

POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,

24th March, 1827.

SIR,

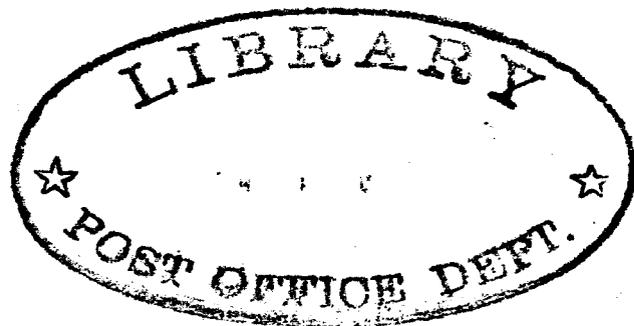
I communicate to you "An Act amendatory of the act regulating the Post-Office Department," passed at the late session of Congress, accompanied with the necessary instructions.

Respectfully, I am your

Obedient Servant,

JOHN McLEAN.

Post Master



AN ACT

Amendatory of the act regulating the Post-Office Department.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Post-master General be authorized to allow to the Post-masters at the several distributing offices, a commission, not to exceed five per cent. on the amount of postage on letters and packets received for distribution. The allowance to commence on the third of March, eighteen hundred and twenty-five: *Provided,* That if the number of mails received at, and despatched from, any such office, is not increased by the distributing system, then no allowance shall be made therefor, except where special provision is made.

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That the Post-master General be authorized to allow to each Post-master, one cent for every letter received from any ship or vessel, and mailed by him: *Provided,* his usual commission, together with the allowance aforesaid, shall not exceed the sum of two hundred dollars a year; and the letter-carriers employed at Post-offices, shall be authorized to receive, for each newspaper delivered by them, an half cent, and no more.

Sec. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That no person, other than the Post-master General, or his authorized agents, shall set up any foot or horse post, for the conveyance of letters and packets, upon any Post-road, which is or may be established as such by law; and every person who shall offend herein, shall incur a penalty of not exceeding fifty dollars for each letter or packet so carried.

Sec. 4. *And be it further enacted,* That the Commissioners of the Navy Board, the Adjutant General, Commissary General, Inspectors General, Quarter-master General, Paymaster General, the Secretary of the Senate, Clerk of the House of Representatives, and the Superintendent of the Patent Office, be authorized to frank, and to receive letters and packets by post free of postage, and that no other persons or officers, excepting those enumerated herein, and in the act to "reduce into one the several acts establishing and regulating the Post-office Department," passed on the third of March, eighteen hundred and twenty-five, shall be authorized to frank or to receive letters through the mail free of postage.

Sec. 5. And be it further enacted, That one or more pieces of paper, mailed as a letter, and weighing one ounce, shall be charged with quadruple postage, and at the same rate, should the weight be greater; and quadruple postage shall be charged on all packets containing four pieces of paper. Every printed pamphlet or magazine which contains more than twenty-four pages on a royal sheet, or any sheet of less dimensions, shall be charged by the sheet, and small pamphlets printed on a half or quarter sheet of royal, or less size, shall be charged with half the amount of postage charged on a full sheet; and there shall be printed or written, on one of the outer pages of all pamphlets and magazines to be sent by mail, the number of sheets they contain; and if such number shall not be truly stated, double postage shall be charged.

Sec. 6. And be it further enacted, That no Post-master, or assistant Post-master, shall act as agent for lottery offices, or, under any colour of purchase, or otherwise, vend lottery tickets; nor shall any Post-master receive free of postage, or frank lottery schemes, circulars, or tickets. For a violation of this provision, the person offending shall suffer a penalty of fifty dollars.

Approved, 2d March, 1827.

INSTRUCTIONS.

The first section of the above act makes no change in the compensation or duties of Post-masters: it supplies an omission in the law of eighteen hundred and twenty-five.

Sec. 2. Authorizes the allowance of one cent, for mailing any letter received from any ship or vessel, provided the usual commission, including this charge, shall not exceed the sum of two hundred dollars a year. In every case embraced by this provision the Post-master may charge, as a part of his commission, one cent for mailing each letter received as aforesaid.

Sec. 3. Post-masters will be careful to report all violations of this section.

Sec. 4. The persons who fill the offices named in this section, are entitled to frank, *and none others*, except such as are named in the law of 1825.

Sec. 5. This section provides, that one or more pieces of paper, mailed as a letter, and weighing one ounce, shall be charged with quadruple postage, and at the same rate, should the weight be greater: and quadruple postage shall be charged on all packets containing four pieces of paper.

Under the law of 1825, it was somewhat doubtful, whether a single letter weighing one ounce or more could be charged with higher postage than a small sheet—also, whether more than treble postage could be charged on a packet containing four or more pieces of paper and weighing less than an ounce. The above section removes all doubts on this subject.

By this section, “every printed pamphlet or magazine which contains more than twenty four pages on a royal sheet, or any sheet of less dimensions, shall be charged by the sheet, and small pamphlets printed on a half or quarter sheet of royal, or less size, shall be subject to half the amount of postage charged on a full sheet.”

Under the law of 1825, postage was charged for a full sheet, on any pamphlet containing twenty-four pages, without regard to their size, and for any additional number of pages, the same charge was made. And the smallest pamphlet not containing more than a half or quarter sheet was subject to the same postage as a full sheet.

By this section postage is to be charged on the sheet, without regard to the number of pages it contains. If there be any additional pages, attached to the sheet, on paper of less size than a sheet, full postage, for a sheet, must be charged. But, where an entire pamphlet is printed on a half or quarter sheet of royal, or less size, only half the amount of postage on a full sheet is to be charged.

It is important that every publisher of a pamphlet should print or write on the title page, as the law requires, the number of sheets, and half, or quarter sheets it contains. If he neglect to do this, after due notice shall be given to him, his pamphlet should not be mailed.

Sec. 6. This section is designed to prevent an abuse of the privilege of franking, by making it penal for any Post-master, or assistant Post-master, to act as agent for lottery offices, or, under colour of purchase, or otherwise, to vend lottery tickets—also, for a Post-master to receive free of postage, or frank, lottery schemes, circulars or tickets.

The strict attention of Post-masters is invited to the following duties.

1. Report every failure of a mail carrier, with the cause which produced it, if known.

2. Repair mail bags that are unsound, though it should detain the mail.

3. When packets are miss-sent from a distributing office, first, inform the Post-master of such office, and if the error be not corrected, report him to the Post-master General.

4. When a loss of a letter mailed which contains money, occurs, report it without delay, with all the circumstances connected with the loss, none of which, or the loss, should be published. A publication is sure to prevent a detection of the perpetrator.

5. Care should be taken that the name of an office at which a letter is mailed, should be plainly written or stamped on it.

6. Be careful to return on the routes by which they were received, all mail bags of every description, not in use. There is great want of attention to this duty, which subjects the Department to embarrassment and loss.

7. Although instructions have repeatedly been given not to inclose any communications in quarterly returns, except such as relate to the returns, yet, resignations, application for blanks, and letters of importance, are often so inclosed, and the consequence is, that they are not opened until weeks, and sometimes months, after they are received at the General Post-office. As all returns are directed to be made at the close

of each quarter, if Post-masters would reflect, they would see that to open and examine more than six thousand returns, require many weeks. How then, can they expect a speedy answer to any communication inclosed in a quarterly return?

8. All applications for blanks at this Office should be directed, *General Post-Office*, care of Joseph Burrows.

9. Personal attention to the duties of his office, by every Post-master, is indispensable.

10. Printers often complain of the miscarriage of their papers when they have never been deposited in a Post-Office, were badly put up, or misdirected. Post-masters are held responsible for such failures, unless they show the fault is with the Printers. This may be easily done, by any Post-master, at whose office the papers are mailed.

Procure from the Printer a list of the packets he sends—arrange this list alphabetically, and compare the packets deposited, with it.

If the packets are insecurely put up, they should be returned to the Printing Office—if not deposited or misdirected, a comparison with the list will detect the error.

11. Where an individual places his frank upon a packet of greater weight than the law authorizes, the excess should be charged. This is often omitted. Many articles, such as the cuttings of grape vines, fruit trees, &c. are sent in the mail, which should be excluded from it. All such abuses must be corrected, or they will increase to the injury of the public.

12. Every carrier of the mail who becomes intoxicated, having the mail in charge, should be dismissed by any Post-master at whose office he calls, and another one employed, at the expense of the contractor, of which, he should be immediately advised.

Post-masters at the ends of routes should see that the carriers are sworn, and that they be specially charged not to carry, out of the mail, letters, open or sealed, in violation of the law.

13. The energetic co-operation of every Post-master, and contractor, is earnestly requested. Each one should consider himself so far identified with the Department, as to participate in the elevation of its character, and his increasing efforts should be directed to so desirable an object. The Post-master General acknowledges with a high degree of satisfaction, the efficiency of many thousands of those who are connected with him in the discharge of arduous and responsible duties, and he confidently expects a continuance of their exertions.