

Twentieth Congress:

SECOND SESSION.

February 4. In the Senate, to-day, Mr. McLane presented a memorial from the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company, praying that Congress will authorize a further subscription of Stock to the Company on the part of the Government. Mr. Benton introduced a bill for the gradual increase of the Engineer Corps, which was ordered to a second reading. The Senate spent about three hours in the consideration of Executive business.

In the House of Representatives, various resolutions were offered; and some which had laid on the table since Saturday last, calling for information from the Departments, were agreed to. A resolution offered by Mr. Ramsay, of Pennsylvania, to print 6000 copies of the Report of the Senate Committee on the Post Offices and Post Roads, relative to the Sunday Mail, occupied the House until the expiration of the hour; and before it was disposed of, the House proceeded to other business. The special order of the day, being a bill to repeal the duties on tonnage on vessels of the United States, and on certain Foreign vessels, was then taken up for consideration. It was opposed by Mr. Gilmer; and several unsuccessful motions were made to dispose of it. On a motion to lay the bill on the table, after the Ayes and Noes were called, Mr. Nuckolls, who was not within the bar of the House when his name was called, as the rules require, moved that his vote be recorded. The Speaker decided that it could not be recorded; and Mr. Nuckolls made an appeal from the decision of the Chair; but the Chair was sustained in his decision, by a vote of 168 to 8. The bill was then ordered to be engrossed and read a third time to-morrow, by a vote of 94 to 78.

February 7. The Senate did not sit on to-day.

In the House of Representatives, various bills were reported, after which the House resumed the consideration of the resolutions of Mr. A. Smith, amendatory of the constitution. Mr. Sergeant made some observations in opposition to the resolutions, when the further debate was arrested by the expiration of the hour. The resolution offered by Mr. Barringer relative to the election of printer, was then taken up, and so modified as to fix to-morrow for the election. The House took up private bills, several of which were acted on in Committee of the whole, and ordered to be engrossed for a third reading to-morrow. Mr. P. P. Barbour made a report in part from the select Committee, appointed to examine the votes for President and Vice-President. The report consists of a resolution, appointing Wednesday next for the opening of the votes by tellers in the presence of the two Houses.

February 9. In the Senate, to-day, Mr. Tazewell from the select Committee, appointed to ascertain and report a proper mode for examining the votes given for President and Vice-President of the United States, &c. reported a resolution in reference to that subject, which was adopted. Mr. Tazewell was elected, by ballot, teller of the votes, on the part of the Senate. Mr. Dickerson's resignation of the office of Senator, and his credentials as Senator for the remainder of the term for which Mr. Bateman was elected, were communicated to the Senate by the Vice-President. Two hours were spent in the consideration of Executive business.

In the House of Representatives, the resolutions offered by Mr. A. Smith, amendatory of the Constitution, were taken up after the presentation of petitions, when Mr. Sergeant briefly continued his observations, but before he had spoken many minutes, the hour having expired, the discussion was arrested. The various bills which were acted on in Committee of the whole on Saturday were then read a third time and passed. The House then resolved itself into Committee of the whole on the state of the Union, on the bill for the preservation and repair of the Cumberland Road, when Mr. Barnard addressed the Committee in favor of the bill, and was followed by Mr. Daniel in opposition and in favor of the amendment. Mr. Vane then moved to amend the bill by adding a fourth section on the subject of the two per cent. fund, which was subsequently ordered to be printed. On motion of Mr. Bell, the Committee then rose, and the House adjourned.

February 10. In the Senate to-day, Mr. Smith of South Carolina presented the protest of the Legislature of South Carolina against the present laws imposing duties on imports for the purpose of protecting domestic manufactures. The object and character of the protest was explained by Messrs. Smith and Hayne. Mr. Hendricks presented the Resolutions of the Legislature of Indiana, declaring the right of that State to the unappropriated lands within its limits.

In the House of Representatives, to-day, the discussion on the resolutions offered by Mr. A. Smith was resumed. Mr. Sergeant concluded the observations he had commenced, and Mr. A.

Smith commenced some remarks in reply; but had not proceeded far before the discussion was arrested by the termination of the hour. The House then proceeded, in obedience to the resolution offered on Saturday, to ballot for a printer for the next Congress; when on opening the ballots, there were found to be 208 members present, 105 being necessary to a choice. Of the whole number, Duff Green had 107, Gales and Seaton 95, and 6 votes were scattering and blank. The Bill relative to Captain Bissell's case was again postponed till Thursday, on motion of Mr. Mercer; and the House resolved itself into Committee of the Whole on State of Union, and took up the Bill for the preservation and repair of the Cumberland Road. Mr. Bell, having a right to the floor, spoke during the residue of the day, in opposition to the power of the Government to construct Roads and Canals, and also in opposition to the policy. He was in favor of the amendment of Mr. Buchanan. When he had closed his observations, on motion of Mr. J. S. Barbour, the Committee rose, and the House adjourned.

SUNDAY MAILS.

Letter from the Postmaster General, to the chairman of the committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, in the House of Representatives.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
19th January, 1829.

SIR: My attention has been directed to your communication of the 6th inst. and all the investigation made, which the pressing nature of my daily duties would admit. In answer to the first inquiry, "whether, in my opinion, a prohibition of the transportation of the mails on the Sabbath, or first day of the week, would tend to impair the revenue of the Department; and if so, to what probable amount?"

I have the honor to state, that daily mails are established on all the principal lines of communication on the Atlantic coast from Maine to Georgia, connecting, in this entire range, places of commercial importance. From New York City, by the way of Albany, Utica, and Rochester, to Buffalo, daily mails are conveyed, and also on several lines connecting with the principal route.

Daily mails are also transported from Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, to the Western Country, including Pittsburgh, Wheeling, and other towns situated on the different routes, to Cincinnati and Louisville, and six weekly trips to Nashville.

On these various routes, there is received annually for postage the sum of four hundred and sixty-four thousand four hundred and forty three dollars and seventy-one cents, and is paid, for the transportation of the mail on them, the sum of two hundred and thirty-four thousand eight hundred and eighty dollars and sixty-two cents.

A discontinuance of the seventh mail, it is believed, would not materially lessen the expense of transportation. On many of the above routes the mail is increasing in size, and now often amounts to from fifteen to twenty-five hundred pounds. When a failure occurs, and throws two mails together, they are now so large on some routes as to exclude all passengers from the mail coach. To run six trips weekly, requires as many teams as are necessary for a daily mail, and, in many instances, the contractors prefer running their stages daily, to six trips weekly, at the same price.

If all travel in private carriages and stage lines on the Sabbath could be suspended, and private expresses prevented, the revenue of the Department would not be much impaired by the discontinuance of the Sabbath mails. But if lines of stages for the conveyance of passengers continue to run on the principal routes, and private expresses are used, the revenue would probably be lessened between fifty and a hundred thousand dollars annually.

You inquire, secondly, "Whether such prohibition would have the effect to impede the progress and expedition of the mails on the other six days of the week, and, if so, to what probable extent?"

The discontinuance of the Sabbath mail, besides the number of weekly mails to six, will produce, in receiving intelligence from this city, a delay of one day in every sixth mail to Philadelphia; two mails out of six, to New York, will each be delayed a day; three of the six to Boston, will each be delayed a day; four at Portland, and five at Augusta, Maine. These delays will appear at once, by supposing the mail to be taken from Washington City for Philadelphia on Saturday, Sunday will intervene before its delivery at Philadelphia; the mail taken on Friday for New York, will be delayed on the Sabbath, before it can be delivered at that city, as well as the Saturday mail, which will make, as above stated, a delay of two mails, each a day, out of six, between Washington and New York. The Boston mail which is taken from Washington on Thursday, will be delayed as above, making a delay of three mails, each one day, out of the six. Between Washington and Portland, the mail taken on Wednesday, from

either place, must rest on the Sabbath, making a delay of one day each, to four mails in the six. A similar delay of five mails out of six, will take place between Augusta and Washington.

From Washington City South, one mail in six will be delayed a day, in being conveyed to Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia; three to Fayetteville, North Carolina; five to Charleston, South Carolina; and every mail received at Savannah, from Washington will be delayed one day.

From New York City to Albany, one mail in six will be delayed a day; to Buffalo, four mails in summer, and five in winter, out of six, will each be delayed a day.

Between Wheeling and this city, there will be a delay of one day each, to two mails out of six; to Zanesville three; and four to Cincinnati and Louisville. From Pittsburgh to Philadelphia, two mails out of six will each be delayed one day.

The mail from this city to New Orleans will be delayed two mails out of three, each three days, and the third mail two days.

It may be difficult at first to comprehend the above delays; but they have been ascertained, by arranging a schedule of six weekly mails. The Sabbath, it must be recollect, will occur at different points on each route, and constantly vary, in the progress of the mails, the places of detention.

In your third inquiry, you ask "Whether a discontinuance of the present practice of distributing letters, &c. from the several post-offices on the Sabbath, or first day of the week, would tend to impair the revenue of the Department; and if so, to what probable amount?" It is believed, that the revenue of the Department would not be lessened, to any considerable amount, if no letters or newspapers, &c. were delivered at the different post-offices on the Sabbath.

By the fourth inquiry, I am requested to state "Whether a change of the present mode of daily conveyance and distribution of mails, would affect the commercial interest of the country; and if so, in what manner?"

It has been considered of great importance to the commercial & agricultural interests of the country, to convey through the mails, into every part of the Union, speedy intelligence of the state of the market at home and in foreign countries. To accomplish this desirable object, and afford the utmost facilities to all commercial transactions great increase of expedition has been given to the mails, within a few years on all the important lines of communication. Some years since, on a sudden rise in the price of cotton, private expresses were dispatched to the South from New York, and other places, in advance of the mail, and immense speculations were made, in the purchase of that article. At that time, mail contractors were not prohibited from forwarding such expresses; and having relays of horses on every route, they were frequently employed in this service, at a high rate of compensation. Since that time, the contracts have been changed, so as to subject any contractor to a forfeiture of his contract, if he engage, either directly or indirectly, in the transmission of commercial information, with a view to speculation, more rapidly than the mail. This provision, with the increased expedition, which has been given, has rendered it extremely difficult, if not impracticable, for expressmen, on the more important routes, to travel more rapidly than the mail is conveyed.

An attempt was recently made to send an express between New York and Philadelphia, in advance of the mail, but the enterprising contractor on that route, delivered it at the latter place, before the express arrived. On this line, the mail is transported twelve miles an hour, when necessary to prevent a failure, or any other exigency require it.

A suspension of the mail on the Sabbath would subject it to the delays before stated, and enable persons in our large cities or elsewhere, on the receipt of intelligence of a change in the price of our great staples, to send express without much effort, and speculate on the holders of such property.

In some of our large cities a failure of the mail or the delay of a few hours in its delivery, has been of serious consequence to persons extensively engaged in commercial operations.

If, as before suggested, private express and all stages for the conveyance of passengers, were suspended on the Sabbath, the discontinuance of the mail on that day would affect, less seriously, the commercial and other interest of the country.

A daily mail has been in operation on some routes, almost ever since the organization of this Department, under the Federal Government. Frequent ineffectual applications have been made to Congress, to discontinue this mail. It has been viewed by many persons of great intelligence and piety, as an evil, but no provision for relief has been adopted. The result of these applications has given a sanction to the policy of the Department, which I have considered as controlling any discretion the Post Master

General might be inclined to exercise on the subject. He cannot act on the moral principle, unless he apply it to every daily mail in the Union. This would involve a responsibility which no individual can exercise with impunity, and would be in opposition to the implied sanction of the National Legislature.

It has been, however, the practice of the Department, on each route, where a daily mail is not established, so to regulate the conveyance, where practicable, as to make the Sabbath a day of rest.

By the 11th section of the Post Office law, every Postmaster is required "at all reasonable hours, on every day of the week, to deliver on demand, any letter, paper, or packet, to the person entitled, or authorized to receive the same."

Between Wheeling and this city, there will be a delay of one day each, to two mails out of six; to Zanesville three; and four to Cincinnati and Louisville. From Pittsburgh to Philadelphia, two mails out of six will each be delayed one day.

The mail from this city to New Orleans will be delayed two mails out of three, each three days, and the third mail two days.

It may be difficult at first to comprehend the above delays; but they have been ascertained, by arranging a schedule of six weekly mails. The Sabbath, it must be recollect, will occur at different points on each route, and constantly vary, in the progress of the mails, the places of detention.

It is believed that the delivery of letters has been considered as more likely to interrupt religious worship, on the Sabbath, than the conveyance of the mail. The passage of the mail stage, through a village or town on Sunday, if Postmasters were not required to distribute letters and newspapers, would excite as little attention as that of any other vehicle.

With great respect,

I am your obedient servant.

JOHN MCLEAN.

HON. SAMUEL MCKEAN,
Chairman of the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads.

LATEST FROM EUROPE.

The late arrivals at New-York, from England and France have afforded intelligence some days later than the previous news.

The Duke of Wellington has written an important letter to the Catholic Priests of Ireland, on the Catholic Question. This letter is said to be a proof of Wellington's sincere desire to emancipate the Catholics from their political disabilities. The Liverpool Mercury says:

This document is calculated to strike with terror Brunswicks and Intolerants, and rejoice the friends of civil and religious liberty, proving, as it does, that Arthur, Duke of Wellington--he who, but a very short time ago, was considered the *preux chevalier* of intolerance and exclusion, has been compelled, by the spirit of the age, to abandon that inveterate hostility which he at one time professed towards the cause of liberty and justice, and to confess that the settlement of the Catholic Question would be a benefit to the nation, and to every individual in it."

The British Minister for Foreign Affairs and the French and Spanish Ambassadors had recently had very frequent intercourse. It was understood to relate to a proposal for a general amnesty to all the Spanish Constitutionalists, and the promulgation of a charter.

The young Queen of Portugal has been proclaimed, in the most solemn manner, at the island of Terceira. The place is said to be capable of withstanding the closest blockade, and the inhabitants are determined to hold out to the last. It is stated that the Brazilian and Constitutional authorities in London desired to send the Portuguese refugees at Plymouth to reinforce the garrison at Terceira, but to this the English government objected, on the ground that it would be a breach of its professed neutrality. An early declaration of war by Don Pedro against Don Miguel is expected.

The King of England has received the young Queen at Windsor, as Queen of Portugal.

A Toulon paper states that, at a council of Ministers held at Paris, it was determined that an expedition of 55,000 men should be sent to Algiers. The army in the Morea is to form a part of this expedition, which, it is added, will be commanded in chief by Gen. Maisonneuve.

In the port of Toulon great activity prevailed, and two frigates were to sail for the Morea very shortly.

MADRID, Dec. 15. The Minister of the U. S. has reclaimed 27 Colombian and American prisoners, found in the four towers of La Carca, which were taken from the South American privateers, captured after being shipwrecked on the coast of Spain.

The subjoined paragraphs are copied from the New-York Commercial Advertiser and American of Wednesday evening.

A letter from the Emperor to Maj. Gen. Count Diebich, dated 9th (20th) Nov. says:—

"The opening of the present war against the Turks has thrown new lustre on the glory of the Russian arms. The courage and constancy of our troops have surmounted all the obstacles which were

the natural difficulties of the country. Four months have scarce elapsed, and our standard floats over the prostrate walls of Varna, that fortress which had never seen a conqueror. Other ports and countries on the east and west side of the Black Sea, have been compelled to submit; and the thunder of our artillery has been heard at the extremities of Asiatic Turkey."

Extract of a letter, dated Odessa, Dec. 2.—

"Letters entitled to credit announce that Varna is not in any way blockaded by the Turks, and even a division of the grand Russian army still occupies Bazardjik and other forts in Bulgaria, which by means of temporary fortifications, are placed out of danger from a surprise. It is added that these troops are about to enter into winter quarters on the right bank of the Danube. The first official accounts will dissipate all doubts as to the state of affairs in Bulgaria."

According to letters from Galatz, a Russian army of from 30 to 40,000 men, including the garrison of Varna, was stationed on the right bank of the Danube, occupying the whole country from Iskischia to Varna, being in communication with the garrison at Matschin detached from the division of Ibsil. A strong body of Turkish cavalry, coming from Schumla, to which a part of the garrison of Silistra has been re-united, is marching for Hershom.

From the *Messager des Chambres* of 24th Dec.

The Gazette of Augsburg says, an examination was about to be made into the conduct of the Divan of Wallachia, accused of having caused a loss of 900,000 ducats to the Russian Army by a failure of supplies.

In order to check the progress—already increasing—of the pest, in the military hospitals, the sick are ordered to be transported out of the city (Bucharest) in order to undergo a quarantine of 21 days, when they may be brought back.

The Turks have, we learn, been considerably reinforced at Girogs, Gen. Booth, who is expected daily at Wallachia, is to be replaced in his command at Bazardjik by Gen. Kroutz.

Wallachia is infested, in addition to all its other calamities, by hordes of wild boars and wolves, who devastate everything.

Public Lands.—The proposition which has been agitated in Congress for one or two sessions to dispose of the national domain, in a different manner from that hitherto pursued, is now attracting a good deal of attention. Supposing that it would not be uninteresting to our readers, to know something of the extent and value of the lands now owned by government, the speedy disposal of which seems to be a favorite object with certain restless politicians, we offer the following items on the subject.

The quantity of land sold up to the 30th June 1828, is 21,103,968 acres.

The amount of sales up to the same period is \$41,950,247.

There have been granted for the support of schools and colleges 7,841,947 acres.

There have been granted for roads & canals 1,934,537 acres.

There have been granted for Military Boundaries and private claims 18,285,777 acres.

The quantity of land surveyed and yet unsold is 210,273,300 acres.

The quantity of land in U. S. unceded is estimated at 750,000,000 acres.

This public domain has cost, including every charge of purchase, surveying and sale, \$32,911,813. This sum includes the purchase money of Louisiana and Florida.—Deduct the \$20,000,000 paid for Louisiana and Florida, and the true cost of the U. S. lands is \$12,911,813, which being deducted from the amount of sales leave a balance of the public lands of 31,039,634.

It appears that the percentage on collecting the custom in 1826 was 31 per cent., while the cost of surveying and selling the public land was but 3 6-10 per cent.

There are at this time about 210,273,300 acres of land surveyed and unsold belonging to the United States, which at present prices would yield a net revenue to the treasury of about \$250,000,000.

The present price of the United States' land gives, we believe, entire satisfaction to the great mass of purchasers.

The proposition of offering these lands at a reduced price each successive year, without a reference to their quality, would we appreh