said Oath before the Commissioners of any of the Navy boards where Convenient, or otherwise before any Judge or Justice of the Peace in the State wherein they respectively reside or shall receive their Commission or warrant. And all commissioners of the Navy boards, Auditors, Commissioners of accounts, Commissaries, Quarter Masters, and all others officers before above mentioned whose business doth not require a steady Attendance with the Army, and who act in a Civil Department, to take the said Oath or affirmation before any Judge or Justice of the Peace of the State wherein they may Respectively reside.

And all persons whatsoever holding or who may hereafter be appointed to hold and exercise any of the above mentioned offices or appointments, or any other future office or appointment, (excepting officers in the Military line of the Army Commanding Divisions, Brigades or in Battalions or companies and also officers commanding in the Navy) shall at the time of taking the abovementioned Oath, or affirmation, also take an oath or affirmation of office in the following words.

I -- --, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully truly and impartially to the utmost of my skill and understanding, execute the office of --, to which I am appointed under the United States of America, and render a true Account of all monies by me received or expended on public account and of all stores or other effects with me entrusted which belong to the said United States, and in all respects to the utmost of my ability, discharge the trust reposed in me with strict justice and integrity.

Which several oaths or affirmations being subscribed and attested, the person administering shall deliver the same to the Deponent or affirmant, together with a duplicate thereof in like manner subscribed and attested. And all officers in the Military line shall cause their Oath or affirmation to be delivered to the Commander in Chief or Commander of a separate Department under whom they serve, or such other person as by General orders shall be appointed to receive the same, which the Commander in Chief and Commander of each separate Department shall cause to be sent to the Secretary of Congress, retaining an exact list of all officers so qualified with their Rank and time of Qualifying. All officers in the Navy shall send or deliver their oaths or Qualifications to the Navy board most convenient, who are required to transmit the same, together with their own qualifications to the Marine Committee as soon as conveniently may be. And all other persons above directed to take the said Oaths or affirmations are required upon the taking and subscribing thereof to send or deliver the same to the Secretary of the State to which they respectively belong, or to such other person or persons as the Governor or President of such State shall direct, who is requested to cause the same when received to be transmitted to the Secretary of Congress. Each Deponent or affirmant to retain and keep the Duplicate of his Qualifications as a voucher of his compliance with the duty hereby enjoined him.

Resolved, That for the greater care and despatch in taking the before mentioned qualifications a Number of the forms thereof be immediately Printed, and sent to the Commander in Chief of the Army, the Commander in each separate Department, and to the Governor or President of each respective State.

Resolved, That if any officer of the Army or Navy or in any of the before mentioned Departments already appointed or who may hereafter be appointed and accepts of his appointment and neglects or refuses to take the before mentioned oath, oaths or affirmations, and to deliver the same in manner required as soon as time and Circumstances will admit, every such officer or person so neglecting or refusing shall be immediately Cashiered and forfeit two months' pay to the use of these United States, and be rendered incapable of serving in the Army, of the said States or of executing thereafter any office under Congress.

And whereas many persons employed as Deputy or assistant Commissaries, Quarter Masters or forage masters are dispersed in various parts of this Continent, over whom neither Congress or the head of their Department can have the immediate inspection, and many falsely call themselves publick officers in some Department,

Resolved Therefore that it be earnestly recommended to the Legislative and Executive Authority of each State to take effectual measures for preventing any person whomsoever within their State from exercising the Office of Commissary, Quarter Master, forage Master, or any other public employment who shall not be able to produce a legal appointment thereto together with a duplicate of the above oath or affirmation to any Magistrate when required, or who shall neglect or refuse to take the aforesaid oaths or affirmations, or who is of a doubtful and suspicious character, respecting either his integrity or Attachment to the interest of these States. And also to apprehend [arrest]

confine or suspend every such officer who shall prove guilty of any Malpractices, or embezzle the Public money, or otherwise appear unfit or disqualified for such employment: and to appoint others in the room of those displaced untill the pleasure of Congress can be known, to whom a particular account thereof is to be immediately forwarded.

Resolved, That every person employed either as Commissary, Quarter Master, forage Master, or in any other Civil Department of the Army shall be subject to trial by Court Martial for neglect of duty, or other offence committed in the execution of their office, and upon conviction shall suffer death, or such other punishment as shall be adjudged by sentence of such Court Martial. And every person in any civil Department of the Army, or in any other Civil Department under the United States of America not immediately serving in the Army with whom money or any public stores shall be entrusted, receiving salary, fee or reward for his services to the public, and who shall wilfully waste embezzle or misapply such money or stores, shall be deemed guilty of felony, and upon indictment and due proof thereof in a Court of Justice proper for trying such Offences in the State where committed, shall suffer death, or such other punishment as shall be adjudged by such Court.

Provided, no person shall be tried in any Court of Judicature for the same offence, for which he had previous thereto been tried by a Court Martial; or be arrested or called to trial by a Court Martial for any offence not expressly made cognizable before them, or for which the offender may be under arrest, indictment or imprisonment by the civil authority.

Resolved, That every person in the service of these United States shall be answerable for and liable to make good all Damage the United States have sustained or may sustain by his neglect of duty, embezzlement of public money or stores, or any other fraudulent practice; which damage and all debts or accounts due to the United States to be recovered in any Court of Record where the same is cognizable in the State where the Defendant may be found, at the suit of the Treasurer of the United States of America for the time being.

Resolved, That the Executive power of each respective State be, and they are hereby requested and fully empowered to superintend, and cause a strict inquiry to be made into the Conduct of all those in the Commissary's or Quarter Master's Departments, or in any other Civil Department under Congress within their State, and also arrest imprison, displace, or suspend all those in the above mentioned Departments who are under pay, and render no adequate service or shall be guilty of peculation, misapplication of Public money, embezzlement of stores, or live in idleness or extravagance in neglect of their duty, or who in any respect conduct themselves unworthy of the station they fill; and to appoint others, where such appointments may appear necessary, transmitting to Congress as soon as possible, the names, stations and ranks of all those displaced or suspended, with the offence occasioning the same and the names of those by them appointed.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *This report, in the writing of Abraham Clark, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 23, folio 33. See under February 3, 1778, post.*

Ordered, That the same be taken into consideration to morrow.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 1778**

The Committee on the Treasury beg leave to report the following Resolution: Resolved, That a Warrant Issue on the Treasurer in favour of James Bryson for Three thousand Dollars, to be by him delivered to Richard Bache, Esq., Postmaster general, for the use of his Department, and for which he is to be accountable.<sup>17</sup>

**FRIDAY, MAY 29, 1778**

Resolved, That a committee of four be appointed to report a plan for regulating continental expresses, and to enquire into and rectify abuses in the general post office:

The members chosen, Mr. R[ichard] H[enry] Lee, Mr. S[amuel] Adams, Mr. [John] Witherspoon, and Mr. [William Henry] Drayton.

**THURSDAY, JUNE, 25, 1778**

2. That such part of the 9th article as respects the post office, be altered or amended, so as that Congress be obliged to lay the accounts annually before the legislature of the several states:

Question put,

Passed in the negative, 2 ayes, 9 noes.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 1778**

The committee on the post office brought in a report; Whereupon,

Resolved, That fourteen thousand and forty-one and one-half dollars be advanced to Richard Bache, Esq.r post master general, for the use of his department; the said R. Bache to be accountable.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1778**

Congress took into consideration the affairs of the treasury and finance; whereupon the committee on finance having made their report, the same was read:

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<sup>17</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 136, II, folio 233.*

Your Committee to whom it was referred to consider and Report on the Currency and Finances of these United States, beg Leave to Report:

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12. That the Sum... of be taken for Postage of letters at the Post Office, and that the Produce of the Revenue thereof be also applied in like manner.

.....

On the above positions your Committee State the following Estimates:

... Dlls.

.....

Post office... 2,000,000

#### **TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 1779**

A letter, of 2, from Mr. R. Bache, postmaster general was read: Whereupon,<sup>18</sup>

Ordered, That it be referred to the committee for superintending and regulating the post office, and,

That three members be added to the said committee:

The members chosen: Mr. [William] Paca, Mr. [William] Ellery, and Mr. [Henry] Laurens.

#### **SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 1779**

The committee appointed to regulate the affairs of the post office, to whom was referred the memorial of Richard Bache Esq., brought in a report; Whereupon Resolved, That there be advanced out of the public treasury to Richard Bache, Esq., postmaster general, twenty thousand dollars, to enable him to pay the debts and charges of his department, to the fifth January, instant, and further to execute the duties thereof; he to be accountable.<sup>19</sup>

#### **FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 1779**

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<sup>18</sup> *The letter of Brétigny is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 78, III, folio 229; that of Bache, in No. 61, folio 15.*

<sup>19</sup> *This report, in the writing of Samuel Adams, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 455.*

The committee on the post office having conferred with the post master, and other principal officers of that department, report,

That it will be proper to supply the post master general immediately with 6967 dollars and one third of a dollar, to pay the debts due from the post office for the quarter ending the 5th of this month:

That it will be proper to advance to the post master, on account, the further sum of 5000 dollars, for the accruing expences of his department, to the end that, dealing with ready money, he may be enabled to make the best bargains for the public:

That the present rate of postage be doubled.<sup>20</sup>

"Tis a pity that the Honorable Congress did not treble the postage for Officers letters as a large annual sum by this means would be put into the public Treasury.

"†§†The several Printers of news-papers on the Continent are requested to insert the above." Pennsylvania Packet, June 22, 1779.]

That the annual salary of the post master general for the future be 2000 dollars per annum:

That the surveyor's pay be increased from six dollars to 12 dollars per day each:

That the comptroller's salary be increased from 340 dollars to 680 dollars per annum:<sup>21</sup>

Resolved, That Congress agree to the said report.

#### **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1779**

A letter, of 5, from R. Bache, post master general, was read:<sup>22</sup>

Ordered, That it be referred to the committee on the post office; and that three members be elected for that committee, in the room of Mr. S[amuel] Adams, Mr. [William] Ellery and Mr. R[ichard] H[enry] Lee, who are absent:

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<sup>20</sup> *"The officers of the American Army beg leave to inform their friends and correspondents, that the postage of all letters to and from the Army is doubled; but as their pay is fully adequate to every expence, they therefore request them to send all letters by the public post, and not, through any economical view, by a private conveyance.*

<sup>21</sup> *This report, with different allowance, in the writing of Richard Henry Lee, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 457.*

<sup>22</sup> *Jefferson's letter is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 71, I, folio 271; that of Bache, in No. 61, folio 43.*

The members chosen, Mr. [Cyrus] Griffin, Mr. [Samuel] Holten and Mr. [William Churchill] Houston.

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1779**

Ordered, That two members be added to the Committee on the Post Office, in the room of Mr. [Henry] Laurens and Mr. [William] Paca, who have leave of absence. The members chosen, Mr. [John] Dickinson and Mr. [Roger] Sherman.

The Committee on the Post office brought in a report; Whereupon,

The Committee on the Post Office Report:

That the Post Master has laid before them his general accounts, which are herewith presented. It appears from one of these accounts A, that a balance was due on the 5th. Inst. to the Post Master of £375 18 6.

From another account, marked B, that the office is now indebted for arrears to post riders about £17666 1 3 according to the nearest computation that the Comptroller can at present make. The post Masters salary is at present 2000 Dollars per annum. The Comptroller's, 1500 per annum.

The surveyors, each, 20 dollars per day: of which these officers respectively complain as being insufficient for their support, as appears by the Post Master's letter of the 5th. inst and the Comptroller's of the 22d., which also accompany this, and to which the Committee beg leave to refer.

The Committee beg leave to recommend that the accounts be Agd. referred to the Treasury Board; that a warrant issue on the treasurer to pay into the Post Master's hands 40,000 dollars Agd. Passed in order to discharge the arrears due by, and for continuing the functions of the office; he to be accountable.

That the post Masters salary be encreased to 3500 Dollars per Passed annum to commence the first day of September last.

That the Comptroller's salary be encreased to 2500 dollars per Passd. annum, to commence on the said 1st September.

Mr Bryson, one of the surveyors, has proposed to the Committee in a paper marked C, to continue in his office at the present allowance of 20 dollars per day, on condition of being allowed to draw forage for one horse and clothing for himself on the terms under which officers of the army draw clothing from the clothier general, which the Committee beg leave to submit to Congress, and recommend that whatever additional allowance be made

to Mr. Bryson, may also be made to Mr. Hazard and Mr. Stevens respectively the other surveyors.<sup>23</sup>

The last paragraph recommitted.<sup>24</sup>

Resolved, That a warrant issue on the treasurer, in favour of R. Bache, Esq. postmaster general, for forty thousand dollars, to discharge the arrears due by and for continuing the functions of the office; for which sum he is to be accountable:

Ordered, That the farther consideration of the report be postponed till Tuesday next.

### **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1779**

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

Resolved, That the accounts of the post master general be referred to the Board of Treasury, to be by them adjusted and liquidated;

That the salary of the post master general be increased to three thousand five hundred dollars per annum, to commence the first day of September last:

That the comptroller's salary be encreased to two thousand five hundred dollars per annum, to commence on the said 1st day of September.

Ordered, That the remainder of the report be re-committed.

### **MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1779**

Congress took into consideration the report on the post office; Whereupon, Resolved, That the post office be so regulated as that the post shall set out and arrive at the place where Congress shall be sitting twice in every week, to go so far as Boston, in the State of Massachusetts bay, and to Charleston, in the State of South Carolina:

And that the weekly post be continued to all other places as at present established.

That the whole expensive system of express riding be totally abolished, except by the particular order of Congress upon very special occasions.

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<sup>23</sup> *This report, in the writing oi Henry Laurens, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 459. It is endorsed: "Read, October 23, 1779. Part passed: remainder postponed to Tuesday 26. Part passed and past recommitted, December 1."*

<sup>24</sup> *A line in the writing of Samuel Huntington.*

That as the 40000 Dollars, granted by Congress on the 23d of October last were principally to discharge the arrears of the Post Office, and a further grant being at present absolutely necessary for continuing the functions of the said office, your Committee report that a warrant issue on the Treasurer, in favor of the Post Master General for the sum of 30,000 dollars, he to be accountable.

Your Committee farther report that as the three surveyors of the Post Office are allowed but 20 dollars a day a sum inadequate to their heavy expences in travelling the roads, that they be allowed the sum of 40 dollars a day, to commence from the 28th of August last, and also yearly clothing for themselves only, upon the same terms under which officers of the army draw clothing from the clothier general.

That a warrant issue on the treasurer, in favour of the post master general, for the sum of thirty thousand dollars, to the use of that department; for which he is to be accountable.

That all express riders in the pay of the United States be discharged, and that no established express riders be in future maintained at the public expence: Resolved, That the three surveyors of the post office be allowed the sum of forty dollars a day, until the further order of Congress:

That as the duties of the post master general and comptroller will henceforward be considerably increased by the above resolutions, the salary of the post master general be five thousand dollars per annum, and the comptroller's be four thousand dollars per annum.

Ordered, That the Board of War and the quarter master, his assistants and deputies in Philadelphia, be informed immediately of the aforesaid resolutions.<sup>25</sup>

## **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1779 {Rev1}**

The Committee on the Post office brought in a report, which was read;

Whereupon, Resolved, That the rate of postage, until the further order of Congress, be twenty prices upon the sums paid in the year 1775:

That single letters, directed to any officer of the line, and all letters directed to general officers or to officers commanding in a separate department, [and all letters to and from the ministers, commissioners and secretaries of these United States at foreign courts, be free.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *This report, in the writing of Cyrus Griffin, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 463.*

<sup>26</sup> *The remainder of this day's entries was made by George Bond. The words in brackets were not in the original report, which is, in the writing of Cyrus Griffin, in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 453.*

## **TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1780**

A letter, of 3, from R. Bache, postmaster general, was read:

Ordered, That it be referred to the committee on the Post-office.

## **THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 1780**

The Committee on the Post Office delivered in a report.

That upon a conference with the Gentlemen of the post office, your Committee are of opinion until the farther orders of Congress that the surveyors of the post office be allowed their reasonable expences in travelling the roads an account of such expences to be rendered every three months to the post master General upon oath, and that a late resolution of Congress giving 40 dollars a day be repealed.

Resolved, that as the business of the post office will henceforward be greatly accumulated, and its revenue at least twenty times increased, that the post master General be allowed at the rate of 10,000 dollars a year until the farther order of Congress, being only ten times the original salary.<sup>27</sup>

## **FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 1780**

Congress took into consideration the report of the Committee on the Post Office: Whereupon,

Resolved, That until the further order of Congress, the surveyors of the post office be allowed their reasonable expences in travelling the roads; an account of such expences to be rendered every three months to the post master general, upon oath; and that a late resolution of Congress, giving forty dollars a day, be repealed.

Ordered, That the remainder of the report be postponed.

## **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1780**

The Board of Admiralty sent in a report for establishing packets; and the Board of War sent in a report for apportioning the quotas of men to be raised by the several States

Admiralty Office Feby. 1, 1780.

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<sup>27</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 465. It is endorsed by Thomson: "The first part passed January 7, 1780; latter part relative to postmaster general postponed."*

The Board pursuant to a motion referred to them for establishing regular packets between these United States and the Kingdom of France beg leave to Report the following plan.

That three Packet Boats be established by the Board of Admiralty to sail from hence for Nantes in the Kingdom of France as soon as may be after the first Tuesday in the months of April June August October December and February annually during said establishment.

That the mails be made up in the Post office in Philadelphia on said days and that the Post Master General fix the Postage of all private letters carried by said Packet boats.

That the said Packet Boats sail from Nantes aforesaid for Delaware or Chesapeake Bays as soon as may be after the first Thursday in the months of June, August, October, December, February, and April Annually on which days the mails are to be made up in France.

That the Minister Plenipotentiary of these United States at the Court of France appoint some suitable person for that purpose and for fixing and receiving the postage of private letters there.

That the Captains of Said Packet boats follow such directions as the Board of Admiralty shall give them from time to time, the said Board conforming themselves in their directions as nearly as possible to the foregoing Resolutions.<sup>28</sup>

#### **FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 1780**

That on the application of the chairman of the Committee of the Post Office, a warrant issue on the treasurer, in favour of the postmaster general, for forty thousand dollars, for which sum he is to be accountable.

#### **FRIDAY, MAY 5, 1780**

The Committee on the Post Office brought in a report, which being taken into consideration,

Resolved, That the present rates of postage be doubled:

That the post from the city of Philadelphia to Talbot court house in the state of Maryland be abolished.

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<sup>28</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 37, folio 179.*

That all masters of packets and other vessels in continental service be, and they are hereby, required to lodge whatever letters they bring from abroad, in the post office nearest to the port where they shall arrive, and immediately after their arrival:

That for defraying the expences of the Post Office and discharging the debts of the same, the following warrants issue in favor of Richard Bache Esqr.

Postmaster General he to be accountable--to wit, a warrant on the Continental loan officer in the state of Massachusetts for 30,000 dollars.

A warrant on the Continental loan officer in the State of Pennsylvania for 30,000 Dollars.

A warrant on the Continental loan officer in the State of Virginia for 20,000 Dollars.

And a warrant on the Continental loan officer in the State of North Carolina for 20,000 dollars.

That the resolution of Congress of the 7 January last, allowing reasonable expences to the surveyors while travelling the roads, be and it is hereby repealed.

That the Postmaster General Board of Treasury be empowered to supply the report advances to Postmaster General, Comptroller and surveyors from time to time with reasonable sums of money to defray money to defray the expenses of living at present they to be accountable on account of their salaries.

That the salary of the Post Master Genl. the Comptroller and surveyors be considered when all other salaries are to be fixed by a new establishment, and in the meantime that the board of Treasury report warrants in favor of the Postmaster General agreeable to a resolution of Congress of the 8th of March last.<sup>29</sup>

Ordered, That the Board of Treasury report advances to the post master general, the comptroller and surveyors, from time to time, on account of their salaries, and that the salary of the post master general, the comptroller and surveyors, be considered when all other salaries are to be fixed by a new establishment. Ordered, That so much of the report as relates to advances be referred to the Board of Treasury; and that so much of the report as relates to the post from Philadelphia to Talbot be referred to the Committee on the Post office to take order.

#### **FRIDAY, MAY 12, 1780 {Rev1}**

That the following warrants, amounting to one hundred thousand dollars, issue in favour of Richard Bache, post master general, for which he is to be accountable,

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<sup>29</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 473; an extract from the report is in No. 61, folio 471.*

**SATURDAY, MAY 27, 1780**

The Committee conceive the establishment of Posts and expresses who shall bring the earliest intelligence of the arrival of the fleet of our ally and the motions of the Enemy as so necessary to the right application of our force that they submit the following Resolution.

Resolved, that the Committee of Intelligence be directed to establish regular Posts to and from the different parts of the Sea coasts of this Continent from Charlestown to Boston in such manner Postponed. as will most effectually procure information of the approach of the fleet of our ally, and the movements of the enemy in consequence thereof.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 1780**

A letter, of 9th, from Governor Jefferson, of Virginia, was read:<sup>30</sup>

Ordered, That so much thereof as relates to the Post Office be referred to the Committee on the Post Office to take order;

That the remainder be referred to the Board of War.

A petition of Charles Freeman was read:<sup>31</sup>

Ordered, That it be referred to the Committee on the Post Office.

A letter, of 7, from E. Hazard to R. Bache was laid before Congress and read:<sup>32</sup>

Ordered, That it be referred to the committee at headquarters.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 1780**

A letter, of 15, from Governor Jefferson, of Virginia, was read:

Ordered, That it be referred to the Committee on the Post Office.....

That on the application of Richard Bache, postmaster general, a warrant issue on the treasurer in his favour, for twenty thousand dollars, on account of his salary.

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<sup>30</sup> *This letter is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 71, I, folio 355.*

<sup>31</sup> *This petition, dated June 16, 1780, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 42, III, folio 57.*

<sup>32</sup> *This letter is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 39, II, folio 118.*

That on the application of Peter Baynton, comptroller for the general Post Office, a warrant issue on the treasurer in his favour, for ten thousand dollars on account of his salary.

That on the application of James Bryson, surveyor of the general post office for the middle district, a warrant issue on the treasurer in his favour, for ten thousand dollars, on account of his salary.<sup>33</sup>

Resolved, That a member be added to the Committee on the Post Office, in the room of Mr. [Cyrus] Griffin, who is absent:

The member chosen, Mr. [John] Walker.

### **FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 1780**

The Committee on the Post Office brought in a report; Whereupon,

Ordered, That the Committee on the Post Office give directions to the post master general, that the southern post riders be so regulated as to arrive at the place where Congress is sitting, only once a week while the line of expresses, established by Governor Jefferson between the southern and northern armies, is kept up.

### **TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 1780**

Ordered, That a member be added to the committee on the Post Office in the room of Mr. [Samuel] Holten.

The member chosen, Mr. [Jared] Ingersol.

### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 1780**

Congress took into consideration the report of the Committee on the Post Office, on Mr. Bec's motion, and

Resolved, That the resolution of the 27th December, 1779, ordering "that the post office be so regulated as that the post shall set out and arrive at the place where Congress shall be sitting, twice in every week, to go so far as Boston, in the state of Massachusetts Bay, and to Charlestown, in the state of South Carolina," be and hereby is repealed.<sup>34</sup>

### **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1780**

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<sup>33</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 136, IV, folio 363.*

<sup>34</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 479.*

Congress resumed the consideration of the report of the committee on salaries;

Ordered, That so much of the report as relates to the surveyors of the Post Office be re-committed.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1780**

Congress took into consideration the report of the Committee on the Post office; Whereupon,

Ordered, That a warrant issue in favour of Richard Bache, postmaster general, on Nathaniel Appleton, commissioner of the continental loan office in the State of Massachusetts Bay, for three thousand dollars in bills of credit emitted pursuant to the act of Congress, of the 18 of March last; and that another warrant on the treasurer for twenty thousand dollars continental bills of the former emission, for the use of his department; and for which the said Richard Bache is to be accountable.<sup>35</sup>

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1780**

Ordered, That a warrant issue on the managers of the United States lottery, for three thousand eight hundred dollars, in favour of Richard Bache, postmaster general order, for the use of his department to be paid at the lottery office in the State of New York; and for which sum he is to be accountable.<sup>36</sup>

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1780**

A letter, of this day, from R. Bache, postmaster general, was read, with sundry papers enclosed:

Ordered, That the same be referred to the Committee on the Post Office.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1780**

The Committee on the Post Office laid before Congress an affidavit of Edmund Darrow, respecting the capture of the mail to the eastward, on the night of 20 October last in Stratford:

Ordered, That it be referred to the Committee on the Post Office.

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<sup>35</sup> *This report, in the writing of Roger Sherman, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 481.*

<sup>36</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 136, IV, folio 605.*

## **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1780**

Congress took into consideration the report of the Committee on the Post Office; Whereupon,

Resolved, That the salary of the surveyor of the post office be three hundred and twenty dollars five hundred and eighty six dollars and two thirds of a dollar per annum, and four dollars per day for his travelling expenses while on journies; and that the said yearly pay have retrospect to the first day of September, 1777:

That the depreciation of money, as settled on the 28 day of June last, be made good, on the pay of the post riders, from the time the same was originally fixed, and that for the future, their pay be double the sum they received before the present war:

That the rates on postage of letters be fixed at half the rates paid at the commencement of the present war: That for the future, the above allowance and rates be paid in specie, or money emitted in pursuance of the resolution of the 18 March last, or other money equivalent:

That the post riders to the eastward, during their necessary stay at Fishkill, have their horses kept in the public stables, and that a reasonable deduction be made from their pay for the forage they shall be supplied with.

Ordered, That the postmaster general lay before the Board of Treasury, as soon as may be, a state of the accounts and sums due to the post riders:

That the postmaster general order the post riders to travel through Connecticut, at a distance from the sea shore, in such manner as may render them secure from attempts of a like nature with that which lately happened at Stratford, in that State.<sup>37</sup>

## **MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1780**

A letter, of 16, from R. Bache, postmaster general, was read:

Ordered, That it be referred to the Committee on the Post Office.

That two members be added to that committee:

The members, Mr. [William] Floyd, Mr. [John] Witherspoon.

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<sup>37</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folios 483 and 487.*

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1781**

Congress took into consideration the report of the Committee on the Post Office; Whereupon,

The Committee on the Post Office to whom was referred the letter [from] Mr. Bache, postmaster general, of the 16th Inst. beg leave to submit the following resolution:

Resolved, That so much of the act of the 12th of December last, for regulating the Post Office, as directs "that for the future the pay of post-riders be double the sum they received

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1781**

A letter, of 7th, from R. Bache, postmaster general, was read:

Ordered, That it be referred to the Committee on the Post Office.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1781 {Rev1}**

On motion of the committee on the Post Office:

Resolved, That, the postage of letters in future be double the sums paid before the commencement of the present war.

That a warrant issue on Thomas Smith, commissioner of the continental loan office in the State of Pennsylvania, in favour of Richard Bache, postmaster general, for thirty thousand dollars of the old emissions, in order to enable the postmaster to prosecute the business of the office, for which the postmaster general is to be accountable.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 1781**

On motion of Mr. [Roger] Sherman, seconded by Mr. [George] Partridge,

Resolved, That the postmaster general be directed immediately to employ a post-rider in the room of him who was lately taken by the enemy, between Fishkill and Morristown; and to apply to the Commander in Chief or the Board of War for an escort on that part of the way where the riders are exposed to be interrupted by the enemy.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 1781**

Ordered, That a report of the Board of Treasury for an advance of money to the postmaster general, together with a letter, of this day, from R. Bache, postmaster general, be referred to a committee of three:

The members, Mr. [Roger] Sherman, [Mr. James Mitchell] Varnum and Mr. [Thomas] Bee.

#### **MONDAY, JULY 2, 1781 {Rev1}**

A report from the Board of Treasury was read; Whereupon, Treasury Office June 20th. 1781.

The Board of Treasury beg leave to represent to the U. States in Congress assembled,

That an Estimate exhibited by the Post Masr Genl. now lays before them for 17.958 specie dollars due to the several Claimants in his Department, for Salaries and Arrearages: That the Accts. of the said Department are now under examination, but can't finally be settled in Time to answer the pressing Purposes of Ebenezer Hazard Surveyor of the Eastern District, whose letter to the Post Masr Genl is transmitted with this Report for the better information of Congress--whereupon the following resolution is submitted:

Ordered, That a warrant issue on Nathaniel Appleton, commissioner of the continental loan office for the State of Massachusetts, in favour of Richard Bache, postmaster general, for eight thousand dollars of the new emission, to be put into the hands of Ebenezer Hazard, surveyor of the eastern district, to be applied in the post office department, and for which sum the said postmaster general is to be accountable.<sup>38</sup>

#### **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 1781**

On motion of Mr. [Roger] Sherman, seconded by Mr. [James Mitchell] Varnum,

Ordered, That the Committee on the Post Office, the superintendant of finance, and postmaster general, prepare and report the state of the present expences of the Post Office, and a system for regulating the same in future.

#### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 1781**

A motion was made by Mr. [James Mitchell] Varnum, seconded by Mr. [Roger] Sherman:

Resolved, That from and after the first day of September next the privilege of franking letters cease.

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<sup>38</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 136, V, folio 385.*

Resolved, That the Committee upon the Post Office, the Superintendent of Finance and Post Master General prepare and report [the state of the present expence of the Post Office and a] system for regulating the same in future.<sup>39</sup>

#### **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1781**

A report from the Board of Treasury was read; Whereupon,

Treasury Office, September 5, 1781.

The Board of Treasury beg leave to inform the United States in Congress assembled, that there are a number of Letters directed to them now laying in the General Post Office, which the Post Master General refuses to deliver, without the Postage is paid in Specie, which will amount to a considerable sum. The Board are not possessed of any Specie to pay the Postage, and the Public Business may be much injured by the Detention of Letters which the Board have Reason to suppose are of great Importance: the following Resolution is therefore submitted:

Ordered, That the postmaster general cause to be delivered to the Board of Treasury, all letters directed to the said Board, charging the postage arising thereon to account, which he is to exhibit to the auditors on the settlement of his accounts.<sup>40</sup>

#### **MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1781**

The report of the Committee on the Post Office, was taken into consideration, and on the question, "that from and after the 1st day of December next, all franks be abolished,"

The yeas and nays being required by Mr. [James Mitchell] Varnum, {table }

So it passed in the negative.

#### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1781**

The report of the committee on the Post Office was taken into consideration; Whereupon,

The Committee on the Post Office beg leave to report.

That they have conferred with the Superintendant of finance, and \*Postmaster\* General according to the instructions given to your Committee, by the act of Congress of the 1st.

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<sup>39</sup> *This motion, in the writing of James Mitchell Varnum, except the portion in brackets which is in Thomas McKean's writing, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, I, folio 209.*

<sup>40</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 136, V, folio 457.*

Day of August last, and thereupon submit sundry papers herewith delivered and numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, by which it appears that the present expence of the Post Office amounts to fourteen thousand, one hundred and sixty six dollars and two thirds.

That your Committee according to the instructions to them aforesaid given, have attended to the regulation thereof in future, and after a full view and consideration, of all circumstances, it appears indispensibly necessary,

1st. That from and after the first day of December next all \*franks\* be abolished, But as the military officers of the United States, are not at present regularly paid, your Committee conceive, that Passed in the negative. it will be proper that the Post Masters keep an exact account of the postage on their letters, and that the same be returned quarterly to the Pay Master General to be deducted from the pay of the officers respectively.

Resolved, That the price to be paid for the postage of letters be reduced to what it was before at the commencement of the present war:

Your Committee further conceive it will be proper, that the Post Master be directed to cause the mail to be carried with all possible Dispatch once a week, and that the Post between Baltimore and Boston ride twice a Week, and that this regulations be extended farther Northward when the produce of the Post Office will admit the expence.

It will also be proper that in some cases an additional Stipend over and above the Commission, be given to the Post Masters, who will have additional Duty, and who will receive but very small sums of Money for Letters, and some of them none at all; and that on the other hand the Post Master General be allowed to regulate the Commissions aforesaid, so as that they shall not in the whole exceed the present Rate of twenty per Cent.

Your Committee are Sensible that the Expence of the office will be much increased by the Methods they have proposed, but they are equally sensible, that the Revenue will also be very considerably increased, and they expect that a far more considerable Expence will be entirely cut off, which purpose they farther beg leave to propose

That as soon as the Posts shall have been established on the new plan from and after the first day of December next, all Express Riders, on constant pay, be dismissed from the public Service.

That the \*postmaster\* general be, and hereby is, authorised to allow the respective several \*postmasters\* such commission per cent, on the posts according to their trouble and attention as he shall think reasonable and just their respective services merit, so as that the said commissions do not in the whole exceed twenty per cent:

That he cause the mail to be carried with all despatch once a week:

That from and after the 1st day of December next, all express riders, on constant pay, be dismissed from the public service:

That there be in the department of the Post Office a \*postmaster\* general, the Comptroller, and two surveyors with the Salaries and Allowances at present made to each and an assistant or clerk:

That the salary of the \*postmaster\* general be twelve hundred and fifty dollars per annum:

That the salary of the assistant or clerk be eight hundred dollars per annum:

That this establishment of the Post Office take place on the 1st day of December next.

Ordered, That Monday Tuesday next be assigned for electing a postmaster general and the assistant or clerk.<sup>41</sup>

#### **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1781**

On motion of Mr. [Joseph] Montgomery, seconded by Mr. [Thomas] Smith,

Resolved, That the establishment of the Post Office as agreed to, on the 19 of October last, take place on the first day of January next, and that the resolution directing its commencement on the first day of December next, be, and hereby is repealed.

#### **MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1781**

The deputation to R. I. had set out on the 22d. & proceeded 1\2 day's journey. Mr. Nash casually mentioned a private letter from Mr. Pendleton to Mr. Madison informing that the Legislature of Virga. had in consequence of the final refusal of R. I. repealed her law for the impost. As this circumstance if true destroyed in the opinion of the deputies the chief argt. to be used by them, viz: the unanimity of the other States, they determined to return & wait for the Southern post, to know the truth of it. The post failing to arrive on the 23d., the usual day the deputies on this day came into Congress & stated the case. Mr. Madison read to Congress the paragraph in the letter from Mr. Pendleton. Congress verbally resolved, that the departure of the Deputies for R. t. sd. be suspended until the further order of Congress; Mr. Madison promising to give any information he might receive by the post. The arrival of the post immediately ensued. k letter to Mr. Madison from Mr. Randolph confirmed the fact, & was communicated to Congress. The most intelligent members were deeply affected & prognosticated a failure of the Impost scheme, & the most pernicious effects to the character, the duration & the interests of the Confederacy. It was at length notwithstanding determined to persist in the

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<sup>41</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 491.*

attempt for permanent revenue, and a Committee was appointed to report the steps proper to be taken.

A motion was made by Mr. Rutledge to strike out the salvage for recaptures on land, on the same principle as he did the words "accruing to the use of the United States." As the latter had been retained by barely 7 States, and one of these was not present the motion of Mr. Rutledge succeeded. Some of Those who were on the other side, in consequence, voted agst. the whole resolution & it failed. By compromise it passed as reported by the Committee. The Grand Committee reported after another meeting with respect to the old money, that it should be rated at 40 for 1. The Chair decided on a question raised, that according to rule the blank sd. not have been filled by the Committee; so the rate was expunged.

## **TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1782**

On motion of Mr. [George] Clymer, seconded by Mr. [Thomas] Bee,

Resolved, That the salary of George Redhead, employed by the late commercial committee to adjust the accounts of the said committee, be at the rate of six hundred dollars per annum, and that the same be referred to the Superintendant of finance.<sup>42</sup>

## **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1782.**

The committee, consisting of Mr. [Ezekiel] Cornell, Mr. [Joseph] Montgomery, and Mr. [Abraham] Clark, to whom was referred a memorial of John Durham Alvey, made report; Whereupon,

Resolved, That John Durham Alvey, postmaster to the main army, be allowed for his past services to this day, the sum of forty dollars per month, in full of all allowances; and that the postmaster general settle his accounts accordingly:

That the postmaster general take order for procuring and appointing a suitable person, on the best terms he can, to serve as postmaster to the main army, and report to Congress.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *On this day according to the indorsement a letter of 14th from Ebenezer Hazard, Postmaster General, was acted upon, so much as related to a dead letter being referred to Mr. J[oseph] Jones, Mr. [Elias] Boudinot and Mr. [Ezekiel] Cornell; the last paragraph Being referred to the Secretary at War. It is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 93.*

<sup>43</sup> *This report, in the writing of Ezekiel Cornell, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 19, I, folio 67.*

**MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 1782.**

The committee, consisting of Mr. J[oseph] Jones, Mr. [Elias] Boudinot, Mr. [Ezekiel] Cornell, to whom was referred a letter of 14 instant from E. Hazard, inspector of dead letters, accompanied with two letters directed to Arthur Lee, esq. made report; Whereupon,

The Committee to whom were referred part of the letter of Eben. Hazard of the 14th of this month respecting dead letters, with the inclosures report,

That it appears to your Committee the packet of letters directed to Arthur Lee Esq. was advertised agreeably to the rules of the Post office by Peter Baynton Comptroller, in the Pennsylvania Packet of October the 11th 1781. That Mr Lee previous to the advertisement was informed of the said letter, and refused to pay the postage saying, "he imagined it was a duplicate of what he had already received."

That the Comptroller aforesaid did on the 14[th] of this month deliver the said Packet, as a dead letter to Eben. Hazard for his inspection. Whereupon the Committee are of opinion,

Resolved, That Ebenezer Hazard, in transmitting the packet of letters directed to Arthur Lee, esq. to the President of Congress, for the information of this body, hath done his duty:

Ordered, That the said packet be referred to the Superintendant of finance.<sup>44</sup>

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Congress proceeded to the election of a postmaster general; and, the ballots being taken, Mr. Ebenezer Hazard was elected, having been previously nominated by Mr. [Roger] Sherman: Mr. James Bryson was elected assistant or clerk to the postmaster general, having been previously nominated by Mr. [Abraham] Clark.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1782.**

Also, a letter of January 31 from Ebenezer Hazard, accepting the office of Postmaster General. It is in No. 61, folio 101.

Also, a letter of January 31, from James Bryson, accepting appointment as assistant or clerk to the Postmaster General. It is in No. 78, IV, folio 295.

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<sup>44</sup> *This report, in the writing of Joseph Jones, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 19, III, folio 77.*

### **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1782**

On this day was read, according to the indorsement, a memorial of John Durham Alvey, postmaster for the headquarters of the army, dated Philadelphia, February 6. It was referred to Mr. [Ezekiel] Cornell, Mr. [Joseph] Montgomery and Mr. [Abraham] Clark. It is in No. 41, I, folio 75.

### **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1782.**

The committee, consisting of Mr. [Ezekiel] Cornell, Mr. [Joseph] Montgomery, and Mr. [Abraham] Clark, to whom was referred a memorial of John Durham Alvey, made report; Whereupon,

Resolved, That John Durham Alvey, postmaster to the main army, be allowed for his past services to this day, the sum of forty dollars per month, in full of all allowances; and that the postmaster general settle his accounts accordingly: That the postmaster general take order for procuring and appointing a suitable person, on the best terms he can, to serve as postmaster to the main army, and report to Congress.<sup>45</sup>

### **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1782**

On motion of Mr. [Elias] Boudinot, seconded by Mr. [Abraham] Clark, Ordered, That the resolution of the 19, respecting the pay of John Durham Alvey, be re-considered:

Resolved, That John Durham Alvey, postmaster to the main army, be allowed for his past services to this day, the sum of forty dollars per month in full of all allowances, except the rations of forage and provisions received by him; and that the postmaster general settle his accounts accordingly.

### **FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 1782**

On this day, according to the indorsement, a letter of February 27 from Ebenezer Hazard, Postmaster General, was read and referred to Mr. [Joseph] Montgomery, Mr. [Samuel] Osgood and Mr. [Thomas] Bee. It is in the Papers of the Continental Congress No. 61, folio 105.

### **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:

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<sup>45</sup> *This report, in the writing of Ezekiel Cornell, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 19, I, folio 67.*

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.<sup>46</sup>

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.

That it shall be the duty of the Post Master General to superintend the whole Department of the Post office; to appoint July 26, 1775. such and so many Deputies (for whose fidelity in office he shall be accountable) as to him may seem proper and necessary, Oct 19, 1781. 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 Oct. 19, 1781. 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 July 26, 1775. 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.

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 Dec. 12, 1780. 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.

That there be an Inspector of Dead Letters, who shall be under oath for the faithful and impartial Discharge of the Oct. 17, 1777. 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--

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<sup>46</sup> *This report, in the writing of Joseph Montgomery, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 19, I, folio 69.*

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.

That, Whereas it is necessary for the regular and Aug. 8, 1776. Speedy Conveyance of Letters and Intelligence, that Aug. 30, 1776. the business of the Post Office should be diligently attended, which cannot be if the persons employed in it are liable to the performance of such public services as are incompatible May 12, 1777. 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.

That, the Post Master General shall annually pay to the Treasurer of the United States the Profits of the Post Office; and July 26, 1776. if the necessary expences of this Establishment should exceed the Produce of it, the Deficiency shall be paid by 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 Nov. 5, 1776. upon the Post Road, for which he shall receive Pay, 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 Nov. 5, 1776. Ferries in preference to every other person, and immediately upon application for that purpose, or as soon after as is possible.

That to avoid danger from Enemies the Post go not out of his regular and usual course in order to pass by Head Quarters; Oct. 17, 1777. 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.

That all Masters of vessels having Commission from the United States, shall immediately upon their arrival at any May 5, 1780. 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.

That the price to be paid for the Postage of Letters Oct. 19, 1781. be the same as at the Commencement of the present War.

That the Salary of the Pest Master General be 1250 Dollars per annum, Oct. 19, 1781. and that of his assistant or clerk 800 Dollars per annum.

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 Nov. 8, 1775. 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.

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 of 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.<sup>47</sup>

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 1782**

On the report of a committee, consisting of Mr. [Theodorick] Bland, Mr. [Thomas] McKean, and Mr. [Turbett] Wright, to whom was referred a letter of 17 from E. Hazard, postmaster general, giving information that the southern post was robbed of his mail, on Sunday the 16, within five miles of Harford, in the State of Maryland:

Resolved, That the executives of the States of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland, be, and they are hereby requested to pursue the most likely measures, by offering proper rewards, at the expence of the United States, and otherwise, for recovering the mail, and bringing the robbers to due punishment.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *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.*

<sup>48</sup> *Hazard's letter is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 113. The report, in the writing of James Madison, is on folio 507.*

## TUESDAY, JULY 2, 1782

For the report of the committee on the Post Office Department, see post September 5; and on the Department of Foreign Affairs, September 18.]

## FRIDAY, JULY 12, 1782

War Office, July 12, 1782.

On Governor Livingston's letter to Your Excellency, referred to me, I beg leave to observe that the information of the mail being robbed arrives too late to give any probable hopes of success, should we attempt to recover it. Measures may be taken to prevent similar accidents in future, and for this purpose I beg leave to submit to the consideration of Congress the propriety of employing, at this inactive stage of the campaign, escorts of dragoons to attend the several post-riders; stationary detachments may be fixed at the different stages, at convenient distances, and a number of light-horse may be quartered in this city, who may be used occasionally by the Post Master General to carry public dispatches.<sup>49</sup>

Motion of Mr. Silas Condict. Referred to Mr. John Morin Scott, Mr. Abraham Clark, Mr. Samuel John Atlee.

That the Secretary at War be directed to furnish a guard of dragoons for the more safely conveying the public mail from the post office in Philadelphia to the post office at Norristown.<sup>50</sup>

## THURSDAY, JULY 18, 1782

On motion of Mr. [David] Ramsay, seconded by Mr. [John] Witherspoon, Resolved, That the Postmaster General take the most speedy and effectual methods to apprehend the robbers of the public mail, and that he shall be reimbursed by these United States any sums of money, not exceeding fifty guineas two hundred and thirty-three dollars and one-third, which he shall bona fide expend on this business.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 513. Committee Book No. 186 shows that it was referred, on the same day, to Mr. [John Morin] Scott, Mr. [Abraham] Clark, and Mr. [Samuel John] Atlee. The letter from Governor Livingston, dated July 11, is in No. 68, folio 595, and, according to Committee Book No. 186, was referred to the Secretary of War on the 12th.*

<sup>50</sup> *This motion, in the writing of Silas Condict, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 509. According to the indorsement it was made on this day. On this day, according to the indorsement, was read a memorial of Arthur Lee, and referred to Mr. [John] Witherspoon, Mr. [John] Lowell and Mr. [Arthur] Middleton. It is in No. 41, V, folio 281.*

<sup>51</sup> *This resolution, in the writing of David Ramsay, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, II, folio 193. It was entered only in the manuscript Secret, (Domestic) Journal No. 8, A.*

## FRIDAY, JULY 19, 1782

The committee, consisting of Mr. [John Morin] Scott, Mr. [Abraham] Clark, and Mr. [Samuel John] Atlee, to whom was referred an ordinance relative to the Post Office, reported the draught of an ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America, which was read the first time:

The Committee to whom were referred the letter of the Secretary at War of the 12th instant concerning the measures necessary to prevent future robberies of the Mail, and a motion of Mr. Condict on the same subject report that they are of opinion that the escorting of the Post Riders by Dragoons, and the posting of others in this city to serve as special expresses will not only be attended with too great an expence but will probably require the greatest part of a Regiment of horse who by being divided into small detachments and put out of the course of discipline and military duty will be greatly injured and disqualified for the proper service for which they were raised. They therefore are of opinion that instead of employing dragoons on that business the Postmaster General and his deputies should be authorized to hire occasional expresses for carrying the public despatches, and such private letters as may from time to time be in the post offices, which not being confined to fixed days, nor obliged to travel the usual post roads would more easily elude the vigilance of the enemy than the stated posts. They have therefore accordingly inserted a clause for that purpose in the draft of an ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America which they herewith Report.<sup>52</sup>

## TUESDAY, JULY 23, 1782

Charles Thomson's Notes of Debates

[July 22-23, 1782]

1782. Monday, July 22. The reports of the Com[mittee] on a report of the Superintendent of Finances relative to his stopping the Drawing of bills for interest which was an order of the day taken up and debated for some time and postponed.(1)

The report of the Com[mittee] on the hospital debated and recommitted.(2)

Tuesday, July 23rd. The ordinance for regulating the Post office under debate on the second reading, a great part recommitted.(3)

MS not found; reprinted from NYHS Collections, 11 (1879): 63.

1 This debate is not mentioned in the journals, but the following information is preserved in Thomson's endorsement on the committee report in PCC. "Report of Comee, Mr

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<sup>52</sup> *This report, in the writing of John Morin Scott, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 507. See ante, July 12, and post, October 18.*

Rutledge, Mr Lee, Mr Clarke, On a report of superintendt. of finance July 1. 1782 relative to the stopping of drawing of bills for interest. Delivered July 18. 1782. Entd. Read. Monday 22 assigned. 22. taken, debated and postpd. Aug 5. 1782 Referred to the grand Comee." See PCC, item 19, 4:361-62;JCC, 22:404-8, 447-48; and James Madison to Edmund Randolph, July 2, 1782, note 5.

2 Although this debate is not recorded in the journals, the text of the report that was debated and the resolves adopted the following day in consequence of its recommitment and revision can be found in JCC,22:408-12; and PCC, item 22, fols.69-78, 85.

3 For this post office ordinance, which received a second reading on October 2 and was adopted October 18, see JCC, 23:632, 669-78. It had its origin in a letter of February 27, 1782, from postmaster Ebenezer Hazard, who had suggested that because there was such a "Multiplicity of Acts relating to the Post Office, and their being so much scattered throughout the Journals,... whether it may not be expedient to appoint a Committee to revise the Acts and Resolutions now in Force, and reduce them... into one Ordinance." See item 59,3:331-47,381-410, item 61, fols. 105-8. Hazard had been elected postmaster general to succeed Richard Bache on January 28, 1782. JCC, 22:60.

#### **THURSDAY, JULY 25, 1782**

On motion of Mr. [Arthur] Lee, seconded by Mr. [Abraham] Clark,

Resolved, That the postmaster general be, and he is hereby, directed to use his discretion in so varying the time of setting out of the post-riders and their routes, from time to time, as to elude the attempts of the enemy to take the mail.

#### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 1782**

On the report of a committee, consisting of Mr. [John] Rutledge, Mr. [Joseph] Montgomery and Mr. [Samuel] Osgood, appointed to confer with the Superintendant of finance respecting the providing packets:

The Committee do report, That the ship Washington may be bought on reasonable and advantageous terms, and is, as your Committee are well informed, a swift sailing vessel fit for a Packet to and from Europe. They therefore recommend, that the Superintendant of Finance be directed to take order for purchasing and employing her for that purpose.<sup>53</sup>

Resolved, That the Superintendant of finance be directed to take order for purchasing and employing the ship Washington for the purpose of a packet to and from Europe.

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<sup>53</sup> *This report, in the writing of John Rutledge, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 26, folio 343.*

## **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1782**

On motion of Mr. [David] Ramsay, seconded by Mr. Izard [William] Few, Whereas it is expedient and at the present time practicable to extend the benefits of the Post Office through North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, in which States for some time past the regular line of communication has been interrupted by the invasion of the enemy, It is therefore

Resolved, That the Post Master General be and he is hereby directed to reestablish Post Offices through the above mentioned states and it is further

Resolved, That the reasonable expences of the postmaster general, or of some trusty person in his department appointed by him, in travelling to and from Georgia on the business of the Post Office, shall be defrayed by the United States.<sup>54</sup>

## **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1782**

The committee, consisting of Mr. [John Taylor] Gilman, Mr. [David] Ramsay, Mr. [Silas] Condict, Mr. [Thomas] Smith, and Mr. [Eliphalet] Dyer, appointed pursuant to the resolution of the 17 June, 1782, to enquire fully into the department of the Post Office, and to report the result of their enquiries, report as follows:

"That Mr. Hazard has held the office of Postmaster General for six months previous to the first day of August last, in which time he has received eight hundred dollars by order of the Superintendant of Finance to defray extraordinary expences of printing Post Office books, procuring portmanteaus, &c. which he found to be wanting when he came into office. That he has drawn out his accounts quarterly and informs that the one ending the first day of May last was delivered to the Comptroller of Accounts on the second day of that month, and as he understands has been passed upon and is now lodged with the Register; that as the printing was not finished there remained a balance upon that account due to the United States, which Mr. Hazard has transferred to their credit in his account ending the first day of August last. That upon examining this account the committee find that a balance appears to be due to the United States upon the transactions of the last six months, of 202 39/90 dollars, which the Postmaster General thinks will remain after defraying all the charges of the Department, exclusive of the extraordinary expences of printing Post Office books, &c. since his appointment, including the officers' salaries, but as several of his deputies' accounts have not yet come in, this cannot be exactly ascertained; that there is a further sum of 1941/3 continental paper dollars of the old emissions and 44 dollars emitted pursuant to the resolution of March 18, 1780, in the hands of the Postmaster General, which he has received for balances due upon accounts prior to his appointment." The committee farther report that "from the information given them by Mr. Hazard it appears that he has reduced the expence of post-riding so as to save at the rate of three hundred and fifty pounds Pennsylvania currency per annum; and

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<sup>54</sup> *This motion, in the writing of David Ramsay, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, I, folio 371.*

that he has directed the establishment of posts from Petersburg in Virginia to Edenton in North Carolina upon a plan which will prevent any expence to the United States for those posts at least for one year, and he expects soon to set posts a going from thence to Newbern upon a similar plan."<sup>55</sup>

### **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1782**

The ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America, being read a second time, and debated by paragraphs,

Ordered, That Monday next be assigned for the third reading.

Letters of Delegates to Congress: Volume 19 August 1, 1782 - March 11, 1783

Connecticut Delegates to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Philada. Octor 8th 1782

We have to apologize for not writing by Mr Brown when he went last from this Place that he went out of Town sooner than was expected & no Letter was Prepared.

The Journals of Congress since May last are not Printed. As soon as Done they will be forwarded as usual.

Congress have at Length directed the same Commissioners who are appointed to settle the Accounts of the several States with the Continent, to Receive, Count and Destroy the Continental Bills Collected in the several States.(1)

The Estimates of Expence for the Service of the Year 1783 are Still in Agitation and will soon be Completed. Two Millions and Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars will be Requested of the States in such Proportion as Congress shall determine, and will doubtless be in the Same Proportion as was lately assigned in the Requisition of twelve Hundred Thousand Dollars for Payment of the Interest of bor[ro]wed Monies, which is in our Opinion too high on our State. The amout to be Raised by the States will be 4,000,000.(2)

It is uncertain whether the Judges appointed to Try the Cause between Connecticut and Pennsylvania will meet; as no answer is yet Recd from the Gentlemen at a Distance, a few Days Time will Determine it but we must be Ready at all Events on our Part.

The Talks about Peace Subsidies and all Overtures on that Subject on the Part of Great Britain appear to be Insidious. Congress have Resolved not to Listen to any Proposals of

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<sup>55</sup> A copy of this report is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress, Reports of Committees, No. 188, folio 2*. The report, in the writing of John Taylor Gilman, is in No. 61, 517.

a Separate Peace or Truce but will strictly Adhere to their Alliance with France, whose Court are greatly Please to see the Same Done by each Particular State.

The Ordinance for Regulating the General Post Office has been Considered and Lies for a third Reading.(3)

A Loan of five Millions of Guilders is Negotiating in Holland, one Million of which was Raised in July last and Subscriptions going on slowly.

The Cessions of the Western Lands as made to the United States by Connecticut, New York and Virginia are not in Terms agreeable to a Majority in Congress. The States Southward of Maryland are Very Fond of their western Charter-Territories and the States which have no such Territory Challenge an Equitable Share in those Lands and Chuse to Receive an Unconditional Cession without any Reserve. The State of Rhode Island still neglects to grant the Duty of five Per Cent on Importations &c by which the whole Measure is Impeded. Thus Every State may in her Turn lay her Fatal Liberum Veto upon the Doings of all the Rest in the Most Essential Concerns of General Finance. Every Member of the Diet of Poland enjoyed the same Liberty untill they became an easy Prey to their Neighbours. The King of Sweeden has by his Ambassador at Paris Proposed a Treaty of Amity & Commerce with the United States of America and desires it may be Remembered that he is the first King Who Unsolicited made us such an Offer. His Sweedish Majesty Expresses himself in flattering Terms upon the Satisfaction he Should have in Negotiating this Business with Dr Franklin. A Commision & Instructions for that Purpose are gone to our Ministers in Europe.

As our expected Term in Congress is nearly Expired we hope some Gentlemen will come on and take their Seats by the first Monday of Novr next at which Time the State will be otherwise Unrepresented.(4)

We are with the greatest Respect Your Excellencys most H[ble] Sevts.

Elipht D[yer]

Benj Hunting[ton]

RC (Ct: Jonathan Trumbull, Sr., Papers). Written by Huntington and signed by Huntington and Dyer.

1 JCC, 23:590-91.

2 See Dyer to Trumbull, October 19, 1782, notes 4 and 5.

3 The ordinance for administering the post office had been read for a second time on October 2 and was adopted by Congress on October 18. JCC, 23:632, 669-79.

4 Oliver Ellsworth and Oliver Wolcott did not arrive to take their seats in Congress until December 20. However, as Dyer's credentials were being extended by the Connecticut Assembly at this very moment, the state was not left unrepresented when the new Congress convened on November 4, although it was a few days later when Huntington returned home and Dyer departed for the Connecticut-Pennsylvania trial at Trenton. See JCC, 23:707-8, 714, 717, 822-23; and Dyer to Trumbull, November 8, 1782.

## **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1782**

The ordinance for regulating the Post Office was read a third time, and passed as follows:<sup>56</sup>

### **AN ORDINANCE FOR REGULATING THE POST OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.<sup>57</sup>**

Whereas the communication of intelligence with regularity and despatch, from one part to another of these United States, is essentially requisite to the safety as well as the commercial interest thereof; and the United States in Congress assembled, being, by the Articles of Confederation, vested with the sole and exclusive right and power of establishing and regulating post offices throughout all these United States: and whereas it is become necessary to revise the several regulations heretofore made relating to the Post Office, and reduce them to one act:

Be it therefore ordained by the United States in Congress assembled, and it is hereby ordained by the authority of the same, that a continued communication of posts throughout these United States, shall be established and maintained by and under the direction of the Postmaster General of these United States, to extend to and from the State of New Hampshire and the State of Georgia inclusive,<sup>1</sup> and to and from such other parts of these United States, as from time to time, he shall judge necessary, or Congress shall direct.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the Postmaster General for the time being, shall, from time to time, superintend and direct the Post Office in all its various departments and services throughout the extent aforesaid, agreeably to the rules and regulations contained in this ordinance; and shall have full power and authority to appoint a clerk or assistant to himself, and such and so many deputy postmasters as he shall think proper, for whose fidelity he shall be accountable; each of whom shall reside at such place as the Postmaster General shall judge best suited to maintain a due and regular transportation and exchange of mails. And the said Postmaster General shall be, and hereby is authorised to allow, from time to time, to his said deputies respectively, such commissions on the monies to arise from postage in their respective departments, as

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<sup>56</sup> *The ordinance was entered in the Journal by George Bond.*

<sup>57</sup> *A draft of the ordinance up to this point, in the writing of Joseph Montgomery, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress No. 59, III, folio 411.*

he shall think their respective services may merit, so as that the said commissions shall not in the whole exceed twenty per cent.

And shall, by himself or his said deputies respectively thereunto regularly authorised by him, from time to time, appoint the necessary post-riders, messengers and expresses, with such salaries and allowances as he or his said deputies respectively shall think meet.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the Postmaster General, his clerk or assistant, his deputies, and post and express-riders, and messengers, or either of them, shall<sup>58</sup> not knowingly or willingly open, detain, delay, secrete, embezzle or destroy, or cause, procure, permit or suffer to be opened, detained, delayed, secreted, embezzled or destroyed any letter or letters, packet or packets, or other despatch or despatches, which shall come into his power, hands or custody by reason of his employment in or relating to the Post Office, except by the consent of the person or persons by or to whom the same shall be delivered or directed, or by an express warrant under the hand of the President of the Congress of these United States, or in time of war, of the Commander in Chief of the armies of these United States, or of the commanding officer of a separate army in these United States, or of the chief executive officer of one of the said states, for that purpose, or except in such other cases wherein he shall be authorised so to do by this ordinance: (provided always, that no letter, flanked by any person authorised by this ordinance to frank the same, shall be opened by order of any military officer, or chief executive officer of either of the states.) And that the Postmaster General, his assistant, deputies, post and express-riders, and messengers, and each and every of them, shall, without delay, take and subscribe the following oath, to wit:

"I, A. B., do solemnly and sincerely swear, declare or affirm, (as the case may require) that I will well and faithfully do, execute, perform and fulfil every duty required of me, and abstain from every act and thing forbidden by a certain ordinance passed by the United States of America in Congress assembled, on the 18th day of October, 1782, entitled 'An ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America.'"

And be it further ordained<sup>59</sup> by the authority aforesaid, that if the Postmaster General shall be guilty of a breach of the said oath or affirmation or any part thereof, and be thereof convict, he shall forfeit and pay one thousand dollars, to be sued for and recovered in an action of debt, in the State where the offence shall be committed, by the treasurer of the United States for the time being: and if any postmaster, post-rider, or

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<sup>58</sup> *The following in the draft was struck out: without delay severally and respectively take and subscribe the following oath or affirmation, to wit: I, A. B. do solemnly sincerely swear declare or affirm, (as the case may require) and call God to witness that I will*

<sup>59</sup> *The following was struck out in the draft: by the authority aforesaid that if any person shall in any act, matter or thing whatsoever be guilty of a breach of the said oath or affirmation or any part thereof and be thereof convict, he shall be deemed forfeit and pay not exceeding one thousand dollars and adjudged guilty of wilful and corrupt perjury and incur and suffer such pains and penalties as by law are to be inflicted in cases of wilful and corrupt perjury, and be thereafter incapable of holding any office or place of trust or profit under these United States,*

other person employed in the Post Office Department, shall be guilty of a breach of the said oath or affirmation or any part thereof, and be thereof convict, each one so offending shall forfeit and pay three hundred dollars, to be sued for and recovered in an action of debt, in the State where the offence shall be committed, by the Postmaster General for the time being: all which forfeitures, when recovered and received, shall be accounted for by the persons recovering the same, and applied towards defraying the necessary expences of the Post Office: and every person employed in the Post Office Department, who shall be guilty of a breach of the said oath or affirmation shall, besides paying the above-mentioned forfeitures, be rendered incapable ever hereafter of holding any office or place of trust or profit under these United States: provided always, that the foregoing oath shall not be required of any special express or messenger, to be appointed at the request of any particular person or persons, in the manner herein after directed, unless the same shall be thought necessary by the Postmaster General; or his deputy who shall have appointed him; which oath shall, without delay, be made by the Postmaster General before the President of the Congress of these United States;<sup>60</sup> and by each of the said clerk or assistant, deputies and post-riders (except as is above provided with respect to special expresses and messengers) before the Postmaster General, or before any civil magistrate nominated by him for that purpose; all which persons are hereby respectively authorised to administer the said oath; and shall respectively make and sign certificates thereof: the certificate to be signed by the President, to be lodged in the office of the secretary of the Congress of these United States, and the other certificates respectively to be returned into the office of the Postmaster General; there to be kept as evidence of the several qualifications therein respectively certified.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the Postmaster General of these United States for the time being, and his deputy and deputies, thereunto by him sufficiently authorised, and his and their agents, post-riders, expresses and messengers respectively, and no other person whatsoever, shall have the receiving, taking up, ordering, despatching, sending post or with speed, carrying and delivering of any letters, packets or other despatches from any place within these United States<sup>61</sup> for hire, reward, or other profit or advantage for receiving, carrying or delivering such letters or packets

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<sup>60</sup> *The following words were struck out in the draft: who is hereby authorised to administer the same, and his certificate thereof signed by him be filed with their secretary.*

<sup>61</sup> *The following in the draft was struck out: or any foreign kingdom or country to any place within these United States where he shall have settled, post offices and posts or running messengers, except such letters and packets as shall respect goods sent by common known carriers or drivers of stage coaches or waggons, and which shall respectively be delivered with the goods such letters do concern without hire, reward or other profit or advantage for receiving or delivering such letters or packets respectively, and except also letters of merchants, masters or owners of any ships, barques or vessels of merchandise respecting any cargo or loading therein sent to be delivered by any such mater or other person employed by him for the purpose according to their respective directions, so as the same shall be thus delivered without any pay or other reward, advantage or profit for the carriage and delivery of the same, and except also any letter or packet to be sent and conveyed by any private person in his or her way of travel, journey or passage without any pay or other reward, advantage or profit for the carriage and delivery of the same, or by any messenger purposely sent for any private affair, or officially on public service.*

respectively; and any other person or persons presuming so to do shall forfeit and pay for every such offence, twenty dollars, to be sued for and recovered in an action of debt with costs of suit, by the Postmaster General or his deputy, in the State in which the offence shall be committed; and such sums as shall be thus recovered and received, shall be accounted for by the Postmaster General, and applied towards defraying the necessary expences of the Post Office. Provided nevertheless, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to extend to any messenger purposely sent on any private affair, and carrying letters or packets relating to such affair only; or to persons sent officially on public service from places where no Post Office is established. And provided also, that nothing herein contained shall in any manner affect any private cross post-rider that may be employed by any of the citizens of these United States with the consent of the Postmaster General or his deputy, until a public rider can be established on such cross road.<sup>62</sup>

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that if any person, not being a post or express rider, in the service of the general Post Office, shall carry any letters, packets, or other despatches, from one place to another, within these United States, on any of the post roads, to any place within these United States, for hire or reward, except in cases as is herein before excepted, or shall not, when bringing letters from beyond sea, for hire or reward, deliver the same at the Post Office, if any there be at the place of his or her arrival, he or she shall, in each of the before mentioned cases, forfeit and pay for every such offence twenty dollars, to be recovered by the Postmaster General or any of his deputies, in an action of debt, in the State wherein the offence shall have been committed, with costs of suit, and applied towards the expences of the post office, and be accounted for accordingly; and if such offence shall have been committed by any person holding a civil or military commission under these United States, he shall, on conviction thereof, forfeit his commission. And for every letter, packet or other despatch from beyond sea, which any person shall so deliver at the Post Office, he shall receive of the Postmaster, at the Post Office, for the delivery of the same, 1-90th of a dollar.<sup>63</sup>

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the Postmaster General shall cause the mail to be carried with all care and despatch, at least once in every week, to and from each of the stated post offices, and his deputies shall keep and transmit to him regular, particular, just and quarterly accounts of the incomes and expenditures of their respective offices; and from those and such other materials as shall be necessary for the purpose, the Postmaster General shall form and keep regular and just accounts of the incomes and expenditures of the general Post Office, which he shall annually deliver to the comptroller of accounts of these United States, attended with the quarterly accounts of each office, and vouchers for his examination and passing.<sup>64</sup>

And whereas it may be necessary for the Postmaster General, or his clerk or assistant occasionally to visit the several post offices in these United States or otherwise to travel for the performance of their respective duties of office, Be it therefore ordained by the

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<sup>62</sup> *This sentence is not in the draft.*

<sup>63</sup> *The draft has it 2/90ths of a dollar.*

<sup>64</sup> *The following was struck out from the draft:*

authority aforesaid that they shall in such case be severally and respectively allowed for the time of necessary absence from home on such business over and above their respective salariesdollars per day, in full for horse hire, travelling expences and all other charges and disbursements whatsoever during such visitation and travel as aforesaid and no more.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the Postmaster General and his deputies shall respectively regularly publish in some public newspaper of the State wherein their respective offices shall be a list of all letters which shall severally have remained in their respective offices by the space of three weeks and at the expiration of six months thereafter shall open and inspect such letters and shall carefully preserve the same with the papers therein respectively contained, insert in a book, to be kept for the purpose the date of every such letter and the name and place of direction on the same and publish such direction (purporting thereon if such is the case that the letter contains valuable inclosures or other matters of importance to the parties) in one of the public newspapers aforesaid and deliver such letter.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the Postmaster General's deputies respectively, shall regularly publish, at the expiration of each quarter, (if it can conveniently be done) in some newspaper of the State in which the respective offices shall be one of the most convenient public newspapers, for three successive weeks, a list of all letters at that time remaining in their office; and at the expiration of the subsequent quarter, shall send such of the letters so published as then remain, as dead letters to the general Post Office, where they shall be opened and inspected by the Postmaster General, who shall destroy such as contain no valuable enclosures, but carefully preserve them, with the papers therein respectively contained, and shall insert in a book, to be kept for that purpose, the date of such letter, and the name and place of direction on the same, together with a particular account of the enclosures contained therein; and at the expiration of each quarter the Postmaster General shall cause to be published, in one of the newspapers of the State in which the owners of such valuable papers are supposed to reside, (if a newspaper is printed in such State) else in the most convenient paper, an advertisement, informing that such papers are in his possession, and shall deliver such letter and enclosures to the person or persons to whom the same shall be directed, or his, her, or their order at the Post Office, he, she, or they first paying the postage for the same, at the rates from time to time established by these United States in Congress assembled, and the necessary expence of such publications as aforesaid; and in case of neglect to take up such letters, the necessary expence shall be charged to the United States.<sup>65</sup>

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid that if any person or persons being an enemy or enemies or a subject or subjects of any of these United States shall rob any post-rider, express or messenger belonging to the post office of any mail letter or other dispatch every such offender if an enemy shall on conviction thereof by a court martial suffer as a spy and if a subject of either of these United States shall if convicted by a due course of law in the State where the offense shall be committed suffer as a felon according to the law of such State.

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<sup>65</sup> *The following was struck out from the draft:*

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid that the stated post-riders shall not go out of their usual courses in order to pass at head quarters of the main Army or of any separate army or at any principal military post unless so directed by the Postmaster General. But when it shall become necessary or the same shall be required by the Commander in Chief or Commander of a separate army the postmaster nearest thereto shall hire a rider on the best terms he shall be able to carry the letters and other dispatches to and from thence and such post office and shall from time to time report to the Postmaster General his proceedings herein. And also that in every case of a robbery of the mail the Postmaster General, his clerk or assistant or any deputy postmaster shall and may advertise in any of the public newspapers of these United States and accordingly pay such reward as he shall judge proper, not exceeding for detecting, securing and bringing to punishment the offender or offenders.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the Postmaster General, and his deputies respectively shall, and they are hereby authorised, whenever the danger of robberies of the mail shall, in their respective judgments, render the same necessary, to hire occasional expresses for carrying the public despatches, and such private letters as, from time to time, shall be in the post-offices; who shall not be confined to fixed days, nor to travel the usual post roads, but shall, in those respects, be subject to the order and direction of the Postmaster General and his deputies respectively. And to the end that the expence of several expresses destined to the same place, at the same time, may be avoided, be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that all extraordinary expresses in the public service shall, if a Post Office be established at the place from which they shall severally take their departure, be hired by the Postmaster General or his deputy, and set out from and return to such Post Office, with the letters, packets and despatches to be carried by them respectively.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the postage of all letters, packets and despatches, to and from the different post offices within these United States, shall be the same as they were at the commencement of the present war with the addition of a sum not exceeding  $\frac{4}{90}$ th of a dollar upon every Letter, Packet or Dispatch which shall come into the Post Office from beyond seas [at the following rates, in pennyweights and grains of silver, estimating each pennyweight as at present, at  $\frac{5}{90}$ ths of a dollar, to wit: For any distance not exceeding sixty miles, one pennyweight eight grains; upwards of sixty, and not exceeding one hundred, two pennyweight; upwards of one hundred, and not exceeding two hundred, two pennyweight sixteen grains, and so on, 16 grains advance for every hundred miles; and for all single letters to or from Europe, by packet or despatch vessels, four pennyweight: the above rates to be doubled for double letters, trebled for treble letters, and a packet weighing an ounce, to be charged equal to four single letters, and in that proportion if of a greater weight: and to the foregoing rates shall be added a sum not exceeding  $\frac{4}{90}$ ths of a dollar upon every letter, packet or despatch which shall come into the Post Office from beyond sea, by any other conveyance than packets or despatch vessels;]<sup>66</sup> and every letter, packet and despatch, except dead letters,

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<sup>66</sup> *The part in brackets was not in the draft.*

may and shall be retained in the office where the same shall have arrived, which shall be nearest to the place of direction, until the postage thereon shall be paid.<sup>67</sup>

And be it ordained by the authority aforesaid, that it shall and may be lawful for the Postmaster General, or any of his deputies, to license every post-rider to carry any newspapers to and from any place or places within these United States, at such moderate rates as the Postmaster General shall establish, he rendering the post-riders accountable to the Postmaster General, or the respective deputy postmasters by whom they shall severally be employed, for such proportion of the moneys arising therefrom as the Postmaster General shall think proper, to be by him credited to these United States in his general account.<sup>68</sup>

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that in case the income of the Post Office shall, in any year, exceed the expences thereof, the Postmaster General shall<sup>69</sup> pay to the treasurer of the United States the surplus, until the sums of money heretofore advanced, or which shall be hereafter advanced, by the United States for the support of the general Post Office, with interest thereon at six per cent. per annum, shall be repaid, after which such surplus shall be appropriated and applied to the establishment of new post offices<sup>70</sup> and the support of packets, to render the Post Office Department as extensively useful as may be;<sup>71</sup> and if the necessary expences of that establishment shall exceed the profits arising from the Post Office, such excess, when properly ascertained, shall be paid on warrants of the Superintendent of finance, by the treasurer of the United States, to the Postmaster General, in quarterly payments, to enable him effectually to support the Post Office.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the salary of the Postmaster General shall be fifteen hundred dollars, and that of his clerk or assistant one thousand dollars, per annum.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that letters, packets, and despatches to and from the members and secretary of Congress, while actually attending Congress,

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<sup>67</sup> *The following in the draft was struck out: And whereas it will greatly tend to the communication of due information to the inhabitants of these United States to enable the transportation of public newspapers by the post-riders at a cheaper rate than the postage of letters, packets or other despatches.*

<sup>68</sup> *2 The following was struck out from the draft: And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid that no letter, packet or other despatch shall be opened or detained in any of the post offices of these United States, otherwise than is herein and hereby provided for.*

<sup>69</sup> *The following was struck out from the draft: shall carry the same to the credit of the United States in the next year's account, to serve as a ground for the abatement of the prices of postage in such manner as these United States shall direct.*

<sup>70</sup> *The draft said: "and roads."*

<sup>71</sup> *The following was struck out from the draft: [Nevertheless, should it appear to the Postmaster General that the interest of the United States requires the establishment of any particular offices or packets before the money heretofore advanced or which may be advanced shall be repaid as aforesaid, he is hereby authorised in such case to apply so much of the surplus as shall be necessary to that use.]*

to and from the Commander in Chief of the armies of these United States, or commander of a separate army<sup>72</sup>, to and from the heads of the departments of finance, of war, and of foreign affairs, of these United States, on public service,<sup>73</sup> and single letters directed to all officers of the line of the army in actual service shall pass and be carried free of postage.

And be it further ordained, that the postage of all letters to officers of the army, either in the line or staff departments in actual service (except on letters on public service from those whose letters and packets pass free of postage) shall on delivery thereof be charged to the officers respectively to whom directed, an account of which shall be collected and transmitted by the Postmaster General every six months to the Secretary at War for settlement, that single letters, directed to any officers of the line, in actual service, shall be free of postage.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that all former and other acts, ordinances and resolutions of these United States in Congress assembled, heretofore made relating to the Post Office, be, and the same, and each and every of them is and are hereby repealed and made void. Done, &c.<sup>74</sup>

The Committee of the Week [Mr. David Ramsay, Mr. Ralph Izard, Mr. John Taylor Gilman] on the memorial of Monsieur Lavahey complaining of injustice done him by the depreciation of the paper currency, report that it be referred to the Superintendent of Finance to report thereon.

On the memorial of Captain Schreiber praying for pay and an exchange they report that no relief can be given him without breaking in on established regulations, and injuring the public service as Congress (tho' extremely desirous of a general exchange) have resolved to make no more partial exchanges.<sup>75</sup>

### **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1782**

On this day, according to the indorsement, a letter of 22 from Ebenezer Hazard, Postmaster General, was read and referred to Mr. [James] Duane, Mr. [Elias] Boudinot and Mr. [Daniel] Carroll. It is in No. 61, folio 123.]

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<sup>72</sup> *The following was struck out from the draft: and from members of Congress to the governors or chief magistrates of the states which they represent, to and from the President of Congress, the Commander in Chief, all the officers of the armies of these United States while on duty.*

<sup>73</sup> *The following was struck out from the draft: and to and from any foreign minister residing at or near Congress.*

<sup>74</sup> *A copy of this ordinance, in the writing of George Bond and Benjamin Bankson, of the Secretary's office, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 59, III, folio 331 The draft, in the writing of John Morin Scott, is on folio 381. See ante July 19.*

<sup>75</sup> *This report, in the writing of David Ramsay, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 32, folio 409. The indorsement shows that it was passed on this day. Also, was read on this day a letter of the same date from Ebenezer Hazard, Postmaster General. It is in No. 61, folio 117.]*

#### **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1782**

The committee, consisting of Mr. [James] Duane, Mr. [Elias] Boudinot and Mr. [Daniel] Carroll, to whom was referred a letter of 22 from E. Hazard, postmaster general, brought in the draught of a "supplemental ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America;" which was read a first time, and to-morrow assigned for a second reading.

#### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1782**

The supplemental ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America, was read a second time, being debated by paragraphs, and some amendments made:

Ordered, That Monday next be assigned for the third reading.

#### **MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1782**

The supplemental ordinance for regulating the Post Office was read a third time, and passed as follows:

The Committee, consisting of Mr. [James] Duane, Mr. [Elias] Boudinot and Mr. [Daniel] Carroll, to whom was referred the letter from Ebenezer Hazard, Postmaster General, on the subject of the Ordinance passed for regulating the Post Office, present the following draft of an explanatory Ordinance for regulating the Post Office, to wit:

#### **AN EXPLANATORY A SUPPLEMENTAL ORDINANCE FOR REGULATING THE POST OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.**

Whereas, since the passing the ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America, it hath been represented that the allowance thereby made of commissions to a deputy postmaster, on the money only arising from the postage of letters, would in many instances be inadequate to the service, and that the provision that all the dead letters should be registered and preserved, will occasion great and useless trouble and expence; and no provision is made therein for the deputy postmaster with the main army; in order therefore to remedy the defects of the before-mentioned ordinance:

Be it ordained by the United States in Congress assembled, and it is hereby ordained by the authority of the same, that it shall and may be lawful for the Postmaster General for the time being, to allow to his respective deputies such commissions as he shall think their respective services may merit, not exceeding twenty per centum on the postage of all letters, making the same allowance for free letters as if they paid postage: and that instead of registering and preserving all dead letters, from time to time, remaining in the general Post Office, it shall be sufficient and the Postmaster General is only required to preserve such of them, the contents and enclosures of which may be valuable.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the act of the United States in Congress assembled, respecting the postmaster at head quarters of the army, passed on the 11th day of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, be, and the same is hereby revived and declared to be in full force. And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that it shall and may be lawful for the Postmaster General for the time being, to allow and pay to any informer, one moiety of the penalties which may be recovered upon his information, for offences against the 4th and 5th clauses of the before mentioned ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America. Done, &c.<sup>76</sup>

### **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1782 {Rev1}**

The committee, consisting of Mr. [David] Ramsay, Mr. [Abner] Nash and Mr. [Richard] Peters, to whom was referred a letter of 20 from the Secretary at War, reported the draught of a supplemental ordinance for regulating the Post Office, which was read a first time:

A Supplementary An Ordinance for amending an Ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America.

Whereas since passing the ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America and the supplement thereto, it hath been represented to the United States in Congress assembled that great inconveniences arise from the priviledge of franking letters not being extended to the several officers at the Heads of Departments in and attached to the Armies of the said United States, who have frequent occasions to correspond on the business of their respective Departments--

Be it ordained by the United States in Congress assembled, and it is hereby ordained by authority of the same, That all letters in public service to and from the Inspector General, Adjutant General and Quartermaster General of the Army of the United States, the Director General of the Hospitals of the said United States, the Chief Physician, the Commissary of Prisoners, the Judge Advocate and the Paymaster General of the said Army shall pass free of postage.

And be it farther ordained, by the authority aforesaid that the like priviledges be and they are hereby extended to the officers at the heads of the like Departments in any Separate Army of these United States.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that all sons having by virtue hereof the priviledge of Deposit with the Postmaster General or his Deputy at the place where the several offices and persons aforesaid shall or may respectively reside an impression of the seals with which their letters are usually sealed, and also their respective

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<sup>76</sup> *This ordinance, in the writing of James Duane, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 59, III, folio 377.]*

Signatures, and the letters shall be endorsed "on Public Business" and the whole of the Superscriptions written in the proper handwritings of the persons so as aforesaid priviledged who shall also sign their names on such Superscriptions to the End that comparison being made with their seals and signatures deposited as aforesaid all Counterfeits and Impositions be detected.

And be it farther ordained, by the authority aforesaid, That the Postmaster General shall once in every six months render an account to Congress of the franked letters passing thro' the different offices under his direction, and of the sums to which the postage would have amounted if the same had been charged.

And be it farther ordained by the authority aforesaid that so much of the ordinance of the eighteenth of October last which directs the Postmaster General or his Deputies to furnish extraordinary expresses be and the same is hereby repealed.

Done by the United States in Congress assembled theDay ofAnno Domini 1782 and in the Seventh year of our Independence.<sup>77</sup> 1

[Note 1: 1 This report, in the writing of Richard Peters, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 59, III, folio 369. The indorsement shows that Monday, December 2, was assigned for a second reading; that on December 2 it was recommitted; a new ordinance was reported December 4, read and "Friday next [December 6] assigned for the second reading."]

Ordered, That Monday next be assigned for the second reading.

#### **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1782 {Rev1}**

(The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution) [Elliot's Debates, Volume 5]

An ordinance, extending the privilege of franking letters to the heads of all the departments, was reported and taken up. Various ideas were thrown out on the subject at large; some contending for the extension proposed; some for a total abolition of the privilege, as well in members of Congress as in others; some for a limitation of the privilege to a definite number or weight of letters. Those who contended for a total abolition, represented the privilege as productive of abuses, as reducing the profits so low as to prevent the extension of the establishment throughout the United States, and as throwing, the whole burden of the establishment on the mercantile intercourse. On the other side it was contended, that, in case of an abolition, the delegates, or their constituents, would be taxed just in proportion to their distance from the seat of

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<sup>77</sup> *This report, in the writing of Richard Peters, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 59, III, folio 369. The indorsement shows that Monday, December 2, was assigned for a second reading; that on December 2 it was recommitted; a new ordinance was reported December 4, read and "Friday next [December 6] assigned for the second reading."*

Congress; which was neither just nor politic, considering the many other disadvantages which were inseparable from that distance; that as the correspondence of me delegates was the principal channel through which a general knowledge of public affairs was diffused, any abridgment of it would so far confine this advantage to the states within the neighborhood of Congress; and that, as the correspondence at present, however voluminous, did not exclude from the mail any private letters which would be subject to postage, and if postage was extended to letters now franked, the number and size of them would be essentially reduced, the revenue was not affected in the manner represented. The ordinance was disagreed to, and the subject recommitted, with instruction to the committee, giving them ample latitude for such report, as they should think fit.

#### **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1782 {Rev1}**

On motion of Mr. [Hugh] Williamson, seconded by Mr. [Daniel] Carroll: Whereas there is reason to suspect, that [as well the national character of the United States and the honor of Congress, as] the finances of the said states may be injured, and the public service greatly retarded, by some publications that have been made concerning the extent of our foreign loans foreign affairs of said states:

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to enquire into this subject, and report what steps they apprehend conceive are necessary to be taken thereon if they shall find that any are necessary.<sup>78</sup>

According to the order of the day, the ordinance for amending the ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States was read a second time; and the question being put, shall this ordinance be read a third time, passed was lost. Ordered, That a letter of 5 November, from the adjutant-general to the Secretary at War, be referred to a committee, and that the committee be instructed to consider the general subject of franks, in order to extend or restrain the privilege as they may find necessary.<sup>79</sup>

The the Priviledge of franking Letters be and the same is hereby extended to Inspector General, the Adjutant General, the Director of the Hospitals, the Quarter master General, the Commissary of Prisoners and the paymaster General of the Army of the U. S., and that the same Priviledge be and the same is hereby extended to the Officers of the Heads of the like departments in any separate army, Letters to and from whom on public

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<sup>78</sup> *This motion, in the writing of Hugh Williamson, except the part in brackets, which is in that of Elias Boudinot, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, I, folio 457. The indorsement shows that the committee was Mr. [Hugh] Williamson, Mr. [Daniel] Carroll, Mr. [James] Madison.*

<sup>79</sup> *The motion upon which the committee was appointed, in the writing of Hugh Williamson, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 59, III, folio 369. The Adjutant General's letter is in No. 149, II, folio 147. The committee, according to the indorsement, was Mr. [David] Ramsay, Mr. [Abner] Nash, Mr. [Richard] Peters. According to Committee Books Nos. 186 and 191, a report was delivered on December 10, and recommitted December 12. The following undated motion, in the writing of Hugh Williamson, is in No. 36, II, folio 85:*

Business shall of Postage shall have the Priviledge of franking Letters on public service to all officers in their respective Departments and that all letters to those officers first shove mentioned shall be free.]

#### **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1782 {Rev1}**

The Committee Consisting of Mr [David] Ramsay, Mr. [Abner] Nash and Mr [Richard] Peters, to whom was referred the Letter of the Secretary at War and a Letter from the Adjutant General on the Subject of postage of Letters, Report--

That in conformity to the principle long since established in the post office department of franking letters to and from the heads of departments on public Service this priviledge should be extended to the Adjutant General, the Inspector General, and Quartermaster General of the Army of the United States, the director of the Hospitals of the said United States, the physician, the Commissary of prisoners, the Judge Advocate and the Paymaster General of the said Army.--And that the like priviledges should be extended to the officers of the heads of the like departments, in any separate Army of the United States. If Congress approve of this they will please to order an ordinance to be brought in for that purpose. On the subject of restraining franks, your Committee are of opinion that it would be inexpedient to take away that priviledge from the persons who at present enjoy it, or to refuse it to those public officers recited in the first part of this Report.<sup>80</sup>

#### **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1782 {Rev1}**

The committee, consisting of Mr. [David] Ramsay, Mr. [Abner] Nash, and Mr. [Richard] Peters, to whom was re-committed the draught of a supplementary ordinance for regulating the Post Office, reported another draught, which was read a first time, and tomorrow assigned for the second reading.

The Committee consisting of Mr [David] Ramsay, Mr [Abner] Nash and Mr [Richard] Peters, to whom were referred sundry papers respecting the Post Office Department--report,

That in their opinion the privilege of franking letters should be extended to all letters on public service to and from the Inspector General, the Adjutant General, the Director of the Hospitals, the Quartermaster General, the Commissary General of Prisoners, and the Paymaster General, and also to and from the heads of the like departments in any separate army.

In order to prevent the multiplicity of franks becoming too burdensome to the public your Committees farther recommend that the allowance not exceeding twenty per cent on what

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<sup>80</sup> *This report, in the writing of David Ramsay, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 59, III, folio 365. The indorsement shows that it was read and recommitted on this day.*

would be the postage of free letters if they were charged be discontinued, and that in lieu thereof the public be charged with no farther Commissions on free letters, though they contain enclosures, than the officers of the Post Office department would be entitled to on the postage of the same number of single letters coming the same distance.

Your Committee further recommend, that that clause of the [ ordinance of] 18th of October last which directs the Postmaster General or his deputies to furnish extraordinary expresses be repealed.

If Congress approve of these Sentiments they will please to order a new ordinance for the above purposes.<sup>81</sup>

### **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1782 {Rev1}**

Congress resumed the consideration of the resolution under debate yesterday; and on the question to agree thereto, resolved in the affirmative.

A question being taken on the third resolution, resolved in the affirmative.

The supplementary ordinance for regulating the Post Office was read a third time, and passed as follows:

#### **AN ORDINANCE FOR AMENDING AN ORDINANCE FOR REGULATING THE POST OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

Whereas it hath been represented to Congress, since passing the ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America, that sundry alterations therein, and additions thereto, are necessary:

Be it ordained by the United States in Congress assembled, and it is hereby ordained by authority of the same, that the privilege of franking letters be, and the same is hereby, extended to the inspector general, the adjutant general, the judge advocate the director of the hospitals, the quartermaster general, the commissary of prisoners, and the paymaster general of the army of the United States; and that the same privilege be, and the same is hereby, extended to the officers at the heads of the like departments in any separate army and to the commissary of marine prisoners; all letters to and from whom, on public business, shall pass free of postage; and in order to prevent the multiplicity of franks becoming too burthensome to the public,

Be it ordained, and it is hereby ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the allowance, not exceeding twenty per cent. on what would be the postage of free letters if they were charged, be discontinued, and that the public be charged with no farther commissions on

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<sup>81</sup> *This report, in the writing of David Ramsay, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 59, III, folio 373. According to the indorsement, it was read on the 18th, and agreed to on this day, and "referred back to the committee to report an Ordinance conformable thereto.*

free letters, though they contain enclosures, than the officers of the Post Office would be entitled to on the postage of the same number of single letters coming the same distance:

And be it ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the clause in the ordinance of the 18th of October last, which directs the Postmaster General and his deputies to furnish extraordinary expresses be, and the same is hereby repealed. Done, &c.<sup>82</sup>

Resolved, That the quartermaster general furnish all extraordinary expresses when the service requires them, any ordinance or resolution of Congress to the contrary notwithstanding.

On motion of Mr. [John] Rutledge, seconded by Mr. [Thomas] Fitzsimmons, Resolved, That the Postmaster General be directed to continue the southern post to Savannah, in Georgia; and that the Superintendant of finance furnish the money necessary for that purpose.<sup>83</sup>

**FROM LETTERS OF DELEGATES TO CONGRESS:  
VOLUME 19, AUGUST 1, 1782 - MARCH 11, 1783**

North Carolina Delegates to Alexander Martin

Philadelphia January the 28th 1783

Sir,

After passing an ordinance for regulating the Post Office; the southern States have at length obtained a resolution of Congress "That the Postmaster general be directed To continue the Southern Post to Savannah in Georgia, and that the Superintendant of Finance furnish the money necessary for the purpose."<sup>84</sup> By our Confederation Congress is not permitted to raise a revenue out of the Profits of the Post Office. But that office should maintain itself in the time of Peace, it doubtless will; with the addition of many by-Posts. At present, it would pay its own expence from Boston to Petersburg. But the further continuation will prove a tax on the Treasury of near two thirds of the expence of Post riders. Under the British Government for similar reasons the post did not ride on the Southern roads more than once a fortnight. He is now ordered to ride once a week: and if we have industry & wisdom enough to promote the trade of our Country, it is hoped that our Commercial correspondence may support the Post in a few Years at the present rates paid for Letters. In the meanwhile, as we have observed, the post will be a Tax on the Treasury & though we have been attentive as in duty bound to promote the Post, it is equally our duty to express our fears, that the Post may soon be discontinued, unless

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<sup>82</sup> *This ordinance, in the writing of Richard Peters, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 59, III, folio 363.*

<sup>83</sup> *This motion, in the writing of John Rutledge, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, I, folio 473.*

<sup>84</sup> *For these two December 24 congressional decisions, see JCC, 23:830-31.*

some attention is had in our State to regulating, both the ferries & the post road. In order to accommodate the large trading Towns it is necessary that the Post should cross the broad ferry at Edenton, we presume that the broad ferries near Bath & New Bern may readily be shuned, by crossing at Washington. The causway at Wilmington is said at present to be absolutely impracticable. We presume that Government will think proper to interfere in this matter and cause the Bridges & roads to be properly repaired. With respect to the expence of ferries, as far as it relates to individuals, it is not our duty to make any remarks; but we hope that the County Courts will enable the Post to Pass at the antient Peace price, and if the Courts have at Present no such power, we flatter ourselves that the General Assembly will give them such Power; or will take the necessary steps on the subject. For, at a time when Letters are carried & delivered at the antient Peace price; which is the case at present, the public have a right to expect that the Post shall be enabled to travel at the antient Price. It is not safe or just that the Public service should suffer by the arbitrary taxation of individuals. If the post should suffer or should be impeded by the neglect of Government--he doubtless must change his rout or be absolutely discontinued.

We have the Honor to be &c,

Benjamin Hawkins

Hu Williamson

Tr (Nc-Ar: Governors' Letterbooks).

### **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1783**

The Committee [Mr. Hugh Williamson, Mr. John Montgomery, Mr. Philemon Dickinson, Mr. Eliphalet Dyer and Mr. Silas Condiot] to whom was refer'd the letter of the Post Master respecting a guard for the mail between Morris Town and Fishkill beg leave to submit the following Report,

That when it shall appear by representations of the Commander in Chief Post master general or otherwise that the public mail is in danger from the Enemy, Congress will take the necessary measures for appointing a sufficient guard.<sup>85</sup>

### **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1783**

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<sup>85</sup> *This report, in the writing of Hugh Williamson, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 139. The letter of Ebenezer Hazard, Post Master General, dated February 3, is in folio 135. The indorsement says it was read February 4. This report was probably presented this day. The committee appointment is entered in Committee Book No. 186, under date of February 4, but there is no record there of the report.*

On this day, as the indorsement shows, was read a letter of Ebenezer Hazard dated Philadelphia, February 7, 1783, relative to a letter taken up at the post office by a person to whom it did not belong, and referred to Mr. [John] Rutledge, Mr. [James] Wilson and Mr. [Eliphalet] Dyer. It is in No. 61, folio 141. See post February 14. Committee Book No. 186 records the committee appointment, hut not the report.

### **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1783**

The committee, consisting of Mr. [Hugh] Williamson, Mr. [Eliphalet] Dyer and Mr. [Silas] Condict, to whom was referred a letter of 18 from the Secretary for Foreign affairs, made a report; Whereupon,

The Committee to whom was referred a letter from the Secty. for foreign affairs respecting the franking of letters observe that by the ordinance for regulating the Post office dated October 14th. 1782, it is provided, that all letters on public service to the Heads of the Departments of Finance of War and of foreign affairs shall pass and be carried FREE of postage. Those letters however which include their private correspondence are not declared to be free. But as the rank of those officers must inevitably expose them to be troubled with many letters, which may not properly belong to the business of their Departments, and as many letters on public service may not be properly endorsed your Committee presume, that the Postmaster General or his assistant will deliver all letters directed to the Heads of Departments of Finance of War and of foreign affairs as if they were marked on public Service, leaving it to them to account for such letters as they may find are not free according to the Spirit of the ordinance. With respect to letters from the Heads of those Departments, the Ordinance also provides that they shall be free, provided they are on public Service of which the writers alone can judge. Your Committee therefore presume that it is indifferent whether the officers referred to endorse their letters with the words Public Service or with the word Free, their name being subscribed, as it cannot be supposed that they would declare letters to be free which ought to be charged. The Postmaster General or his assistant should therefore pass letters free, which are marked in either manner. On the whole your committee beg leave to report; that it is not necessary at present to make any alteration in the Ordinance for regulating the Post Office.<sup>86</sup>

Resolved, That all letters to and from the heads of departments, on public service, are free, and ought not to be detained for want of the words On public service, endorsed.

### **FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 1783**

On the report of a committee, consisting of Mr. [Hugh] Williamson, Mr. [Eliphalet] Dyer, Mr. [Silas] Condict, and Mr. [John] Montgomery, to whom was referred a letter of March 5, from the post-master general:

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<sup>86</sup> *This report, in the writing of Hugh Williamson, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 25, II, folio 183.*

Congress being informed by the Postmaster General that Mr. Durham Alvey late postmaster in the main army has resigned

Resolved, That the postmaster general be, and he is hereby authorised, from time to time, to appoint a deputy to attend the main army, who shall be entitled to draw provisions not exceeding two rations a day, and to such other salary reward as may be stipulated by the pay postmaster general, to be paid as heretofore by the paymaster general, upon a warrant from the Commander in Chief, it being provided that the amount of such rations and pay shall not exceed the allowance which was made to such officer by an act of Congress, dated the 11th of March, 1782; such pay to commence from the 10th of March last, when Mr. Alvey, late postmaster with the main army, resigned.<sup>87</sup>

### **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 1783**

[On the report of a committee, consisting of Mr. [Hugh] Williamson, Mr. [Eliphalet] Dyer and Mr. [Silas] Condict, to whom was referred a letter of the 22d from the Superintendent of finance, together with a memorial of J. D. Alvey: Resolved, That the Comptroller be directed to settle the accounts of Mr. John Durham Alvey, for money he is engaged to pay to certain post-riders whom he was authorised to hire at headquarters; and that the Postmaster General be directed immediately to pay Mr. Alvey the balance due on those accounts:

That the Postmaster General be also directed to pay to Mr. Alvey the balance due him for pay, as Postmaster at Headquarters, as soon as the revenue of the Post Office will admit of such disbursements, with the interest of six per cent. from the time when this account shall be settled.<sup>88</sup>

### **MONDAY, MAY 5, 1783**

The Committee consisting of Mr. [Hugh] Williamson, Mr. [Eliphalet] Dyer and Mr. [Silas] Condict who were appointed to enquire fully in the proceedings of the Department of the Post Office beg leave to report.

That they have made very particular enquiries into the conduct of the Post Office and have the satisfaction to find that the duties of that office are discharged with the utmost industry and oeconomy and with great attention at the same time to the public convenience.

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<sup>87</sup> *This report, in the writing of Hugh Williamson, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 523. The indorsement shows that it was delivered April 1, read and entered. The Postmaster General's letter is on folio 145.*

<sup>88</sup> *This report, in the writing of Hugh Williamson, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 19, I, folios 71, 73. The letter of the Superintendent of Finance is in No. 137, II, folio 343.]*

Having examined the accounts of the Postmaster General they find that on the first of August 1782 there had been a balance in his hands of 202 39/90 Dollars beside a small sum in paper money and that on the first of January 1783 there was a balance in his hands of 653 88/90 Dolls.<sup>89</sup>

#### **FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 1783**

A letter, of 25, from Joseph Bullock, one of the late managers of the lottery, was read, stating that, among the dead letters in the hands of the postmaster general, are several packets containing tickets and letters; that the lottery accounts being now in the hands of the public auditors, those vouchers are absolutely necessary in the settlement of same; Whereupon, Ordered, That the packets aforesaid be delivered: free the said J. Bullock.<sup>90</sup>

#### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1783**

On this day, according to the indorsement, was read a letter of the 14th from Eben Hazard, Post Master General, concerning packets from England. It is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 151.

#### **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1783**

On motion of Mr. [William] Ellery, seconded by Mr. [Hugh] Williamson, Ordered, That a committee be appointed to the postmaster general enquire into the circumstances of the mail being stolen out of the post office in Princeton, on last Thursday evening, and make report thereof to Congress.<sup>91</sup>

#### **FROM LETTERS OF DELEGATES TO CONGRESS: VOLUME 21, OCTOBER 1, 1783 - OCTOBER 31, 1784**

Elbridge Gerry to Abigail Adams

Princeton 6th Novr 1783

My dear Madam

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<sup>89</sup> This report, in the writing of Hugh Williamson, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 521. According to the indorsement it was delivered on this date, read and entered. It was entered in No. 188, the record of reports on the executive departments, and not in the Journal. See ante, January 6.

<sup>90</sup> *The letter is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 78, IV, folio 407.*

<sup>91</sup> *This motion, in the writing of William Ellery, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, II, folio 275.*

Since I had the Pleasure of addressing You<sup>92</sup>, nothing of Importance has occurred in the Concerns of our Friend excepting a Letter from Mr Jay, wherein he with great Candour & good Sense has endeavoured to do Justice to Mr Adams' Character, & recommended him as the most suitable person to represent the united States at the Court of London; declaring at the same Time in the most positive terms, that should the place be offered to himself, he would not accept it. I should be exceedingly happy on my own Account, but more particularly on yours, Madam, to see Mr Adams in America, because I am persuaded he would not only be in the Way of rendering at this Time essential Services to his Country, but also (by recovering his Health), to himself & Family. The perplexities of American politics, are neither pleasing nor salutary; much less so must there be, which are in the Center & subject to all the Subtleties & Intrigues of European Systems; but the probability is I think against his immediate return. The postmasters have either misconstrued or perverted the Design of the post office Ordinance, which provides that Letters to & from certain persons in publick office, on publick business shall be exempt from postage.<sup>93</sup> The Endorsement of such persons Names on their Letters is therefore sufficient to acquit the Receiver thereof from postage; but the postmasters have, as I am informed, in many Cases where the Members of Congress & the Commander in chief have not endorsed with the Words "on publick Business," had the assurance to take postage; not so much I apprehend to benefit the publick, as to save the 20 per Cent allowed to the postoffice,<sup>94</sup> but Measures are taken since the Receipt of your Letter to correct this Error, & I presume the Frank of our foreign Ministers will be admitted in Future by order of Congress. Doctor Lee & Mr Osgood join in their best respects to yourself & Family,

with Madam your sincere Friend & most obt hum servt

E Gerry

#### **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1783**

That the letters from the Post Master General, informing that the mail, the money and letters of consequence were recovered, lie on the table.

The letter of Ebenezer Hazard, Postmaster General, dated November 22, an affidavit of Joseph Parker, of November 15, and a letter from John Harrison, postmaster at Princeton, dated November 7, all relating to the robbery of the mail at Princeton, are in No. 61, folios 155--161. According to the indorsement, they were referred on this day to Mr. [David] Howell, Mr. [Elbridge] Gerry and Mr. [Eleazar] McComb; and the record in Committee Books No. 186 and No. 191 shows that a report was delivered January 2, 1784, and acted upon January 6.

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<sup>92</sup> See *Gerry to Abigail Adams, September 18, 1783*.

<sup>93</sup> For this October 18, 1782, *Post Office ordinance*, see *JCC*, 23:678.

<sup>94</sup> *Gerry is here referring to a provision incorporated in the "Supplemental Ordinance for Regulating the Post Office" adopted October 28, 1782. JCC, 23:688-89.*

### **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1783**

On motion of Mr. [Thomas] Jefferson; seconded by Mr. [David] Howell,

Resolved, That the postmaster general be, and he is hereby directed to give orders to his deputy, at the place where Congress is sitting, to furnish an extra post or posts whenever required by the President.

### **SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 1784.**

Mr. Jacob Read's motion, January 3d., 1784; Referred to the Postmaster General to report.

That the Postmaster be instructed to order the post riders who meet at Annapolis with the Northern and Southern Mails severally to remain a night at Annapolis in order to give the Members of Congress an opportunity to examine and answer their despatches by the returns of the post.<sup>95</sup>

### **TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 1784.**

The committee, consisting of Mr. [David] Howell, Mr. [Elbridge] Gerry and Mr. [Eleazer] McComb, to whom was referred a letter of 22 November, from the postmaster general, with sundry papers enclosed therein, respecting the robbery of the mail at Princeton, report the following state of facts: "That about nine o'clock in the evening of the 30th of October last, the mail for the eastward was closed and laid on the counter, in the post office, that the post-rider came into the office, and passed into a room adjoining, with the postmaster, leaving the mail on the counter, and a lighted candle near it, without any one in the office, the door leading into the street and the room adjoining being open; that under these circumstances some person entered the office at the front door, extinguished the candle and carried off the mail; that some days after the robbery of the mail, it was found in a meadow near Princetown, and returned to the general post-office; that the mail contained a large packet of notes, signed by Michael Hillegas, treasurer, and franked by the superintendant of finance and other valuable effects, none of which were missing; but that five or six letters were lost, and several franked by members of Congress were broke open. Upon which state of facts the committee conceive that the interests of individuals, the revenue of the post office, and the national honor, are intimately concerned in the safety and preservation of the public mails, and of the letters, packets and despatches committed to the post-office." Whereupon,

Resolved, That a copy [of the letters and papers referred to the committee, be transmitted to the supreme executive of the State of New Jersey, who are requested to order a strict

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<sup>95</sup> *This motion, in the writing of Jacob Read, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, II, folio 281. The indorsement states that it was made on this day and a copy sent to the Postmaster at Philadelphia.]*

enquiry into the conduct of John Harrison, postmaster at Princetown, and James Martin, post-rider, relative to the premises; to ascertain whether and how far they were culpable in the loss of the mail; to discover, if possible, the perpetrators of the robbery, and to transmit the result of such enquiry to Congress.]

Committed. 2nd. Resolved, That it be earnestly recommended to the Legislatures of the several States to enact adequate laws for the security of the public mails and of the letters, packets and despatches committed to the Post offices within their respective jurisdictions.

Agreed to Jany, 15. 3rd. Resolved, That the President issue a Proclamation offering a reward of 300 dollars to be paid out of the public Treasury and charged on the Revenue of the Post office to any person or persons who shall apprehend and secure in any of the goals in the United States the perpetrator or perpetrators of the aforesaid robbery, so that he or they may be thereof legally convicted, and brought to condign punishment, and promising the same reward, with an indemnity to any person, who being an accomplice shall give information and evidence whereby any principal offender or offenders shall be convicted as aforesaid.

[Resolved, That the postmaster general be directed to inform Congress, to whom the mail was delivered when found, and whose hands it passed through till lodged in the general post office; that he also be directed to give positive orders to the several postmasters, and post-riders, to take the most effectual care of the letters, packets, despatches and mails committed to them respectively, as any neglect or misconduct in that department will meet with no indulgence from Congress.]<sup>96</sup>

#### **THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 1784.**

On the report of the committee, to whom was referred the letter from the postmaster general, of the 22d of November, with the papers enclosed, respecting the robbery of the mail at Princeton,

Resolved, That the president issue a proclamation, offering a reward of three hundred dollars, to be paid out of the public treasury, and charged on the revenue of the post office, to any person or persons who shall apprehend and secure, in any of the goals in the United States, the perpetrator or perpetrators of the aforesaid robbery, so that he or they may be thereof legally convicted, and brought to condign punishment; and promising the same reward, with an indemnity, to any person who, being an accomplice,

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<sup>96</sup> *The report, in the writing of a clerk, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 19, III, folio 83. The parts in brackets was entered in the Journal by Henry Remsen, Jun. but the 2d and 3d resolves are in the report only and were not entered in the Journal. The Postmaster General's letter is in No. 61, folio 155.*

shall give information and evidence whereby any principal offender or offenders shall be convicted as aforesaid.<sup>97</sup>

**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 11, 1784.**

[Motion of Mr. David Howell. Referred to Mr. David Howell, Mr. Hugh Williamson and Mr. Jacob Read.]

Congress having received information that the mail from the southward has arrived here but twice for the last seven weeks and then only from Virginia, and that the mail from the eastward has arrived here but once for the last three weeks, notwithstanding travellers both on horseback and in carriages have passed on the post roads--

Resolved, That the postmaster general be directed to inquire into and report to Congress the reasons of the aforesaid failures and to dismiss or cause to be dismissed from the service of the department any person, or persons, who may appear to have been deficient<sup>98</sup>

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1784.**

[Report of Mr. David Howell, Mr. Hugh Williamson, Mr. Jacob Read, on a motion respecting the irregularity of the Post Office.]

The Committee to whom was referred a motion of Mr. [David] Howell for enquiring into the reasons of the late irregularities in the arrival of the mails at this place--submit the following report:

It appears to your Committee that there have been great defects and irregularities in the arrival of both the northern and southern mails at this place for the last seven weeks, that tho' the severity of the season may help to account therefor in some measure, yet as there have been instances in which the post roads have been passed, both by carriage and travellers on horse back, while the post riders omitted performing their tours of duty, there is reason to apprehend some culpable neglect whereupon your Committee submit the following resolution Resolved, That the Postmaster General be directed to enquire into and report to Congress the reasons of the late defects and irregularities in the arrival of the mails at this place, and to dismiss or cause to be dismissed from the service of the department any person or persons, who may appear to have culpably neglected his duty.

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<sup>97</sup> *This resolution, as a part of the report of the committee brought in January 6, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 19, III, folio 84.*

<sup>98</sup> *This motion, in the writing of David Howell, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 527. It was made on this day, according to the indorsement, and referred to Mr. [David] Howell, Mr. [Hugh] Williamson and Mr. [Jacob] Read.*

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 1784. {Rev1}**

On motion of Mr. [Edward] Hand, seconded by Mr. [James] McHenry,

Whereas by the ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America, passed the 18th day of October, 1782, it is ordained, that letters, packets and despatches to and from the Commander in chief of the armies of these United States, on public service, shall pass and be carried free of postage: And whereas there is reason to apprehend that the numerous letters and packets addressed to the late Commander in chief of the armies of these United States, in consequence of his late command, and on matters foreign to his private concerns, will subject him to an expence in postage, which it would be improper and unreasonable he should bear,

Resolved, That all letters and packets to and from the late Commander in chief of the armies of the United States, shall pass and be carried free of postage until the further orders of Congress: and that the postmaster general be, and he is hereby directed to refund to the said late Commander in chief, all the monies paid by him for the postage of letters or packets since the time of his resignation.<sup>99</sup>

**TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1784.**

On motion of Mr. [John] Beatty, seconded by Mr. [David] Howell,

Resolved, That the information communicated to Congress by the governor of the State of New Jersey, in consequence of their act of the 6th of January last, as the result of his enquiry respecting the robbery of the post office at Princeton, is satisfactory, and exculpates Mr. Harrison, the postmaster at Princeton, from every suspicion of collusion or fraud.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 4, 1784.**

On motion of Mr. [Francis] Dana, seconded by Mr. [Richard Dobbs] Spaight, Whereas Congress do now stand adjourned to the 30 of October next, then to meet at Trenton, in New Jersey, and as public letters and despatches may continue to be addressed to the president of Congress, as usual, during their session, which may occasion an unnecessary delay before they will arrive to the committee of the states:

Resolved, That the postmaster general be directed to instruct his deputies in the several post-offices, to forward all such letters and papers which may come in to their offices, addressed as aforesaid, to the chairman of the committee of the states, at the place where they may hold their session.

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<sup>99</sup> *This motion in the writing of Edward Hand, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, II, folio 365.*

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 1784.**

Congress assembled: Present the same as yesterday.

The committee, consisting of Mr. [David] Howell, Mr. [Elbridge] Gerry and Mr. [Eleazer] McComb, to whom was referred a letter of 22 November, from the \*postmaster\* general, with sundry papers enclosed therein, respecting the robbery of the mail at Princeton, report the following state of facts:

"That about nine o'clock in the evening of the 30th of October last, the mail for the eastward was closed and laid on the counter, in the post office, that the post-rider came into the office, and passed into a room adjoining, with the \*postmaster\*, leaving the mail on the counter, and a lighted candle near it, without any one in the office, the door leading into the street and the room adjoining being open; that under these circumstances some person entered the office at the front door, extinguished the candle and carried off the mail; that some days after the robbery of the mail, it was found in a meadow near Princetown, and returned to the general post-office; that the mail contained a large packet of notes, signed by Michael Hillegas, treasurer, and \*franked\* by the superintendant of finance and other valuable effects, none of which were missing; but that five or six letters were lost, and several \*franked\* by members of Congress were broke open. Upon which state of facts the committee conceive that the interests of individuals, the revenue of the post office, and the national honor, are intimately concerned in the safety and preservation of the public mails, and of the letters, packets and despatches committed to the post-office." Whereupon,

Resolved, That a copy [of the letters and papers referred to the committee, be transmitted to the supreme executive of the State of New Jersey, who are requested to order a strict enquiry into the conduct of John Harrison, \*postmaster\* at Princetown, and James Martin, post-rider, relative to the premises; to ascertain whether and how far they were culpable in the loss of the mail; to discover, if possible, the perpetrators of the robbery, and to transmit the result of such enquiry to Congress.]

\* Committed. 2nd. Resolved, That it be earnestly recommended to the Legislatures of the several States to enact adequate laws for the security of the public mails and of the letters, packets and despatches committed to the Post offices within their respective jurisdictions. \* Agreed to Jany, 15. 3rd. Resolved, That the President issue a Proclamation offering a reward of 300 dollars to be paid out of the public Treasury and charged on the Revenue of the Post office to any person or persons who shall apprehend and secure in any of the goals in the United States the perpetrator or perpetrators of the aforesaid robbery, so that he or they may be thereof legally convicted, and brought to condign punishment, and promising the same reward, with an indemnity to any person, who being an accomplice shall give information and evidence whereby any principal offender or offenders shall be convicted as aforesaid.

[Resolved, That the \*postmaster\* general be directed to inform Congress, to whom the mail was delivered when found, and whose hands it passed through till lodged in the general post office; that he also be directed to give positive orders to the several \*postmasters\*, and post-riders, to take the most effectual care of the letters, packets, despatches and mails committed to them respectively, as any neglect or misconduct in that department will meet with no indulgence from Congress.]<sup>100</sup>

### **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 1784.**

On motion of Mr. [Edward] Hand, seconded by Mr. [James] McHenry,

Whereas by the ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America, passed the 18th day of October, 1782, it is ordained, that letters, packets and despatches to and from the Commander in chief of the armies of these United States, on public service, shall pass and be carried free of postage: And whereas there is reason to apprehend that the numerous letters and packets addressed to the late Commander in chief of the armies of these United States, in consequence of his late command, and on matters foreign to his private concerns, will subject him to an expence in postage, which it would be improper and unreasonable he should bear,

Resolved, That all letters and packets to and from the late Commander in chief of the armies of the United States, shall pass and be carried free of postage until the further orders of Congress: and that the postmaster general be, and he is hereby directed to refund to the said late Commander in chief, all the monies paid by him for the postage of letters or packets since the time of his resignation.<sup>101</sup>

### **SATURDAY, JULY 10, 1784.**

Resolved, That the Honorable the Commissioners for Treating with the Indian nations be and they are hereby empowered to confer with Colonel Geo. Morgan of Princeton in the State of New Jersey relative to the instruction of the Indian youths at Princeton and with him to take such measures as may appear proper and most for the Satisfaction of the said youths and beneficial to the Interest of the United States of America for the proper

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<sup>100</sup> *The report, in the writing of a clerk, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 19, III, folio 83. The parts in brackets was entered in the Journal by Henry Remsen, Jun. but the 2d and 3d resolves are in the report only and were not entered in the Journal. The \*Postmaster\* General's letter is in No. 61, folio 155. On this day, according to the indorsement, was read a memorial from the public creditors in and near Philadelphia and referred to Mr. [Samuel] Osgood, Mr. [Hugh] Williamson and Mr. [James] Tilton. It is in No. 41, II, folios 156, 160. See post, January 15.*

<sup>101</sup> *This motion in the writing of Edward Hand, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, II, folio 365.*

support of the said youths and for their return to their own Country as in the wisdom of the said Commissioners shall seem meet.<sup>102</sup>

On a report of the same committee, to whom was referred a letter of the 15 June, from Ebenezer Hazard, postmaster general,

The Committee Consisting of Mr. [Edward] Hand, Mr. [Jeremiah Townley] Chase, and Mr. [Jacob] Read to whom was referred a letter of the 15th June, 1784, from Eben Hazard Post Master Genl., setting forth "That he had directed a suit to be instituted against Gershom Johnston for a violation of the 5th Section of the ordinance for regulating the post office; that Johnston appeared to be sensible of his error and wished that the prosecution might not be suffered to go on; that he did not think himself authorised to discontinue the suit, and prayed for the orders of the Committee of the States,"

Having taken the same into consideration, beg leave to report, that by the 6th. Section of the ordinance for regulating the post office, it is ordained, "That if any person not being a post or express rider in the service of the Genl. post office, shall carry any letters, packets or other dispatches from one place to an other within these U. S. on any of the post roads to any place within these U. S. for hire or reward, except in cases as is herein before excepted, or shall not when bringing letters from beyond Sea for hire or reward, deliver the same at the post office, if any there be at the place of his or her arrival, he or she shall, in each of the before mentioned cases forfeit and pay, for every such offence, Twenty dollars; to be recovered by the postmaster genl. or any of his deputies, in an action for debt in the State wherein the offence shall have been committed, with costs of suits." That Congress by their act of the 29th. day of May last have resolved, that the committee of the States shah not "repeal or contravene any ordinance or act of Congress."

Your Committee therefore beg leave to offer the following resolution: Resolved, That Ebenezer Hazard, postmaster general, be informed, in answer to his letter of the 15 day of June last, that the committee of the states do not find themselves at the liberty are not authorised to order a discontinuance of the suit commenced by his direction against Gershom Johnson, for a violation of the 5th section of the ordinance for regulating the post office.<sup>103</sup>

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[Motion of Mr. Francis Dana seconded by Mr. Jacob Read, referred to Mr. Francis Dana, Mr. Edward Hand Mr. Richard Dobbs Spaight]

That a Committee be appointed to take into Consideration an advertisement signed St. John agent for the French packet boats dated Boston May, 1784, published in the Boston

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<sup>102</sup> *This resolution, undated, in the writing of Jacob Read, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 32, folio 61. It belongs, apparently, to this period.*

<sup>103</sup> *This report, in the writing of Edward Hand, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 32, folio 31. Hazard's letter is in No. 61, folio 173.*

Gazette and the Country Journal of the 31st. of May last and to report to the Committee of the States the measures necessary to be taken to prevent the revenue of the post office from being prejudiced thereby.<sup>104</sup>

**MONDAY, JULY 12, 1784.**

The committee, consisting of Mr. [Francis] Dana, Mr. [Edward] Hand and Mr. [Richard Dobbs] Spaight, appointed to take into consideration an advertisement published in "The Boston Gazette, and the Country Journal," of the 31st of May last, signed "St. John, agent for the French packet-boats," and dated "Boston, May, 1784"; report,

That the said advertisement is an open avowal of a direct an intention to contravene an ordinance of the United States Congress for regulating the post-office of these United States; and that the measures therein mentioned, and said to have been taken by the said St. John, are a flagrant violation of the same ordinance, as well on his part as on the part of others said to be concerned with him; will greatly injure the revenue of the post-office, and, if not prevented, may defeat that useful institution. That therefore the postmaster general be furnished with a copy of the advertisement referred to, and ordered immediately to make enquiry into this matter, and if he should obtain sufficient evidence to prosecute the offender if he should find that the said ordinance hath been violated in consequence of the abovementioned advertisement, that he cause the offenders to be prosecuted according to law.<sup>105</sup>

Resolved, That the Committee of the States agree to the said report.

The report of a Committee consisting of Mr. [David] Howell, Mr. [Arthur] Lee and Mr. [James] Tilton, to whom was referred a letter of December 13th, 1783, from Joseph Reed, Esq., was taken up, which being under debate, an adjournment was called for and agreed to.

Letters of Delegates to Congress: Volume 21 October 1, 1783 - October 31, 1784

Charles Thomson to Ebenezer Hazard

Philada July 16. 1784

Sir I have the honor to enclose you an Act of the Comee of the States in answer to yr letter of 15 June and am Sr Yr &ca,<sup>106</sup> CT.

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<sup>104</sup> *This motion, in the writing of Jacob Read, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 32, folio 75.*

<sup>105</sup> *This report, in the writing of Francis Dana, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 32, folio 73.*

<sup>106</sup> *Postmaster general Hazard had instituted suit against one Gershom Johnson for violation of the Post Office ordinance, and had asked whether under the law the suit could be discontinued, as "Johnston appears now to be sensible of his Error, and wishes that the Prosecution may not be*

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1785.**

That the Postmaster General and Secretary in the War Office be directed forthwith and that the officers of the several departments of the Treasury be directed on or before the 21st day of March next as they may deem it expedt., to remove the papers of their respective offices to this City where they are to be Kept till the further orders of Congress.<sup>107</sup>

**MONDAY, JANUARY 17, 1785.**

Mr. [Hugh] Williamson, Mr. [Jacob] Read, Mr. [Elbridge] Gerry, Mr. [Rufus] King and Mr. W[illiam] Livingston, the Committee on Post Office, "To enquire fully into the proceedings of the post office & report agreeable to resolution 17 July, 1782. Reported up to I Jany." This was a change of personel from the committee appointed December 9, which consisted of Mr. Williamson, Mr. [William] Houstoun, Mr. [John F.] Mercer, Mr. [John] Jay and Mr. [Jacob] Read.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1785.**

An Ordinance for the regulation of the Office of Secretary of Congress and for extending it to the Home Department

He shall transmit to the Board of Treasury Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to the Secretary for the War Department, to the Secretary of Marine, to the Commissioners of the Board of Treasury and to the Postmaster General all papers referred to them by Congress respectively, as well as an authenticated Copy of all Acts, Ordinances and resolutions of Congress touching their respective Departments.

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1785.**

[Report of the Committee on the administration of the Department of the Post Office.]

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*suffered to go on." The enclosed July 10 resolve directed that Hazard be informed that "the committee of the states are not authorised to order a discontinuance." See JCC, 27:582- 83; and PCC, item 61, fols. 173-76.*

<sup>107</sup> *This motion, in the writing of Elbridge Gerry, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 19, I, folio 527. See post, February 2. According to Committee Book, No. 186, the committee on Gerry's motion also considered and reported this day on the letters of December 3 and 23, 1784, on post office matters, from Postmaster General Ebenezer Hazard. The letter of December 23 is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 181, which is indorsed as having been referred to the Committee on the Post Office. The Gerry committee reported February 2 and a resolve was adopted February 7.*

The Committee consisting of Mr. [Hugh] Williamson, Mr. [Jacob] Read, Mr. [Elbridge] Gerry, Mr. [Rufus] King, and Mr. W[illiam] Livingston who were appointed pursuant to the Act of June 17th., 1782, to enquire into the Proceedings of the Department of the Post Office beg leave to Report,

That it appears by a Letter from the Post Master Genl., that after defraying the Expences of the Post Office during the last Year there was a Balance remaining in favour of the Office of 1,981 Dls. which has been paid into the Treasury of the U. S. which Payment completes 5,878 Dollars, that have lately been paid in Discharge of Debts contracted during the War by the Post Office.

Your Committee nevertheless think it their duty to report that they have heard many Complaints of the want of Expedition in the Postage of Letters and they have observed some Instances of very exceptionable Delay. Your Committee have also heard Complaints that sufficient Regard is not had to the Safety of Letters and Packets which are committed to the Post Office and they apprehend that those Complaints which are very frequent may have some Foundation, Wherefore they submit,

That a Committee be appointed to prepare an additional Ordinance for the better regulating of the Post Office.<sup>1</sup>

[Note 1: <sup>1</sup> This report, in the writing of Hugh Williamson, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 529. The indorsement states that it was read on this day and passed.

Mr. [Samuel] Hardy, Mr. [Elbridge] Gerry, Mr. [Hugh] Williamson, Mr. [Jacob] Read and Mr. [William] Houstoun, to prepare an additional ordinance for the better regulating of the post office. This committee was renewed March 14. Committee Book No. 190.

#### **THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 1785.**

The Ordinance on the Office of the Secretary of Congress being taken up for a second reading:

.....

Congress proceeded in the second reading of the Ordinance, and the same being gone through and amended,

Ordered, That it be read a third time.

The same being read a third time, was agreed to as follows: An Ordinance for the regulation of the Office of the Secretary of Congress. Be it ordained by the United States in Congress assembled, that the Secretary of Congress shall in future be charged with the

following duties, and shall keep his office in or near the State house or Building where the Sessions of Congress shall be holden.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 1785.**

The Committee of the Week [Mr. Melancthon Smith, Mr. William Henry and Mr. Pierse Long] Report as their Opinion That the Letter from Ebenezer Hazard, Post master General, requesting leave to remain in Philadelphia until the ensuing Year, be referred to the Committee on the Post Office.

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On this day, according to Committee Book No. 190, Mr. [William] Grayson was added to the committee of March 14, to prepare an ordinance for the better regulation of the Post Office.

**MONDAY, APRIL 11, 1785.**

On this day also Postmaster General Ebenezer Hazard's letter of April 4, 1785, requesting leave to reside in Philadelphia, was referred to the committee of March 14 on the Post Office. See ante, April 8.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 1785.**

On the report of a committee, consisting of Mr. Houstoun, Mr. Howell, Mr. Holten, Mr. Grayson and Mr. Dick, appointed to prepare an additional ordinance for better regulating the Post Office motion of Mr. [William] Houstoun, seconded by Mr. [William] Grayson,

Resolved, That the postmaster general make enquiry, and report the best terms upon which contracts may be entered into, for the transportation of the several Mails, in the stage carriages on the different roads, where such stage carriages are or may be established.<sup>108</sup>

**TUESDAY, JULY 12, 1785.**

In pursuance of the order of the 30 of June, the Postmaster general reported the terms on which Contracts will be entered into, for the transportation of the mails in stage carriages.

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General Post Office,

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<sup>108</sup> *On this day, according to indorsement, was read a letter mof June 29 for Maurice Desdevens, praying attention to his claim. It is in No. 35, folio 243.*

New York, July 9th. 1785.

Sir: In Obedience to the Act of Congress dated June 30th. 1785, I have made the Enquiry therein directed; and having received the Proposals from the Proprietors of the Stages, now beg Leave to lay them before the United States in Congress assembled.

Knowing that there was a Competition between the Stages on the Road from this City to Philadelphia, I hoped to take the Advantage of that Circumstance, and get the Business done upon much lower Terms; and for this Purpose sent the letter No. 1 to the Proprietors of each; but, it seems, a Coalition has been formed, whereby this Intention is frustrated.

No. 2 contains the Proposals for carrying the Mail between Boston, Albany, and this City;--No. 3, between this City and Philadelphia, and No. 4 between Philadelphia and Petersburg, or Norfolk, in Virginia; beyond which I do not find that any Stages are established. As these are the only Proposals which have been received, or may be expected, they contain "the best Terms upon which Contracts may be entered into for the Transportation of the several Mails in the Stage Carriages;" and, therefore, though they contain also the worst, it has become my Duty to report them.

I have the Honor to be, very respectfully Your Excellency's most obedient and very humble Servant.

Eben. Hazard.<sup>109</sup>

General Post Office, July 11th. 1785.

Sir, Since I had the honor of addressing to your Excellency the Report which accompanies this, it has occurred to me that Congress will be unable to determine upon the Expediency or Inexpediency of sending the Mails by Stage for want of that Information which an intimate Acquaintance with Post Office Business alone can furnish and therefore shall take the Liberty of making some Remarks upon the Proposals handed in.

Considering that the Proprietors of the Stages will be put to no additional Expence, or at most a very trifling one, their Demands appears to me to be exorbitant, although, in some Instances, they will carry the Mails for less than it now costs.

Mr. Hall, in his Proposals (No. 2) demands a larger Sum than we now pay for carrying the Mail to Boston by way of Hartford. Our present Expence for one Mail a week is £275. Pennsylvania Currency Pr. Ann. Twice a week would therefore cost... £550.

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<sup>109</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 357. According to indorsement it was read this day and Friday 15th assigned; debated on 15th and Tuesday 19th assigned. See post, September 7.]*

Mr. Hall's demand is... £750,

consequently we should sink on this Road... £200

Pr. Ann. nor would the Mail be carried more expeditiously than it now is. His Proposal for the Transportation of the Mails from this City to Albany is worthy of Attention as we shall both save Money by it, and receive Mails from that Quarter more frequently than at present if he can accomplish his Plan, which, he will engage to do.

Between Philadelphia and this City Money will be saved in the Carriage of the Mail, and we shall receive as many Mails in the Week upon Mr. Ogdens' Plan (No. 3) as we now do; but the letters will be longer on the Road, even in Summer; and much longer in the Winter; which may be very prejudicial to the mercantile Interest, from whence the Post Office Establishment derives its principal Support. Should a Change upon this part of the Road be adopted, all the Hurry of the Business at Philadelphia, and Part of that at New York, the chief Offices in the States, must be at Night; which will be extremely inconvenient; for, as all the Counting houses and Stores will then be shut, the Merchants will have no Opportunity of transacting the Business which their Letters may render necessary, so as [to] answer their Correspondents by Return of Stage, but must wait for the next, which will, in many Cases very materially injure them. The People in the Post Offices, fatigued with the Confinement and Business of the day will be very apt to make Mistakes, however careful and attentive they may be; and the Confinement will be so constant that no Constitution will be able to bear it.

It is true this might be guarded against by allowing them additional Assistance; but then this will increase the Expence to the Public; and the Expence of extraordinary Firewood and Candles must be superadded; so that I think it will be doubtful, whether, upon the whole, there would be any Thing saved by sending the Mail by Stage on this Road, and the Inconvenience to the Merchants arising from the unsuitable Time of the Mail's Arrival and Departure as well as its being longer on the Road will be certain and inevitable. I am therefore of Opinion that it will be both inexpedient and impolitic to make a Change here, more especially as the present Arrangement is universally satisfactory.

Upon Mr. Twining's plan (No. 4) we shall have two mails from Petersburg, and one from Baltimore weekly, more than we have at present, and the Expence will be upwards of Four hundred Pounds Pr. Annum more than it now is; this will, probably, be counterbalanced by the additional Number of Letters thrown into the Office, which are now carried by Mr. Twining's Stage, and for Pay too, but in such a way as to elude the Ordinance of Congress, and guard against the Consequences of a Prosecution. It must be remarked here, that if Mr. Twining's Proposals are agreed to, a cross Post must be maintained between Baltimore and Annapolis or the Capital of Maryland will be left out of the Line of Communication. The Expence of this Post cannot be very great, and as Mr. Twining does not appear to insist upon the Stages arriving at any capital Office at

Night, the Inconvenience arising from transacting Business at unseasonable Hours may be avoided.

Mr. Twining has just handed me another Proposal (No. 5.) for carrying the Mail from Petersburg to Savanna; but it seems to me to be done more for the Sake of proposing than any Thing else.

Upon the whole, Sir, I am of Opinion that if the Stages can perform according to the Contracts proposed, they may be advantageously employed on the Roads from New York to Albany, and from Philadelphia to Petersburg, but on no other. And here I beg Leave to submit it to your Excellency whether it may not be expedient, and indeed necessary for Congress to recommend to the several States to pass Laws absolutely prohibiting the Carriage of any Letters by Stages on any Post Road now or hereafter to be established, unless such Stages shall be in the service of the General Post Office; and also, refusing to admit to an Entry at the Custom House, any Vessel which may bring letters--either from beyond Sea, or Coastwise, unless the Master or some person for him, shall produce a Certificate from the Post Master General's Deputy at the Port of Arrival (if a Post Office is established at such Port) that the Letters brought by such Vessel have been delivered into the Post Office.

A Communication, by Post, with the Province of Quebec, has been some time in Contemplation; and the British Postmaster General there is ready to concur in such an Establishment. It appears to be an important Object on Account of the Furr Trade and the Letters which pass to and from Europe by the Packets; but as the Ordinance for regulating the Post Office now stands the Postmaster General is not at Liberty to agree to it. I beg Leave to recommend it to the Attention of Congress; and, at the same Time to submit to their Consideration the Terms of a Contract (No. 6) for conveying the Mail from Albany to St. John's, proposed by Col. Udney Hay, the Proprietor of the Ferries upon the Lakes, and the carrying Place between them, of whose Attention to Business and Punctuality and Dispatch in executing it, I have had flattering Accounts.

A Post to Fort Pitt is also wanted; and although the Postage would not, perhaps for some Time, defray the Expence necessarily attending the Establishment, Advantages, too obvious to need a Recital, would more than counterbalance the Deficiency.

The Feelings of Humanity concur with the Dictates of Justice in urging me to request that the Case of the Postriders on the Roads where the Stages may be employed, who will be deranged thereby, may not be forgotten. It has always been customary, except in Cases of very singular Misconduct, to give the Riders three Months' Notice of an intended Discharge, that they might have an Opportunity of providing some other Employment; those now in the service have a Claim to Attention, as poor honest Men, who have faithfully done their Duty; if Stages are immediately employed, these Men will not experience as much Lenity as those who are thought unworthy to be continued in the Service; but will be suddenly discharged, and besides being thrown out of Business will be encumbered with the Maintenance of their Horses, or must sell them at a considerable Loss.

I have the Honor to be, Your Excellency's most obedient and very humble Servant.  
Eben. Hazard.<sup>110</sup>

**FRIDAY, JULY 15, 1785.**

Also, the Postmaster General was directed "To report the number of mails weekly and the time of transportation between the most easterly post Office within the U. S. and Boston, between Boston and New York on the several roads; between N. York and Albany, between New York and Philadelphia, between Philada. and Petersburg on the several roads, between Petersburg and Savannah with the amt. in dollrs. of the Salary to the riders distinguishing the terms between the several Offices as above particularised,"

"Mr. Grayson has this report."

**MONDAY, JULY 18, 1785.**

[Report of the Postmaster General]

General Post Office, July 18th. 1785.

I have the Honor to hand to your Excellency the Report called for by the Act of Congress of the 15th. Inst., and to add to it a Letter received from the Post Rider who travels between Philadelphia and Annapolis. He states the Case truly respecting the horse lost in the Ice, and the Danger his own Life was in, as I learned from other Persons at the Time when the Accident happened; and from the Character of the Man, I have no doubt of the Truth of his Representation respecting the Loss of his other two horses.

Notwithstanding I was informed that both Lines (as they are called) of Stages between Philadelphia and this City had formed a Kind of Union for the Purpose of carrying the Mati and that consequently, no other Proposals need be expected yet others have been handed to me which your Excellency will receive herewith.

I have the Honor to be, Your Excellency's Most obedient humble Servant Eben. Hazard.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 361. According to indorsement it was read this day. See post, September 7.*

<sup>111</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 199. It seems to have been read this day, together with its enclosures, which were James Finley's letter to the Postmaster General, 1785, July 14, on folio 203; Charles Bessonett & Company's proposals to carry the mails between New York and Philadelphia, July 14, on folio 195; Letter from the Postmaster General to the Proprietors of the Stages, July 2, on folio 207; Letter from the Postmaster General to Mr. William C. Houston, on folio 211; Memorial of sundry New York merchants on the proposed alteration in the mode of conveying the mails, July 15, on folio 215;*

.....

Registers Office, 11th. July, 1785.

for the Register,

Josp. Hardy, Clk.

General account of receipts and expenditures of the United States in the year 1784

RECEIVED

.....

General Post Office: For so much received of Ebenezer Hazard Post Mr. Genl....  
4,378.15

.....

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1785.**

Office for Foreign Affairs,

2d Septemr., 1785.

Sir: The English Packet which arrived the Day before Yesterday brought me no Letters from Mr Adams; which Impute to its being Mode of Conveyance to which nothing very important can prudently be trusted.

Some private Intelligence by that Vessel leads me to consider the Surrender of our Posts as being more problematical than it has lately appeared to be.

I hear that the Circumstance of Congress having ordered some Troops to be raised, excited the Attention of the british Ministry, and induced them to order two Regiments to embark for Quebec--a Packet was preparing to sail for that Place on the first Wednesday in last Month with Despatches, which was perhaps it was not thought expedient to convey there through our Country.

The Loyalists at the different Posts are computed to amount to between six and seven thousand and I am assured that they are provided with Arms and Rations by Government.

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*Table of mails, time and salary of riders, from Kennebec to Savanna, on folio 228, a duplicate on folio 366, and a Statement of the Register of Treasury, July 18, of receipts and expenditures of the General Post Office for the year 1784, on folio 232.*

An Attempt has been made to prevail on the Ministry so to alter the Government of Quebec, as to render it more consonant to that of England; and one Objection made to that Change was, that then it would be more difficult to collect and direct the Force of the Province than it now is under its present Government. What Degree of Credit is due to this Intelligence is not in my Power to ascertain. It nevertheless comports with certain Reports which have lately reached us from the Frontiers, Vizt. that Encouragement was given by the Government of Canada to our People to settle Lands in the vicinity of the Posts; and that a considerable Number of Persons from among us had been seduced by their Offers to remove thither.

I think it my Duty to lay these Matters before Congress and at the same Time to observe that in my Opinion they should for the present be kept secret. Permit me Sir, also to hint, that there may be Occasions when it would be for the Public Interest to subject the Post Office to the Orders of your principal executive Officers.

I have the Honor to be etc.

John Jay.<sup>112</sup>

#### **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1785.**

On motion of Mr. [William] Houstoun, seconded by Mr. [William] Grayson,

Resolved, That the postmaster general be, and he is hereby authorized and directed [instructed, under the direction of the board of treasury] to enter into contracts under good and sufficient security, and penalties with Abraham Ogden, Talmage Hall and Nathaniel Twining for the conveyance of the different mails by the stage carriages, from Portsmouth, in the State of New Hampshire, to the town of Savannah, in the State of Georgia by the way of Charleston and from the city of New York, to the city of Albany in the State of New York, agreeable to the terms reported according to the accustomed route.<sup>113</sup>

"Resolved that the Post Master Genl. be authorized and directed to make contracts with the Masters or owners of Stage Coaches on the Post roads through the U. S. for the transportation of the Mail whenever the same can be effected at rate of on terms not exceeding dollars pr. mile annually for three mails a week." And "Resolved, That the Post Master Genl. be authorized and directed to contract with Nathaniel Twining for the transportation of the Mail by Stage from Philad. to Petersburg and from Petersburg to

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<sup>112</sup> *This letter is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 80, I, folio 373. According to indorsement it was read this day and "Ordered to be kept secret."*

<sup>113</sup> *This motion, in the writing of William Houstoun, except the words in brackets which are in the writing of Elbridge Gerry, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, III, folio 127. The words lined out so appear in the motion and not in the Journal. In No. 36, IV, folios 49, 51 and 51st are undated motions in the writing of William Grayson as follows:*

Savannah on the terms proposed by the said Twining the day of and under the conditions stated to him by the sd. Post Master General." An estimate of the expense of mail transportation, on folio 51, seems to have had bearing upon the above proceedings.]

On motion of Mr. [Charles] Pinckney,

Resolved, That, whenever it shall appear to the Secretary of the United States of America for the department of foreign affairs that their safety and or interest require the inspection of any letters then lying in any of the post Offices, he be authorized and empowered to inspect the said letters, and report the same immediately to Congress excepting from the operation of this resolution, [which is to continue for the term of twelve months] all letters franked by or addressed to members of Congress. and the officers of the United States. <sup>114</sup>

### **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1785.**

September 12: The following committee was appointed: Mr. [William] Houston, Mr. [David] Howell, Mr. [Samuel] Holten and Mr. [William] Grayson, on "Letter 9 Sept. Postmaster genl. on the meaning of the words accustomed route." They reported October 3 and the report was acted on October 5. Hazard's letter is in No. 61, folio 235.

### **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1785 {Rev1}** **Congressional Resolve of September 26, 1785 on Postal Rates**

The Committee consisting of Mr [James] McHenry, Mr [Jacob] Read, and M' [Charles] Pettit to whom were committed a motion of Mr [James] McHenry beg leave to submit the following resolution.

Resolved, that it be and hereby is recommended to the several States to vest the U.S. in Congress assembled, with the sole and exclusive right and power of establishing and regulating post-offices throughout the U.S. and raising a revenue by exacting postage on the letters and papers passing thro the same, provided that the postage shall not exceed the following rates in pennyweights and grains of silver, estimating each pennyweight at 5 nineteeths of a dollar, to wit: For any distance not exceeding sixty miles one pennyweight, eight grains; upwards of sixty and not exceeding one hundred, two pennyweight; upwards of one hundred and not exceeding two hundred, two pennyweight, sixteen grains; and so on sixteen grains advance for every hundred miles and for all single letters to and from Europe or any foreign country by packet or dispatch vessels, four pennyweight: the above rates to be doubled for double letters, trebled for treble

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<sup>114</sup> *This motion, in the writing of Charles Pinckney, except the part in brackets which is in the writing of Elbridge Gerry, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 25, II, folio 445. The indorsement by Charles Thomson says it was "renewed again 23 Oct., 1786, without limitation of time." This motion was entered, by Thomson, only in the manuscript Secret (Domestic) Journal, No. 3.*

letters and a packet weighing an ounce to be charged equal to four single letters, and in that proportion if of a greater weight: and to the foregoing rates of inland postage an additional sum not exceeding upon every letter packet or dispatch which shall come into this post office from beyond sea by any other conveyance than packets or dispatch vessels and which are to be forwarded; but for all such as are not to be forwarded, whether inland or ship letters a sum not exceeding.

Provided also that the net proceeds of the revenue be applied in the first instance to the extinguishment of the post office debt and the establishment of such cross posts throughout and within the several States and in the western country or new States, as the United States in Congress assembled may judge proper.

Provided also that the residue of the revenue be for ever appropriated for the maintenance of public packets or dispatch vessels, and the support of vessels of war for the protection of trade; provided nevertheless that no part of the said residue be applied without the consent of nine States in Congress assembled.<sup>115</sup>

Author's Note: On November 1, 1785, a Motion was made by James McHenry, seconded by Charles Pinckney, "that the Resolution of yesterday for postponing the consideration of the report touching the Post office be reconsidered, for the purpose of postponing it till Monday next"; and on the question to agree to this, the yeas and nays being required by Mr. McHenry, there were six yeas and three nays with Virginia divided. So the question was lost. As I read this, it may mean the Resolve was voted into effect on that date.

#### **MONDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1785.**

Also the report of the Committee of September 12 on the letter from the Postmaster General was rendered this day. It was adopted verbatim, October 5, and is there spread on the Journal.

#### **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1785.**

On the report of a committee, consisting of Mr. [William] Houston, Mr. [David] Howell, Mr. [Samuel] Holten and Mr. [William] Grayson, to whom was referred a letter of 9th September, from the postmaster general,

Resolved, That the Secretary of Congress, inform the postmaster general, that the words "accustomed route," mentioned in the resolution of the 7th day of September last, relate

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<sup>115</sup> *This report, in the writing of James McHenry, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 547. The indorsement states that it was read this day and Wednesday, October 5, assigned for its consideration. A further note: "60 Copies" implies that this report was printed. A printed copy is pasted in the Journal under the date of October 31.*

to the stage carriages, and that the postmaster general be directed, to establish cross posts, where the same shall thereby be rendered necessary.<sup>116</sup>

#### **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1785.**

Also on this day according to indorsement, was read a letter from the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, dated December 2, forwarding a letter of November 28 from the French chargé des affaires relative to a proposed arrangement between the French and American post offices. It was referred back to the said Secretary to report. Jay's letter is in No. 80, II, folio 73. See post, March 29, 1786.

Also, according to Committee Book No. 190, "A Motion of Mr. King for regulating the post between U. S. and Canada" was this day referred to the "Postmaster gent to report."]

#### **FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 1786.**

The Committee [consisting of Mr. William Houstoun, Mr. William Grayson, Mr. John Kean, Mr. Charles Pettit, and Mr. William Samuel Johnson] to whom the Letter from the Secretary at War was refer'd recommend the follg. resolve:

Resolved, That the Post Master General be and he is hereby authorized and directed to establish a Communication by Post between Philadelphia and Fort Macintosh on the River Ohio; the Post to travel once in a fortnight from Philadelphia to and once in a Month from and also that he be authorized to employ Expresses on the same Route on the application of the Secretary at War or the Secretary of Congress.<sup>117</sup>

General Post Office,

January 3d., 1786.

Sir: There is in my Hands a Sum of Money received formerly for Postage on Letters by the British Packets. This Money belongs to the British Post Office, and would long since have been paid to the Agent for the Packets, had not the Sheriff of Philadelphia attached it in my Hands to secure the Payment of a Debt alledged to be due from Mr. Foxcroft (the Agent) to a Mr. Tillier of Philadelphia for Services performed by him under the Directions of Mr. Foxcroft, then one of the joint Postmasters General for America. Mr. Foxcroft complains of the Detention of this Money as a Hardship; and informs me that he can neither procure a Settlement of his Accounts with the British General Post Office, nor

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<sup>116</sup> According to Committee Book No. 190, this report, which is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 61, folio 531, in the writing of William Grayson, was rendered October 3.

<sup>117</sup> This report, in the writing of William Houstoun, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 27, folio 283. According to Thomson's indorsement it was read January 6, 1786. The committee was appointed December 27, 1785. See post, February 25.

the Payment of his Salary as Agent for the Packets, until he can make this Remittance; and therefore is urgent with me to pay him the Balance due, upon Condition of his giving satisfactory Security for the Repayment of it

in Case Judgment should be given against him. As I hold this Money, not in my private Capacity, but as Postmaster General, I do not consider myself at Liberty to act in this Case without particular Instructions, and must therefore request your Excellency to lay it before Congress.

I have the Honor to be etc.<sup>118</sup>

Eben Hazard.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1786.**

Office For Foreign Affairs,

21st. February, 1786.

The Secretary of the United States for the Department of foreign Affairs to whom was referred, a Letter to him of 28th. November last from the Chargé des Affaires of France enclosing a Plan of a Treaty for the Correspondence of Letters between the Post Offices of France and those of the United States, Reports:

That he has submitted the said Plan to the Consideration of the Post Master General of the United States, whose Opinion thereon appears in the following Letter, vist.--

General Post Office,

February 16, 1786.

Sir: I have had under Consideration the proposed "Plan of a Treaty for the Correspondence of Letters between the Post-Offices of France and those of the United States of North-America," and observe but one Defect in it; and that is, it is left optional with the Writers to pay the Postage or not; and if we may judge from Experience, they will not pay it. The Consequences will be--

1st. That a Receipt must be given by the American Office, which will make the United States accountable for the Amount of the Postage.

2d. The Letters must then be distributed from New Hampshire to Georgia; and the dead or (refuse) Letters returned to New York at the Risque of the United States; which will,

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<sup>118</sup> *This letter is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 251. According to indorsement it was read this day.*

evidently be very great, if we consider the Distances to which the Letters must travel, the Size and Situation of many of our Ferries, and our Seasons, especially the Winter.

3d. Accounts must be kept between the American and French Offices, which, in their very nature, must be complex and intricate, both Nations being interested in the Postage of each letter, and the Postage being marked, partly in french Money and partly in Penny-weights and Grains of Silver; the former, not being sufficiently understood by us -will occasion many Errors, and be the Source of much Confusion.

We were exactly upon the above Plan with Respect to the british Packets at their first Establishment, as you will observe from the enclosed Advertisement; but the Inconveniences attending it were so great that it was found necessary to make an Alteration; and the whole Business was amazingly simplified by providing that all the Packet Postage should be paid in England. By this small change in the System every Difficulty is removed; and, as Experience has evinced its Utility, I beg leave to recommend the Adoption of the same Mode in the present Case. Indeed, it will be more advantageous to France than the Plan now proposed, because the number of refuse Letters will be lessened by it, as all the Letters put into the Offices in Prance will then be paid for, and the refuse Letters from this side of the Water will not be more numerous upon this Plan than upon the other: there will also be a Saving of the Commissions allowed to the Deputy Post Masters for transacting the Business.

The other Regulations, such as giving the Captains, Receipts for the Mails, sending Invoices of the Letters &ca. are equally proper upon either Plan.

I have the honor to be &ca.

(Signed) Ebenr Hazard.

The Honble: the Secy: for foreign Affairs.

Your Secretary thinks the Observations of the Post Master General are well founded, and therefore is of Opinion, that he the said Post, Master General should be duly authorized to conclude the said Treaty with the Director of the French Posts vested with equal Powers on the part of his Most Christian Majesty, provided the Alterations in question are admitted, and provided further that the Duration of the said Treaty shall not exceed the Term of ten Years.

Your Secretary is also of Opinion that the said Treaty should be engrossed and executed in both Languages.

All which is submitted to the Wisdom of Congress. John Jay.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 81, II, folio 35. According to indorsement it was read February 25, 1786, and "Referred back to Secy. for foreign Affairs to report." Committee Book No. 190 shows that the, Secretary again reported March 29. The*

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Mr. [William] Grayson, Mr. [John] Kean, Mr. [William Samuel] Johnson, Mr. [John Bubenheim] Bayard and Mr. [Nathaniel] Gorham, "to prepare and report an Ordinance on the post Office. 11 feby., 1786. Letter from Com.tee. of Merchants and traders of Philada" This was a renewal of the committee of December 27, 1785, on post office, which reported January 6, 1786. Report was rendered June 15. The letter from the Philadelphia merchants complained of the inconvenience of the mails, is dated February 11 and is in No: 59, III, folio 351.

### **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 1786.**

Office for Foreign Affairs,

29th March, 1786.

The Secretary of the United States for the Department of foreign Affairs to whom was referred his Report of 21st: February last on the proposed Convention between the Post Offices of the United States and France,

Reports:

That in his Opinion the following Form of such a Convention would be proper vizt.

Plan of a Convention between the Post Office of France and that of the United States of America for regulating their mutual Intercourse and correspondence. His most Christian Majesty having authorized the Director of the Post Office of France, and the United States having authorized Ebenezer Hazard Esquire their Post Master General, to form and conclude such Convention, they have accordingly agreed upon the following Articles viz:--

1. There shall be maintained on both sides a good, constant and mutual correspondence for the Transmission, Reception, and Distribution of Letters, Dispatches and Packets.
2. All Imposts, Postage, and Charges which may be due on Letters passing from the Post Offices of France to those of the United States, shall be paid in France. And on the other hand, all Letters passing from the Post Offices of the United States to those of France, shall be paid in the United States. That is to say, no french or other Postage due on Letters coming from that Kingdom to the United States shall be demanded or received in the United States, nor any american Postage due on Letters going from the United States to France shall there be demanded or received. The Packet, Postage on Letters passing

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*advertisement referred to is a broadside notice of the New York-Falmouth packets issued by the British Postmaster General, 1783, November 18, and is on folio 77.*

by Packets to or from France and the United States to belong to the Sovereign whose Packet shall carry such Letters.

3. And as his most Christian Majesty has, in order to promote and facilitate the Intercourse and Correspondence between the two Countries, been pleased to establish Packets at L'Orient which sail once a Month from that Place to New York. It is agreed that all Letters intended to be transmitted from L'Orient to New York by the said Packets, shall be put into a Mail by the Post Office at L'Orient, which Mail sealed with the known and acknowledged Seal of that Post Office and directed to the Post Office at New York, shall on its Arrival at New York, be immediately delivered to the said Post Office, where the same shall be opened by the Post Master, in the Presence of the Consul or Vice Consul of France there residing, or of the french Agent for the said Packets, and all such Letters as may be found therein franked by the french Ministers of either of the great Departments shall be immediately delivered to the said Consul, Vice Consul or Agent, to be forwarded and transmitted in such Manner as he or they may think proper. And further, that whenever and as often as the Post Master at New York shall receive from a Captain of one of the said Packets a Mail so put up and directed, and being in good Order, he shall give to the said Captain a Receipt for the same mentioning therein the Name of the Captain and Packet who brought it, the Time when received and that the same was in good Order.

4. That all Letters intended to be transmitted from New York by one of the said Packets to L'Orient shall be put into a Mail by the Post Office at New York, which mail sealed with the known and acknowledged Seal of the said Office and directed to the Post Office at L'Orient shall at the Stated Times appointed for the sailing of a Packet, be delivered by the said Post Master to the Captain thereof who shall thereupon give him a Receipt for the same specifying when he received it and that it was in good Order.

5. That whenever one of the said Mails shall arrive at L'Orient and be delivered to the Post Office there it shall be opened in the Presence of the Consul, Vice Consul or Agent of the United States there residing, to whom all such Letters found therein as may be franked by the President of Congress or either of the Ministers of the great Departments shall be immediately delivered, and they shall be forwarded and transmitted in any Manner that the said Consul, Vice Consul or Agent may think proper; but they or such one of them to whom the said Letters shall be so delivered shall without Delay give a proper Receipt for the same to the Post Office.

6 The Director of the Post Office at L'Orient and the Post Master at New York, shall with every Mail send to each other a Letter of Advice specifying the Number of Letters enclosed in it; which said Letters shall be counted on the opening of the Mail to determine whether the Number received be the same with the Number sent.

All which is submitted to the Wisdom of Congress.

John Jay.<sup>120</sup>

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 1786.**

On motion of Mr. [William] Grayson, seconded by Mr. [Theodore] Sedgwick, Resolved, That the postmaster general be informed, in answer to his letter of the 19th, that Congress approve his conduct in directing the deputy postmasters not to receive the paper money of any state for postage of letters.<sup>121</sup>

**MONDAY, AUGUST 7, 1786.**

The Commee. consisting &c. [of Mr. William Grayson, Mr. Rufus King and Mr. William Few, on forming a new Contract for carrying of the mail] report:

That the postmaster general be instructed under the direction of the board of treasury to enter into contracts with good and sufficient security for the conveyance of the different mails by the stage carriages from Portsmouth in N. Hamshire to the town of Augusta Savanah in the State of Georgia.

That the said Post Mr. Genl. do make arrangements for ye transportation of the Mati to and from the following places, at such stated periods as he shall judge necessary.

From Portsmouth in N. Hamshire to Pownalborough in the State of Massachusetts by the rout of Wells and New Gloucester Portland.

From Boston in the said State of Massachusetts to the town of Concord in N. Hamshire, and from thence through Exeter to Portsmouth from Springfield in the State of Massachusetts to Albany in the State of N. York.

From the City of N. York to the City of Albany in the State of N. York and from N. York to Danbury in the State of Connecticut and from thence to Hartford in said State by the most convenient rout.

From the town of Baltimore to the city of Annapolis in the State of Maryland and from the City of Philadelphia to the Town of Vienna in the State of Maryland.

From the town of Alexandria in the State of Virginia to the town of Pittsburgh in the State of Pennsylvania by the rout of Leesburgh and Winchester, Fort Cumberland, and Bedford.

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<sup>120</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 81, II, folio 73. According to indorsement it was read this day. March 29: The following committees were appointed:*

<sup>121</sup> *The letter from Postmaster General Ebenezer Hazard is in No. 61, folio 255. It was read this day and, according to indorsement and Committee Book, No. 190 was referred to the "Commee. of the whole on the State of the Nation."*

From Philadelphia to Bedford.

From the town of Wilmington to Fayetteville in the State of No. Carolina, by the rout of Elizabeth Town.

From Fayetteville in North Carolina to Cambden in South Carolina and from thence to Charles Town in the same State and from Cambden by the rout of Columbia to Augusta in Georgia.

That the contracts commence on the first day of January and remain in force for twelve months thence next ensuing.<sup>122</sup>

### **TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 1786.**

The Committee consisting of Mr. [William], Grayson, Mr. [Rufus] King and Mr. [William] Few to whom was referred a motion respecting the conveyance of the mail having reported

That the postmaster general be instructed under the direction of the Board of treasury to enter into contracts with good and sufficient security for the conveyance of the different mails by the stage carriages from Portsmouth in Newhampshire to the town of Augusta in the State of Georgia &c.

A motion was made by Mr. [William] Houstoun seconded by Mr. [Lambert] Cadwallader to amend the report by Mr. [William] Few and Mr. [William] Houstoun

{ table }

So the question was lost.

A Motion was then made by Mr. [William] Houstoun seconded by Mr. [Melancton] Smith to strike out the word "Augusta" and on the question shall "Augustas" stand, the yeas and nays being required by Mr. [William] Few.

{ table }

So the question was lost and the word was struck out.<sup>123</sup>

### **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 1786.**

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<sup>122</sup> *This report, in the writing of William Grayson and an unknown, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 555. According to indorsement it was: "Entd. Aug. 4, 1786, read Aug. 7, 1786."*

<sup>123</sup> *See post, August 16.*

"A report for transportation of the Mail and establishment of cross posts" was referred to the Postmaster General "To report an estimate of the annual expence of the several cross posts proposed to be established and also the probable productiveness of the said posts respectively." Report was rendered August 21. See ante, August 15. A resolution in the writing of Charles Thomson and Roger Alden, with a few changes by Rufus King, is in No. 61, folio 537. It is dated August 16 and is practically identical with the report of the committee of August 24 which was adopted and spread on the Journal September 4. Committee Book No. 190.

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Also was read a letter of August 15, from Arthur Lee asking to have delivered to him, free of postage charges, a box addressed to his brother Richard Henry Lee which was put into the post office by mistake. It is in No. 78, XIV, folio 627 and is indorsed "Referred to the postmaster general to take Order. Chas. Thomson Secy."

#### **MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 1786.**

General Post Office,

August 21st., 1786.

Sir: I have the honor to inform your Excellency that the Report of the Honorable Committee of the 16th and 17th Inst. "for Transportation of the Mail and Establishment of cross Posts," which was referred to the Postmaster General has been under Consideration, and I now beg leave to report:

That limiting the number of Contracts to four, will, probably, not fully answer the end proposed; because the Stages in each District fixed upon for the Extent of a Contract, are not all owned by the same Persons; and consequently there must still be a joint Contract, though of less Extent than the present. This will be the Case between Portsmouth and New York, and between Philadelphia and Petersburg. In each of these Distances the Stages are owned by different Persons, some of whom have exclusive Privileges on particular Parts of the Road, and others have not; and the Experience of this Year has taught that by a Combination among the Proprietors of the Stages the Advantages arising from these Privileges may be transferred to Persons to whom they were not originally given, and the Public made to pay for it. There is Reason also, to suppose that a Contract from Portsmouth to New York cannot be formed, as two of the three Proprietors have declared that if ever they contract again, it shall be separately, and independently of every other Person.

That, judging of the Expence of the Cross Posts by what is now paid upon Part of those Routes, and supposing that upon the other Parts it will not be less than the stated Price of

Post-riding prior to the Revolution which was two Dollars and two-thirds of a Dollar pr. mile pr Annum, the Cost of the Establishment now proposed will be nearly as

follows, vizt.

{ table }

If the present Expence upon some of these Roads should be deducted vizt.

{ table }

Admitting the above Calculation of Distances and Prices to be accurate, the former will, probably, be found to be nearly so; but the latter, being founded more upon Conjecture, cannot be so much depended upon. Two Dollars and two thirds pr. Mile was the Price of Post-riding upon the main Road: travelling Expences must be less, farther back in the Country; but being doubtless, greater now than before the Revolution, it is supposed that what was then paid upon the main Road may be about the Standard for the Cross Roads now.

As no Experiment has been made upon most of the proposed cross Roads, it is difficult if not impracticable to form even a tolerable

Conjecture of their probable Productiveness; but as there is annually a considerable Loss upon those already established (except from Philadelphia to Talbot Court House) it seems reasonable to conclude that there will be a much greater upon Roads through Countries less populous, that do not possess equal commercial Advantages.

In considering this Subject an Idea occurred to me, which I beg leave to suggest: it is, that the Post Master General be authorized to contract for the Establishment of the Cross Posts now proposed (and as many others as he shall from time to time think proper) with any suitable Persons who will undertake the Business at their own Expence, and give sufficient Security for the Performance of the Contract; and to give such Persons an exclusive Privilege of posting upon such Roads for a Term of Years. It is highly probable that, upon this Plan many more Establishments, than are now in Contemplation, may be made, without any Expence to the Union; which, at the Expiration of the Contract, will become Sources of Revenue. Should the Idea be a little extended, and a longer Term of years allowed to such Persons as would establish Stage Carriages for the Purpose of transporting the Mail upon Cross Roads, perhaps the Public would derive greater Benefit from the Plan. All which is most respectfully submitted.

I have the Honor to be etc.

Eben. Hazard.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 375. According to indorsement it was read August 21 and referred to a committee August 24. See ante, August 16.*

#### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 1786.**

August 24: The following committee was appointed: Mr. [Rufus] King, Mr. [Charles] Pinckney and Mr. [John] Bull, on "The report on carriage of the mail and establishing Cross posts and the postmaster genl. report thereon. "A report was rendered September 4.

#### **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1786.**

September 19: The following committees were appointed: Mr. [Charles] Pinckney, Mr. [Nathan] Dane, and Mr. [Edward] Carrington, on "Letter 19 Sept. 1786 Postmaster genl." on acceptance of specie only for postage. A report was rendered September 20, which was adopted with only minor changes and is there spread on the Journal. Ebenezer Hazard's letter is in No. 61, folio 379; the committee report is on folio 539.

#### **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1786.**

On the Report of a committee, consisting of Mr. [Charles] Pinckney, Mr. [Nathan] Dane, and Mr. [Edward] Carrington, to whom was referred a letter of the 19, from the post master general:

Whereas the United States in Congress assembled, are, by the Articles of Confederation, invested with the sole and exclusive right of establishing and regulating Post Offices, from one State to another throughout the United States, and exacting such postage on the Papers passing through the same as may be requisite to defray the expences of the said offices: and whereas the present situation and demands of the post office will on no account admit the receipt of any other money than specie; the paper currencies of the several States, from their limited circulation and probable depreciation, being totally inadequate to the purpose;<sup>125</sup>

Resolved therefore, That the post master general be, and he is hereby directed to issue instructions to the postmasters in the several states, to receive no other money in payment for postage than specie.<sup>126</sup>

Resolved, That the post-master-general be, and he is hereby empowered, in all cases where he may conceive it necessary, to demand, or authorise the demanding the postage at the time the letters are put into the post Offices.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> *The committee report, see ante, September 19, phrases it "render a payment for postage in paper totally improper." Thomson entered the report on the Journal and afterward struck it off.*

<sup>126</sup> *The committee report adds, "that the United States will indemnify the civil officers in adhering to this order." It is in No. 61, folio 539.*

<sup>127</sup> *The committee report, see ante, September 19, adds: "Your Committee report that the other points of the said letter from the Postmaster General being included in the general regulations contained in the ordinance on the Post Office, it is unnecessary for them to remark thereon."*

On the question to agree to the last resolution, the yeas and nays being required by Mr. [Edward] Carrington,

{table}

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1786.**

General Post Office,

New York, Sept. 25th., 1786.

Sir: It is with great Reluctance that I intrude upon your Excellency at this Time, but such is the nature of the Case, that silence would be criminal.

The Irregularity attending the Arrival of the Mail cannot have escaped the Observation of Congress, and the Inattention to its Safety is equally great but no actual Damage can be proved. One only of the contracting Proprietors of the Stages has fulfilled the Stipulations in the Contract; and yet it is said we have no Remedy. Upon an Application to the Commissioners of the Treasury, some of them thought the Bonds of the Delinquents ought to be put in Suit; but others were in doubt whether this could be done with any Prospect of Success as we could not prove any actual Damage sustained; they directed me to apply to Alexander Hamilton Esqr. for his opinion; and having seen it, thought it adviseable not to risque a Prosecution. The Mail arrives as irregularly as formerly and even more so; there is one now due from the Southward of Philadelphia, which should have arrived here Friday Evening; and the Philadelphia Mail which should have arrived on Friday Evening was not brought to the Office til ten O'Clock on Saturday Morning; and was then delivered by a negro Boy about fifteen Years of Age, who said he had brought it over the River the Night before, that he did not know it was the Mail, but had thrown it upon the Wharf with the Baggage of some Passengers to whom he thought it belonged; that upon their telling him the x contrary he put it again on board the Boat, where it remained til two O'Clock in the Morning when he carried it to a neighbouring House; and that it was not discovered to be the Mail until just before he brought it to the Office.

There has been similar, though not equal Inattention to the Eastern Mails which frequently are left at the Office as late as at Eleven and Twelve O'Clock at Night; and in a late Instance, have been carried about the City (and even past the Office) in the Waggon til the Passengers were set down at their respective houses, and then the Mail was left at the Stage-House, from whence it was sent to the Office. These things as well as that the Drivers are not all under Oath, have been represented to the Proprietors but without Effect; and my last Letter to one of them (of which I take the Liberty to enclose a Copy) remains unanswered. I cannot think it right to pay the public Money under such

Circumstances without first requesting the direction of Congress and that they may more easily form an Opinion, I take the Liberty of enclosing--

No. 1. A Copy of the Contract.

2. The Condition of the Proprietors Bonds; and

3. Queries proposed to Mr Hamilton with his Replies.

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1786.**

[Motion of Mr. King]

Resolved, That the post master General make such an allowance to William Bedlow post master in the City of New York in addition to the emoluments of his Office as may be a reasonable compensation for his extra services in the Receipt and dispatch of Packet Letters originally received in his Office.

Resolved, That the post mast. Gen. retain in his hands the last quarters salary of the contractors for the transportation of the mail from the City of New York to Savannah till an enquiry is made into the causes of the many disappointments which have taken place in the conveyance of the mail on that Rout.<sup>128</sup>

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1786.**

On a report of the postmaster general.

Resolved, That the Post-master general make such an allowance to the postmaster at the port where the<sup>129</sup> European Packets do, or shall statedly arrive, in addition to the emoluments of his office, as may be a reasonable compensation for his extra services in the receipt and despatch of Letters originally received into his Office from on board such Packets, and by him forwarded to other offices:<sup>130</sup>

Provided that such Allowance shall not exceed per Centum on the Amount of inland

Postage chargeable from tune to time upon such Letters, agreeably to the Ordinances of Congress. Resolved, That the Postmaster General retain in his hands, after the Expiration

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<sup>128</sup> *This motion, in the writing of Rufus King, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, III, folio 315. According to indorsement it was made October 23 and referred to the Postmaster General to report. According to Committee Book No. 190 he reported October 25.*

<sup>129</sup> *Roger Alden here begins the entry.*

<sup>130</sup> *A letter from Ebenezer Hazard, dated October 24, 1786, dealing with this matter, is in No. 61, folio 275. It refers to a motion of Congress, referred to him, but no motion seems to be recorded nor does the letter bear evidence of having been read in Congress.*

of the present Contract with the Proprietors of the Stages, such Sum as one Quarter's Pay for the Transportation of the Mail from the City of New York to Savannah in Georgia will amount to, until an Enquiry is made into the Causes of the many Disappointments which have taken place and of any others which may yet take Place, in the Conveyance of the Mail upon that Route. Referred to post m. gen. to take Order.<sup>131</sup>

#### **MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1786.**

Also was read, according to indorsement, a letter from Postmaster General Ebenezer Hazard dated October 30, forwarding intelligence from Frederick Green, Postmaster at Annapolis, informing that the Maryland legislature is considering taking control of the Maryland postoffice under the idea that Congress has control in interstate postoffice business and not within the state. Hazard's letter is in No. 61, folio 391.

#### **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1786.**

The Postmaster General, to whom was referred his Letter of this Date, begs Leave to report:

That the Act of Congress of the 4th September last, instructing him to enter into Contracts for the Conveyance of the Mail by Stage Carriages, as it admits of no other Mode if this is practicable, may be productive of Consequences, very foreign, as he conceives, from the Intentions of Congress, and highly prejudicial to the Interests of the United States. That as the Postmaster General is not left at Liberty to insist upon suitable hours for the Arrival and Departure of the Mails, he must submit to be regulated, in this particular, by the Proprietors of the Stages; and the Experience of the present Year has shewn that the Hours most suitable for them, are most inconvenient to the Merchants, whose Correspondence is the principal Support of the Post Office, and, if withdrawn, would prove the Ruin of the Department.

That, in his present Situation the Postmaster General cannot refuse to admit even exorbitant Demands for performing the Service. From these Considerations the Postmaster General begs leave to recommend that it be

Resolved, That notwithstanding the Conveyance of the Mail by Stage Carriages may be practicable, yet the Postmaster General shall not be restricted to employ them for that Purpose, unless the Proprietors thereof will agree to receive and deliver the Mails at capital Offices in hours suitable for the Transaction of mercantile Business; and as it is

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<sup>131</sup> *This resolve, in the writing of Ebenezer Hazard, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 383. It is indorsed: "Report Postmaster General respecting allowance to Post Master at N. York. first paragraph Passed Octr. 26th., 1786 Second referred to P M General to take Order Octr. 26th. 1786." A copy by Roger Alden is in No. 59, III, folio 421.*

probable that Post riders would give more Satisfaction upon some particular Parts of the Road. that he be authorised to employ them in such particular Cases.<sup>132</sup>

General Post Office

Octr. 30th., 1786.

A report from the postmaster general on the subject of forming a contract for the transportation of the mail, pursuant to the resolution of the 4 of September, being read,

A motion was made by Mr. [Rufus] King, seconded by Mr. [Melancton] Smith, That the postmaster general be informed that the words "if practicable," in the resolution of the 4th of September, are not to be construed so as to bind him to form the contract for the transportation of the mail on terms inconvenient to the mercantile interest, or to comply with the extravagant demands of the Contractors.

On the question to agree to this, the yeas and nays being required by Mr. [Rufus] King,

{table}

So the question was lost.

### **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1786.**

A motion was made by Mr. [Charles] Pinckney, seconded by Mr. [John] Bull, in the words following:

Whereas it appears that the resolution of the 4th of September last, authorizing and instructing the Postmaster general to enter into contracts for the transportation of the mails in stage-carriages, if practicable, so far as it respects the states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, is inexpedient, and that they might be conveyed upon more reasonable and convenient terms, should the postmaster-general be left at liberty to contract for the same, either by the stage carriages or post riders, as shall appear to him most conducive to the public interest: Resolved, That the postmaster-general be, and he is hereby empowered to contract for carrying the said mails through all or either of the states above mentioned, in such way and manner as shall appear to him most consistent with the public interest, giving, however, in all proposals for contracts which are equal or nearly so in expense, a preference to the conveyance by stage carriages. And whereas the intention of Congress in having the mails transported by stage carriages, was not only to render their conveyance more certain and secure, but by encouraging the establishment of stages to make the intercourse between the different parts of the Union less difficult and expensive than formerly; and as a discretionary power in the postmaster general, either to employ post riders or contract with the owners

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<sup>132</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 393. According to indorsement, it was read October 31.*

of the stage-carriages for conveying the mati in the states of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, might interfere with the object for promoting and establishing the running of stages in the said states: Resolved, That so far as respects the states of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, it is improper to alter the postmaster-general's present instructions, touching the conveyance of the mati through the same.

On the question to agree to this motion, the yeas and nays being required by Mr. [Charles] Pinckney,

{table}

So the question was lost.

#### **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1786.**

General Post Office, Novr. 2d., 1786.

Sir: The Proprietors of the Stages have delivered in their Proposals for carrying the Mails next year, and I find so very material a Difference between the Sums now paid them, and what some of them expect in future, that I should think myself guilty of Unfaithfulness in Office should I accept their offers without first reporting them to Congress.

Your Excellency will observe from the particular Statement accompanying this, that the Eastern Proprietors have risen very considerably in their Demands; they alledge that they can not alter their hours of Arrival and Departure (except the hour of Arrival at this City) without lossing half their Passengers, and therefore cannot consent to a change in this Respect.

It need not be remarked that their hours are very inconvenient, and that upon their Plan the Office in this City must be kept open all Day on Sunday for the Receipt of Letters. Mr. Hall, who has been so irregular this year, is one of those Proprietors; and, from the Embarrassments he labours under, it is not probable that he will perform better in future, and he has the longest Stage on that Route.

While I am writing, one of the Eastern Proprietors has called to inform me that through a Mistake two of them have stated their Demands too low; if it is rectified as he proposes, there will be an Addition of Two hundred and twenty-six Dollars to their Prices.

The present Contractors between New York and Philadelphia are very exorbitant in their Demands. Dennison's are much more moderate. No Stages can do the Business so well on this Route as Post Riders; but as there will be a considerable Saving if Stages are employed, and as the public Convenience will be consulted by a Change of Hours, I apprehend that a Continuance of the present mode of Conveyance between those two Cities will be satisfactory.

Your Excellency will recollect that in my Letter of July 11th., 1785, I gave it as my Opinion that Stages might be advantageously employed to the Southward of Philadelphia; the experience of this year confirms me in that Opinion, notwithstanding there have been very great Irregularities (many of which were undoubtedly unavoidable) and som criminal Neglects but these may be guarded against in the new Contract.

Upon the whole I beg Leave to recommend the Transportation of the Mail on Horseback between Portland and New York, and by Stages from New York to Savannah.

I have the honor to be, etc.

Eben. Hazard.<sup>133</sup>

Also a "Meml. N. Twining and a Motion for reducing postage" was referred to the Postmaster General to report. He reported November 3. Committee Book No. 190.

#### **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1786.**

The Com. Consisting of [Mr. Edward Carrington, Mr. Charles Pinckney, and Mr. William Houstoun] beg leave to report in part the following Resolution:

That the Post Master General be directed to enter into Contracts, in pursuance of the instructions heretofore given him; for the conveyance of the Mail from Portland in Massachusetts to Savanna in Georgia, with either the proprietors of the Stages or post riders, so as to suit the convenience of the Mercantile business, provided that upon propositions which may be equal or nearly so preference be given to the Stages.<sup>134</sup>

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Also the Postmaster General was directed to take order on "his report on Mr. Twining's metal viz. That Mr. Twining has undoubtedly made very extraordinary and successful exertions in opposition to uncommon difficulties for the establisht. of an extensive line of stages, which various testimonies induce the postmaster genl. to believe will be of great public utility; and from Mr. Twinings drafts upon him for money the P. M. genl. is led to think that much dependence has been placed on the contract with the genl. Post Office for assistance in defraying the heavy expences wch necessarily attend such an establishment. Should this resource fail so soon, the Establisht. yet in its infancy must at least languish, the public sustain an injury and Mr. Twining, notwithstanding his merit

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<sup>133</sup> *This report is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, folio 283. According to indorsement it was read November 2. November 2: The following committee was appointed: Mr. [Edward] Carrington, Mr. [Charles] Pinckney, and Mr. [William] Houstoun, on "Motion Mr. Carrington respecting stage carriages Postmaster's letter of 2 and Motions." Report was rendered November 3.*

<sup>134</sup> *This report, in the writing of Edward Carrington, in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, 553. According to indorsement the "question lost."*

in this instance probably be ruined. And as the next contract will furnish an opportunity for obtaining satisfaction for any neglects during the present year, the Post Mr. genl. begs leave to recommend that Mr. Twining's present quarter's pay be not detained after it shall become due, but that such deductions as the justice due to the United States may demand may be made hereafter, which is respectfully submitted."<sup>135</sup>

### **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1787.**

Congress assembled. Present Massachusetts Connecticut New York New Jersey Pennsylvania Virginia North Carolina South Carolina and Georgia and from Rhode island Mr [James Mitchell Varnum and from Delaware Mr [Nathaniel] Mitchell. A draught of an Ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States was read a first time.

[An Ordinance for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America<sup>136</sup>]

Whereas the communication of intelligence with regularity and dispatch, from one part to another of these United States, is essentially requisite to the safety as well as the commercial interest thereof; and the United States in Congress assembled, being by the articles of confederation, vested with the sole and exclusive right and power of establishing and regulating Post Offices throughout all the United States; and whereas it is become necessary to revise the several regulations heretofore made, relating to the Post Office, and reduce them to one act:

Be it therefore ordained by the United States in Congress assembled, and it is hereby ordained by the authority of the same, That a continued communication of posts throughout these United States, shall be established and maintained, by, and under the direction of the Post-Master General of these United States, to extend to and from the state of New Hampshire and the state of Georgia inclusive; and to and from such other parts of these United States, as Congress shall from time to time direct.

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<sup>135</sup> *Committee Book No. 190.*

<sup>136</sup> *This report, in broadside form, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 607--610. It is indorsed, "Report, Mr. Grayson. Ordinance regulating Post Office, June 1786. N.B. The original Report was committed March 27th, 1788 and not returned. this is the only copy in the office." According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190 passim, the original committee on this subject was appointed February 28, 1785, renewed on March 14, and December 27, 1785, and February 25, 1786, and the committee of this last date reported June 15, 1786. According to Committee Reports, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 189, pp. 11 and 16, the report was delivered June 15, 1786 but no consideration was given to it during 1786. The brackets indicate the mutilated parts of the document, in which the text is supplied by the editor so far as possible. In Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61 pp. 431--433, there is a document entitled "Remarks upon and Alterations proposed in the Ordinances of Congress, respecting the Post Office, which are now in Force," which was used in formulating this report. This ordinance incorporated with slight variations all the sections, except one, of the Ordinance of October 18, 1782, which is entered in Ordinances, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 175, pp. 55--67. See Journals, vol XXIII, pp. 670--678.*

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the Post-Master General, shall have two assistant Post-Masters General under him, the one for the eastern and the other for the southern department; who shall from time to time superintend and direct the post-office, in all its various departments and services, throughout the extent aforesaid, agreeably to the rules and regulations contained in this ordinance; the said Post-Master General shall have full power and authority to appoint a clerk or assistant to himself, and such and so many deputy Post-Masters, as he shall think proper; for whose fidelity he shall be accountable, each of whom shall reside at such place as the Post-Master General shall judge best suited, to maintain a due and regular transportation and exchange of mails. And the said Post-Master General shall be, and hereby is authorised to allow from time to time, to his said deputies respectively, such commissions on the monies to arise from postage in their respective departments, as he shall think their respective services shall merit; so as, that the said commissions shall not in the whole exceed twenty percent. and shall, by himself or his said deputies, respectively thereunto regular authorised by him, from time to time appoint the necessary postmen, messengers or expresses, with such salaries and allowances, as he or his said deputies respectively shall think meet, or he shall make contracts for the transportation of the mail, with the owners of the stage carriages, where the same can be effected on terms advantageous to the public, or where he shall be directed to do so by Congress.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the Post-Master General shall reside at the place where Congress shall hold their sessions; and the assistant Post-Masters General shall reside as near as may be in the centre of their districts respectively: They shall be appointed by Congress, but the Post-Master General shall have authority to suspend them from office, in case of real-conduct, until the pleasure of Congress shall be known. It shall be the duty of [the] said assistant Post-Masters General, personally to visit every post-office in their districts respectively once at least in every six months, to settle accounts with the deputy Post-Masters therein, to receive all balances due thereon to the general Post-Office, and remit the same to the Post-Master General; and in general, to transact such other business of the department, as may from time to time be committed to them by the instructions of the said Post-Master General. And it shall, moreover, be the duty of the said assistant Post-Masters General, to report particularly in writing, to the Post-Master General, at the end of every six months, their own proceedings, and the state of the post roads, with the reputed distances, and of the ferries within their districts respectively; together with their own opinions, as to any alteration in the rout of the mail.

And whereas, packets have been established between divers parts of Europe and these United States, and more may be established therefrom, as well as from one part of these United States to another; and it is necessary in order to secure the payment of the inland postage, upon letters and dispatches to be sent by such packets, that the said postage should be paid at the office at which such letters or dispatches are left to be forwarded: Be it ordained by the authority aforesaid, That neither the Post-Master General, the assistant Post-Masters General, or the deputy Post-Masters, or any other person in the postoffice department, shall forward by post, any letter, or dispatches, unless the inland postage shall first be paid therefor, at the rates established by this Ordinance; but it shall be lawful for the Post-Master General, assistant Post-Masters General, or deputy Post-

Masters, to open any letters or other dispatches (which shall not by this ordinance be exempt from a charge of postage) intended to be sent by the packets, which shall be left in any post-office to be forwarded, upon which the inland postage shall not be paid as aforesaid, and having discovered the name and place of abode of the writer, shall return the same, endorsing on the back of the said letter or dispatch, returned for want of payment of the inland postage.<sup>137</sup>

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the Post-Master General, his clerk, assistants, and deputy Post-Masters, and post and express riders and messengers, or either of them, shall not knowingly or willingly open, detain, delay, secrete, embezzle or destroy; or cause, procure, permit or suffer to be opened, detained, delayed, secreted, embezzled or destroyed, any letter or letters, packet or packets, or other dispatch or dispatches, which shall come into his power, hands or custody, by reason of his employment in, or relating to the post-office, except by the consent of the person or persons by or to whom the same shall be delivered or directed; or by an express warrant under the hand of the President of the Congress of the United States, (or in time of war, of the commander in chief of the armies of these United States, or of a commanding officer of a separate army in these United States, or of the chief executive officer of one of the said states) for that purpose; or except in such other cases, wherein he shall be authorised so to do, by the ordinances and regulations of Congress: Provided always, That no letters franked by any person, authorised by this ordinance to frank the same, shall be opened by order of any military officer, or chief executive officer of either of the states; and that the Post-Master General, or his assistants, or deputy post-masters, and post and express riders, and messengers, and all other persons employed in the post-office department, and each and every of them, not having already taken an oath of the same import, shall without delay, take and subscribe the following, to wit, "I A.B. do solemnly and sincerely swear, declare or affirm, (as the case may require) that I will well and faithfully do, execute, perform and fulfil, every duty required of me, and abstain from every act and thing forbidden by a certain ordinance, passed by the United States in Congress assembled, on the<sup>138</sup> entitled, 'An Ordinance for regulating the Post-Office of the United States."

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That if the Post-Master General shall be guilty of a breach of the said oath, or affirmation, or any part thereof, and be thereof convicted, he shall forfeit and pay one thousand dollars, to be sued for and recovered in an action of debt, in the state where the offence shall be committed, by the Treasurer of the United States, for the time being; and if any assistant, deputy post-master, post rider, or other person employed in the Post-office department, shall be guilty of a breach of the said oath, or affirmation, or any part thereof, and be thereof convicted, each one so offending, shall forfeit and pay three hundred dollars, to be sued for, and recovered in an action of debt, in the state where the offence shall be committed, by the Post-Master General for the time being; all which forfeitures, when recovered and received, shall be accounted for by the persons recovering the same, and applied towards

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<sup>137</sup> *This paragraph with slight verbal differences is in the "Remarks", Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 431--432. See note 1, p. 46.*

<sup>138</sup> *Blank to be filled with date of passage of the ordinance.*

defraying the necessary expences of the post-office; and every person employed in the post-office department, who shall be guilty of a breach of the said oath or affirmation, shall, besides paying the above mentioned forfeitures, be rendered incapable ever thereafter of holding any office, or place of trust or profit, under these United States. Provided always, That the foregoing oath, shall not be required of any special express or messenger, to be appointed at the request of any particular person or persons, in the manner herein after directed, unless the same shall be thought necessary by the Post-Master General, or the persons who shall have appointed him; which oath shall, without delay, be made by the Post-Master General, before the President of the Congress of these United States; and by each of the said clerks, assistant Post-Masters General, deputy PostMasters, and post-riders, (except as is above provided, with respect to special expresses and messengers) before the Post-Master General, or before any civil magistrate, nominated by him for that purpose; all which persons are hereby respectively authorised to administer the said oaths; and shall respectively make and sign certificates thereof. The certificates to be signed by the President, to be lodged in the office of the Secretary of the Congress of these United States; and the other certificates respectively, to be returned into the office of the Post-Master General, there to be kept as evidence of the several qualifications therein respectively certified.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the Post-Master General of these United States, for the time being, and the persons appointed by him, or employed by his orders for that purpose respectively, and no other person whatsoever, shall have the receiving, taking up, ordering, dispatching, sending post or with speed, carrying or delivering of any letters, packets or other dispatches, from any place within these United States, for hire, reward, or other profit or advantage, for receiving, carrying, or delivering such letters or packets respectively; and any other person or persons presuming so to do, shall forfeit and pay for every such offence, twenty dollars, for every letter or packet, carried by him or [them] contrary to the true intent and meaning hereof; to be sued for, and recovered in an action of debt, with costs of suit, by the Post-Master General, or the assistant Post-Masters General in the state in which the offence shall be committed; and such sums as shall be thus recovered and received, shall be accounted for by the person who shall recover and receive them, and applied towards defraying the necessary expences of the post-office. Provided nevertheless, That nothing herein contained, shall be construed to extend to any messenger purposely sent on any private affair, and carrying letters or packets relating to such affair only; or to persons sent officially on public service by any officer of these United States, being legally authorised therefor. And provided also, That nothing herein contained, shall in any manner affect any private cross post-rider, that may be employed by either of the states in the union, or by any of the citizens thereof, with the consent of the Post-Master General, or an assistant Post-Master General, until a public rider shall be established on such cross-roads.

And whereas, on the arrival of ships, both from beyond seas and coastwise, into the ports of these United States, many letters directed to merchants and other citizens thereof, have by the negligence of the masters and passengers, been either opened or long detained, to the great prejudice of those to whom the same were directed:

Be it therefore ordained, That after the day of no ship or vessel shall be permitted to break bulk, or to make any entry in any port of these United States, until the master or mate of such ship or vessel shall have produced to the proper officer at such port, a certificate signed by the Post-Master General's deputy at such port, that the said master or mate has delivered into the post-office the letters brought in such ship or vessel: And to the end, that the revenue of the post-office may not be injured by the fraudulent concealment of letters, the Post-Master General's deputies respectively shall have authority, and are hereby required to administer to each master or mate bringing such letters to their offices as aforesaid, an oath (or affirmation) that the letters so brought are, to the best of his knowledge and belief, all the letters brought into such port by the vessel of which he is the master or mate, in her present voyage, excepting only such as are directed to the owners or consignees of such vessel. And if any collector or other officer of the customs within these United States, shall admit to an entry in his office, any vessel before the master or mate thereof shall have produced to him a certificate of the delivery of the letters signed by the Post-Master General's deputy as aforesaid, such collector or other officer so admitting such vessel to an entry, shall forfeit and pay for every offence two hundred dollars. And if the captain or commander of any vessel shall enter his said vessel, or in any manner break bulk, without giving an account as aforesaid, of the letters, packets and dispatches on board his said vessel, or in case of having brought none in his vessel, shall not make affidavit thereof as aforesaid, he shall forfeit two hundred dollars for every such failure, to be recovered by action of debt, bill, plaint, or information, in any court of record within these United States, and the Post-Master General, assistant Post-Masters General, and deputy Post-Masters, are in every instance of neglect or omission, hereby specially directed to prosecute for the same, as they shall answer to the contrary at their peril.

And be it further ordained, That the Post-Master General be authorised and directed, to establish, as soon as it can conveniently be done, so many cross-posts, as will be necessary to keep up a communication between the great post road, and all the por[t]s of entry throughout these United States.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That if any person, not being a post or express rider in the service of the General Post-Office, shall carry any letters, packets, or other dispatches from one place to another, within these United States, on any of the post roads to any place within these United States, for hire or reward, except in cases as is herein before excepted, or shall not, when bringing letters from beyond sea for hire or reward, deliver the same at the post-office, if any there be, at the place of his or her arrival, he or she shall, in each of the beforementioned cases, forfeit and pay, for every letter, packet or dispatch, carried contrary to the true intent and meaning hereof, twenty dollars, to be recovered by the Post-Master General, or any of his assistants or deputies, in an action of debt in the state wherein the offence shall have been committed, with costs of suit, and applied towards the expences of the post-office, and be accounted for accordingly; and if such offence shall be committed by any person holding a civil or military commission under these United States, he shall on conviction thereof, forfeit his commission. And for every letter, packet, or other dispatch from beyond sea, which any person shall so deliver at the post-office, he shall receive of the post-master, at the post-

office, for the same, one ninetieth of a dollar. And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the Post-Master General shall cause the mail to be carried with all care and dispatch, at least in every week, to and from each of the stated post-offices; and his assistants and deputies, shall keep and transmit to him, regular, particular, just and quarterly accounts of the incomes and expenditures of their respective offices; and from those and such other materials as shall be necessary for the purpose, the Post-Master General shall form and keep regular and just accounts of the incomes and expenditures of the general post-office, which he shall annually deliver to the Comptroller of Accounts of these United States. And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the Post-Master General's deputies respectively, shall regularly publish at the expiration of each quarter (if it can conveniently be done) in one of the public newspapers, for three successive weeks, a list of all letters, at that time remaining in their offices, and at the expiration of the subsequent quarter, shall send such of the letters so published, as then remain, as dead letters, to the general post-office; where they shall be opened and inspected by the Post-Master General, who shall carefully preserve such of them as may contain valuable papers, with the papers therein respectively contained, and shall insert in a book to be kept for that purpose, the date of such letter, and the name and place of direction on the same, together with a particular account of the inclosures contained therein; and at the expiration of each quarter, the Post-Master General shall cause to be published, in one of the news-papers of the state, in which the owners of such valuable papers are supposed to reside, (if a news-paper is printed in such state) else in the most convenient paper, an advertisement, informing, that such papers are in his possession, and shall deliver such letters and inclosures, to the person or persons to whom the same shall be directed, or his, her, or their order, at the post-office, he, she, or they first paying the postage for the same, at the rates from time to time established by these United States in Congress assembled, and the necessary expence of such publications as aforesaid; and in case of neglect to take [up such ]letters the necessary expences shall be charged [to the United] States.

And be it further ordained by the au[thority afor]esaid, That the Post-Master General, his assi[stants a]nd deputies respectively, shall, and they are hereby [authorized], whenever the danger of robberies of the [mail s]hall in their respective judgments render the same ne[cessary] to hire occasional expresses for carrying t[he publ]ic dispatches, and such private letters, as from time [to time sh]all be in the post-offices; who shall not be confined to fixed days, nor to travel the usual post roads, b[ut shall] in those respects, be subject to the order and direction of the Post-Master General, and his assistants [and deputi]es respectively. And to the end that the expence of several expresses destined to the same place, at the [same time], may be avoided, Be it ordained by the authority aforesaid, That all extraordinary expresses in the publ[ic service] shall, if a post-office be established at the place, from which they shall severally take their departure, be hired by the Post-Master General, or his deputy, and set out from and return to such post-office, with the letters, packets and dispatches to be carried by them respectively.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the postage of all letters, packets and dispatches to and from the different post-offices, within these United States, shall be at the following rates in penny weights and grains of silver, estimating each

penny weight, as at present, at five ninetieths of a dollar, to wit. For any distance not exceeding sixty miles, one penny weight, upwards of sixty and not exceeding one hundred, one penny weight eight grains; upwards of one hundred and not exceeding two hundred, two penny weight; upwards of two hundred and not exceeding three hundred, two penny weight sixteen grains, and so on, adding sixteen grains for every hundred miles: And for all single letters to or from Europe, by packet or dispatch vessels belonging to these United States, four penny weights. The above rates to be doubled for double letters; trebled for treble letters, and a packet weighing an ounce, to be charged equal to four single letters, and in that proportion if of a greater weight: And to the foregoing rates shall be added, sixteen grains upon every letter, packet or dispatch which shall come into the post-office from beyond sea, by any other packet or dispatch vessels, and is to be forwarded inland by post; but upon each letter or packet brought from beyond sea, and directed to any person at the place where the the vessel shall arrive, the deputy Post-Masters respectively shall charge only two ninetieths of a dollar, which shall be in full compensation for their care and trouble respecting such letters and packets:

And, forasmuch as the customary allowance of one ninetieth of a dollar for each letter and packet brought from beyond sea (otherwise than by packets or dispatch vessels) and lodged in the post-office, has been found to be beneficial, the deputy Post-Masters respectively are hereby authorised to continue the said allowance to all masters of vessels (other than packets or dispatch vessels) bringing letters and packets from beyond sea, and lodging them in the post-office.

And whereas, the post-master at the port at which the European packets stately arrive, has extraordinary services to perform, for which he receives no compensation: Be it ordained by the authority aforesaid, That such allowance shall be made to the said post-master therefor as the Post-Master General shall deem reasonable; Provided, that the same shall not exceed per centum on the amount of the inland postage on the letters received by the packets, and forwarded from his to other offices.

And in order to prevent unnecessary delays in the transportation and delivery of letters, whereby the mercantile interest, and correspondence in general, may be materially injured: Be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That all mails brought by packets or dispatch vessels, to any port within these United States, shall be sent immediately upon the arrival of such packet or dispatch vessel, unopened and in the first instance to the post-office at such port; and all mails to be sent by such packets or dispatch vessels, on their return, shall be made up at the said post-office, sealed with the seal thereof, and taken from thence immediately on board such packet or dispatch vessel, by the commander thereof, or some person duly authorised by him for that purpose in writing; nor shall any person, other than the Post-Master General's deputy, and the persons employed by him, take up or receive any letters to be forwarded by such packets or dispatch vessels, on penalty of two hundred dollars, to be sued for and recovered, for every offence, in an action of debt, by the Post-Master General, or the assistant Post-Masters General, in any court of record in that state in which the offence shall be committed; and such penalty when recovered, shall be applied towards defraying the necessary expences of the post-office. And be it further ordained by the authority

aforesaid, That the following rates shall be paid for the carriage of newspapers, magazines, and all other periodical publications sent by post, to wit.

For each newspaper, for any distance not exceeding... dwts. grs.

60 miles

60 to 100 do.

100 to 200 do.

And so on for every 100 miles; and for each magazine or other periodical publication, containing but one sheet, or less, the same rates as above, for the same distances; but if they contain more than one sheet, then the above rates shall be charged in proportion to the distance, for each sheet, such magazine or other periodical publication shall contain. Provided always, That no news-paper, magazine or other periodical publication, shall be suffered to pass in the mail, unless it shall be thoroughly dry, and the wrapper left open at one end, so that it may be clearly seen how many news papers or other publications, and whether any letters are contained therein; and if it shall appear upon examination, that any letters are concealed under such wrapper, the full rate of postage shall be charged not only on such letter, but also on the other contents of the wrapper. And whereas, in order to promote the circulation of useful intelligence, the printers of news-papers have been allowed to exchange their papers with each other by means of the post, without any charge of postage: Be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the same privilege shall still be continued, provided that such papers shall be dried, and put up as is before directed; and provided also, that each printer shall send to each other printer [but one copy each of] his papers, and that such papers shall not be carried [farther by post] than to the next capital city [of a state in] which a news-paper shall be printed.

And to the end [that] all persons concerned in the post-office d[epartment] may diligently and without interruption attend t[o the du]ties of their respective stations; Be it ordai[ned by the] authority aforesaid, That the said persons shall be exemp[ted fr]om militia duty, and from serving as jur[ors and co] nstables.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That the salary o[f the Post]-Master General, shall be dollars per annum, and that of each of the assistant Post-Masters[General] dollars per annum; and that the allowance to the Post-Master General for a clerk, shall be five[hundred d]ollars per annum, and no more.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That all letters, packets and dispatches to and from the members and secretary of Congress, while at the place where Congress, or a committee of the States shall hold their sessions, and actually attending therein; to and from the late commander in chief of the armies of these United States; to and from the commissioners of the treasury collectively; to and from the heads of the departments of war, and foreign affairs, on public service, shall pass and be carried free of postage; provided that the whole of the superscription of letters from any of the above

persons shall be written by the person entitled to the privilege of franking them, whose name shall be also subscribed.

And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, That all former and other acts, ordinances and resolutions, of these United States in Congress assembled, heretofore made relating to the post-office, be, and the same, and each and every of them, is and are hereby repealed and made void.

Ordered That Wednesday next be assigned for a second reading. [Motion on cross-posts<sup>139</sup>]

Resolved, That the Postmaster General be authorized and empowered to grant, for a Term not exceeding seven Years, to any Person or Persons who will give satisfactory Security for the performance of their Contract, the exclusive Privilege of carrying Letters and Packets for hire, upon any Cross Road within the United States [State of Virga], upon which he may think a Post Rider necessary; provided that the Postage to be charged by such Persons for the Carriage of Letters and Packets shall in no Case exceed the Rates charged, pursuant to the Acts of Congress, for similar Letters and Packets carried the same Distance upon the main Post Road, and that he from time to time report to Congress all contracts entered into by him. Provided also that Contracts so to be made shall not involved the General post office Occasion any expence to the Genl post Office or lessen the Revenues of the same.

#### **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1787.**

The post master general to whom were referred sund motions respecting cross posts having reported thereon

[Report of Postmaster General on sundry motions<sup>140</sup>]

General Post Office, February 15th. 1787.

Sir: I have now the Honor to report upon the Motions made yesterday respecting the Transportation of Letters between Fort Pitt and the Falls of the Ohio, and, for the farming of Cross Posts: and I beg leave to observe, That, as it appears to me, the Plan proposed by the former will be attended with an Uncertainty incompatible with every Idea of a Post Office;

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<sup>139</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 401, in the writing of Ebenezer Hazard and Abraham Clark. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 136, this motion and another motion, respecting the transportation of letters between Fort Pitt and the falls of the Ohio, were referred to the Postmaster General to report. Report rendered February 15. See February 20, 1787.*

<sup>140</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 397--398, read February 15, 1787. See February 13, 1787.*

That it will furnish no Mode of Conveyance which the People do not already possess;

That, as the writers will generally be on the Spot, they will be as likely to know of Opportunities of sending their Letters as a Postmaster would, and could choose such as they themselves had Confidence in; which they will, doubtless, prefer to lodging them in the hands of another Person, and paying him for sending them; which, I apprehend, is the Construction they will put upon the Charge of Postage, for it will be difficult for them to conceive of Postage where no Post is employed.

In Case of an Establishment at such a Distance as at the Falls of the Ohio, Chance must direct in the Choice of a Postmaster; the Chance is against his being a suitable Person; and it will be difficult, if not impracticable to procure Returns and Remittances; and, indeed, the customary Allowance to Postmasters would be no Compensation for the Trouble of making them, and much less for the Responsibility of the Officer.

For these Reasons I am of Opinion that the proposed Plan would not be eligible; and I beg leave to add, that, from a Circumstance now taking Place, the Business probably may be effected without being subject to so many Inconveniences. A Contract is nearly completed for the Cross Road from Alexandria to Bedford and Fort Pitt, so that a Postmaster at the latter Place will be appointed of Course; if the Postage on Letters sent by this Rider, to go beyond Fort Pitt, is paid at the Office in which the Letters are first lodged, there will be no Impediment to prevent the Postmaster's forwarding them by the first good Conveyance he can meet with, and it will be his Duty to do it.

The Proposal for the Establishment of Cross Posts cannot, in any way, be injurious to the Public; but, on the contrary, may be the means of making many Establishments which would not otherwise be made, accommodating the Citizens of many Parts of the Union who now derive no Benefit from Posts, and, eventually, of greatly encreasing the Revenues of the General Post Office. All which is respectfully submitted, etc.

Eben Hazard

His Excellency

The President of Congress

On motion of Mr [William] Grayson seconded by Mr S[tephen] M[ix] Mitchell

Resolved, That the post master general be and he is hereby authorised and empowered to grant for a term not exceeding seven years to any person or persons who will give satisfactory security for the performance of his or their contract the exclusive privilege of carrying letters and packets for hire upon the cross roads within the State of Virginia from the City of Richmond to Staunton in the County of Augusta and from Winchester in the County of Frederick to Staunton; provided that the postage to be charged by such person or persons for the carriage of letters and packets shall in no case exceed the rates charged pursuant to the Acts of Congress for similar letters and packets carried the same

distance upon the main post road and provided also that such contract shall not occasion any expence to the general post Office.<sup>141</sup>

According to indorsement, an extract of a letter from a gentleman in Kentucky to a friend in Philadelphia, dated December 12, 1786, giving an account of the conduct of General Clarke, was communicated to Congress by the President and referred to the Secretary for transmission to the Governor of Virginia. The copy is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 49, pp. 323--324.]

#### **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1787.**

Mr. William Grayson, Mr. Abraham Clark and Mr. William Blount, on a motion respecting the transportation of letters between Fort Pitt and the Falls of the Ohio. See February 13 and 15, 1787.

#### **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1787.**

[Letter of Postmaster General regarding mail service<sup>142</sup>]

General Post Office,

New York February 22d. 1787.

Sir: Pursuant to the Orders of Congress of 26th October last, I have detained in my hands so much money as one Quarter's Pay for the Transportation of the Mail from this City to Philadelphia amounts to, and have endeavoured to find out the Causes of the many Disappointments which have taken Place in the Conveyance of the Mad upon that Route. For this Purpose I applied to Col. Ogden (the Contractor) who supposed they might be sufficiently accounted for from the Incivility of a Mr Jacamiah Smith, who keeps the Perry at Powles Hook; and, as is alledged, frequently refused sending the Mati across, upon its Arrival, which prevented its being brought to the Office in Season. He referred me for Particulars to a Mr Joseph Lyon, who usually took the Mati from this City, and went with it, sometimes as far as Elizabeth Town, sometimes to Hackinsack Perry, and sometimes no farther than to Powles Hook. Mr Lyon called upon me, and confirmed Col. Ogden's Account of Mr Smith's Incivility; and added, that they sometimes met with similar Treatment at Hackinsack Perry; and, that he believed that when the Mati had

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<sup>141</sup> *February 15, 1787. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 137, the following committee was appointed: Mr. Rufus King, Mr. James Madison, Mr. Lambert Cadwallader, Mr. Charles Pinckney and Mr. Abraham Clark on a motion for repealing the Ordinance of October 13, 1786, for establishing a Board to liquidate and settle all accounts between the United States and individual States. Cf. Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 59, III, pp. 431--432. Mr. Pinckney was replaced by Mr. James Mitchel Varnum on March 12, 1787. See March 29, 1787.*

<sup>142</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 291--292, read February 26, 1787.*

arrived too late, it had been generally owing to Detentions occasioned by the Badness of the Roads and Ferries. This is the only Person who been with me on Behalf of Col. Ogden; and he can speak with Certainty respecting no other Part of the Road than that between this City and Elizabeth Town. From Information received otherwise it appears, that although Col. Ogden contracted for the whole Distance from New York to Philadelphia, yet his Stages travelled but a small Part of it; and the Owners of the others, having no Interest in the Mail, would come under no particular Obligations about it; and their Drivers could not be put under Oath as the Contract required. He afterwards sold his Interest in the Stages, before the Expiration of the Contract, reserving to himself the Emoluments arising from the Carriage of the Mail. It was from these Sources, I apprehend, that the Disappointments which took place in the Conveyance of the Mail arose; to which may be added, that as there was no Person with the Mail whose express Business it was to take Care of it, it was, of Course, but a secondary Object of Attention. For a small Distance on this End of the Road, indeed, Mr Lyon had the Care of it; but, as he informs me, he was not under Oath; and there have been Instances of the Mail's being brought from Powles Hook to this City, without being expressly in the Charge of any Person.

I now beg Leave to inform your Excellency, that Col. Ogden is in Town, expecting Payment of what is due to him; and I wait only the Orders of Congress for compleating the Settlement with him.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

Eben Hazard

[Letter of Postmaster General on establishing Posts with Canada<sup>143</sup>]

General Post Office February 26th 1787

Sir: A Letter lately received from Hugh Finlay, Esquire, Deputy Postmaster General for the Province of Quebec, has at length enabled me to report upon the Proposal for establishing regular Posts between the American and Canadian Offices. A Correspondence upon this Subject took Place between Mr. Finlay and myself, and the Business was so far matured that a Plan for conducting it upon equitable, and mutually beneficial Principles was proposed; and from the Ardor Mr Finlay had discovered upon the Occasion, I flattered myself the Establishment would have been made; however, he thought it prudent to wait the Arrival of Lord Dorchester, as he might have Instructions upon the Subject. Since that Event has taken Place Mr Finlay thinks it unnecessary to enter on any new Mode of forwarding the Canadian Mails to New York, and thus an End is put to the Business. I have the Honor to enclose your Excellency a Copy of Mr. Finlay's Letter, and am, very respectfully,

Your Excellency's most obedient, etc.,

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<sup>143</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 295, read February 26, 1787. The letter of Finlay is on p. 299.*

Eben Hazard

**MONDAY, MARCH 12, 1787.**

Congress assembled. Present Massachusetts New York New Jersey Pennsylvania, Delaware Virginia North Carolina and Georgia and from Rhode island Mr [James Mitchell Varnum and from Connecticut Mr S[tephen] M[ix] Mitchell. [Motion of Mr. King for reducing postage rates <sup>144</sup>]

Resolved that the Post M. G. be and hereby is authorised to lower the present rate of Postage on Letters, Packets Dispatches, provided that he may not reduce the same more than twenty five per Cent lower than the present Establishment.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 1787.**

[Report of Postmaster General on reducing the rates of postage<sup>145</sup>]

General Post Office

March 13th.1787.

The Postmaster General begs Leave to report upon the Motion for reducing the Rates of Postage.

That he apprehends such a Measure will prove generally satisfactory, as he has repeatedly heard it alledged that the present Rates are too high; That, should the Rates be reduced, he thinks it probable an Increase of Correspondence will prevent a Diminution of the Revenue.

He is therefore of Opinion that a Reduction of the present Rates of Postage is adviseable; but, inasmuch as some considerable Time will be necessary for making the Calculations, getting the new Tables of Rates printed, and forwarded to the several Postmasters so that the new Establishment may take Place in all the Parts of the Union at the same Time; and as, from his having no Clerk, his Attention must frequently be withdrawn from this Business by the other Duties of his Office, he begs Leave to propose that the Receipt of the reduced Postage do not commence before the first Day of January next. Which is respectfully submitted.

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<sup>144</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, III, p. 339, in the writing of Mr. Rufus King. On the back of the original is noted a vote by states. According to indorsement and Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 140, the motion was referred to the Postmaster General to report. Report rendered March 15, 1787.*

<sup>145</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 407, read March 15, 1787. See March 12 and October 20, 1787.*

Eben Hazard

**FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 1787.**

On the report<sup>146</sup> of a comee. consisting of Mr. [William] Grayson Mr [James Mitchel] Varnum and Mr [Stephen Mix] Mitchell to whom was referred a memorial of Mathias Ogden,

Resolved That the postmaster general take Order for the payment of the quarter's wages to Matthias Ogden for the transportation of the mail.

**MONDAY, APRIL 23, 1787.**

On Motion of Mr [Edward] Carrington seconded by Mr [William Samuel] Johnson Resolved That the privilege of sending and receiving letters and packets free of postage be extended to the members of the Convention to be held in Philadelphia on the second Monday in May next in the same manner as is allowed to the members of Congress.

**MONDAY, JULY 16, 1787.**

[Letter of Postmaster General on carrying mails<sup>147</sup>]

General Post Office, New York July 16th. 1787.

Sir: As more than half the Duration of the Contract with the Proprietors of the Stages has elapsed, it is high Time to advertise for another, should it be thought adviseable to continue this Mode of transporting the public Mails; I beg, therefore, to be honored with the Commands of Congress upon this Subject; and have the honor to be, etc.,

Eben Hazard<sup>148</sup>

**MONDAY, JULY 23, 1787.**

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<sup>146</sup> *This report, in the writing of Mr. William Grayson, was read March 21, 1787. It is indorsed on Ogden's memorial, read March 20, 1787.*

<sup>147</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 315, read July 16, 1787. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 152, the letter was referred to a committee consisting of Mr. Nathan Dane, Mr. Benjamin Hawkins and Mr. William Pierce, which reported July 23, 1787. Acted on July 26 and 27, 1787.*

<sup>148</sup> *July 16, 1787. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 152, the committee of July 11, on Virginia indents, was discharged and the delegates of Virginia were to be furnished with a copy of the report. See July 11, 1787.*

Resolved that the post master General be, and he is hereby authorised and instructed to enter into contracts with sufficient security for the conveyance of the mails for one year, Passed commencing on the first day of January next from Portland in Massachusetts, to Savannah in Georgia, by Stage carriages from Portland to Petersburg, if practicable, and from Petersburg Savannah by Post riders, and that the same be done by four or more Separate contracts; And in Case of only four contracts the first to extend from Portland to New York; the second from New York to Philadelphia; the third from Philadelphia to Petersburg [Suffolk in Virga]; and the fourth from Petersburg [Suffolk] to Savannah, by such route as the Post master General may find most convenient.<sup>149</sup>

Resolved that the said Post master General be further authorised and instructed to make arrangements for the transportation of the mail for one year from the first day of January next on the cross roads mentioned in the resolve of Congress passed September the 4th 1786 and [also for] on the principles therein provided mentioned<sup>150</sup> provided the general post office shall not be at any additional expence for the postage on sd Cross roads [in the resolution of feby 15 1787.]

#### **THURSDAY, JULY 26, 1787.**

On the report<sup>151</sup> of a comee. consisting of Mr [Nathan] Dane Mr [Benjamin] Hawkins and Mr [William] Pierce to whom was referred a letter<sup>152</sup> from the postmaster genl,

Resolved That the post master general be and he is hereby authorised and instructed to enter into contracts with sufficient security for the conveyance of the mails for one year commencing on the first day of January next from Portland in Massachusetts to Savannah in Georgia by Stage carriages if practicable and that the same be done by four or more separate contracts; and in case of only four contracts the first to extend from Portland to New York; the second from New York to Philadelphia; the third from Philadelphia to Suffolk in Virginia and the fourth from Suffolk to Savannah by such route as the postmaster general may find most convenient.

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<sup>149</sup> *An apparent amendment to the latter part of this resolve, undated, is as follows:*

*"And that the same be done by [four] three separate contracts the first to extend from Portsmouth to N York; The second from N York to Petersburg; and the third to extend from Petersburg to Georgia. Philadelphia; the third from Philadelphia to Petersburg and the fourth from Petersburg to Georgia." Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 558.*

<sup>150</sup> *In Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 554, there is an undated amendment, in the writing of Mr. R. H. Lee, as follows: "After the word (Mentioned) in the 6th. line of the second resolve, insert And the said Postmaster General is hereby authorised and instructed to contract (in addition to the Cross Posts mentioned in the resolve aforesaid) for the establishment of a Cross Post from Fredericksburg in Virginia to Hobbs's Hole on Rappahanock river and from thence to the Port of Entry on Yeocomico upon Potomac river. And from thence to Urbanna the Port of entry on Rappahanock river." See July 27, 1787.*

<sup>151</sup> *See July 23, 1787.*

<sup>152</sup> *See July 16, 1787.*

Resolved That so far as respects the Contract from Suffolk to Savannah the postmaster general may agree that the Mail shall be carried twice a week from the first of May to the first of November and once a week from the first of November to the first of May.

**FRIDAY, JULY 27, 1787.**

Congress assembled present as yesterday.

Congress resumed the consideration of the report<sup>153</sup> of the committee on the letter from the postmr genl and thereupon

Resolved That the postmaster general be and he is hereby authorised and instructed to make arrangements for the transportation of the mail for one year from the first day of January next on the cross roads mentioned in the resolve<sup>154</sup> of Congress passed the 4th. Sept 1786 and also for the establishment of a cross post from Fredericksburg in Virginia to Hobb's Hole on Rappahanock river and from thence to the port of Entry on Yeocomico upon Potomac river And from thence to Urbanna the port of entry on Rappahanock river, On the principles provided in the resolution of the 15th. of Feby. 1787.

**THURSDAY AUGUST 16, 1787**

It was moved and seconded to agree to the following as the 14 section of the 6. article.

"every order, resolution or vote, to which the concurrence "of the Senate and House of representatives may be necessary "(except on a question of adjournment, and in the cases "hereinafter mentioned) shall be presented to the President for his "revision; and before the same shall have force, shall be "approved by him, or, being disapproved by him, shall be repassed "by the Senate and House of representatives, according to the "rules and limitations prescribed in the case "of a bill" which passed in the affirmative. [Ayes -- 9; noes -- 1]<sup>155</sup>

It was moved and seconded to insert the following proviso after the first clause of the 1st section of the 7-article.

"Provided that no Tax, Duty or Imposition shall be laid "by the Legislature of the United States on articles exported "from any State"

It was moved and seconded to postpone the consideration of the Proviso which passed in the affirmative. [Ayes -- 10; noes -- 1.]

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<sup>153</sup> See July 23, 1787.

<sup>154</sup> *Journals*, vol. XXXI, pp. 629--630.

<sup>155</sup> *Vote 195, Detail of Ayes and Noes, see Records of July 20, note 3; see also note 3 below.*

It was moved and seconded to add the words "and post roads" after the words "post offices" in the 7 clause of the 1st sect of the 7. article which passed in the affirmative. [Ayes -- 6; noes -- 5.]

It was moved and seconded to strike the words "and emit bills" out of the 8. clause of the 1 section of the 7 article which passed in the affirmative. [Ayes -- 9; noes -- 2.]

[To adjourn Ayes -- 4; noes -- 7.]<sup>156</sup>

separate questions being taken on the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 clauses of the 1. sect. of the 7 article as amended

They passed in the affirmative.

And then the House adjourned till to-morrow at 11 o'Clock A.M.

Table image for Detail of Ayes and Noes [Beginning of p. 12 of blank book]<sup>3</sup><sup>157</sup>

[At this point the secretary began keeping the Detail of Ayes and Noes in a bound blank book. On page 1 he apparently started to copy some of the more important votes from the loose sheets. He had thus copied Votes 17, 29, 30, 32, 34--37, 39--41, when he stopped and, leaving ten blank pages, commenced recording the votes of August 16 on page 12. After filling up pages 12--16, he turned back to page 2 and recorded the last votes on that and the page following.]

## **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17. 1787, IN CONVENTION**

Mr. Richard Henry Lee, Mr. William Grayson and Mr. William Few on a memorial of Nathaniel Twining, praying for relief in connection with losses incurred in his mail contract. Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 41, X, pp. 259--262, read September 20, and acted on September 25 and 26, 1787. There is another unsigned memorial of Twining with reference to his contract in Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 41, X, pp. 255--256. It is endorsed by Thomson as read November 2, 1787 and referred to the Postmaster General to report. No business was transacted on this date and no other information regarding this memorial appears.

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<sup>156</sup> *Vote 305, Detail of Ayes and Noes, but there is no reason for placing it here, except that it follows Vote 304.*

<sup>157</sup> *At this point the secretary began keeping the Detail of Ayes and Noes in a bound blank book. On page 1 he apparently started to copy some of the more important votes from the loose sheets. He had thus copied Votes 17, 29, 30, 32, 34--37, 39--41, when he stopped and, leaving ten blank pages, commenced recording the votes of August 16 on page 12. After filling up pages 12--16, he turned back to page 2 and recorded the last votes on that and the page following.*

## **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1787 (Constitutional Convention)**

Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 141, I, pp. 246--247.

[Report of the Convention of the States<sup>158</sup>]

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Section. 8. The Congress shall have Power ...

To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

## **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1787.**

[Letter of Postmaster General regarding education of White Eyes<sup>159</sup>]

August 10th. 1787.

Sir: Some Time ago I called on the Board of Treasury with a former Accot. of Col. Morgan's for the Maintenance and Education of White Eyes, and they informed me that the Resolution of Congress, authorising that Expence, had long since expired, and of Course the Accot. could not be paid. When I waited upon them yesterday, as your Excellency desired, they repeated the Information, and referred me to the Comptroller's Office for Particulars. I went there, but the Clerk could not then lay his hand on the Papers relating to that particular Business. I apprehend the fact is, that as the time fixed for the Maintenance of White Eyes, by the Act of Congress, has expired, without any

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<sup>158</sup> *This report consists of the Constitution, the resolution of the Convention and the letter of Washington to the President of Congress, transmitting the first two documents. According to the Despatch Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 185, IV, p. 17, this report was delivered September 20, 1787. According to a letter of William Bingham to Thomas FitzSimons, dated September 21, 1787, the report of the Convention was received and read September 20, 1787 and Wednesday next (September 26) assigned for consideration. The copy of the Constitution and resolution, engrossed on five parchment sheets, which was transmitted to Congress, is preserved in the Shrine in the Library of Congress. The original of Washington's letter, which probably bore Thomson's endorsements, has not been located. Copies of the Convention imprint of the report, printed by Dunlap and Claypoole, are in the Library of Congress. See September 27 and 28, 1787. The text of the Constitution and the resolution of the Convention here printed is taken from the engrossed copy.*

<sup>159</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 311, read September 21, 1787. A letter of Col. G. Morgan, August 6, 1787, on this same subject, is copied by Thomson in the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 167, where it is stated that it was referred to the Board of Treasury to take order.*

subsequent Act being passed, the Comptroller does not think himself justifiable in giving a Certificate for, nor the Commissioners of the Treasury in paying, any more Money on that Account; while, at the same Time Col. Morgan does not conceive himself at Liberty to send White Eyes home, without the Orders of Congress for that Purpose.

I have the Honor to be, etc.,

Eben Hazard<sup>160</sup>

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1787.**

The committee consisting of Mr R[ichard] H[enry] Lee Mr [William] Grayson and Mr [William] Few to whom was referred a petition<sup>161</sup> of Nathaniel Twining having reported<sup>162</sup> "That it appears to them that Mr Twining having undertaken the business of conveying the mails by stages through a great extent of country interrupted by many wide ferries and through very deep and sandy roads hath found from experience that the expence of this undertaking exceeded the allowance he had agreed by contract to receive from the public. That his willingness to execute the business on the most reasonable terms had induced him for the year 1787 to accept of about one thousand dollars less than had been allowed him for the year preceding whilst the other contractors, though on roads more practicable taking advantage of the necessity that compelled the postmaster to form contracts for the conveyance of the mails insisted upon and actually received a larger allowance for the year 1787 than was allowed for the year preceding. That from necessity he has been obliged to convey the mails during some part of the time and on some parts of the line, by horses instead of carriages, which according to the strictness of the contract he hath entered into, makes him liable to penalties which still add to his misfortunes. That in consideration of the premises and of the propriety of giving reasonable encouragement to the undertakers of new and useful employments for the public who are commonly subjected as Mr Twining has been to unforeseen difficulties the committee recommend That the postmaster general be instructed to allow Mr Twining the same consideration for his services for the year 1787 as he contracted for in the year 1786, and to remit to Mr Twining the penalties he hath incurred by the failures of his contract as before specified, taking care to reserve an indemnification for the public in cases where money has been actually paid or been contracted to be paid for services in conveying the mail unperformed by Mr Twining. And that the mails may for the remaining part of this year be continued to be conveyed on this route by horses in place of carriages in such part of his line where they have already been so done.

The foregoing report being under consideration A division was called for and on the question That the postmaster general allow Mr Twining the same consideration for his services for the year 1787 as he contracted for in the year 1786 the yeas and nays being required by Mr [Melancton] Smith

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<sup>160</sup> See *September 20, 1787*.

<sup>161</sup> See *September 22, 1787*. See also *September 26, 1787*.

<sup>162</sup> See *September 22, 1787*. See also *September 26, 1787*.

{ table }

So the question was lost.

On the question

Resolved That the post master genl be and he is hereby instructed to remit to Mr Twining the penalties he hath incurred by the failures of his contract by conveying the mail by horses instead of carriages, taking care to reserve an indemnification for the public in cases where money has been actually paid or been contracted to be paid for services in conveying the mail unperformed by Mr Twining And that the mails may for remaining part of this year be continued to be conveyed on this route by horses in place of carriages in such parts of his line where they have already been so done.

## **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1787.**

[Motion respecting remission of penalties of Mr. Twining.<sup>163</sup>]

Whereas the Act of Congress of Sepr. 25 last confines the remission of penalties to Mr. Twining to failures of his Contract by conveying the Mail by Horses instead of Carriages, which relief will be but partial, as from unavoidable accidents in some instances the carriage of the Mail was interrupted

Resolved That the Postmaster General extend the remission of penalties incurred by Mr. Twining in the failure of his Contracts to all such failures as have been already incurred.

## **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1787.**

Congress assembled present as yesterday.

A motion<sup>164</sup> being made by Mr [William] Grayson seconded by Mr [Daniel] Huger That from and after the last day of Decr. next the public mail be conveyed from Petersburg in Virginia by the route of Halifax, Tarborough, Fayetteville, Camden and Columbia to the town of Augusta in the state of

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<sup>163</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 566, in the writing of Mr. Richard Henry Lee. This motion is also entered by Roger Alden in the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 169. According to indorsement and the Committee Book it was referred to the Post Master General to take order.*

<sup>164</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 563, in the writing of Charles Thomson. After "the stage" the original reads "carriages or with single horse riders as he shall judge best [will be attended with least expence]" There is also the following added clause, "with cross post from such part of the road he may think to the town of Suffolk in Virginia".*

Georgia and that the postmaster genl make his contracts with the owners of the stage carriers accordingly.

On the question to agree to this the yeas and nays being required by Mr [William] Few,

{table}

So the question was lost.

[Motion of Mr. King on conveyance of mails<sup>165</sup>]

That the p. Mast General be authorized to alter the route from Petersburg in Virga. to Savannah in Georgia to Augusta in Georgia provided he may judge it beneficial and expedient and that in case of such alteration that he establish cross post agreeably to the resolution principles provided in the R. of feby 15, 1787 to the commercial towns on the sea-coast.<sup>166</sup>

Letters of M. Beaumarchais, July 2, 1787, and his agent, M. Chevallie, October 10, 1787, regarding the accounts of the former. Report rendered September 25, 1788.

According to the Despatch Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 185, IV, p. 19, there was received:

A memorial of the inhabitants of Germantown, October 1, 1787, which was read, offering that place for Congress. Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 46, pp. 137--139.]

#### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1787.**

Report of Postmaster General on route of Southern mail<sup>167</sup>.<sup>168</sup>

General Post Office Octr. 11th. 1787.

Sir: Having been honored by a Reference of the enclosed Motion,<sup>169</sup> I beg leave to Report;

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<sup>165</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 564, in the writing of Mr. Rufus King. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 172, this motion was referred to the Postmaster General to report. Report rendered October 12 and acted on October 15, 1787.*

<sup>166</sup> *October 10, 1787. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 172, the following letters were referred to the Board of Treasury to report:*

<sup>167</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 403--405, read October 12 and acted on October 15, 1787.*

<sup>168</sup> *See October 10, 1787.*

<sup>169</sup> *See October 10, 1787*

That as the route therein proposed has not been the Post's Route, it has not been visited either by myself or my Assistant, for which Reason I have not a sufficient Acquaintance with it to enable me to form a proper Judgment respecting it.

That, from consulting a Map of the Country, and Information received otherwise, the proposed Route appears to be shorter than the present, and that some large Ferries would be avoided by adopting it, which are Advantages worthy of Attention;

That, on the other hand, Disadvantages present themselves. Should the proposed Route be adopted, the Sea Ports, which are important on Account of their Connection with foreign Countries, as well as with the several Parts of the Union, would be deprived of an Advantage they have always hitherto enjoyed, and the Union itself might suffer by closing these Avenues through which Information from foreign Parts might pass; this Measure would also, beyond a doubt, excite Discontents and Clamors throughout the whole Extent of Sea Coast, from Virginia to Georgia. Should Cross Posts be proposed to prevent these Inconveniencies, new Difficulties arise from the Expencc attending their Establishment, which must be great; the following will be necessary; vizt.

From the new Route to Suffolk;

to Edenton;

to Newbern;

to Wilmington;

to George Town;

to Charleston;

and to Savannah.

This Expencc, which cannot now be calculated for want of necessary Data, added to that of the whole Line from Petersburg to Augusta, I apprehend, will considerably exceed what is paid at present for the Carriage of the Mail from Petersburg to Savannah; and should the Population of the Country not be equal, the Income will be proportionably less.

That, as Trade is the principal, and almost only, Support of the Post Office Department, and the important trading Towns lie generally on the Sea Coast, it is to be feared that the proposed Alteration would materially injure the Revenue, and thus, while it encreased Expences, would deprive of the means of paying them.

That, as no hint of an Alteration of the Post Road has been publicly given, and the Route from Suffolk to Savannah has been particularly mentioned, in the Advertisement from

this Office, pursuant to a former Act of Congress; the Proposals will undoubtedly be for Contracts upon that Route; and there is not sufficient Time remaining between this and the last Day of December, to advertise for, and receive Proposals for Contracts, to establish Post Offices, and make the other Arrangements which an Alteration of the Road will render necessary.

Upon the whole, Sir, I beg leave to give it as my Opinion that it will not be adviseable to make the proposed Alteration in the Post Road, before particular Information can be obtained respecting the various Circumstances necessary to be attended to; the coming Year will furnish sufficient Opportunity for collecting it; and, should the Measure then be deemed expedient, the Alteration may be made, free from present Embarrassments, at least from such as unavoidably arise from the advanced Period of the present Contract.

It is evidently proper to vest in the Postmaster General the discretionary Power mentioned in the concluding Paragraph of the Motion, and I think a considerable Saving might be made if he possessed it throughout the whole Extent of the Post Road. At present he is obliged to contract with the Proprietors of the Stages, if it is practicable, without attending to any other Circumstance; it was so last Year; and the Proprietors made their Advantage of it; for, knowing the Restrictions he was under, some of them demanded, and he was obliged to allow them a larger Sum for carrying the Mail for this Year than was allowed for the last. I have Information upon which Dependance can be placed, that the Demands are now to be still more encreased, and a Reference to the Act of Congress of the 26th. July last will convince your Excellency that I am under the same Restrictions as before. It is unnecessary to enlarge here, as the Files of Congress already contain a full Discussion of this Subject; I shall therefore take the Liberty of respectfully submitting the above

Remarks, and of assuring your Excellency that I have the Honor to be, etc.,

Eben Hazard

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1787.**

On motion<sup>170</sup> of Mr H[enry] Lee seconded by Mr [Edward] Carrington

Resolved That the postmaster general be and he is hereby authorised to contract for the transportation of the mail for the year 1788 by stage carriages or horses as he may judge most expedient and beneficial; provided that preference is given to the transportation by stages to encourage this useful institution, when it can be done without material injury to the public and that the Mail be conveyed three times per week from the first of May to the first of November and twice a week from the first of Novr. to the first of May from Portland in Massachusetts to Suffolk in Virginia; and twice a week from the first of May

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<sup>170</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 565, in the writing of Mr. Henry Lee. See October 10 and 12, 1787.*

to the first of November and once a week from the first of November to the first of May from Suffolk to Savannah in Georgia.

On motion<sup>171</sup> of Mr [William] Few seconded by Mr H[enry] Lee

Resolved That the postmaster general be and he is hereby authorised to alter the route from Petersburg in Virginia to Savannah in Georgia, to Augusta in Georgia provided he may judge it beneficial and expedient and that in case of such alteration he establish cross posts agreeably to the principles provided in the resolve of the 15th of feby. 1787, to the commercial towns on the sea coast.

### **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1787.**

On motion<sup>172</sup> of Mr [Edward] Carrington seconded by Mr [William] Irvine

Resolved That the postmaster genl.be and he is hereby authorised and instructed to alter the present rates of postage so as to reduce them as nearly twenty five per centum as will consist with the present mode of calculating pennyweights and grains of silver in order to reduce them to the currencies of the several states and that he make the necessary arrangements so that new rates may take place on the fifth day of february April next.

And whereas large packets would frequently be sent by post if a proportionably less rate of postage were charged for them than for letters Resolved That the postmaster genl be and he hereby is authorized to fix such rates per pound weight for the carriage of such packets as he may judge will be most likely to induce persons to send such by post.<sup>173</sup>

### **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1788.**

[Motion for a post from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh<sup>174</sup>]

Resolved That the Postmaster General be and he is hereby directed to employ Posts for the regular transportation of the Mail between the City of Philadelphia and the Town of Pittsburgh in the State of Pennsylvania; By the Route of Lancaster, Yorktown, Carlisle, Chamberstown and Bedford. And that the Mail be dispatched Once in each week from

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<sup>171</sup> *Motion of Mr. Rufus King, in his writing. Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 564.*

<sup>172</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No, 61, p. 411, in the writing of Mr. Eben Hazard. See March 15, 1787.*

<sup>173</sup> *October 20, 1787. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 173, there was read and referred to the Board of Treasury to report:*

<sup>174</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 331, in the writing of Mr. William Irvine. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 184, this motion was referred to the Postmaster General to report. Report rendered March 3, 1788.*

the Post Offices at Philadelphia and Chamberstown respectively, and once in each fortnight from Chamberstown and Pittsburgh respectively.

Resolved that the Postmaster General be and he is hereby Authorised to contract for this route upon the principles of the Act<sup>175</sup> of Congress of the 15th of February 1787 for a term not exceeding seven years with any person or persons who will give satisfactory security for the performance of his or their contract; And if such contract cannot be formed by the first day of April next, that the Postmaster General make the establishment at the expense of the General Post Office.

[Letter of Postmaster General on mail contract<sup>176</sup>]

General Post Office

Febry. 27th. 1788.

Sir: Pursuant to the Acts<sup>177</sup> of Congress of Sepr. 4th 1786, and Febry. 15<sup>th</sup>. 1787 I entered into Contract with John Huff, of Winchester in Virginia, for the Establishment of a Cross-Post-Road between Alexandria in Virginia and Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, by the Route of Leesburg, Winchester, Fort Cumberland, and Bedford; and also between Winchester and Stanton in Virginia. Among other Things, it was stipulated in the Contract, that Mr. Huff should give Bond with sufficient Security for Performance; and that the Contract should not be binding upon the Postmaster General, nor should Mr Huff enjoy the Emoluments arising from it, until such Bond was given. As Mr Huff was a Stranger, he could not find Securities here; but promised to compleat the Business soon in Virginia, where he was known. Lest I should be imposed upon as to the Sufficiency of the Sureties, I referred the Matter to the Post master at Alexandria; who informs me that he has not seen Mr. Huff since last May, and that he has never given Bond. Mr. Huff himself has intimated to me that the Establishment cannot be made upon the Terms of the Contract; from which it appears hardly probable that a Communication with Pittsburgh, which may be depended upon, can be formed and supported upon that Route; at the same Time the Establishment of Government in the Territory of the United States, northwest of the River Ohio seems to render a regular and sure mode of Communication between the Seat of Federal Government, and that Country (at least as far as Pittsburgh) indispensably necessary. This might be had from Philadelphia were it not for the Interference of Mr. Huff's Contract, which includes the Route between Bedford and Pittsburgh. This Contract was to continue for seven Years; but as more than a Year of the Time has already elapsed, and Mr. Huff has neither given Bond, nor performed the other Duties required, and stipulated on his Part, I beg Leave to submit to your Excellency's Consideration whether it ought to be deemed obligatory upon the Postmaster General, so as to preclude other Arrangements upon the same Route (or a Part of it) which the public Service may call for.

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<sup>175</sup> See *Journals*, vol. XXXII, pp. 59--60.

<sup>176</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 61, pp. 319--320, read February 27, 1788. Acted on May 20, 1788.

<sup>177</sup> See *Journals*, vol. XXXI, p. 629 and vol. XXXII, pp. 59--60.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

Eben Hazard<sup>178</sup>

A petition of the inhabitants eastward of Portland, Massachusetts, for the establishment of a post route. Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 42, VI, pp. 391--394, read February 27. Referred to the Postmaster General to report. Reported rendered March 5, 1788.

**MONDAY, MARCH 3, 1788.**

[Report of Postmaster General on post from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh<sup>179</sup>]

General Post Office

March 3d. 1788 Upon the Motion for a Post from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, the Postmaster General begs leave to Report;

That he apprehends there will not be a sufficiency of Postage received from the Letters and Packets passing between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to defray the Expence of such an Establishment, at present; but he is of Opinion that this will not long be the Case, as the Number of Emigrants to the Westward, already very great, will annually be much encreased:

That the Establishment of Government in the Territory of the United States Northwest of the River Ohio, seems to render a regular Mode of Intercourse between the Seat of Federal Government and that Country, necessary; and, considering that Individuals will contribute to its Support, the Mode of Communication by Post will be the least expensive, as well as most convenient to the Public;

That the Route proposed is rather circuitous; but York Town, and Carlisle, being County, as well as trading Towns, may be of sufficient Importance to demand Attention:

That your Postmaster General is of Opinion that it will be adviseable to employ Posts between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh; but as the Distance is great, and the Expence will be encreased by the Frequency of Communication, he begs leave to propose, that the Mail be sent but once in each Fortnight, throughout the whole Route, unless the Business

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<sup>178</sup> February 27, 1788. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 184, the following were referred: The letter of recall of Chevalier de la Luzerne and the letter of credence of Count de Moustier to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs to report. A report on this subject was rendered on February 13 and another on June 2, 1788. See February 26, 1788.

<sup>179</sup> Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 323--324, read March 3, 1788. See February 27, 1788.

can be done by Contract; in which Case the Contractor might be engaged, perhaps, to do it weekly.

Which is respectfully submitted.

Eben Hazard<sup>180</sup>

His Excellency  
The President of Congress.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 1788.**

[Report of Postmaster General on post route<sup>181</sup>]

General Post Office,  
March 4th. 1788

The Postmaster General, having duly considered the Petition of the Inhabitants of Massachusetts, Eastward of Portland, praying for the Establishment of a Post between Portland and Pownalborough, begs Leave to

Report, That, although he has been intimately connected with the Post Office Department ever since May 1775, (when he received an Appointment under the Committee of New York) he does not recollect, nor can he find by any Documents in this Office, that any Post rode between Portland and Pownalborough, at the Expence of the General Post Office of the Union, before October 1784: That, in May 1784, the Postmaster at Boston, at the Request of some Gentlemen to the Eastward, represented to the Postmaster General, the Anxiety of the Eastern Inhabitants of Massachusetts, for a Rider to "go fifty miles below Falmouth", now Portland; and informed him that if "Thirty Pounds per Year" (100 Dollars) could be allowed from the General Post Office, "the Inhabitants engaged to make up the Deficiency by Subscription;" intimating, at the same Time, that it was probable the Thirty Pounds would be reimbursed by the Postage to be received:

That a Post began to ride, upon these Principles, in October 1784, and was continued for fifteen Months, when the new Plan of transporting the Mail, by Stage, took Place:

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<sup>180</sup> *March 3, 1788. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 186, the following committee was appointed: Mr. Jeremiah Wadsworth, Mr. Nathan Dane, Mr. Abraham Clark, Mr. William Irvine and Mr. Dyre Kearny, on resolutions of the legislature of Virginia respecting the settlement of claims for the western territory. According to the Despatch Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 185, IV, p. 28, these papers, dated January 7 and received (read) March 3, consisted of the report and resolutions of the Assembly of Virginia with letters N. 1 and 2 on the subject of Illinois accounts and papers marked A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, O, P. The committee reported May 5, 1788.*

<sup>181</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 427--428, read March 5, 1788. The covering letter of Hazard is on p. 333. See February 27, 1788.*

That, by the Act<sup>182</sup> of Congress of Sepr. 4<sup>th</sup>. 1786, the Route from Portland to Pownalborough was enumerated among the Cross Roads, which the Post Master General was directed to farm; but, no Person appearing to take it, upon that Principle, no public Mail has since been carried upon that Route;

That from the Petition it appears, that the Establishment of the Post alluded to, is both a favorite and important Object with the Petitioners; and it will, doubtless, facilitate a Communication with the Capital of the State, and prove a Convenience to Government;

That the Expence of Two hundred Dollars per Annum, stated by the Petitioners as necessary for supporting the Establishment, cannot be considered as worthy to be put in Competition with the Advantages which it is supposed will arise from it; And therefore your Postmaster General is of Opinion, that it will be both prudent and expedient to grant the Prayer of the Petition:

Which is respectfully submitted.

Eben Hazard<sup>183</sup>

His Excellency  
The President of Congress.

#### **FRIDAY, MAY 2, 1788.**

Memorial of Isaac Trowbridge, March 28, 1788, respecting his contract for carrying mail. Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 41, X, pp. 267--268. Referred to the Postmaster General to report. Report rendered May 6, 1788. See May 13 and June 17, 1788.

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Representation of Benjamin Contee, March 17, 1788, with reference to his letter opened in the post office. Referred to the Postmaster General to report. Report rendered May 6, 1788.

#### **TUESDAY, MAY 6, 1788.**

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<sup>182</sup> See *Journals*, vol. XXXI, p. 629.

<sup>183</sup> March 5, 1788. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 190, p. 186, there was referred to the Board of Treasury to report a letter of David Brearley to the Delegates of New Jersey, dated February 22 and read March 5, 1788, respecting his claim for depreciation of pay. *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 41, I, pp. 469--471, with two accounts on pp. 473 and 477 and a note on p. 475. Report rendered March 12, 1788.]

General Post Office  
New York May 5th. 1788.

The Postmaster General begs Leave to Report; Upon the Memorial of the Honorable Benjamin Contee;

That all Letters sent from one Post Office to another at the same time, are put up (with an Invoice of them) in a Bundle, covered with a Paper Wrapper, which is tied, and sealed with the Seal of the Office from which the letters are sent; and the Bundle is then directed for the Office to which the Letters are to be carried:

That Mr Contee's Letter appears to have been the outside Letter of the Bundle, and that the Seal (probably to secure the Direction in Case of Accidents) was placed next to the Wrapper:

That the Wax used in sealing the Bundle, being hot, has melted that with which Mr. Contee's Letter was sealed, and occasioned the Wrapper to adhere to it; and, that in Consequence of this Adhesion, Mr. Contee's Letter was torn in taking the Wrapper off the Bundle, which is commonly done in an hurry, as there are generally People waiting at the Post Office Window for their Letters upon the Arrival of the Mail;

That, as Part of the Post Office Seal, Part of the String with which the Bundle was tied, and Part of the Wrapper, still adhere to the Seal of Mr. Contee's Letter, the Postmaster General thinks it evident that the Letter was torn in the manner abovementioned.

Upon the Memorial of Isaac Trowbridge he reports;

That so far as the Postmaster General is acquainted with the Circumstances of the Case, the Memorialist has truly stated Facts;

That after the Memorialist had entered into the Contract, and before he gave Bond, he alledged a mistake in his Calculation; but the Postmaster General did not conceive himself at Liberty to make any further Allowance, as the Contract was compleated, and he had Proposals from another Person who asked but ten Dollars more than Mr. Trowbridge for performing the same Service;

That the Purposes of Commerce did not require so frequent a Transportation of the mail, as thrice in each week, to the Eastward: nevertheless, as the Establishment is made, and is general, extending from New Hampshire to Georgia, and Alterations in a Part of the Route (particularly in the middle) will create Confusion in the whole, and may occasion great Damage in mercantile Cases respecting Insurance,

Bills of Exchange, &c. the Postmaster General cannot advise an Alteration in this Respect now.

Which is with due Deference submitted.

Eben Hazard<sup>184</sup>[<sup>185</sup>]

**TUESDAY, MAY 13, 1788.**

May 13, 1788. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 190, the following committee was appointed: Mr. Stephen Mix Mitchell, Mr. Edward Carrington and Mr. Samuel Allyne Otis, on the report of the Postmaster General on the memorial of J. Trowbridge. See May 6, 1788. Report rendered May 22, 1788. See also May 2 and June 17, 1788. According to indorsement the following were read:

**TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1788.**

A motion<sup>186</sup> of Mr [William] Irvine seconded by Mr [John] Brown being made and under debate "That the post master gen(1). be directed to employ posts for the regular transportation of the mail between the city of Philadelphia and the town of Pitsburg in the state of Pensylvania by the rout of Lancaster, York town, Carlisle, Chamberstown and Bedford and that the mail be dispatched once in each fortnight from the postoffices respectively."

A motion<sup>187</sup> was made by Mr [Nathan] Dane seconded by M(r). [Samuel Allyne] Otis that the consideration thereof be postponed to take into consideration the following motion

"That the postmaster general be authorised and directed to contract for the remainder of the present year for the conveyance of the mail by post riders and by the usual rout once a week from Portland to Pownalborough in Massachussets."<sup>188</sup> And on the question to postpone for the purpose above mentioned the yeas and nays being required by Mr [Samuel Allyne] Otis

{ table }

So it passed in the negative.

On the question

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<sup>184</sup> *Report of Postmaster General on memorials of B. Contee and Trowbridge*

<sup>185</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 423--424, read May 6, 1788. The covering letter of May 5, 1788, also read, is on p. 337. See May 2, 13 and June 17, 1788.*

<sup>186</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, III, p. 395, in the writing of Mr. John Brown. It is in the form as passed.*

<sup>187</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, III, p. 397, in the writing of Mr. Nathan Dane.*

<sup>188</sup> *The original motion has the following clause, "and once a week from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh in Pensylvania ", which is crossed out.*

Resolved<sup>189</sup> That the postmaster genl be and he is hereby directed to employ posts for the regular transportation of the mail between the city of Philadelphia and the town of Pittsburg in the state of Pensylvania by the rout of Lancaster, York town, Carlisle, Chamberstown and Bedford and that the mail be dispatched once in each fortnight from the post Offices respectively.

[Motion of delegates of Delaware on posts<sup>190</sup>]

Resolved that the Post Master General be authorised and directed to contract with suitable persons for the regular Establishment transportation of the mail twice in every Week from Wilmington in the State of Delaware to Dover in the Said State, upon the Principles of the resolution<sup>191</sup> of Congress of the 15th. of February 1787, and if it cannot be carried into effect upon the Principles of the resolutn aforesaid by the first of June next, that the Establishment be made at the Expenee of the Genl Post Office.

#### **THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1788.**

The Comtee. [consisting of Mr. Samuel Mix Mitchell, Mr. Edward Carrington and Mr. Samuel Allyne Otis] to whom was referrd. the Petition of Isaac Trowbridge and the report of ye. Post Master Genl. thereon,

Report,

That the Sum for which ye. Petitioner has contracted to transport the Mail from New York to Hartford in Connecticut is less than it can be performd. at; and that ye Contractor who transports the Mail from Hartford to Boston is allowed three hundred and ten Dollars more than is allowed the Petitioner, alth'o the Distance is not so large.

Whereupon your Comtee. would Submit the following Resolve viz That Isaac Trowbridge ye. Contractor for Transportation of the Mall from Hartford to New York, be allowed three hundred and ten Dollars in Addition to the Sum of seven hundred and forty Dollars contracted for.

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[Report of Postmaster General on post from Wilmington to Dover]

General Post Office,

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<sup>189</sup> See February 27, 1788.

<sup>190</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 439, in the writing of Mr. Dyre Kearny. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 191, this motion was referred to the Postmaster General to report. Report rendered May 22, 1788.*

<sup>191</sup> *Journals, vol. XXXII, pp. 59--60.*

New York May 22d. 1788.

Upon the Motion for the Establishment of a Post between Wimington and Dover in the State of Delaware, the Postmaster General begs leave to Report,

That he apprehends there can be no Objections against such an Establishment provided it can be made upon the Principles of the Resolution<sup>192</sup> of Congress of the 15th. of February 1787; but, as the Rates of Postage have been very considerably reduced, and it cannot yet be known whether there will be a proportionable Increase of the Number of Letters sent by Post, he cannot recommend an Addition to the Expences of the Department at present.

He begs leave to add, that upon the Adoption of the new Constitution, which a very short time will probably effect, such farther Powers will be vested in Congress as will enable them to make the Income of the Post Office not only adequate to every present Exigency, but much more diffusively useful, and an Addition to the Revenues of the Union.

Which is very respectfully submitted.

Eben Hazard

**MONDAY, JUNE 9, 1788.**

The Committee consisting of Mr [Abraham] Baldwin Mr [Paine] Wingate and Mr [Hugh] Williamson to whom was referred a Letter from Mr Burrall submit the following resolve

That the Post Master General be instructed in examining dead Letters that in Case he shall find any Letters or Packages directed to any Accountant or other Officer of the U S or respecting the Duties of their Office on public Business he deliver the same to the Officer or Officers to whom directed free from any charge of Postage.

Agreed.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 1788.**

On the report<sup>193</sup> of a comee. consisting of Mr [Abraham] Baldwin Mr [Paine] Wingate and Mr [Hugh] Williamson to whom was referred a letter<sup>4</sup> from Mr Burrall

Resolved That the postmaster genl be and he is hereby instructed that in case, on examining dead letters, he shall find any letters or packages directed to any accountant or other officer of the United States on public business, he deliver the same to the officer or officers to whom directed, free from any charge of postage.

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<sup>192</sup> *Journals, vol. XXXII, pp. 59--60.*

<sup>193</sup> *See June 9, 1788.*

**FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1788.**

[Letter of Postmaster General on power to open letters <sup>194</sup>]

General Post Office

New York June 13th. 1788

Sir: Your Excellency will perceive from the enclosed Extract from a Letter written by the Post Master at Philadelphia, which I received yesterday, that a Case has occurred, in which, for the Promotion of Justice and Support of the Laws, a measure has been thought of that involves in it some important Questions.

During the War Authority was given to the Executives of the States to stop Letters in certain Cases, but no existing Act of Congress gives such Authority at present, and perhaps it would be improper that it should be lodged any where but with Congress; especially as Cases seldom occur in which the Exercise of such a Power will be necessary. As the present appears to be one of that Kind, I beg leave to lay it before your Excellency, and to request the Orders of Congress how to act respecting it.

I have the Honor to be, etc.,

Eben Hazard

His Excy. The President of Congress.

**TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1788.**

A motion<sup>195</sup> of Mr [William] Irvine seconded by Mr [John] Brown being made and under debate "That the post master gen(1). be directed to employ posts for the regular transportation of the mail between the city of Philadelphia and the town of Pitsburg in the state of Pensylvania by the rout of Lancaster, York town, Carlisle, Chamberstown and Bedford and that the mail be dispatched once in each fortnight from the postoffices respectively."

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<sup>194</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 345. The enclosure is on p. 349. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 195, the letter was referred to a committee consisting of Mr. Nathan Dane, Mr. Hugh Williamson and Mr. William Few, which reported June 18, 1788.*

<sup>195</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, Ill, p. 395, in the writing of Mr. John Brown. It is in the form as passed.*

A motion<sup>196</sup> was made by Mr [Nathan] Dane seconded by M(r). [Samuel Allyne] Otis that the consideration thereof be postponed to take into consideration the following motion

"That the postmaster general be authorised and directed to contract for the remainder of the present year for the conveyance of the mail by post riders and by the usual rout once a week from Portland to Pownalborough in Massachussets."<sup>197</sup> And on the question to postpone for the purpose above mentioned the yeas and nays being required by Mr [Samuel Allyne] Otis

{table}

So it passed in the negative.

On the question

Resolved<sup>198</sup> That the postmaster genl be and he is hereby directed to employ posts for the regular transportation of the mail between the city of Philadelphia and the town of Pittsburg in the state of Pensylvania by the rout of Lancaster, York town, Carlisle, Chamberstown and Bedford and that the mail be dispatched once in each fortnight from the post Offices respectively.

[Motion of delegates of Delaware on posts<sup>199</sup>]

Resolved that the Post Master General be authorised and directed to contract with suitable persons for the regular Establishment transportation of the mail twice in every Week from Wilmington in the State of Delaware to Dover in the Said State, upon the Principles of the resolution<sup>200</sup> of Congress of the 15th. of February 1787, and if it cannot be carried into effect upon the Principles of the resolutn aforesaid by the first of June next, that the Establishment be made at the Expenee of the Genl Post Office.

#### **THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1788.**

The Comtee. [consisting of Mr. Samuel Mix Mitchell, Mr. Edward Carrington and Mr. Samuel Allyne Otis] to whom was referrd. the Petition of Isaac Trowbridge and the report of ye. Post Master Genl. thereon,

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<sup>196</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 36, III, p. 397, in the writing of Mr. Nathan Dane.*

<sup>197</sup> *The original motion has the following clause, "and once a week from Philadelphia to Pittsburg in Pensylvania ", which is crossed out.*

<sup>198</sup> *See February 27, 1788.*

<sup>199</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 439, in the writing of Mr. Dyre Kearny. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 191, this motion was referred to the Postmaster General to report. Report rendered May 22, 1788.*

<sup>200</sup> *Journals, vol. XXXII, pp. 59--60.*

Report,

That the Sum for which ye. Petitioner has contracted to transport the Mail from New York to Hartford in Connecticut is less than it can be performed. at; and that ye Contractor who transports the Mail from Hartford to Boston is allowed three hundred and ten Dollars more than is allowed the Petitioner, alth'o the Distance is not so large.

Whereupon your Comtee. would Submit the following Resolve viz That Isaac Trowbridge ye. Contractor for Transportation of the Mall from Hartford to New York, be allowed three hundred and ten Dollars in Addition to the Sum of seven hundred and forty Dollars contracted for.

.....

[Report of Postmaster General on post from Wilmington to Dover]

General Post Office,

New York May 22d. 1788.

Upon the Motion for the Establishment of a Post between Wimington and Dover in the State of Delaware, the Postmaster General begs leave to Report,

That he apprehends there can be no Objections against such an Establishment provided it can be made upon the Principles of the Resolution<sup>201</sup> of Congress of the 15th. of February 1787; but, as the Rates of Postage have been very considerably reduced, and it cannot yet be known whether there will be a proportionable Increase of the Number of Letters sent by Post, he cannot recommend an Addition to the Expences of the Department at present.

He begs leave to add, that upon the Adoption of the new Constitution, which a very short time will probably effect, such farther Powers will be vested in Congress as will enable them to make the Income of the Post Office not only adequate to every present Exigency, but much more diffusively useful, and an Addition to the Revenues of the Union.

Which is very respectfully submitted.

Eben Hazard

**MONDAY, JUNE 9, 1788.**

The Committee consisting of Mr [Abraham] Baldwin Mr [Paine] Wingate and Mr [Hugh] Williamson to whom was referred a Letter from Mr Burrall submit the following resolve

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<sup>201</sup> *Journals, vol. XXXII, pp. 59--60.*

That the Post Master General be instructed in examining dead Letters that in Case he shall find any Letters or Packages directed to any Accountant or other Officer of the U S or respecting the Duties of their Office on public Business he deliver the same to the Officer or Officers to whom directed free from any charge of Postage.

Agreed.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 1788.**

On the report<sup>202</sup> of a comee. consisting of Mr [Abraham] Baldwin Mr [Paine] Wingate and Mr [Hugh] Williamson to whom was referred a letter<sup>4</sup> from Mr Burrall

[Note 3: 3 See June 9, 1788.]

Resolved That the postmaster genl be and he is hereby instructed that in case, on examining dead letters, he shall find any letters or packages directed to any accountant or other officer of the United States on public business, he deliver the same to the officer or officers to whom directed, free from any charge of postage.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1788.**

[Letter of Postmaster General on power to open letters<sup>203</sup>]

General Post Office  
New York June 13th. 1788

Sir: Your Excellency will perceive from the enclosed Extract from a Letter written by the Post Master at Philadelphia, which I received yesterday, that a Case has occurred, in which, for the Promotion of Justice and Support of the Laws, a measure has been thought of that involves in it some important Questions.

During the War Authority was given to the Executives of the States to stop Letters in certain Cases, but no existing Act of Congress gives such Authority at present, and perhaps it would be improper that it should be lodged any where but with Congress; especially as Cases seldom occur in which the Exercise of such a Power will be necessary. As the present appears to be one of that Kind, I beg leave to lay it before your Excellency, and to request the Orders of Congress how to act respecting it.

I have the Honor to be, etc.,

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<sup>202</sup> See June 9, 1788.

<sup>203</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 345. The enclosure is on p. 349. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 195, the letter was referred to a committee consisting of Mr. Nathan Dane, Mr. Hugh Williamson and Mr. William Few, which reported June 18, 1788.*

Eben Hazard

His Excy. The President of Congress.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1788.**

On the memorial<sup>204</sup> of Isaac Trowbridge stating that in making his contract with the postmaster genl. for the transportation of the mail between the cities of New York and Hartford for the year 1788 he was under a mistake regarding the expences and praying for a further allowance or to be excused from transporting the mail more than twice a week.

Resolved That the prayer of the memorial cannot be granted.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 1788.**

[Report of committee on powers of Postmaster General<sup>205</sup>]

The Committee consisting of [Mr. Nathan Dane, Mr. Hugh Williamson and Mr. William Few ] To whom were referred a letter from the post master General of the 13th instant and the paper accompanying it, report that on a view of this letter and paper two questions arise

First how far a governor or president of a State has power to Stop or open letters, passing in the public mail, or through the post offices of the United States.

Secondly how far a governor of a State ought to have such a power. As to the first, the Committee observe that Congress by the Confederation have the sole and exclusive power of regulating the post offices throughout the United States and that no power can be exercised respecting the post office but what is delegated by Congress and that it does not appear that any such power has been hitherto delegated by that body to the governor and presidents of the Several States to Stop or open letters passing as aforesaid.

As to the Second the Committee observe that the power in question is of such a nature as not to be capable of being delegated with propriety to any persons except to some principal officer or officers immediately under the controul of and responsible to Congress.

Under these impressions and considering the present state of the Government of the United States the Committee are of opinion that it is inexpedient to delegate the power in question to the governors and presidents of the Several States.

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<sup>204</sup> See May 2, 6, 13 and 22, 1788.

<sup>205</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 569--570, in the writing of Mr. Nathan Dane. Read June 18, 1788. See June 13, 1788.*

**TUESDAY, JULY 1, 1788.**

[Report of committee on mail contracts<sup>206</sup>]

The Committee [consisting of Mr. Abraham Baldwin, Mr. Nathan Dane, Mr. Jonathan Dayton, Mr. Dyre Kearny and Mr. Nicholas Gilman] submit the following resolves

That the Postmaster general be and he hereby is authorized and instructed with the consent of the Comtee hereinafter mentioned to enter into contracts with sufficient security, for the conveyance of the mails for one year commencing on the 1st day of Jany next, from Portland in Massachusetts to the state of Georgia, by stage carriages or horses, as he may judge most expedient and beneficial; provided that preference is given to the transportation by stages, to encourage that useful institution, when it can be done without material injury to the public; and that the mail be conveyed three times each week from the 1st of May to the 1st of Novr and twice a week from the 1st of Novr to the 1st of May, from Portland in Massachusetts to Suffolk in Virginia and from Suffolk to the state of Georgia, agreeably to the resolution of the 15th Octr 1787; the same to be done by four or more separate contracts.

In case of only four contracts, the first shall extend from Portland to New York; the second from New York to Philadelphia; the third from Philadelphia to Suffolk in Virginia; and the fourth from Suffolk to the state of Georgia, by such route as the Postmaster general may find most convenient and proper. Resolved That the Postmaster general be and he hereby is authorized and instructed to make arrangements for the transportation of the mail for one year from the 1st day of Jany next, on the cross roads mentioned in the resolves of congress passed the 4th Sepr 1786 and the 27th of July 1787, on the principles provided in the resolution of the 15th Feby 1787.

Resolved That the Postmaster general be and he hereby is directed to employ posts for the regular transportation of the mail, for one year, from the 1st Jany next, between the city of Philadelphia and the town of Pittsburgh in the state of Pennsylvania; by the route of Lancaster, Yorktown Carlisle, Chamberstown and Bedford, and between Portland end Pownalborough in the state of Massachusetts and that the mail be dispatched once in each fortnight from the post offices respectively.

Resolved That the stated Committee of the Post Office, appointed in pursuance of the resolution of the 17th June 1782, be instructed to superintend the execution of the preeeding resolves, and to report specially thereon to congress.

[Report of committee on memorial of G. Morgan<sup>207</sup>]

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<sup>206</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 571--572, in the writing of Mr. Abraham Baldwin. Read July 1 and passed July 3, 1788. See June 6, 1788.*

**MONDAY, JULY 7, 1788.**

July 7, 1788. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 197, the following committees were appointed to inquire into the several departments and report to Congress in conformity with the resolution of June 17, 1782:

.....

Mr. Paine Wingate, Mr. John Swann, Mr. Nathan Dane, Mr. James R. Reid and Mr. Peleg Arnold on the Post Office department. Mr. Arnold was replaced by Mr. Dyre Kearny on August 25, 1788. Report rendered August 27 and the committee renewed October 9, 1788. See September 30, 1788.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 1788.**

[Letter of Postmaster General regarding mail contracts<sup>208</sup>]

General Post Office

New York July 8th 1788.

Sir: I was yesterday honored with the Resolves of Congress of the 3d. Inst. respecting Contracts for the Carriage of the Mail during the ensuing year; and, upon perusing them some Difficulties occur, which make an Application to your Excellency necessary; I beg leave to mention them, and to request the farther Directions of Congress.

The Resolve of the 3d. Inst. instructs the Postmaster General "to make Arrangements for the Transportation of the Mail for one Year from the first Day of January next on the Cross Roads mentioned in the Resolves of Congress passed the 4th Sepr. 1786 and the 27th. July 1787, on the Principles provided in the Resolution of the 15th. of February 1787;" Upon a Reference to the first of those Resolves your Excellency will observe the following Cross Roads particularly mentioned therein; vizt.

From Portland to Pownalborough in the State of Massachusetts.

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<sup>207</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 19, IV, pp. 163--164, in the writing of Mr. Hugh Williamson. Read July 1 and recommitted July 15, 1788. See June 25, July 30, August 11, 12, 15 and 28, 1788.*

<sup>208</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 353--355, read July 9, 1788. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 198, the letter was referred to the committee on the Post Office, appointed July 7, 1788. See the report rendered August 27, 1788. See also September 30 and October 9, 1788.*

From Boston in the State of Massachusetts to the Town of Concord in New Hampshire, and from thence through Exeter to Portsmouth.

From Springfield in the State of Massachusetts to the City of Albany in the State of New York.

The first of these, besides being included in the Clause above quoted from the Resolves of the 3d. Inst. (which expressly require that the Business shall be done "upon the Principles provided is the Resolution of the 15th of February 1787," is also particularly mentioned in the next Clause, which directs the Postmaster General, unconditionally (except as to the Duration of the Contract) "to employ Posts for the regular Transportation of the Mail..... between Portland and Pownalborough in the State of Massachusetts". Your Excellency will immediately perceive the Embarrassment which such contrary Directions must necessarily create in the mind of the Postmaster General, and that Obedience to both is impracticable.

The two other Cross Roads above mentioned have already been contracted for, for seven Years, agreeably to the Resolve of Congress, of the 4th. September 1786; and the Contracts must, doubtless, be considered as binding upon the Union; but the Resolve of 3d. Inst. if carried into Effect by the Postmaster General's entering into new Contracts for those Routes for one Year from the 1st. of January next, will violate those which are already formed, and subject the Postmaster General to a Prosecution for Damages sustained by the Contractors. I apprehend, Sir, it was not the Intention of Congress to interfere with Contracts already formed, and yet, as no such saving Clause as that contained in the Resolves of 4th. September 1786 is introduced into those of the 3d Inst. it appears as if the Honorable Committee entertained a different Idea, and I dare not venture to act upon my own Judgment in this Case.

Your Excellency will observe that one of the Cross Posts directed by the Resolves both of 4th. September 1786, and the 3d. Inst. to be contracted for by the Postmaster General, is "from the Town of Alexandria in the State of Virginia to the Town of Pittsburgh in the State of Pennsylvania, by the Route of Leesburg, Winchester, Fort Cumberland and Bedford;" The Resolve of 20th. May last directs the Postmaster General to "employ Posts" between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh "by the Route of Lancaster, York Town, Carlisle, Chamberstown and Bedford;" if therefore, a Contract should be entered into for the Route from Alexandria to Pittsburgh, there will be two Posts, one private, the other in public Service between Bedford and Pittsburgh; and the Contract with the private Rider must contain, at least by Implication, a Surrender, on the Part of the United States, of the Postage between those two Places, whereby the Revenue will be injured.

Pursuant to the Resolve of May 20th. 1788, I have engaged with a Person for the Route from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh for one Year; he has sent a Person, with Horses to be fixed at proper Stations, who, I suppose, is now at Pittsburgh; and it is probable that a regular Transportation of the Mail will commence in the Course of ten Days or a Fortnight. In this State of the Business, Sir, the Resolve of the 3d. Instt. directs me to employ Posts upon that Route for one Year from the first day of January next, at which

Time the existing Contract will be but half expired. Here Difficulties, which have been already hinted at, recur; and a new one presents itself; vizt. a double Expencc upon the same Road, for half the Period of the present Contract.

Your Excellency, I flatter myself, will excuse these Remarks, as the Difficulties stated are obviously of such a Nature as to be insurmountable, except through the Intervention of Congress; and will your Excellency permit me to submit it to Consideration, whether a standing Instruction to Committees upon the Business of any Department, to consult with the Head of the Department upon the Object of their Appointment, would not be useful, as tending to furnish necessary Information, and to prevent Confusion.

I have the Honor to be, etc.,

Eben Hazard<sup>209</sup>

His Excy. The President of Congress.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 1788.**

[Letter of Postmaster General regarding mail contracts<sup>210</sup>]

General Post Office  
New York July 8th 1788.

Sir: I was yesterday honored with the Resolves of Congress of the 3d. Inst. respecting Contracts for the Carriage of the Mail during the ensuing year; and, upon perusing them some Difficulties occur, which make an Application to your Excellency necessary; I beg leave to mention them, and to request the farther Directions of Congress.

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<sup>209</sup> July 9, 1788. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 198, the report of the committee of June 4, 1788, on the letter of Baron von Steuben, was recommitted to the same committee, which reported July 25, 1788. See July 7, August 25 and September 11, 1788. According to indorsement the report of the committee on putting the new Constitution into operation was the order of the day for this date. The Committee Book, p. 197, and Reports of Committees, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 189, p. 36, give July 9, 1788, as the date of the report. No further evidence regarding consideration on this date is available. See July 2, 8, 14 and September 13, 1788.

<sup>210</sup> Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 353--355, read July 9, 1788. According to indorsement and the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 198, the letter was referred to the committee on the Post Office, appointed July 7, 1788. See the report rendered August 27, 1788. See also September 30 and October 9, 1788.

1787;" Upon a Reference to the first of those Resolves your Excellency will observe the following Cross Roads particularly mentioned therein; vizt.

From Portland to Pownalborough in the State of Massachusetts.

From Boston in the State of Massachusetts to the Town of Concord in New Hampshire, and from thence through Exeter to Portsmouth.

From Springfield in the State of Massachusetts to the City of Albany in the State of New York.

The first of these, besides being included in the Clause above quoted from the Resolves of the 3d. Inst. (which expressly require that the Business shall be done "upon the Principles provided is the Resolution of the 15th of February 1787," is also particularly mentioned in the next Clause, which directs the Postmaster General, unconditionally (except as to the Duration of the Contract) "to employ Posts for the regular Transportation of the Mail..... between Portland and Pownalborough in the State of Massachusetts". Your Excellency will immediately perceive the Embarrassment which such contrary Directions must necessarily create in the mind of the Postmaster General, and that Obedience to both is impracticable.

The two other Cross Roads above mentioned have already been contracted for, for seven Years, agreeably to the Resolve of Congress, of the 4th. September 1786; and the Contracts must, doubtless, be considered as binding upon the Union; but the Resolve of 3d. Inst. if carried into Effect by the Postmaster General's entering into new Contracts for those Routes for one Year from the 1st. of January next, will violate those which are already formed, and subject the Postmaster General to a Prosecution for Damages sustained by the Contractors. I apprehend, Sir, it was not the Intention of Congress to interfere with Contracts already formed, and yet, as no such saving Clause as that contained in the Resolves of 4th. September 1786 is introduced into those of the 3d Inst. it appears as if the Honorable Committee entertained a different Idea, and I dare not venture to act upon my own Judgment in this Case.

Your Excellency will observe that one of the Cross Posts directed by the Resolves both of 4th. September 1786, and the 3d. Inst. to be contracted for by the Postmaster General, is "from the Town of Alexandria in the State of Virginia to the Town of Pittsburgh in the State of Pennsylvania, by the Route of Leesburg, Winchester, Fort Cumberland and Bedford;" The Resolve of 20th. May last directs the Postmaster General to "employ Posts" between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh "by the Route of Lancaster, York Town, Carlisle, Chamberstown and Bedford;" if therefore, a Contract should be entered into for the Route from Alexandria to Pittsburgh, there will be two Posts, one private, the other in public Service between Bedford and Pittsburgh; and the Contract with the private Rider must contain, at least by Implication, a Surrender, on the Part of the United States, of the Postage between those two Places, whereby the Revenue will be injured.

Pursuant to the Resolve of May 20th. 1788, I have engaged with a Person for the Route from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh for one Year; he has sent a Person, with Horses to be fixed at proper Stations, who, I suppose, is now at Pittsburgh; and it is probable that a regular Transportation of the Mail will commence in the Course of ten Days or a Fortnight. In this State of the Business, Sir, the Resolve of the 3d. Inst. directs me to employ Posts upon that Route for one Year from the first day of January next, at which Time the existing Contract will be but half expired. Here Difficulties, which have been already hinted at, recur; and a new one presents itself; vizt. a double Expence upon the same Road, for half the Period of the present Contract.

Your Excellency, I flatter myself, will excuse these Remarks, as the Difficulties stated are obviously of such a Nature as to be insurmountable, except through the Intervention of Congress; and will your Excellency permit me to submit it to Consideration, whether a standing Instruction to Committees upon the Business of any Department, to consult with the Head of the Department upon the Object of their Appointment, would not be useful, as tending to furnish necessary Information, and to prevent Confusion.

I have the Honor to be, etc.,

Eben Hazard<sup>211</sup>

His Excy. The President of Congress.

## **TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 1788.**

[Report of committee on the Post Office Department<sup>212</sup>]

The Committee consisting of [Mr. Paine Wingate, Mr. John Swann, Mr. Nathan Dane, Mr. James R. Reid and Mr. Peleg Arnold<sup>213</sup>] appointed agreeably to a resolution<sup>3</sup> of

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<sup>211</sup> July 9, 1788. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 198, the report of the committee of June 4, 1788, on the letter of Baron von Steuben, was recommitted to the same committee, which reported July 25, 1788. See July 7, August 25 and September 11, 1788. According to indorsement the report of the committee on putting the new Constitution into operation was the order of the day for this date. The Committee Book, p. 197, and Reports of Committees, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 189, p. 36, give July 9, 1788, as the date of the report. No further evidence regarding consideration on this date is available. See July 2, 8, 14 and September 13, 1788.

<sup>212</sup> Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 581--584, in the writing of Mr. Paine Wingate. The three enclosed papers mentioned in the next to the last paragraph of the report are on pp. 587--588, 591--593 and 594 respectively. Read August 27, 1788. The committee had leave to take back the report on September 30 and was renewed on October 9, 1788. See July 7, 9, and August 25, 1788.

<sup>213</sup> Although the name of Mr. Arnold is indorsed on the report, the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 197, states that he was replaced by Mr. Dyre Kearny on August 25, 1788. [Note 3: 3 Journals, vol. XXII, p. 334.]

Congress of June 17. 1782, to enquire fully into the proceedings of the department of the Post office, and to report the result of their enquiry to Congress, Report,

That the Post master General who has the direction of the affairs of the Post office has one Assistant, and in order properly to execute the duties of his office, he employs sixty nine Deputy Postmasters, who are obliged each of them to keep an office peculiarly appropriated to the purpose of receiving and transmitting letters which are entrusted to their care. The pay of the Deputies for their services is Twenty per Centm. deducted out of the money received by them respectively for all letters they shall deliver according to the established rates of Postage.

The general instructions given by the Post-master general to his Deputies and the obligations required of them for the faithful discharge of their trust appear to be well calculated to preserve regularity, promote the advantage of those whose letters are conveyed, and place the Revenue of the office on a proper footing of security. Those instructions and obligations. for the Deputies, as well as the forms of contracts and bonds required of the Postriders, are the same as have been used by the present and former Post-master general ever since the existence of that office under the Authority of Congress. The particular instructions given by the Postmaster General to his Deputies from time to time for special purposes the committee are not informed of, as by means of the multiplicity of business in the general post office and no clerk being allowed, there could not be copies preserved.

The contracts and obligations entered into by those who are employed in trasporting the mail, are strict and well adapted for the security and punctuality of those conveyances. And the Post-master general informs that the Stages and Postriders have been as punctual in delivering the mails generally as could reasonably be expected. That the forfeitures for failures under this head in the years 1786 and 1787, amount only to about forty two dollars, excepting the forfeitures of Mr. Twining which in 1787 amounted to upwards of two thousand dollars but were remitted to him by resolve<sup>214</sup> of Congress of Sept. 25. 1787.

To ascertain with precision the Receipts of each Post Office for two or more years, the Postmaster general states would require an examination of several hundred accounts and more time than the indispensable demands of the department would permit and he further adds that the present state of his mind is such, owing to sickness and death in his family that he is totally unfit for the investigations. But he informs in general that the income of the Post office from Portland to Virginia inclusive has defrayed the expences of it, but from Virginia southward the expence has exceeded the income, and Bills have been from time to time drawn upon him for the deficiencies.

The receipts of the General post office from the year 1785 to April 1. 1788 inclusive are as follows, viz.

... Dollars 90ths

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<sup>214</sup> *Journals. vol. XXXIII, p. 533.*

In 1785... 29598. 12.

In 1786... 27096. 53.

In 1787... 29243. 52.

In 1788. one quarter to April 1... 6649. 88.

The monies received have been disposed of in defraying the ordinary and contingent expences of the department, and in payments made to the Treasury of the United States. Of each of these the following sketch may give some Idea.

{table}

This statement exhibits a general view of expenditures during the whole period of time it includes, but not an exact one for each year; because part of the money received in each year could not be paid to the Riders in the year in which it became due, and consequently was charged in the succeeding year when it was paid. The like remark is applicable to the money paid into the Treasury. Agreeably to the foregoing statement of the Receipts and disposition of the monies in this department there remains unapplied 1247. 19/90 Dollrs. in the general post office, exclusive of forfeitures for failures in contracts.

The committee find that the transportation of the mail costs from a tenth to some what less than a twenty fourth part of a dollar pr. mile. The expence is various, and generally greater at the Southward than Eastward. The expence of some of the routes has been increased and in others reduced in the contracts of the present year; but on the amount of the whole the reduction of this year is considerable.

The committee on a calculation of the ordinary expence of conveying the mail are of opinion that it cannot be afforded generally, by a person who is faithful and punctual and makes that his business for a less price than a dollar for Twenty four miles.

The committee would accompany this report with a list of the Deputy-Post-Masters, and an account of the annual expence of trasporting the mail in the different contracts, and the amount of the Receipts of the general post office in the present and three preceeding years. Also the forms of the contracts made with the Post-riders and obligations given by them, and the Instructions given to the Deputy-Post-Masters and their bonds for performance.

With respect to the letter of the Post Master General to Congress of July 8th. ulto. the committee further report that on conferring with him on the meaning of acts of Congress relative to his department, the doubts stated in his letter are removed.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 1788.**

[Report of committee on the Post Office Department<sup>215</sup>]

The Committee consisting of [Mr. Paine Wingate, Mr. John Swann, Mr. Nathan Dane, Mr. James R. Reid and Mr. Peleg Arnold] appointed agreeably to a resolution of Congress of June 17. 1782, to enquire fully into the proceedings of the department of the Post office, and to report the result of their enquiry to Congress, Report,

That the Post master General who has the direction of the affairs of the Post office has one Assistant, and in order properly to execute the duties of his office, he employs sixty nine Deputy Postmasters, who are obliged each of them to keep an office peculiarly appropriated to the purpose of receiving and transmitting letters which are entrusted to their care. The pay of the Deputies for their services is Twenty per Centm. deducted out of the money received by them respectively for all letters they shall deliver according to the established rates of Postage.

The general instructions given by the Post-master general to his Deputies and the obligations required of them for the faithful discharge of their trust appear to be well calculated to preserve regularity, promote the advantage of those whose letters are conveyed, and place the Revenue of the office on a proper footing of security. Those instructions and obligations. for the Deputies, as well as the forms of contracts and bonds required of the Postriders, are the same as have been used by the present and former Post-master general ever since the existence of that office under the Authority of Congress. The particular instructions given by the Postmaster General to his Deputies from time to time for special purposes the committee are not informed of, as by means of the multiplicity of business in the general post office and no clerk being allowed, there could not be copies preserved.

The contracts and obligations entered into by those who are employed in trasporting the mail, are strict and well adapted for the security and punctuality of those conveyances. And the Post-master general informs that the Stages and Postriders have been as punctual in delivering the mails generally as could reasonably be expected. That the forfeitures for failures under this head in the years 1786 and 1787, amount only to about forty two dollars, excepting the forfeitures of Mr. Twining which in 1787 amounted to upwards of two thousand dollars but were remitted to him by resolve<sup>216</sup> of Congress of Sept. 25. 1787.

To ascertain with precision the Receipts of each Post Office for two or more years, the Postmaster general states would require an examination of several hundred accounts and

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<sup>215</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp. 581--584, in the writing of Mr. Paine Wingate. The three enclosed papers mentioned in the next to the last paragraph of the report are on pp. 587--588, 591--593 and 594 respectively. Read August 27, 1788. The committee had leave to take back the report on September 30 and was renewed on October 9, 1788. See July 7, 9, and August 25, 1788.*

<sup>216</sup> *Journals. vol. XXXIII, p. 533.*

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... Dollars 90ths

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The monies received have been disposed of in defraying the ordinary and contingent expences of the department, and in payments made to the Treasury of the United States. Of each of these the following sketch may give some Idea.

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This statement exhibits a general view of expenditures during the whole period of time it includes, but not an exact one for each year; because part of the money received in each year could not be paid to the Riders in the year in which it became due, and consequently was charged in the succeeding year when it was paid. The like remark is applicable to the money paid into the Treasury. Agreeably to the foregoing statement of the Receipts and disposition of the monies in this department there remains unapplied 1247. 19/90 Dollrs. in the general post office, exclusive of forfeitures for failures in contracts. The committee find that the transportation of the mail costs from a tenth to some what less than a twenty fourth part of a dollar pr. mile. The expence is various, and generally greater at the Southward than Eastward. The expence of some of the routes has been increased and in others reduced in the contracts of the present year; but on the amount of the whole the reduction of this year is considerable.

The committee on a calculation of the ordinary expence of conveying the mail are of opinion that it cannot be afforded generally, by a person who is faithful and punctual and makes that his business for a less price than a dollar for Twenty four miles.

The committee would accompany this report with a list of the Deputy-Post-Masters, and an account of the annual expence of trasporting the mail in the different contracts, and the amount of the

Receipts of the general post office in the present and three preceeding years. Also the forms of the contracts made with the Post-riders and obligations given by them, and the Instructions given to the Deputy-Post-Masters and their bonds for performance.

With respect to the letter of the Post Master General to Congress of July 8th. ulto. the committee further report that on conferring with him on the meaning of acts of Congress relative to his department, the doubts stated in his letter are removed.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 1788.**

Resolved That the post master genl be and he is hereby authorised and directed to establish a post from Wilmington in the state of Delaware to the town of Dover in the said state as soon as may be and that he contract for the regular transportation of the mail to and from the said places respectively once in every week by post riders or otherwise and that he further take order for the continuance of the said establishment for one year from the first of january next.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1788.**

On motion of Mr [Abraham] Clarke seconded by Mr [Dyre] Kearny Resolved.<sup>217</sup> That the duties of paymaster genl. having been united with those of the commissioner of army accounts by an act<sup>3</sup> of congress of the 23d March 1787, the present commissioner is entitled by former resolutions of Congress as Pay Master General, to send and receive all letters respecting the business of said Offices free of postage.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1788.**

Memorial of William Bedlow, deputy postmaster of New York, respecting postage on letters of the Treasurer of the United States. Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 41, I, pp. 479--480. This letter is indorsed as read September 23 but is entered in the Despatch Book, p. 40, as received September 25, 1788. See October 1, 1788.

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1788.**

The Committee [consisting of Mr. Pierpont Edwards, Mr. Jonathan Dayton and Mr. James R. Reid] to whom was refered the Memorial of Levi Pease report That it appears to the Committee, that the Distance from New York to Boston is two hundred and fifty six Miles; and from New York to Philadelphia is ninety six Miles. That the road eastward is much worse than southward, that the Mail for the Current year is carried to and from Philadelphia to this City for 1333 Dollars, that the Travel on the Boston road,

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<sup>217</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, p. 579, in the writing of Mr. Abraham Clark.*

upon the present Contract for carrying the Mail, amounts in one year to 64897 66,560 miles, and on the road to Philadelphia to 29,952 miles, that it appears to the Committee that very great irregularities have existed in the transportation of the Mail on the Road to Boston; no less than nineteen different riders having, since the first of January last arrived at one office only Many of whom were Persons wholly unworthy of so important a Trust, and given to intoxication, that very little Attention has been paid by the riders, to the stipulated time of arrival at the different offices, the mail seldom being delivered at the proper Hour, that these Considerations, added to the facility of sending Letters by the Stages, which ply on that road, and are furnished with trusty Conductors, and the speculation practised by the Carriers of the Mail, in appropriating the profits of Way Letters to their own use, have very greatly diminished the Revenue of the post office, your Committee are therefore of opinion that the Post Master general be directed to contract with Mr Pease upon the Terms proposed in his Memorial and thereupon submit the following Resolution

Resolved that the Post Master General contract with Levi Pease, for the transportation of the Mail between New York and Boston for one year, commencing the first Day of January next, upon the Terms proposed by said Pease in his Memorial, he giving sufficient Security for the fulfilment of the Contract on his Part.<sup>218</sup>

#### **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1788.**

October 9, 1788. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 208, the following committee was appointed: Mr. John Swann, Mr. James R. Reid, Mr. Dyre Kearny, Mr. Samuel Allyne Otis and Mr. Jonathan Dayton on the Post Office department. This was a renewal of the committee of July 7, 1788. See July 9, August 27, and September 30, 1788.

#### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1788.<sup>219</sup>**

On the report<sup>220</sup> of a committee consisting of Mr [Abraham] Clark, Mr [Hugh] Williamson and Mr [James] Madison, to whom was referred a motion of Mr [Abraham] Clark, respecting the board of commissioners, appointed under the ordinance<sup>221</sup> of May 7th. 1787.

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<sup>218</sup> *October 2, 1788. According to the Committee Book, Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 190, p. 208, the following committee was appointed: Mr. Hugh Williamson, Mr. Abraham Clark and Mr. Alexander Hamilton on the letter of September 3, 1788, of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs respecting the particular expenses of Mr. Jefferson. See August 22 and September 3, 1788.*

<sup>219</sup> *This is the last day on which business was transacted by the Continental Congress.*

<sup>220</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 26, p. 687, in the writing of Mr. Abraham Clark. Read October 10, 1788. See October 2, 1788..*

<sup>221</sup> *Journals, vol. XXXII, pp. 262--266.*

Resolved, That the board of commissioners appointed pursuant to an ordinance of Congress of the 7th. of May 1787 be restrained from entering upon the business of their appointment, or finally determining any matter to them referred by the said ordinance unless all three of the said commissioners shall be present any thing in the said ordinance to the contrary notwithstanding. And that said board of commissioners do not meet for the purpose of their appointment until the board of treasury shall have notified to them that the vouchers and accounts to be returned by the district commissioners, are ready for them to act upon. And the board of treasury and the several commissioners then acting under Congress are hereby required to attend the said board of commissioners when by them requested, in order to give them any necessary information, and to explain and to support the claims of the Union. And the board of treasury are also required to furnish the board of commissioners with such of the clerks in the offices under the direction of the said board of treasury, as the said board of commissioners may find necessary, not exceeding two in number. And that the said board of commissioners have the privilege, while in the execution of their office, to send and receive letters by post free of postage.

*This was the last day on which business was transacted by the Continental Congress.*

#### **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1789.**

The Senate assembled: present as yesterday.

Mr. Wingate, in behalf of the committee, reported, that they had examined the enrolled bill, entitled "An act to provide for the safe keeping of the sets, records, and seal of the United States, and for other purposes;" also, the bill, entitled "An act for establishing the salaries of the executive officers of government, with their assistants and clerks;" and that they were correct.

A message from the House of Representatives:

Mr. Beckley, their Clerk, informed the Senate, that the House of Representatives had agreed to recede from their disagreement to the third and fifth amendments, proposed by the Senate, to the bill, entitled "An act for establishing the salaries of the executive officers of government, with their assistants and clerks;"

That the House of Representatives had agreed to the proposed conference on the subject matter of the amendment to the bill, entitled "An act for allowing compensation to the President and Vice President of the United States;" and had appointed Messrs. Baldwin, Livermore, and Goodhue, managers of the conference on the part of the House of Representatives;

He also brought up a resolve of the House of Representatives, "that, until further provision be made by law, the General Post Office of the United States shall be conducted according to the rules and regulations prescribed: by the ordinances and resolutions of the late Congress, and that contracts be made for the conveyance of the

mail in conformity thereto;" and requested the concurrence of the Senate in the said resolve;

He also brought up the enrolled bill, entitled "An act to provide for the safe keeping of the acts, records, and seal, of the United States, and for other purposes;" together with the enrolled bill, entitled "An act for establishing the salaries of the executive officers of government, with their assistants and clerks;" severally signed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives." And he withdrew.

The Vice President affixed his signature to the above mentioned enrolled bills, and they were, by the Committee of Enrollment, laid before the President of the United States for his approbation.

The resolve of the House of Representatives, for the regulation of the post office, was read.

Ordered, That it be committed to Messrs. Butler, Morris, and Ellsworth, with an instruction to report a bill upon the subject.

The Senate proceeded in the second reading of the bill, entitled "An act to suspend part of an act; entitled 'An act to regulate the collection of the duties imposed by law on the tonnage of ships or vessels, and on goods, wares, and merchandises, imported into the United States;"

And, on motion that the bill be postponed:

It passed in the affirmative.