

PHILATELIC SECTION.



London 1/42

PAPERS

RELATIVE TO

THE AGREEMENT

MADE

BY GOVERNMENT

WITH

John
MR. PALMER,

FOR THE REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT

OF

THE POSTS.

London:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, JUN. AND W. DAVIES, (SUCCESSORS TO MR. CADELL) IN THE STRAND.

1797.

Page 1

Section 1

Section 2

Section 3

Section 4

Section 5

Section 6

Section 7

TO THE PUBLIC.

I HAVE the honor to lay before you the Copy of a Memorial, together with a Remonstrance, and other papers, presented to the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury, respecting an agreement entered into with me, for the Reform and Improvement of the Posts of this Kingdom, by which it was stipulated that I should have *for my life* Two and a Half per Cent. on the future *net increase* of the Post-Office Revenue, from the Commencement of my Plan, *if it succeeded, but not a Shilling otherwise*—the arrangement and conduct of the Posts being at that time in the worst possible state, and their Revenue *decreasing*.

The only improvement of the Posts, previous to that time, had been suggested by Mr. ALLEN, about sixty years before, which was considered, by the Post-Master General, and Government, so beneficial to Commerce, that they granted him the farm and exclusive management of the Cross-Posts during his life, (being above forty-two years) and nearly the whole of the profits. My proposal, therefore, to accept so small a share of the *future increase* of a Revenue, at that time *decreasing*, was approved, as highly advantageous to Government, if it were possible the Plan could be carried into effect. I ventured on this scheme, under the plain and simple idea, that the business of the Post-Office was merely a branch of the carrying trade of the country, monopolized by Government, for the advantage of the public:—That it had never been properly regulated, because almost every officer concerned in its direction and management throughout the Kingdom, was interested in its neglect and abuse. Could I, therefore, be allowed the same uncontrouled power of managing this business, as an individual exercised in his trade or manufacture, *and as Mr. ALLEN was allowed in the conduct of the Cross-Posts, he being exempted from any controul from the Post-Office*, I might so reform its abuses, and extend and improve the business and its profits, that even with so small a commission as Two and a Half upon every 100l. I gained for my country, *or a fortieth share of the net increased profits*, and that for my life only, *I might in time procure as large a life income as Mr. ALLEN derived from the whole increase procured by him*, being about 14,000l. a year.

The event, as far as I have been allowed to proceed with my Plans, has justified my hopes in the advantages obtained for the Public, and I trust my stipulated share will not be withheld from my family.

During the forty-two years of Mr. ALLEN's improvement, an increase of 14,000l. a year only was procured.

The average net amount of the whole Post-Revenue, when I agreed to accept a 40th share of the *future net increase* for my life, as a compensation for my Plan, and carrying it into execution, had *gradually accumulated*, during a course of near two centuries, to no more than 150,000l. a year.

In the few years since my Plan has been carried into execution, it has increased to above 400,000l. a year*.

* In consequence of the expedition, regularity, and safety, given to the Posts by my Plan, a further additional tax is now proposed to be laid on correspondence of 250,000l. per year, and likewise 60,000l. per year, for the same advantages in travelling.

I must intreat, therefore, you will keep impressed on your memory these facts, and that Government contracted with me, looking to the wretched state of the Posts, *declared, by their ablest officers, totally incapable of improvement*, though so injurious to commerce, that the subject was obliged to carry on his correspondence in defiance of Acts of Parliament, penalties, &c. by the common Coaches of the Country, because more safe and expeditious;—that, looking at it in this state, and its Revenue of course decreasing, Government contracted with me to reform and improve it, for merely a 40th share of *the future net increase*; and that for my life only:—at the same time, let it be remembered, *I was not to receive one shilling if I did not succeed in my scheme*.

The Terms, both as to powers, and profits, on which I agreed to carry my Plan into execution, were given to the present Bishop of Lincoln, then private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for his perusal and information, and I had shortly after, a message from him by the Secretary, "*That the Terms were thought fair by the Minister, and would be fully complied with, provided the Plan succeeded.*"—Whatever shape, therefore, this engagement has been fashioned into, on the part of Government, for their political convenience, and to which I submitted from necessity, relying on their faith for the due observance of the *Spirit of the Original Agreement*, on their part, which had been so completely fulfilled on mine, no advantage, I think, to the prejudice of my family, ought to be taken of such official form.

As there is a difference of opinion, between the Lords of the Treasury and myself, respecting this agreement, I am advised by my Counsel, to petition the House of Commons, to be heard in support of my claims, at the Bar of that House: I beg leave, therefore, to express my hopes, that those who have experienced a convenience or advantage from my exertions to procure safety, expedition, and regularity, both in correspondence and travelling, will favor me with a perusal of the Memorial and Remonstrance, &c.

The whole might certainly have been more condensed, but I thought a selection from the mass of original papers, read and admitted at the Treasury Board, would afford the most satisfactory evidence. From this statement, it will appear how much greater hazard, anxiety, and fatigue, an individual has to encounter in a public engagement, from its complicated and opposing interests, and connections, beyond that with a private person, whose interest at once secures you his encouragement, in the improvement of his trade or fortune, and where the law sanctions and protects the agreement—You will therefore, I hope, consider, *that both should equally be held sacred*.

My Petition to Parliament has been long deferred, in consequence of the delay which attended the discussion of the Papers, by the Lords of the Treasury; the event of which, I waited for with the respect and patience due to that honourable board, and I was encouraged to expect, from conversations held at that time, that there could be no doubt of the issue being entirely to my satisfaction. You will, no doubt, be surpris'd in perusing the Papers, (which I most earnestly conjure you to do) to find, that it could be possible for prejudice and obstinacy to give so violent, so uncandid and persevering an opposition to an individual, in the prosecution of a plain and simple plan, for a Public benefit; but I have to lament, that the difficulties there stated, are small in comparison with those I have had to encounter in the Post-Office, most of which could not have occurred, had the powers, possessed by Mr. ALLEN, and assured to me, been confirmed;—For want of such powers, *at least half a million has been lost to the Revenue*, exclusive of the increased accommodation I should have procured to the public, had I been suffered to carry my other Plans into execution, so frequently alluded to in these Papers. I wish not to revive former contests, and therefore, shall only observe, that of the frequent and numerous charges, so wantonly and vexatiously brought forward against me, not one was adduced, which has not been most clearly and fully refuted; nor is there any charge that can possibly be urged, in extenuation of the treatment I have received, (however unworthily procured or supported) which I do not pledge myself fully to refute on a fair hearing at the Bar of the House of Commons.

In the Debates of last year it appears, that, on Mr. BOYD's statement of the right of the Contractors to a preference in the new loan, if negotiated previous to the expiration of the contract for the preceding one, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared himself at first *not only unwilling, but positively determined, not to admit such claim, till the Governor of the Bank observed, that something like a promise had been given to that effect* *. Upon which the Minister assented to it. I should hope therefore, in the present misunderstanding between Government and myself, respecting my agreement, looking to the clear and absolute promise made to me, "*That the terms were thought fair by the Minister, and would be complied with, provided the Plan succeeded,*" exclusive of the strong and additional chain of evidence produced in the Memorial and Appendix, and considering my risk and anxiety, and the permanent advantages derived to the country from my bargain, I shall be thought entitled to equal consideration and justice, or at least that I may be allowed the same advantage as Mr. BOYD was declared clearly entitled to, viz. *To come to the Bar of the House of Commons and demand the fulfilment of my agreement.*

* Mr. DOUGLASS declared, in defence of the bargain, "That contractors after *running the risk* attending the transaction *were entitled to the advantage*, nor could that be lessened or withdrawn more than the premium of an insurer, when his adventure is successful;" in this situation, he says, "Could the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Guardian of the Public Faith, as well as the Manager of its Finances, reject a claim to which he was then pledged? A strict adherence to an engagement, and a liberality beyond the reach of little motives, must likewise produce a more powerful confidence, and more advantages to the country, than the saving of Two and a Half per Cent. And after all he would ask, even if the country was to gain 333,000l. or 900,000l. by dissolving a bargain (which he would admit was not complete till ratified by Parliament,) would even that sum be adequate to compensate the stab, which public credit, and the credit of Government, would receive from so unprecedented a procedure?" Respecting the Hamburg bills, he says, "if the whole transaction had been merely verbal, Mr. BOYD would have been entitled *to come to the Bar of the House, and demand the fulfilment of the agreement.* It was therefore immaterial whether he possessed Treasury Warrants, or a mere Memorandum, neither required stamps, and the *bare word* of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was ample security for Mr. BOYD."

Mr. STEELE with equal liberality declared "That the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in deciding in favour of Mr. BOYD's claim, had acted like a man of honour, with a strict regard to Justice, and an anxious desire to fulfil former engagements, and, with a determination, if he did err, to err on the side of the claim of right. Whether in circumstances in which it was at least a doubt whether he was not pledged, he was not right feeling as he did, to act as he had done? in the affirmative of this, he was persuaded, there were few in that house who would not agree with him, that he was bound in honour, justice, and sound policy, to yield to Mr. BOYD's claims of preference, if well founded; and such, after a decided disinclination, and some opposition, the claims of Mr. BOYD were made appear to be. Though they might not be specifically expressed in writing, he was bound, as a man of honour, to yield to his demand; and if he had not done so, he would have been guilty of a gross act of injustice to an individual, dishonour and disgrace to himself, and impolicy to the State."

To these liberal sentiments of his friends, the Chancellor of the Exchequer fully subscribed; and added, "that though some gentlemen seemed to think, that unless Government was bound down by specific terms, an engagement should not be abided by; yet, *a common understanding, an implied condition, or a strong and clear construction*, would be equally binding on the Minister of the Country, to the observance of the claim in point of honour and justice; and no personal inconvenience could ever induce him to resist a claim founded on an understood and implied condition."

You will, therefore, I hope, in your communication with your Representatives in Parliament, desire them to support the prayer of my Petition, when presented agreeably to the united opinion and advice of three eminent Counsel, which you will read at the end of my Memorial, and which Petition will merely be—that I may not be precluded from a Privilege—(the birth-right of every Englishman,) which you all enjoy in your dealings with each other, viz. *to be heard by my Counsel in support of my claims* both as to the powers and profits, as settled by the Minister himself, and described in the correspondence and commission, in pages 44-5-6 of the Appendix, those powers, being absolutely necessary for me, further to improve the public accommodation and Revenue, and of course the fortune I hope to procure for my family, by extending and making perfect my Plans—for though the present state of the Posts, opposed to what they were previous to my Reform, may do some honour to the kingdom—yet, looking at what they now are, and what they might be, it is a disgrace to so great a commercial country as England, that such material advantages should be *impeded by any inferior considerations*.

As I was not an officer introduced through favor, or depending on patronage, but *first produced the fund* out of which my emolument is claimed—I conceive, that while that fund continues, and I live, my claim must likewise continue, and *increase or diminish* with it.

JOHN PALMER.

THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

THE
M E M O R I A L
 OF
J O H N P A L M E R,

SURVEYOR AND COMPTROLLER-GENERAL OF THE POST-OFFICE,

SHEWETH,

THAT, pursuant to your Lordships' warrant, dated 2d July, 1789, your Memorialist was appointed Surveyor and Comptroller-General of the Mails throughout Great-Britain, with a salary of 1,500l. a year, and 2l. 10s. per cent. on the net Post-Office Revenue, beyond 240,000l. a year, subject to a proviso, that such per centage should not be diminished, or increased, either by any future grants, or pensions, charged on the said Revenue, or any augmentation thereof, from additional rate of postage, nor by any diminution, or increase in the establishment of packets.—(*Appendix, No. 1.*)

That your Memorialist has duly received his salary, and per centage to 5th April, 1793, and presuming that all accounts relative to the Post-Office Revenue are now made out, and the balance struck from thence to 5th April, 1794,

Your Memorialist prays your Lordships to order him a copy of such accounts, and likewise a warrant for his per centage, and salary, during that period, after deducting thereout 3000l. received by him subsequent to 5th April, 1793, pursuant to an order of his Majesty's Privy Council.

And your Memorialist is persuaded he shall be thought well entitled to the per centage, and salary aforesaid, as well as to a *continuance thereof during life*, notwithstanding his suspension from *official superintendance, and further improvement* of his plan, and offers the following statement in support of such claim, viz.

STATEMENT.

In 1782, your Memorialist, having, after much enquiry and consideration, arranged a plan to reform the tedious, and insecure method of conveying the Mails throughout this kingdom, and so far improve the same, as to *justify an increase of postage*, with some restrictions in franking, &c. beneficial to the revenue, communicated his general outlines to Mr. PITT, and, meeting with encouragement, quitted his residence at Bath, to give explanations, &c. in person; after which he was desired to proceed in rendering the plan more complete, which employed him till January, 1783, when it was returned, with additions, to Mr. PITT, who determined on an early trial, but was prevented by a change of Administration. (*Appendix, No. 2.*)

The plan was taken up by the new Administration, and after various conferences sent to the General Post-Office for observations, while your Memorialist undertook to travel through different parts of the kingdom, to clear up fresh doubts.

In July, 1783, the Post-Office furnished *three volumes of objections*, declaring *the plan absolutely impracticable, and prejudicial to the revenue, and commerce*; in consequence of which, your Memorialist undertook several other journies till the autumn following, when he answered the objections so fully, that the plan was approved, and directions given for its immediate execution; as the increased postage, &c. *on the ground of this reform*, was to constitute part of the fresh supplies. (*Appendix, No. 3. A. B. and C.*) p. 7 to 35.

It was at this time agreed, that your Memorialist, if able to carry his plan into execution as proposed, should have, from its commencement, *during his life*, 2l. 10s. per cent. on the whole *future increase* of the Post-Office Revenue, with a *general controul* of the Office, and its expenditure, as his per centage would interest him in the

improvement thereof; being the exact *reverse* of a situation enjoyed by the Secretary, who, having a like percentage on the whole *gross expenditure* of the Office Packets, was intersted in the accumulation of expence, and consequent decrease of the revenue. Matters being thus arranged, your Memorialist contracted with several persons to execute the proposed plan on the Bath, and Bristol, and other roads, and was preparing to begin on the former, when Administration again changed.

In December, 1783, Mr. PITT came again to the Treasury, and found the plan ripe for execution; but the General Election, and *another volume of objections* from the Post-Office, still declaring it *impracticable, and destructive*, obliged him to postpone the trial for several months, during which your Memorialist prepared further answers, which proving satisfactory, he attended a meeting, with the Post-Master General and his principal Officers, at Mr. PITT's, when the most material objections were completely over-ruled, and trial directed on the Bath road, on the 2d of August following.

Your Memorialist, previous to the commencement of his plan, proposed *the same terms* to Mr. PITT, as had been agreed to by the former Administration, and learnt from his Private Secretary, Dr. PRETTYMAN, that they *were thought fair, and would be fully complied with, provided the Plan succeeded*. This quite satisfied your Memorialist; and when it was afterwards intimated, that a compensation would be made for his trouble and expence, in case of failure, he declared that, having no fears for the event, he should expect *his full compensation in case of success, but not a shilling otherwise*.

Some time afterwards, Mr. PITT, finding an intended tax on coals would be unpopular, sent for your Memorialist, to converse further respecting his plan, and the probable encrease of revenue to accrue from it; when he was so well satisfied of its productiveness, as to make the latter a substitute.

Your Memorialist, with his proposal, delivered a narrative of Mr. ALLEN's transactions in 1720, respecting the cross posts, in order to point out the powers requisite for such an undertaking, as Mr. ALLEN had

“ Full liberty to make all kinds of improvements he should judge most conducive to the extension of commerce, the improvement of the revenue, and his own private advantage, without any restraint or impediment from the authority of the Post-Office Board,” and was further authorized “ to make the utmost improvement for his own benefit, during life, of that branch under his own farm and management, being inseparable from the improvement of the revenue and enlargement of national commerce.”

On 2d August, 1784, the plan was tried, and succeeded beyond promise; notwithstanding which, so many impediments arose from the Office, that your Memorialist was obliged to implore your Lordships' protection, and on 21st August, 1784, a minute was made to the following effect, viz.

“ Write and acquaint the Post-Master General, my Lords are so fully convinced of the public advantage to be derived from Mr. PALMER's plan, if it succeeds, that they are desirous every possible assistance should be afforded: acquaint them, Mr. PALMER complains of having hitherto been impeded and thwarted, and desire they will therefore give the most positive orders that every assistance be afforded, and such powers furnished him, as will effectually secure the obedience of the several Post-Masters to his directions.”

Your Memorialist afterwards made several Contracts for the further extension of his plan, pursuant to your Lordships' directions; but in consequence of voluminous objections, and repeated complaints from the Office, the trial was stopped on other roads, till they could be done away, which was completely effected; though at the expence of some months delay, and considerable forfeitures to Contractors, not employed. (*Appendix*, No. 4. p. 35.)

About July, 1785, your Lordships again found it necessary to issue peremptory orders, to enforce the further extension of his plan; in consequence of which, the Post-Master General wrote circular official letters, re-

quiring *that all directions from your Memorialist, or his Agents, should be obeyed as their own*, and threatening punishment, should they in future be neglected or misconstrued.

In the Autumn of 1785, your Memorialist, after having carried his plan into execution, both on the direct and cross roads, in various parts of the Kingdom, and made arrangements towards its further extension, applied for his appointment, and *received from your Lordships' Board, the draft of a grant from the Crown*, appointing him Surveyor and Comptroller-General of the Post-Office *during life*, with full authority to suspend any Officers for neglect of instructions, *received either from the Post-Master General, or himself*; likewise declaring, that no bills whatever, respecting the post-revenue, should be paid, *till examined and signed by your Memorialist, or his Deputy*; and granting to your Memorialist, *in consideration of his good, and faithful services*, for the advancement of the revenue, commerce, and manufactures, as well *by way of reward for such services, as to encourage him to continue his exertions for furthering the same*, a clear salary of 1,500*l.* together with 2*l.* 10*s.* per cent. on the increased post-revenue, beyond a specific sum, intended to be inserted, so as to make the salary and per centage adequate to his compensation first agreed on. (*Appendix, No. 5. p. 45.*)

On laying this draft before the ATTORNEY GENERAL, he thought the Act of 9th Ann. could only authorize an appointment under the Post-Master General, and that the grant now proposed, required a *new Act*; in consequence of which objection, it was agreed that a Treasury warrant should, for the present, issue to the Post-Master General, pursuant to the old Act: but the continued opposition experienced from the Office, in general, having evinced the impossibility of conducting, and improving the plan in question, if subject to any controul in that department, your Memorialist was promised, that some means should be devised to obviate the necessity of obtaining a new Act, and yet *fully secure him against interruption*; and he was repeatedly told, *it was impossible* he should be deprived of his specific profits *during life*, if the public continued to enjoy the benefit accruing from his plan; and hardly to be supposed that any Post-Master General would, after what had passed, disobey the Treasury minutes, by interfering with him in his management, and improvement of it.

A *renewal of objections, and impediments, at the Post-Office*, not only delayed the appointment, but compelled your Memorialist to apply again to Mr. PITT for redress, and another meeting was had with the Post-Master General, who prevailed on him to receive their very extraordinary Memorial, dated 1st March, 1786, stating their full conviction, from the trial which had taken place, that the plan was, and must be, *prejudicial to the revenue and commerce*; but this Memorial, like the former, was proved to contain statements, and accounts, evidently erroneous. (*Appendix, No. 6. p. 47.*)

About June, 1786, your Lordships' warrant of appointment went to the Post-Office, but did not take effect, because Lord TANKERVILLE had doubts about the per centage; and though the ATTORNEY and SOLICITOR GENERAL, afterwards declared the legality, and propriety, of such a compensation, and his Lordship acceded to the measure, yet, he unfortunately went out of office without signing any appointment.

Lord CLARENDON soon after succeeded, and had likewise objections respecting the per centage; but *Mr. Pitt refused to vary the plan*, declaring that mode of proportioning the reward to services, would be a constant spur to the exertion of your Memorialist, and *most equitable, and beneficial on both sides*. These, and other objections, however, so much impeded your Memorialist, who was anxious for the extension of his plan to Scotland before the ensuing Winter, that he consented to wave, for the present, the full completion of his appointment, being assured by Mr. PITT, *that all the terms originally agreed on, should ultimately be confirmed*; but the delays were such, that even a limited appointment was not granted by the Post-Master General, 'till the 11th October, 1786,* when your Memorialist obtained a part of his expences; *not a shilling* till then having been received either by himself, or his numerous Agents, *although more than four years had elapsed* since the commencement; because he determined, *agreeably to his first declaration, to prove the scheme permanently beneficial, previous to receiving any recompence*.

* By a mistake in the original Memorial, the 6th of August was substituted for the 11th of October.

Your Memorialist immediately departed for Scotland, and established his Plan at Edinburgh, &c. though at so late and unfavourable a season of the year; and the reasons for holding his appointment under the Post-Master General, instead of the Crown, being understood at the Office, he was considered, like Mr. ALLEN, *totally independent of them, so far as related to the management and improvement of his Plan*; which idea was confirmed by your Lordships' minutes, as well as a repetition of circular official Letters; and your Memorialist, in the utmost cordiality with the Post-Master General, proceeded uninterruptedly in his improvements and arrangements.

From June to October, 1787, your Memorialist, by direction of the Treasury, resided in France, for the purpose of settling with Baron D'OGNY, Intendant General of the Posts there, a daily communication with this kingdom, under better regulations, and likewise arranging a similar plan for other parts of the Continent; and, on his return, Lord WALSHINGHAM had succeeded the deceased Lord CLARENDON.

As the Commissioners for Public Inquiry, have spoken very fully, respecting your Memorialist, and his plan, their report will furnish the best certificate that his repeated complaints were not unfounded, nor his improvements ideal, (*Appendix, No. 7. p. 54 & 58.*) viz.

After enumerating several improvements, and declaring the salary should continue 1,500l. a year, with house, coals, and candles, they mention your Memorialist's further claim, pursuant to his original agreement with Government, which he stated to be, That his expences be paid to 2d August, 1784, and an average struck of the net-revenue of the Post-Office to that time, and he be allowed 2l. 10s. per cent. per ann. on the future increase of such revenue; which allowance was to include his salary, and every expence, for travelling, &c.

They then state, that the *opposition* which your Memorialist experienced from the *oldest and ablest* officers in the service, who represented his plan, not only *impracticable, but dangerous to commerce and the revenue*, had induced them to *examine, and weigh, with great attention*, the numerous documents and information which had been *furnished on both sides*; and they were enabled to state, that your Memorialist had *exceeded* the expectations held forth in his first proposal, with regard to *dispatch and expence*, while, at the same time, the *revenue was augmented*, and answers returned to letters *in less than half the time, with punctuality never before experienced, at a lower rate per mile than the old plan*: That the reform had been effected for 20,000l.* per ann. *less than proposed*, and the *revenue increased*, as the Office accounts undeniably proved.

They mention an attempt to convey the mails upon the old plan, with greater dispatch, which, after increasing the expence from 3l. a year per mile to 9l. had been abandoned.

They state, that having investigated an engagement made in 1720 with Mr. Allen, for farming the cross-posts, they found his improvements of a limited nature, and *not fully disclosed for above forty years*, and that his profits *were very large*; whereas the improvements suggested and already executed by your Memorialist, were far more extensive, and of such importance to commerce, as to have *justified an additional expence*, while, at the same time, he had acted without reserve, and *was never like to reap the benefit obtained by Mr. Allen*.

They observe, that Mr. Allen met with none of those difficulties experienced by your Memorialist, which required all his activity and perseverance, aided by the firm, and liberal support of Government, to surmount, against a most powerful opposition, and *every obstruction that could be thrown in his way by Officers in this department*.

And, after referring to Accounts in their Appendix, to prove the Post-Office revenue benefited by the plan in question, they state, that the natural improvement thereof, by the extension of commerce, and growing prosperity of the country, had been materially checked by the slow progress of the post, as the speed of stage-coaches had induced numbers to prefer that conveyance for letters, though at the risk of a penalty, and additional expence;

* At the outset of the Plan, it was generally understood that I had the whole of the contracts for conveying the Mails, and got this 20,000l. per ann. by it.

whereas such letters had of late been sent by the post; and, if the dispatch, safety, and punctuality effected by your Memorialist continued, the conveyance of letters, by other means, would be prevented.

Under the foregoing circumstances, they thought your Memorialist *justly entitled to the compensation he claimed, being a very small part of that revenue, which his integrity, activity, and zeal, had created, exclusive of the numerous advantages accruing to the public and commerce.*

And your Memorialist having proposed, in case of any remaining difficulties respecting the agreement for his salary and per centage, &c. &c., to accept, in lieu thereof, a farm of the cross post, or penny-post, at a rent exceeding any previous annual produce, and to be increased at certain periods,

The Commissioners declared such last-mentioned proposal should not be accepted; because, to secure the benefit derived, and to be further expected from your Memorialist's plan, *it was absolutely necessary he should be interested in the productiveness of the whole Post-Office revenue, which might otherwise fall back into its former state of delay, irregularity, and confusion.*

And the Commissioners, after stating *various, and excessive abuses*, which formerly prevailed in the Post-Office expenditure, declared, that some person, possessing an appointment *originating with your Lordships, and independent of the Post-Office, was absolutely necessary to prevent their future accumulation.*

The Commissioners having delivered in their Reports, your Memorialist, on 30th December, 1788, wrote to Mr. PITT, requesting a confirmation of the agreement made with him, and, after recapitulating the particulars, with his former promise to confirm them, he intimated his having in contemplation *various other Plans, which he conceived would be of the greatest consequence to the correspondence of this kingdom, and particularly the metropolis, and its neighbourhood*, which he should have previously digested, and carried into execution, had the settlement of his affairs left his mind sufficiently at ease for the purpose. (*Appendix, No. 8. p. 59.*)

Many meetings having taken place with the Commissioners, your Lordships, on 2d July, 1789, signed two warrants of that date, viz. one for payment of arrears, and the other a warrant of appointment, as stated in the Introduction to this Memorial.

It is proper to observe, although so complete a performance of an agreement, by an individual, for the public benefit, in which so much unforeseen delay, and expence, had been incurred, by an *unmerited opposition*, might have justified some extra compensation, and his *per centage was to have been given on all increase of the revenue subsequent to his plan*, which had previously been averaged at only 150,000*l.* per annum, yet it was thought proper that restrictions should be laid on some of the objects of the per centage, and that the profits arising from the tax should be added to the former revenue, and both together fixed at 240,000*l.* before his per centage on any increase commenced; by which means his compensation, including his salary, became, in fact, 1000*l.* per annum *less than his agreement entitled him to.*

The arrears were now paid, and your Memorialist hoped his anxiety, and embarrassments were removed, and that, after seven years labour, he might look forward to the quiet enjoyment of his situation, and uninterrupted exertion of his abilities in further improvements of a plan, which had already effected so much, since *every shilling gained for himself must be attended by an annual increase of forty shillings to the revenue.*

With these reasonable expectations, he was preparing to execute some of the arrangements suggested in his letter to Mr. PITT, when he had the mortification to find his powers, and his ardour, considerably weakened by the adoption of a new method for transacting office business, which checked him in almost every instance, and ultimately brought on a *renewal of his former opposition, and difficulties.* The inconveniences grew at last to such excess, that your Memorialist was prevented not only effecting his further arrangements, but even improving, or preserving in proper order, those long established, and approved. Remonstrances were frequently offered against an innovation, so contrary to *the original agreement, the former minutes of your Lordships, and the conduct of the former*

Post-Master General, as well as so injurious to the public accommodation and revenue. Much altercation took place, and, at length, the *Post-Master General* suspended your Memorialist from the official superintendance, and improvement of his plan; having, in fact, long before virtually done so; by the unusual interference, *although not one officer had ever been suspended for opposing, and impeding him, in direct opposition to your Lordships' commands, and to the prejudice of the public revenue, and accommodation.* (*Appendix*, No. 9, p. 61.)

It may be here proper to observe, that, after the suspension of your Memorialist, the *Post-Master General* attempted to conduct his plan according to their own method; but the attempt was soon dropped, and his original mode recurred to, with the assistance of officers introduced, and formed by him, who were then invested with powers, much exceeding those before refused to your Memorialist.

Your Memorialist conceived himself, according to his *virtual agreement*, free from any controul, where it appeared prejudicial to his plans; and, without disrespect to the exalted situations of the *Post-Master General*, he thought, that, if released from official claims, he must be qualified to direct a scheme, originating with himself, and established by *his own incessant exertions*, during a course of years, in preference to Noblemen, whose rank in life rendered it improbable they should have thought on the subject previous to coming into office, and whose limited attendance, and continual change, must prevent their attaining more than a superficial insight afterwards. (*Appendix*, No. 10, p. 63.)

Although it might appear invidious, were your Memorialist to detail the various instances in which he conceives the public accommodation, and revenue, *have been materially injured*, by the alterations made in the management of his plan, previous to his suspension, or the great increase of accommodation, and revenue, which must have been derived from those further plans, alluded to in his letter to Mr. PITT, had he been *suffered to execute them without interference*, yet he could, if called upon, clearly and easily prove the former; and as to the latter, he ventures to refer your Lordships to the beneficial effects already derived from one part of his projected improvements, viz. the new penny-post, which he formed, and would have adopted many years ago, if left to his own discretion; having, in 1788, offered the Commissioners to farm the same, as Mr. ALLEN did the cross polls, and accept such farm in lieu of his per centage.

In order to form a due estimate of your Memorialist's claim, it may be proper to shew what have been his personal sacrifices, and risk, to effect a public benefit, and the amount of the benefit secured.

When the plan was first brought forward, he was not an indigent adventurer, but, settled at Bath with his family, and occupied in the management of his property in the Theatres of that city, and Bristol; together with other extensive concerns, which through his personal attention, and exertions, were annually improving; but, in order to effect a reform of such extent, and national importance, he quitted his residence and his family, and in a short time, for want of his usual attention, the Theatres, and other engagements, declined so much, that, to prevent further losses, and provide for increasing expence, he was obliged to dispose of the major part of this property, which would otherwise have afforded a permanent income to himself, and a certain establishment to some of his children.

In short, after having been alienated from his family, and harrassed both in mind, and body, during several years, at the risk of forfeiting all recompence for his labours, and every shilling of the expence incurred, unless the strong and repeated opposition, which in every instance started up, could be overcome, and complete execution of his plan established; he found himself, at the end of this period, with his domestic concerns in confusion, his constitution impaired, and his fortune diminished, to the amount of 7000*l.* and upwards.—Your Memorialist intreats your Lordships to consider what must have been his situation, had he failed in the attempt, and what reward would equal such a risk!

The Office accounts shew, that, besides many improvements, pointed out by the Commissioners, the following pecuniary advantages have been gained, viz.

Your Memorialist believes that no regular account of the Post-Office revenue, previous to the year 1724, can now be found; and from the earliest establishment, to that time, being more than a century, with every post charge, assistance, and improvement, it then amounted to only 96,332*l.* 7*s.* 5*d.* per ann.

From 1724 to 1764, being forty years, it decreased on the average, being in 1762 only 77,795*l.* 7*s.* 2½*d.* and in 1763 it amounted to no more than 97,833*l.* 15*s.* 10¼*d.*

In the years 1764 and 5, the Act restricting franks, and modifying postage, increased the annual revenue to 157,571*l.*

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
The average produce of the nine subsequent years, from 1765 to 1774, was, per annum,	162,534	6	0
Being an average annual increase of 4,961 <i>l.</i> 6 <i>s.</i>			
The average of the nine subsequent years, from 1774 to 1783, was, per annum,	149,333	13	0
So that, for the <i>nine years preceding the new plan</i> , there was a decrease of, per annum,	13,198	13	0
Between the time of establishing this plan and April 1794 (not quite ten years) the net revenue has gradually increased to, per annum, above — —	400,000	0	0
And the previous annual average having been as above, — —	149,333	13	0
It appears that the plan in question has <i>not only stopped</i> the annual decrease of 13,198 <i>l.</i> 13 <i>s.</i> but from that time <i>procured an increase of</i> , per annum, above	250,666	7	0

Exclusive of this actual *increase of the revenue, protection and dispatch have been secured to commerce, correspondence, and travellers*; and though, previous to this reform, continual mail robberies took place, and great expence incurred in prosecuting offenders, which in one instance cost government 4,000*l.* yet, from the establishment of the mail coaches to this time, *not a single robbery* has been committed, except *where the mail coaches have been dropped, and carts used on the old plan, at an increased expence*; and also except *the loss of mails*, through the negligence of guards, *since the suspension of your Memorialist*.

This claim, being *founded on an agreement*, it seems unnecessary to draw inferences from similar situations, could any equally strong be found.

With respect to the mode of payment by per centage, numerous instances occur of allowing 20*l.* 30*l.* 40*l.* and even 50*l.* but none less than 10*l.* per cent. for the management of Post-Office business, and revenue, on the *gross*, instead of the *net* receipts.

The Secretary, as before observed, had 21. 10*s.* per cent. on the *gross* packet expenditure.

Mr. Allen, who, in forty-two years, did not procure a twentieth part of the increase already obtained by the plan in question, was suffered to enjoy nearly the whole sum, being above 12,000*l.* per annum, during his life, which the then Post-Master General declared to be, only the *natural fruits of his own industry and services*.

It is to be observed, that Mr. Allen, after taking the cross posts to farm, improved them sparingly, at intervals of several years, under his own exclusive management, and through the means of his own Surveyors, but without disclosing his plans, as he merely engaged that *at his death, only*, they should be made known, and the management should *return to the Post-Master General*; declaring, that it was not to be supposed that, *during his management*, he should impart his plans to any but a relation, on whom he had a perfect reliance: and, in consequence of this exclusive confidence, *Mr. Allen was enabled to secure a provision for that relation after his own death*.

Your Memorialist, on the contrary, gave up the principles of his plan in the first instance, and exposed them to public observation; after which, his extreme anxiety to extend their public accommodation and benefit, rendered him impatient of checks or delays; but had he acted with reserve, or contented himself with gradual alterations, as opportunity permitted, he might, perhaps, have avoided both anxiety and controversy, and ultimately rendered his scheme *more beneficial to himself, though less so to the public*.

With the before-stated precedents in view, as to modes of payment by per centage, and while the Post-Revenue was *decreasing upwards of 13,000*l.* per annum*; and *delay, confusion, and irregularity prevailed in the Office*, as

the Commissioners' reports certify, your Memorialist was contracted with to carry his plan of Reform into execution, for an allowance of only 2l. 10s. per cent. during his life, to be computed on the future net increase of the revenue.

Your Memorialist conceives, the records of the Treasury, from the earliest time, do not furnish any instance of a more cautious, safe, or advantageous bargain made by that Honourable Board for the Public: nor does he conceive that any bargain was ever more zealously followed, or more completely fulfilled, on the part of the individual contracted with.

With respect to the 3000l. per annum settled on your Memorialist, he thinks that cannot, on reflection, be held sufficient to discharge an engagement, by which he is *eventually* become entitled to a much larger amount; and though the sum appears, and is, considerable, yet it should be recollected, that, in order *to stand a chance* of obtaining the recompence now claimed, (being only a fortieth part of the increased annual revenue procured, and from which the public will derive a *permanent benefit, while his must terminate with life*) your Memorialist gave up every other pursuit: and that the zeal, ability, and activity, which the Commissioners give him credit for, in the public service, would, it is presumed, if exerted in many private engagements, which so frequently occur in this kingdom, have secured, with less risk and anxiety, an establishment probably as considerable through life, but certainly more satisfactory to the father of a Family, than the uncertain tenure of *any life annuity*, unless so very considerable as to permit his realizing a fortune in a few years.

In short, your Memorialist has only to repeat,

That he made considerable private sacrifices, and undertook, at the risk of *certain ruin*, to effect a plan, from which the public was, without the *possibility of a loss*, to stand the chance of a considerable benefit, subject only to a condition, that the projector should receive, *during life*, a small proportion of such benefit as might be procured.

The sacrifices having been made, the risk incurred, and the benefit effected, far beyond promise: the projector applies for his reward, secured by an agreement, which, had it been made with any private individual, would have undergone the common forms, and might have been easily enforced on either side. In this instance, the common forms were not attainable; but the agreement in question was sufficient to silence the claims of your Memorialist, though to his ruin, had he been unsuccessful, and therefore he could not doubt the validity and due performance of it on the part of Government, should he succeed; as the undertaking tended to effect, and has accomplished, a great commercial benefit, and was sanctioned by the word of the First Minister of the first Commercial Nation in the world: whose patronage induced the trial, and encouraged your Memorialist to persevere against an opposition, which would otherwise have borne down any innovator, whatever might have been his merits.

Your Memorialist, therefore, presumes to hope the foregoing Statement will induce your Lordships to grant the relief prayed:

- I. Because your Memorialist became *entitled to the per centage* claimed, on the establishment of his plan, and the same ought to increase with the revenue, *during his life, as the reward of past services*, so as not to be dependent on the continuance of his exertions, though such continuance must be a desirable object, in order to keep up and increase his per centage—and with respect to the salary, that having been granted in consequence of some restrictions in the per centage, is liable to the same claim.
- II. Because the power of suspension, which was executed in 1792, might, with equal justice, have been used *immediately after your Memorialist had brought his plan to effect*, and, (had there been no specific agreement,) it could never have been conceived that, after all his sacrifices, risk, labour, and ultimate success, he was only to obtain an income, *determinable by his opponents, at any indefinite period*; while the Public was to remain in full possession of his permanent acquisitions and his plans.

III. Because, *if the form of appointment, though contrary to agreement, might justify an official suspension, it ought only to deprive your Memorialist of official perquisites in house-rent, coals, candles, &c. &c. and whatever may be the actual powers, he presumes to hope that no individual, employed by your Lordships, will be permitted to suffer, for having, under the circumstances before stated, and in full confidence of protection, endangered the spirit of his contract, and exposed himself to unforeseen difficulties.*

Your Memorialist presumes to add, that although he does not conceive the discharge of any official duties necessary towards entitling him to the salary and per centage, yet he is far from desiring a sinecure, or inactivity; and, as the plan in question has been *his only object for many years, at the expence of every other pursuit*, it would be his ambition, as well as his interest, to make further improvements, should your Lordships think fit to give him such *an appointment as first settled, or as advised by the Commissioners*, after obtaining the necessary Act for that purpose. The latter appointment, would, at once remove all former difficulties respecting the Post-Master General, and enable your Memorialist to check the Post-Office expenditure, as well as arrange, and compress, all accounts for your Lordships' inspection; and, at the same time, he will, in that situation, readily submit to your Lordships' further improvements respecting the posts of this kingdom, which he pledges himself, shall, if accepted and executed, increase the revenue *very considerably beyond the present unexpected amount.*

If, however, your Lordships, after confirming to your Memorialist his salary and per centage, shall not think proper to assign him such an appointment as before specified, he will, nevertheless, be ready to communicate the plans for improvement, alluded to, in such manner as your Lordships shall require, and from time to time, when applied to, give further information on the subject, to the best of his ability.

(Signed)

J. PALMER.

December 4, 1794.

THIS MEMORIAL having been left at the Treasury, on the 4th of December, 1794, the following Answer was obtained on the 25th of August, 1795, viz.

S I R,

25th August, 1795.

Having laid before the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury, your Memorial, dated the 4th of December last, stating, that, by a Warrant of this Board of the 2d July, 1789, you was appointed Surveyor and Comptroller-General of the Mails throughout Great Britain, with a salary of 1,500l. per annum, and 2l. 10s. per cent. on the Net Post-Office Revenue beyond 240,000l. a year, which you have duly received to the 5th of April, 1793; and praying that their Lordships would grant a Warrant for the per centage and salary to the 5th of April 1794, deducting the sum of 3000l. received by you subsequent to the 5th of April, 1793, pursuant to an Order of his Majesty's Privy Council; I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you, that they are of opinion, the sum of 3000l. per annum, for your life, is a just and full compensation for the services you have rendered, and *do not think themselves justified, on the part of the Public, to make any addition to that allowance.*

I am, SIR,

Your most humble servant,

JOHN PALMER, Esq.

CHARLES LONG.

OBSERVATIONS.

The Plan referred to by the foregoing Memorial, having been undertaken in the service of Government, and the terms, arranged with an Officer of the Crown, no regular contract, or personal responsibility, was attainable by the individual contracted with; but, independent of prior transactions, the *first draft of appointment prepared at the Treasury*, though put aside in consequence of technical objections, clearly ascertained the terms which had been originally entered into, and understood between the parties; and the subsequent variations were made by the Crown Officers, not in consequence of any fresh agreement, but, to avoid the necessity for their procuring the sanction of a new Act of Parliament;—therefore, though *the form of appointment was changed, the agreement and the*

merits remained the same; and, it cannot be intended that an exemption from legal ceremonies should render public engagements (necessarily resting on the faith of Government) less binding in effect, than private contracts.

OPINION of MR. MANSFIELD, on MR. PALMER'S CLAIM,
As stated in the foregoing MEMORIAL :

I think that Mr. PALMER is entitled to the 1,500*l.* a year and the per centage, which the First Lord of the Treasury agreed to pay him; but I think that it will be impossible for him to enforce that agreement by any proceeding at Law, or in Equity. It never was intended that this agreement should personally bind the First Lord of the Treasury, and no formal contract was ever entered into, even on the part of the Crown, by persons who had authority to make a contract binding on the Crown. The only possible method, therefore, which can be pursued by Mr. PALMER, to obtain what he is entitled to, is by Petition to the House of Commons, the success of which will be very uncertain and precarious. Such a Petition ought to state, as shortly as it can be done with clearness, the nature of Mr. PALMER's merits, and the agreement of the First Lord of the Treasury to make him the compensation which he claims; and the prayer of it, I think, should be, that the House will take his case into consideration, and present an Address to his Majesty, requesting him to give directions to the Lords of the Treasury to fulfil the engagement made with Mr. PALMER, and to issue proper orders for his being paid what he is entitled to. I am not much acquainted with the forms of Petitions to the House, but those who are conversant with them will very easily enable Mr. PALMER to express properly what seems to me ought to be the effect of the prayer of the Petition. Though I do not recollect any application to the House exactly of a similar nature with the present, yet I believe that instances may be found of applications nearly of a similar nature, particularly for compensations to be made to Authors of useful Inventions, by which the Public has been profited. If Mr. PALMER pursues this mode, previous to his taking any such step, he should, I think, give notice of his intentions to the Lords of the Treasury, and should take every step that occurs to him which may prevent their giving opposition to him.

J. MANSFIELD,
TEMPLE, January 2, 1795.

OPINION of MR. ERSKINE.

Taking the facts contained in Mr. PALMER's Memorial as the basis of my opinion, I think that his claim is equitable, upon the footing of an original agreement, and in compensation for past services, originally undertaken and prosecuted upon the faith of it, unless a forfeiture could be shewn, arising from any miscarriage or failure of the scheme from fraudulent relinquishment of activity, or other gross misconduct in Mr. PALMER.

Still building my opinion upon the facts disclosed by the Memorial, I am of opinion, that if the same transaction had taken place between individuals, the Proposition by Mr. PITT, and the acts of Mr. PALMER, upon the footing of them, would amount to a contract to give effect to Mr. PALMER's Claim; and consequently, transferring that conclusion to a case where no contract can be generated, but where the whole must rest upon the good faith of the Public, pledged by the act of its responsible servants, Mr. PALMER's Claim appears to deserve a similar support.

T. ERSKINE,
SERJEANT'S INN, Jan. 8. 1796.

OPINION of MR. GIBBS.

I think that Mr. PALMER cannot, by any Suit at Law or in Equity, compel the payment of his salary and per centage, according to the original agreement, because there is no contracting party against whom such suit could be instituted; for Public Officers are not personally liable on contracts entered into by them, on behalf of the Crown, or of the Public.

In justice, however, it seems to me, that Mr. PALMER is intitled to the salary and per centage, unless, while he held his late office, such charges of fraud or neglect can be fixed upon him as would have worked a forfeiture of the office, even if it had been previously granted to him for life. Nothing of this sort is to be collected from the papers which I have seen. Considering, therefore, the great expence and risk at which Mr. PALMER entered upon this undertaking, the positive promise relied on by him, that that which he now asks should be granted to him for life; the further promise, under which he accepted the office lately taken from him; his perseverance in surmounting the obstacles, from whatever motive, laid in his way; the great success of his schemes, which was progressive until his removal from the Post-Office; the ample testimony in his favour, given by the Commissioners of Accounts, after a strict investigation of the subject; and the probability, from all these circumstances, that his exertions, if he were replaced in the office, would produce a further public benefit; I think his expectation of having the original agreement carried into execution is reasonable and well founded.

An engagement entered into by one individual with another, under similar circumstances, each undertaking to do that which by law he might, would be obligatory upon both, and an Action, or Bill in Equity, would lie at the suit of the injured party against him who refused to perform his part.

V. GIBBS,

TEMPLE, Feb. 17, 1796.

JOINT OPINION OF THE SAME COUNSEL ON THE FOLLOWING QUERY :

Your opinion is desired,

Whether, under the circumstances mentioned in this Memorial, Mr. PALMER is not entitled to a continuance of his specified compensation from Government, for his past services? and, as no fraud, or negligence in the discharge of the duties of his office can be imputed to Mr. PALMER, if the agreement in question had been made with an individual, would not a Court of Equity have decreed him a specific performance of it?—and, as the Lords of the Treasury think they are not justified on the part of the Public, in granting the claim in question, will not an application to Parliament, be proper, for the purpose of obtaining the decision of the Public on this subject? or, what other measure should be pursued, in order that Mr. PALMER's claims, and conduct, may be fully investigated?

WE think, that, under the circumstances stated in this Memorial, Mr. PALMER, having been guilty of no fraud, or negligence in discharge of the duties of his office, is entitled to a continuance of that compensation from Government, which was specified in the original agreement. If such an agreement had been made with an individual, a Court of Equity would have decreed a specific performance of it, or an action might have been brought for a breach of it. In the present case, there is no one against whom a bill for that purpose can be filed, or an action brought. Mr. PALMER, therefore, has no remedy but by an application to Parliament; and as the Lords of the Treasury have rejected the claim, upon the grounds that they think themselves not justified on the part of the Public in granting it, such an application appears to us adviseable, because, if Parliament should think his claim well-founded, the objection raised by the Lords of the Treasury will be removed.

J. MANSFIELD,

T. ERSKINE,

V. GIBBS.

N. B. Mr. PALMER was very desirous of obtaining the Opinion of the ATTORNEY GENERAL, but on sending the papers to his Chambers, it appeared that he was so much engaged by a pressure of Crown Business, and other matters, that many months must have elapsed before his Opinion could be expected.

RIGHT HONORABLE THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS

OF HIS

MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

MY LORDS,

IN answer to my Memorial of 4th December, 1794, I have the honor of a letter from your Secretary, Mr. LONG, dated 25th August last, stating it to be your Lordships' opinion, "That the sum of 3000l. per Annum, for my life, is a just and full compensation for the services I have rendered, and that you do not think yourselves justified on the part of the Public, to make any addition to that allowance."

I confess, my Lords, that during the suspense of more than eight months, I had flattered myself with most sanguine expectations of obtaining the relief prayed, not only because the claim, upon full investigation, will appear founded in justice, but because very considerable further public advantages, and increase of revenue, must accrue from my perseverance in a Plan, which has already effected so much, and is yet greatly improveable in material branches, as intimated by me to the Commissioners of Enquiry, and likewise to Mr. PITT, in my letter of December, 1788. My original appointment was intended to sanction, and encourage this perseverance, *free from controul*, and I dare assert, that had the powers first allowed, remained undiminished, *at least half a million* would, by this time, have accrued from the Post-Office to the Exchequer, beyond the present amount, *and a proportionate annual increase would be now accruing.*

Your Lordships' Records, and the Post-Office Minutes, will evince, that I am not given to promise beyond my power of performance, having, during a series of years spent in your service, *in no one instance failed in effecting what I had proposed*; but on the contrary, performed beyond my undertakings, notwithstanding the oldest and most experienced Post-Officers *invariably declared them chimerical at the time.*

With this claim to your Lordships' confidence, and the additional support of an unimpeached integrity, I am desirous now, as on former occasions, to prove my merits, not by assertions, but performance; and I trust, my Lords, that after bringing to your recollection, in how many instances I have overcome difficulties thought insuperable, and rendered both systematic, and highly beneficial, Plans, at first declared impracticable, and destructive, your Lordships will, as well from a regard to private justice, as public benefit, allow me a full and a mature investigation, respecting an engagement, for which every other prospect in life has been sacrificed, and on which so much yet depends, both for the public and my family: these considerations, will, I hope, plead my excuse for a further intrusion on your Lordships' time and attention, which I forbore to urge during the sitting of Parliament.

Having stated in my Memorial, the many delays and objections, which impeded the trial of my Plan for four years, and the unqualified declaration of the Commissioners of public inquiry, "That the opposition I encountered was *unmerited*, and the very great *increase of Revenue and accommodation* which my exertions had produced, *far exceeded my promise*, and *well entitled me to the specified compensation*," it is needless to repeat those facts. Twelve years have now elapsed since the difficulties were first encountered, and the abuses began to be remedied; but I trust, that your Lordships and the public will not think my labours *less*, because they are *past*, or *forget the reform*, because the advantages are become familiar.

In order to evince the general nature and extent of the objections and impediments I had to encounter, and the determination of the old Post-Officers, neither to reform themselves, nor countenance any one in the attempt, I have in the Appendix, selected (from many volumes of objections delivered in) a few extracts from those most relied on, and furnished by the Office, not only previous to the commencement of my Plan, but even after five

months trial on the Bath and Bristol Roads, together with my answer thereto, which will shew some, though a very small portion, of the difficulties raised, and the threats of responsibility, and ridicule thrown out against me. However, they are sufficient to prove, that the attempt was arduous, and that notwithstanding I have been fortunate enough to overcome every objection and difficulty, yet few would, under such circumstances, have been found to engage in so extensive an undertaking, *at his sole risk and expence, should he fail, and with no other expectation of benefit, should he succeed, than a fortieth part of the clear increase, to be procured to a Revenue, which had for years been decreasing upwards of 13,000l. per annum.* And it will scarcely be credited, that with all the nicety and perfection so much boasted of in the former Post regulations, and the fear of dangers from innovation, the many very glaring defects pointed out in my answers, had, among others, continued for near a Century, without any attempt at a remedy. (Appendix, No. III. A, B, and C, and No. IV. p. 7 to 45.)

These references will serve to give a faint idea of the excessive neglect, and misconduct, which prevailed in an Office of the first consequence, both to the state and commerce; and it is evident, that the old Post-Officers never would have attempted any reform, not only because their emoluments might be lessened, but because they satisfied themselves with the idea of its perfection; or if any faults appeared, they had such a dread of the labour, intricacy, and impossibility of accomplishing a reform, that the thought was not only opposed, but ridiculed; and the successive Post-Masters General, having no other means of obtaining information, than from the opinions of these Officers, were so completely brought over to their side, as not only to sanction the opposition, but even themselves to present Memorials to your Lordships, against the continuance of my Plan, *after nearly two years trial, and were prevailed upon to declare it destructive to the Revenue,* though the Office accounts for the same period would at this moment prove the contrary.

My Lords, although the Post-Masters General were probably led to sanction this opposition, merely from a misplaced confidence, it was sufficient to prevent any one from undertaking to remedy such a complicated evil, if those who had declared themselves averse, and incompetent to the attempt, were nevertheless to have the power of controuling, what they neither would nor could perform, or if that controul was to remain with a superior power, whom they had evidently prejudiced, and would always be enabled to influence; for, whether they opposed from sinister motives, or were themselves deceived, it is evident, that the ideas and opinions advanced by these experienced Officers, would be relied on by the Post-Masters General, as the best foundation for their own; because men who had spent their lives in the service, were naturally supposed to have gained a better insight, both as to the theory and practice of the various Posts throughout this kingdom, and to be more competent judges of the perfections and defects of its various branches, than noblemen, placed to superintend an office, which requires more time and investigation, than they could possibly be expected to afford, when it is recollected, that near 2000 persons are employed throughout his Majesty's dominions in the Post-Office duties, (which differ materially, as to extent of duty and proportionate emoluments, and include the receipt and appropriation of more than 600,000l per annum;) and that the continuance of a Post-Master General in Office, is generally, either from changes in Administration, or other political arrangements, of so short duration, that in seven years, which elapsed after the commencement of the Plan in question, no less than eight changes took place in that department; notwithstanding it is found necessary, that the heads of every other commercial board should be men of business, who are to consider themselves placed there for life.

Under these impressions, my Lords, and with the fullest conviction *on both sides,* that no good could be expected from my Plan, *unless free from controul; I specified my terms, which were acceded to,* as stated in my Memorial; and the first draft of appointment prepared at your Lordships' board, *clearly evinced, that these terms and my emolument were then fully understood.* (Appendix, No. V. p. 45.)

By this draft, I was intended *a grant from the Crown, not from the Post-Master General,* appointing me Surveyor and Comptroller-General of the Post-Office *during life,* and in consideration of my good and faithful services for the advancement of the revenue, commerce, and manufactures, as well by way of *reward for such services, as to*

encourage me to continue my exertions, for furthering the same, a clear salary of 1,500l. together with 2l. 10s. per cent. on the increased Post revenue. The Attorney General thought this intended form of appointment objectionable, without the sanction of a new Act; but surely this objection ought to have been pointed out before my labour and risk had been incurred, or it could never vitiate the agreement, which I had fully performed on my part; and therefore, either the necessary confirmation should have been obtained on the part of government, where the power to obtain it lay, or if any variation was made by the Crown Officers, to avoid that necessity, the *form* only, and not the *effect* should have been lost to the individual, who was *unable to compel a specific performance*, and necessarily confided in the protection and faith of his employers.

In consequence of the objections raised, respecting my appointment, I experienced so many difficulties, for want of regular powers and payment of my arrears, that when the Commissioners for public inquiry had given the most unquestionable certificate of my having fully performed my undertaking, and earned my promised reward, I wrote on 30th December, 1788, the letter to Mr. PITT, inserted in Appendix, recapitulating what had passed, with my intreaty *for a full performance of his agreement*. (Appendix, No. VIII. p. 59.)

My Lords, it will be in your recollection, that the facts and claims stated in this letter, were not objected to, as wanting foundation; and although, after various meetings with the Commissioners, and payment of my arrears, my appointment was made out in a manner essentially differing from what had been intended, being, not a Grant from the Crown, but a Warrant from your Lordships to the Post-Master General, yet I was given to understand, the appointment must go as varied, because it would be inconvenient to obtain the Act required; but that no possible doubt could be entertained of its being *secure for my life*, and care should be taken to draw a proper line, if necessary, so as to *prevent any interference with my situation and Plan*.

And it is to be observed, that by this appointment, instead of making my per Centage commence, according to original agreement, on all increase of the former averaged annual Revenue, which was within 150,000l. Mr. PITT, recurring to the modification proposed by him in October, 1785, first added the produce of the new tax from additional postage, estimated at from 80,000l. to 100,000l. per Annum, and set at the mediate sum of 90,000l. which increased the 150,000l. to 240,000l. before my per Centage began. The 1500l. salary was given as some recompence for the alteration, but I was nevertheless prejudiced near 1000l. per Annum. However, the salary and per centage, as then fixed, much exceeded my present allowance of 3000l. per Annum, and the per centage was then evidently increasing to a far greater extent. (Appendix, No. I.)

From the multiplicity of important business transacted at your Lordships' board, it would have caused further difficulties and delays, had I longer opposed this arrangement; and my mind had been so much harrassed by continued anxiety and suspense, respecting my expences and arrears, near 7,000l. and the want of some powers to enable my forwarding the Plan, that I was happy in obtaining these requisites any way. But I leave your Lordships to judge, whether this variation should ever have been suffered to *affect the spirit of my agreement*, which, *though many times repeated, had never been denied, and on my part had been actually performed*; and whether, after seven years spent in effecting an adverse reform, which, by annihilating the perquisites and abuses, and correcting the negligence and mismanagement of the old Officers, had made them my determined enemies, I should have been left at their mercy, *or liable to be displaced by the Post-Master General*, who, as well from a continuance of their own opposition, as through the advice and representations of those Officers, would be induced to impose such checks, and exert such controul, over me and my plan, that the execution of any further arrangements so clogged, would become impracticable, till irritated by the interference of a power I had *never been taught to acknowledge*, I should at last give some offence, which might afford a plea for getting rid of me from the Office.

Respecting the controversy between the Post-Master General and myself, I have only to observe, that it imputes to me no charge of dishonor or negligence, but relates to the extent of their authority over myself and my Plan, *which I denied*; not for want of any personal respect, or from a wish to lessen the general official authority due to Noblemen in their situations, but, for reasons stated in my Letter of October 1790, respecting the

Scotch posts, as extracted in the Appendix ; and because *it never was intended that I should be amenable to that authority*, which must be essentially prejudicial to my Plan, and the further proposed improvements from which the revenue and my own income were to be benefited ; as the reform ever had, and ever would meet opposition, both from the acts and advice of those Officers who had submitted to it, merely because imposed by your Lordships' authority, and probably sustained some loss of consequence, profit, or ease, during the continuance. Besides, no improvements in a Plan of this kind could be effected, if liable to the previous inspection or controul of persons, who, having at first proved themselves unacquainted, both in theory and practice, with the system to be arranged, must of course be incapable to direct the various subsequent connections intended to fit in with a ground work which I alone had constructed. (Appendix, No. IX. p. 61.)

I would appeal to your Lordships' consideration, whether, in the improvement of your private estates, any person would easily be found to open a mine, or coal work, or undertake any hazardous scheme, at his sole risk and expence, with the temptation only of receiving a *fortieth part of the clear profits, should it ultimately succeed* ? Or, having made that engagement, would it be just to put him under the direction of a Superior Agent, not only *ignorant of the means* to be pursued, but *openly adverse*, from motives either of interest, pride, or personal convenience, both to the project and the projector ? And, if in spite of these disadvantages, the estate was permanently benefited beyond the projector's offer, or your own expectations, would it be *just*, my Lords, to leave him in a situation which might enable his *former opponent first to harass, and then to dismiss him ; while you continued in the full enjoyment of the benefits arising from his labours* ? Or, if to prevent contention between these Agents, you thought that by relinquishing your own share of *greater benefits*, to be expected from *further exertions*, you were justified in stopping those exertions, notwithstanding the projector was interested in them as well as yourself, *would it be fair*, my Lords, to retain *his specified share of the increasing profits you yet continued to receive, and only give him, as a compensation, what had become less than his right, in proportion as your emoluments had become greater than your expectations* ? Or, ought that very sum, which he, before the trial, offered to accept in lieu of an uncertain profit, but was then refused, because it might have exceeded his claim and lessened his exertions, to be imposed on him, as a recompence, after his risk had been incurred, and his perseverance had proved his right more extensive ? I am sure, my Lords, that, individually, you would never sanction such injustice, and therefore, that you will not hold yourselves bound to countenance, in your public characters, what you would feel dishonest, or disgraceful in a private one ; for I trust it can never be made to appear, that the Government of this Country, is alone above its Laws. Surely, my Lords, as my attempt was without salary or patronage, and my failure would have left me without remedy, my specified profits, earned by success, should be without diminution, and no subsequent controversy can vitiate an agreement which on one part has been fully performed.

Although it does not seem necessary to justify my subsequent private conduct, in order to support my prior legal claim, yet I am far from wishing to appear capable of disrespect without provocation, and I trust it will be allowed that my feelings have been severely tried ; for in the first instance, the unmerited opposition experienced to my Plan from all branches of the Post-Office, and the impossibility of conducting it, *if controuled*, made me naturally jealous of every interference ; but this disposition was wearing away, and I entertained the hope that former animosities would cease. This hope was considerably supported by the growing attention and confidence of the successive Post-Masters General, till the appointment of Lord WALSINGHAM, who frequently wrote to me for official information, and expressed opinions very flattering both to myself and my Plan, and among many others, I received from him the following note, viz.

“ December 28th, 1787.

“ I have long wished to see that point cleared, of your Plan costing less than the old one, for I have understood invariably, that it cost more, but that the benefits overpaid the expences. Be it one or the other, it was a most fortunate regulation, and you will well *deserve the Salary and Commission on the increased Revenue, for which the faith of Government is pledged to you.*”

“ Yours, W.”

In answer to this note, I sent his Lordship such information as might have completely satisfied his mind on the subject, though the accounts under his own controul, if properly examined, must have rendered any explanation, either from myself or others, unnecessary ; and surely those documents only should have satisfied him on a point which involved the most material interests of the Office under his inspection.

While these friendly communications were passing, the Commissioners made their report respecting the Post-Office, in which so much commendation is bestowed on my Plan and Conduct. Lord WALSINGHAM, having procured this Report, previous to its appearing at your Lordships' board, first communicated the contents to the old Officers ; and then, after taking every Clerk out of my Office, to Windsor, kept them at an inn there for near three months, at the public expence, and loss of their services, in order that they might privately copy the Report ; and when I requested of him a perusal, or such information as related to myself, it was not only refused, but my own Clerks declared themselves laid under strong injunctions by his Lordship, to keep the matter perfectly secret from me. These circumstances naturally created a desire for investigation ; and I afterwards discovered that, notwithstanding his Lordship's apparent friendship, and although nothing appeared inimical to any other Officer, yet the following Notes were inserted in the margin, in his own hand-writing, respecting myself and my Plan ; viz. Where the Report mentions " The improvement of the Revenue by my Plan, and declares my " merits," Lord WALSINGHAM remarks—" *There is no proof of the improvement of the Revenue, the expence " exceeds the former by £.18,000 per year.*" Where the Report says, " By which the correspondence of the " Kingdom is improved, and the Revenue increased,"—his Lordship writes " *Not so.*" To the Commissioners' Declaration, " That they had examined with great attention the numerous documents and information furnished " by both parties,"—his Lordship wrote, " *No documents in opposition to the measure produced.*" On the Commissioners' further remarks, proving the Plan and its effects beneficial, his Lordship wrote, " *Nothing like it.*" Where the Report notices the great defalcation of the Post, previous to my Plan, by Letters and Packets going by Coaches, and that they had been sent by Post since the Reform—his Lordship wrote (what the acknowledged superior speed of Mail-Coaches must have rendered improbable) viz. " *Many Merchants' Letters are now sent " as Parcels by the Flys and Diligences.*" And where the Commissioners say, " Under these circumstances " we are of opinion that Mr. PALMER is justly intitled to the compensation he claims, being a very small " part of that Revenue which his integrity, activity, and zeal have created, exclusive of the numerous advan- " tages accruing to the Public and Commerce,"—his Lordship wrote, " *Not a word true.*"

Now, my Lords, these remarks, made on the Report from which your Lordships were to learn the state of the Post-Office, and the merits and claims of its Officers, evidently tended to deprive me, clandestinely, of a certificate on which depended my title to the reward for which I had been years labouring, and all my prospects in Life. It is to be observed, that they were made by his Lordship when apparently my friend, although not only Office documents and accounts, but those furnished by me, and not objected to by him, would then, and will now, ascertain beyond the possibility of Refutation, that the Report, which has never since been questioned, was true, and his Lordship's doubts and contradictions groundless.

As another of the numberless instances of Lord WALSINGHAM's want of candour, I must refer to the dispute which arose respecting my projected improvements of the Scotch Post, which his supercession of my powers in that kingdom completely stopt. The Post-Master General having, after this dispute, sent a Letter to Mr. PITT, containing charges against me, on my challenging them to fix a single blot on any part of my conduct : I was desirous of answering these charges, but prevented by assurances from the Post-Master General, that the Letter was merely private, and would be thought no more of : I was likewise to experience in future no more vexatious interference in my executive department. However, Lord WALSINGHAM's conduct soon revived the disputes, and I was afterwards much surpris'd to find that this *private Letter* had been entered up as a *recorded accusation against me in the Office Books, without giving me an intimation on the subject, or an opportunity to answer it.* I appealed to your Lordships, desiring to be heard, as well respecting these charges, as the injuries sustained by the impediments to my Plan ; but the Letter having been address'd to Mr. PITT, and not to the Board, no official

answer could be received. I was, therefore, under the necessity of sending to the Post-Master General the Minutes entered in Appendix (No. 9.) urging a regular production of the charges, and full investigation of my conduct; and likewise, that such resolutions might be entered at your Lordships' Board, as might secure my proceeding with safety to myself, and advantage to the Public. This offer was declined, and no attempt made to substantiate the charges, but again a line was proposed to be drawn between us, and again delayed till the Post-Master General took an opportunity of ending the matter by my suspension, without assigning any specific charge; and I am confident, that if assigned, it would merely have been such as might have endangered the loss of a patron to an Officer whose sole claim depended on patronage, but could never have been sufficient to do away rights acquired by specific agreement, and post services.

And now, my Lords, after various delays experienced, by which two years were lost between the proposal of my Plan and procuring a trial; seven months before I could obtain the effect of your Lordships' Minutes of 1784, for a second trial; and near seven years between my proposal and final settlement; and all this notwithstanding your Lordships gave express order to promote expedition, and I, on my part, lost no opportunity of following those orders, as far as my limited powers enabled me,

I have the satisfaction at last to state, that perseverance has effected the following among many other advantages, to the Revenue and Public.

Before the Reform.

The Post-Office Revenue from 1774 to 1783, was annually decreasing, and did not exceed } £. 150,000.

The number of news-papers annually sent from the London-Office was less than } Two millions.

A very great annual expence was formerly sustained both by Government and individuals for expresses, and the number used annually to Bristol alone to exceed } Two hundred expresses for one city only.

The annual expence incurred in rewards for apprehension, and costs in prosecution for Mail robberies, was formerly very considerable, and (exclusive of loss and inconvenience to individuals) cost the public } Several thousand pounds.

Since the Reform.

The annual Post Revenue has been increased to considerably beyond } £. 400,000.

Number of newspapers now annually sent by the London Office only above } Eight millions.

The number of expresses to the whole kingdom, both for Government and individuals, when last examined, did not amount annually to } Forty for the whole kingdom.

As to expences for apprehension and prosecution of Mail robbers, although the Coaches have now travelled near 30 millions of miles, not a single attempt has ever been made to rob them; therefore the cost for prosecution, &c. has of course been nothing } o o o

This great increase of Revenue has arisen, not merely in consequence of the Posts being rescued from various defects and abuses, as mentioned in the Appendix; but, exclusive of the advantages derived to most parts of the Kingdom by a daily Post, instead of three times a week, the means of correspondence are again doubled, and trebled by the expedition and regularity, and the well-connected arrivals and departure of the General and Cross Posts. It is to be observed, that previous to this reform, even the Capital might be said to have had little more than a three days post, which made the distinction at that time of General and Bye Nights. On an examination, some time past the number of Letters appeared to be doubled; the amount on what were the General Nights not

only being greatly increased, but even those of the Bye Nights grown equal in number, and the Letters inwards, which had been less than the outwards in the proportion of three or four, then exceeded them.

My Lords, I should conceive the foregoing Statement would justify your Lordships with the Public in granting my claims, had the agreement not been so clear; and surely, my Lords, with such an agreement, no plea can justify the deprivation.

A celebrated Statesman*, speaking of the faith to be observed with respect to rewards due for Public services, says, "What the law respects, should be sacred. If the barriers of law should be broken down upon ideas of convenience, even of Public convenience, we shall have no longer any thing certain among us. If the discretion of power is once let loose upon property, we can be at no loss to determine whose power, and what discretion it is that will prevail at last; and no man knows, when he cuts off the incitements to a virtuous ambition, and the just rewards of public services, what infinite mischief he may do to his country through all generations—such saving to the Public may prove the worst mode of robbing it."

My Lords, I should not presume to advance these opinions, had they originated with myself, but the acknowledged abilities of the author, seem to justify their quotation in support of my claim. And one further remark appears particularly in point, as it supports the avowed opinions both of Mr. Pitt and the Commissioners, as well as your Lordships' motives for my original appointment: viz. "I know of no mode of preserving the effectual execution of any duty, but to make it the direct interest of the Executive Officer, that it shall be faithfully performed." And that an Officer, so interested is necessary, your Lordships will be convinced by a reference to the statements in the Appendix, where it will appear how completely my progress in the improvements I was daily making for the advantage of Commerce and the Revenue, was checked by *Lord Walsingham's wanton and vexatious interference with the exercise of those powers, which it was the intention of your Lordships' repeated minutes, as well as warrants, expressly to vest in me, for those beneficial purposes, in consideration of my acknowledged ability to effect them*; and it will also appear, how frequently even your Lordships' Board, from the same unfortunate cause, and ill-founded representations, has been induced to sanction measures extremely prejudicial to the Revenue. (Appendix. No. 10. p. 63.)

If, notwithstanding what has been said, your Lordships can still think the opposition of the Post-Master General and their Officers may have had foundation, and the benefits of my Plan are yet doubtful; I am willing to accept, in full satisfaction of my claims, the produce of either of those parts of my plan which has been specifically objected to by Lord Walsingham, and declared most unproductive and prejudicial to the Revenue.

Or if, after all, your Lordships shall still continue to think yourselves not justified on the part of the Public in acceding to my claims, I have only to request that your Lordships will not be *both Party, and Judge*; but that the Public opinion, on the subject, may be taken by the voice of their respective Representatives in Parliament, on a discussion before the House of Commons. Every individual is more or less interested, and being acquainted with the nature and extent, can speak as to the benefits or prejudices arising from my plan. I will, with your Lordships' permission, send copies of my Statement for their further information; and my Claim will then stand or fall as its merits on examination shall deserve, and the Public shall decide. I shall, with great confidence, rely for justice on this *Jury of my Country*, before whom, I doubt not to make it appear, that looking to the Public and the Post-Office Revenue on one hand, and myself on the other, all have been essentially injured by my suspension.

I have the honor to be,

My Lords,

Your Lordships'

Very obedient,

J. PALMER.

January 6, 1796.

* MR. BURKE.

From the ESTABLISHMENT of the POST-OFFICE, in the Reign of JAMES the First, or some earlier period, to 1724, no regular accounts of its Receipts, or Disbursements, could be obtained.

ACCOUNT of the GROSS and NET PRODUCE from the 5th of APRIL 1723, to the 5th of APRIL 1793.

Years ended 5 April.	Gross Produce.			Net Produce.			Years ended. 5 April.	Gross Produce.			Net Produce.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
1724.....	178,071	16	9 ⁵ / ₈	96,339	7	5	1759.....	229,879	10	9	86,095	14	8
1725.....	175,274	9	6	99,867	18	11	1760.....	230,146	15	1 ¹ / ₄	83,493	11	3
1726.....	178,065	6	11	94,812	14	8	1761.....	240,497	16	0 ⁶ / ₁₂	86,689	6	0
1727.....	182,184	9	10 ⁷ / ₂	100,889	13	0	1762.....	233,722	0	9	77,795	17	2
1728.....	183,915	3	6	104,665	7	9	1763.....	238,999	5	10 ¹ / ₂	97,833	15	10
1729.....	179,189	15	0 ³ / ₄	92,307	10	10	1764.....	225,326	5	3 ¹ / ₄	116,182	8	5
1730.....	179,817	9	11 ¹ / ₂	94,790	5	7	1765.....	262,496	6	11 ¹ / ₄	157,571	0	11
1731.....	171,412	0	5 ⁹ / ₂	92,169	15	8	1766.....	265,427	17	8 ¹ / ₂	161,943	0	10
1732.....	176,714	4	7	92,036	11	8	1767.....	275,230	10	0 ¹ / ₂	161,944	14	6
1733.....	171,283	18	5	92,146	6	8	1768.....	278,253	9	0	165,783	11	2
1734.....	176,334	3	1 ³ / ₂	91,701	11	0	1769.....	284,914	14	5	164,760	9	1
1735.....	182,171	4	8 ³ / ₂	98,630	15	7	1770.....	285,050	14	6 ¹ / ₂	156,062	3	1
1736.....	188,210	11	4 ¹ / ₂	97,621	9	5	1771.....	292,782	7	3 ¹ / ₂	155,513	0	1
1737.....	182,490	10	6 ⁹ / ₂	97,088	8	1	1772.....	309,997	8	6 ¹ / ₂	165,503	6	10
1738.....	186,578	4	1 ¹ / ₄	92,664	4	8	1773.....	310,126	11	9 ⁹ / ₂	167,176	11	4
1739.....	183,747	16	8	97,250	14	10	1774.....	313,032	14	6	164,077	8	4
1740.....	194,197	5	11	90,665	6	8	1775.....	321,943	1	4	173,188	14	2
1741.....	191,408	17	10	90,085	6	8	1776.....	318,418	7	4	167,482	4	2
1742.....	197,721	4	2 ³ / ₂	87,584	14	2	1777.....	329,921	14	3 ¹ / ₂	158,575	14	5
1743.....	190,626	0	9 ⁶ / ₂	88,441	5	10	1778.....	347,128	8	5	137,994	6	4
1744.....	194,461	8	7 ³ / ₂	85,114	9	4	1779.....	372,817	11	2	139,248	9	9
1745.....	194,607	5	7	85,755	14	3	1780.....	387,092	10	7 ⁹ / ₂	136,409	5	10
1746.....	201,460	14	4 ¹ / ₂	80,890	6	11	1781.....	417,634	12	9 ¹ / ₂	154,157	2	7
1747.....	209,028	9	5	85,942	1	11	1782.....	393,235	18	6 ⁹ / ₂	117,325	4	10
1748.....	217,453	17	9 ¹ / ₂	78,752	8	8	1783.....	398,624	6	4 ¹ / ₂	159,625	1	1
1749.....	212,801	16	3 ¹ / ₂	88,323	13	1	1784.....	420,101	1	8 ¹ / ₂	196,513	16	7
1750.....	207,490	14	8 ¹ / ₂	97,397	15	7	1785.....	463,753	8	4 ¹ / ₂	261,409	18	2
1751.....	203,748	6	10 ¹ / ₄	99,115	14	11	1786.....	471,176	8	1 ⁶ / ₂	285,975	15	11
1752.....	207,092	3	1 ¹ / ₄	97,721	17	8	1787.....	474,347	9	7 ¹ / ₂	278,599	14	11
1753.....	206,666	5	1 ¹ / ₄	98,148	9	11	1788.....	509,131	15	8 ¹ / ₂	296,980	12	1
1754.....	214,300	10	6 ¹ / ₂	97,365	5	1	1789.....	514,538	4	3 ¹ / ₂	318,610	5	8
1755.....	210,663	0	7 ¹ / ₂	102,015	7	4	1790.....	533,198	1	9	331,179	18	8
1756.....	238,455	17	9 ¹ / ₄	94,242	6	2	1791.....	575,079	3	10 ¹ / ₂	355,999	6	6
1757.....	242,478	4	0 ¹ / ₂	79,849	4	11	1792.....	585,432	10	10	366,959	19	8
1758.....	222,075	12	0 ¹ / ₂	73,729	19	6	1793.....	627,592	19	0	391,508	15	11

An ACCOUNT of the ANNUAL EXPENCES attending the ROBBERIES of the MAIL, for Ten Years, from the 5th of APRIL, 1774, to the 5th of APRIL, 1784.

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
1775.....	66	18	2	1780.....	395	3	7
76.....	21	16	0	81.....	895	10	5
77.....	20	16	4	82.....	1477	15	10
78.....	110	3	8	83.....	3777	10	0
79.....	511	8	4	84.....	1189	15	1

This Account was sent, in consequence of an order from the Treasury, to the Post-Office, in Autumn 1785, but it was afterwards discovered by the Commissioners of Enquiry that considerable sums had been omitted in the above Statement.

An ACCOUNT of the EXPENCE of EXPRESSES to GOVERNMENT, from the Treasury, Secretary of State, &c. for the Years 1779, 1780, and 1781.

	£.	s.	d.
1779.....	1893	10	0
1780.....	1595	12	3
1781.....	1298	14	6

APPENDIX, No. I.

WARRANT.

JOHN PALMER, Esq. to be appointed Surveyor and Comptroller-General of the Mails, with a Salary of 1500l. a Year, and 2l. 10s. per Cent. over and above the Sum of 240,000l. the net Revenues of the Post-Office.

AFTER our hearty Commendations, **Whereas** we did, by a Warrant dated the 5th Day of August, 1786, authorize and empower you to appoint JOHN PALMER, Esq. to be Surveyor and Comptroller-General of the Mails, in Consideration of his having suggested and partly carried into Execution, a Plan for extending and improving the Posts, and for the more safe, expeditious, and regular Conveyance of the Mails throughout Great Britain, on the Terms and Conditions, and with the Powers and Authorities therein mentioned, together with a Salary of One Thousand Five Hundred Pounds a Year, and Two Pounds Ten Shillings per Centum, on the net Revenue of the Post-Office, over and above the Sum of Three Hundred Thousand Pounds a Year; **And, Whereas**, in further Consideration of the great Advantages derived to the Public from the said Plan, and of the Pains and Labour of the said JOHN PALMER in the Improvement and Conduct thereof, as well as the very considerable Expence attending the same, in frequent Journeys and otherwise, **We** have thought it reasonable that the said JOHN PALMER should be allowed a yearly Salary of One Thousand Five Hundred Pounds, and Two Pounds Ten Shillings per Centum on the net Revenue of the Post-Office, over and above the Sum of Two Hundred and Forty Thousand Pounds a Year, from the second Day of August, 1784, when the Plan began to be executed, in full Satisfaction for his Trouble therein, and all Travelling and other Charges whatever; **These** are therefore to direct you to Cancel the Appointment of the said JOHN PALMER, under the authority of our said Warrant, and to Authorize and Empower you to Appoint (and place upon the Establishment of the Post-Office) him, the said JOHN PALMER, Surveyor and Comptroller-General of the Mails throughout Great Britain, and to invest him with full and sufficient Authority over all Surveyors, Comptrollers, Post masters, Contractors, Deputies, Clerks, Sorters, Window-Men, Letter Receivers, Letter Carriers, Messengers, and other Officers and Servants employed in the Sorting, Conveying, and Delivering of Letters within the said Kingdom; and also to give the said JOHN PALMER full Power and Authority to suspend any such Officers and Servants for Neglect of Duty, or for departing from such Instructions or Directions as they have already received, or shall hereafter receive, from you, or from the Postmaster-General for the time being, or from the said JOHN PALMER, under your or their Authority: **And we** do hereby further authorize and direct you to cause the said JOHN PALMER to be paid a yearly Salary of One Thousand Five Hundred Pounds, clear of all Deductions, together with an Allowance of Two Pounds, Ten Shillings per Centum, on such part of the net Revenue of the Post-Office as shall at any time exceed the annual Sum of Two Hundred and Forty Thousand Pounds, with a Proviso that the said Poundage shall not be affected on the one hand by a Diminution thereof, occasioned by any future Grants or Pensions charged on the said Revenues; nor, on the other hand, by any Augmentation of the Revenue, occasioned by any additional Rate of Postage, or by any Diminution or Increase in the present Expence of the Establishment of the different Packets; which said Salary and per Centage is to take place and be computed from the second Day of August, 1784, when the Execution of the Plan first took place; deducting from the Sum that shall be due thereon, all such Sums as the said JOHN PALMER has received under his present Appointment, or otherwise for his own Advantage, except the Sum of Three Thousand Pounds, directed to be paid to him by our Warrant of this Day's date. **And whereas**, the net Amount of the Revenues of the Post-Office cannot be ascertained until a considerable time after the expiration of each Year, **we** hereby authorize and direct you to cause Payment to

be made from time to time to the said JOHN PALMER, of the Sum of Two Hundred and Fifty Pounds, after each and every Quarter, from the Period the net Amount of the Revenue was last ascertained, on Account of the said per Centage, until the net Amount of each Year can be ascertained, when so much as shall appear due to him thereon is to be paid to him; but if it shall happen that the four Quarterly Payments of Two Hundred and Fifty Pounds in the Year shall exceed the Rate of Two Pounds Ten Shillings per Centum on the net annual Revenue of the Post-Office, over and above the said Sum of Two Hundred and Forty Thousand Pounds, that the same shall be deducted out of any future Payments to the said JOHN PALMER. **And** this being first entered in the Office of the Commissioners for Auditing the Public Accounts, shall be as well to you as to the Receiver-General, for making Payments accordingly, and all others herein concerned, a sufficient Warrant.

Whitehall Treasury Chambers, 2d Day of July, 1789.

W. PITT.
GRAHAM.
MORNINGTON.

To our very good Lords, Henry Frederick
Lord Carteret, and Thomas Lord Walsingham,
his Majesty's Postmaster-General.

Entered in the Office for Auditing the Public Accounts, the 9th of July, 1789.

JOHN WIGGLESWORTH.

Entered in the Office of Augustus Pechell, Esq. Receiver-General of the Revenues of the Post-Office, July the 10th, 1789.

J. BOWDEN.

JOHN PALMER, Esq. to be appointed Surveyor and Comptroller-General of the Mails, with a Salary of 1500l. a Year, and 2l. 10s. per Centum, over and above the Sum of 240,000l. the net Revenues of the Post-Office.

J. C.

APPENDIX. No. II.

P L A N

FOR THE

REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT

OF

THE GENERAL POST-OFFICE.

THE Post, at present, instead of being the swiftest, is almost the slowest conveyance in this Country; and though from the great improvement in our roads, other Carriers have proportionably mended their speed, the Post is as slow as ever.

It is likewise very unsafe, as the frequent robberies of it testify; to avoid a loss from this, people generally cut Bank-Bills, or Bills at sight, in two, and send the parts by different Posts.

The Post-Master General lately advertised directions to the Public, of the best method he could devise of dividing a Bill, in such a manner as to prevent its being of any use to the Robber: rewards too have been frequently offered by him, for the best constructed Mail Cart, on some plan to prevent the frequent robbery of the Mail, but without effect.

It is at present so little taken care of, that generally it is trusted to some idle Boy, without character, mounted on a worn-out Hack, and who, so far from being able to defend himself, or escape from a Robber, is more likely to be in league with him.

The Post should certainly be as safe and expeditious as any other regular Stage in the Kingdom, for till it is so, whatever penalties are held out to Coachmen, &c. carrying Parcels, the Public, as their convenience directs, will send by the safest and most expeditious conveyance, to the very great loss of the revenue of the Post-Office.

The comparison betwixt the Post, and the Diligences from Bath to London, will pretty nearly serve for the whole Kingdom.

The Diligence that sets out from Bath, at four or five, on Monday afternoon, will deliver a letter about ten on Tuesday Morning: the Post that leaves it at ten or eleven on Monday night, does not deliver a letter until two or three on Wednesday afternoon, frequently much later. Nothing therefore prevents the Post losing the conveyance of many more letters than it does at present, but the cheapness of the carriage over that by the Diligence: by the Post, a letter is four-pence only, by the Diligence, booking, carriage, and portage, about two shillings; yet many persons, both at Bath and Bristol, send by the latter, and indeed, throughout the Kingdom, every letter to which expedition is necessary, is now sent by Diligences, where they are established, though even by these, there is often great delay in the delivery by the London Porters, to prevent which, it is often thought worth while, in letters of consequence, to write on the back,—“An extra Sum will be given to

the Porter, if he delivers the letter immediately." To remedy this, it is advised to contract with the Masters of these Diligences to carry the Mail, and a Guard to protect it, and this, it is presumed, may be done by them, not only better, but as cheap as the present method to the Office, which in general, is three-pence per mile for the Boy and Horse.

They should go at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour; this, allowing a quarter of an hour to change the Horses, and for each Post-Master to change the Bags, (which at most places is full enough) will take the Mail from Bath to London, at most, in sixteen hours.

The Mail Diligence would have a recommendation above all others, both for passengers and parcels, as it would always be punctual to time, and protected by the Guard, which must prove an additional motive for the Masters to contract the cheaper with Government.

Diligences are now established from almost every Town in the Kingdom to London, and in many Cities and capital Towns, where the Cross-Post communicates, as from Bath and Bristol to Birmingham, Liverpool, Chester, Oxford, Exeter, Plymouth, Portsmouth, &c. which would be a great benefit to the Cross-Posts; and in many places, where they are not yet established, a contract for the Mail, might induce people to do it.

The delay at the different Post-Offices on the road, cannot be worse than it is now; perhaps too, if the Offices were enlarged at the Post-Office in Town, and more sorters and runners employed, the letters might be delivered much sooner after the Mail arrives than at present.

The Guard should by no means be left either to the Post-Masters or Masters of the Machines to furnish, as those, they could provide, could be little relied on in any respect. A Soldier is accustomed to the discharge of fire arms, to keep them clean, and to watch and fatigue in late hours; a sufficient number of them, well recommended by their Officers, should be distributed over the Kingdom, and one quartered at the Inn of every Stage, or every other Stage where the Diligence stops to change, he might be seated at the top of the Coach, with the Mail behind him; here he could best command the road, and observe suspicious persons; he might have two short Guns or Blunderbusses, and Pistols for the Coachman to use if necessary; they should have some extraordinary pay for their trouble, and be liable to Military punishment for neglect of duty. The swiftness and punctuality of the Post, would be almost as great a security as the Guard, for if at any time it did not arrive to its hour, a Man and Horse should be dispatched to seek the cause of the delay, and if robbed, pursuit immediately made, so that it would be scarce possible for the Robber to escape; at present the Post is so very uncertain in time, that many hours may elapse, ere information can be given of the robbery.

No outside Passenger to be allowed.

If the Diligence was free of Turnpikes. it would be a great saving to Government, and a very trifling tax on Tolls, which for a Carriage and Pair from Bath to London, is about nine shillings.—A Carriage and Four, eighteen, this would be so much towards payment of the carriage of the Mail; and taken all through the Kingdom, must amount to a very large Sum annually.

It is requested to know, what the Provisoers are respecting the two Universities? as they are excepted in some respects in the Post-Acts, but it is not mentioned what.

It is certainly a hardship on Individuals, being liable to a heavy penalty on sending letters by Diligences, &c. in this respect; they may go out at an hour when the Post does not, and at a time when a letter requires dispatch; yet two or three Guineas must be paid for an Express, or a Servant sent post to do what may be done much better for Half a Crown by the Coach.

All that Government wants, is to secure the postage of any Letter not sent with parcels of Goods, or by private hands ; oblige every person, therefore, sending a letter by any other conveyance than the post, to take the letter to the Post-Office, and pay the postage to the place where it is directed, let it be stamped with the Post-mark, and signed by the Post-Master, then suffered to be carried as directed, and the sender and carrier freed from any penalty. If the letter be of such consequence that the Post cannot be waited for, it is worth paying the extra Postage ; few people would hazard the payment of a heavy penalty which they could so easily avoid : but the great aim must be to carry cheaper, safer, and swifter than any other Carrier, and that will secure the business better to them than any penalties.

The Post-Master of every town must know the exact time the Mail should arrive, and either himself, or servant, be ready at the Inn, where the Horses change, with his packet of letters to put in the general Bag, and to take out those brought for him ; he must be very inexpert if he cannot change his packets (at most places) as soon as the Ostler does his Horses ; if he is not ready, the Diligence by no means to wait. The Letters for this Town going on to London, and none from it, will point out to the Secretary at the Post-Office the negligent Officer ; and the Inhabitants not receiving their Letters, and finding their own not forwarded, will of course complain of his neglect. If, on enquiry, the salaries of Officers are not proportioned to the trust and duty, Government will undoubtedly advance them ; but no more keep a negligent Servant in a department of the Post-Office, than in the Excise—Something more should be allowed to those Officers where the Mail stops in the night, and the letters are received and made up late.

As the hours of sending off the Mails from every Office in the Kingdom, are settled to accommodate the General Post-Office, by the proposed alterations they may, perhaps, be changed in most places—to some the alteration may prove more convenient—to others inconvenient ; yet at the very worst, the consideration that the letter which may be sent on the morrow, will arrive at the place it is directed for, as soon as one now sent to day, will far over-balance it. No constant good regulation can take place, whilst they are obliged to wait at the General Post-Office for Letters from the other Offices of Government, and as the Posts on this plan will be so much more expeditious, the indulgence may be certainly dispensed with ; they may always be in time for common business, and if the letter be of great importance, it would be much better to pay the expence of a special Messenger, than to stop the whole post business of one part of the Kingdom.

A Committee of Gentlemen, Merchants, &c. in each town, might perhaps suggest a better method of regulating the Post for their own district, than persons always employed in the Office in London, and they would undoubtedly be pleased with the compliment of being consulted. Some intelligent Out-Riders who travel for orders to the different parts of the Kingdom, and have experienced inconvenience in their Correspondence, would be likely to furnish very useful information, which the Office should ever encourage from every quarter.

Where new roads are continually forming, and Manufacturing Villages growing into large Towns, the Post of such a Country must be open to continual variation and improvement.

It may be adviseable to consult with the Merchants, &c. in London, how far it may be proper for the General Office to shut at seven or eight in the evening ; the 'Change being shut at three, and the Bankers at six, the business would be much better done than at twelve at night, or one or two in the morning, and cheaper to Government ; it must be much better for all Clerks, Servants, &c. for, let the hour be ever so late, many persons will delay writing to the last. On examination, perhaps, it may be so regulated, that the letters may be delivered so much earlier than they are at present, as to leave full as much time after the receipt of the letter to answer it, as there is now, though the Post will go out earlier. The increased expedition of the Post too would well allow for the missing one—an early hour at the Office would occasion earlier hours for the dispatch of business that is to be communicated by it.

It is presumed that, by these and other improvements which may be made, Letters might be delivered in nearly half the time they are now, from many parts of the Kingdom, in perfect safety ; and as the public pay an additional Tax with less ill-will, when it is grounded on great improvement and convenience, suppose the postage

was to be advanced in proportion of six-pence for four-pence ; but double and treble letters in a smaller degree, for as the Diligence can carry any weight of letters, every encouragement should be given to send small packets by the Post, and as Government would pay about three-halfpence a pound for one hundred miles, the public should not be made pay one shilling and four-pence by the ounce.

By the Act of 1765, the postage of a single letter, which used to be three-pence for any distance under eighty miles, was altered to one penny for one Stage, and two-pence for two Stages, under the idea that by doing it so cheap Government would have the great number of letters, sent by Carriers, &c. in preference to them, not considering that they were sent for expedition, not for cheapness, as the carriage and portorage of a letter to ever so small a distance, generally exceeds three-pence.

By the present regulation of the prices of postage from the General Post-Office, a single letter is a penny for one Stage, two-pence for two Stages, any distance beyond that, and not exceeding eighty miles, three-pence, from eighty miles to any part of England, be the distance what it may, even to Berwick-upon-Tweed, which is three hundred miles, only four-pence ; so that beyond eighty miles there is no sort of proportion kept betwixt the distance and the charge—to Edinburgh indeed it is six-pence. Letters which pass through London are charged the postage *to* London, and *from* thence to the place of its destination.

The Post-charge from Edinburgh differs from that to it ; for any distance not beyond fifty miles two-pence, not beyond eighty, three-pence, and beyond eighty, even to London, but four-pence. Double letters all over the Kingdom are charged double, treble, quadruple, or an ounce, one shilling and four-pence, which should be well considered, and moderated, and be in less proportion than according to the rate of single letters.

The American charge seems to be on a better Plan than that in England ; they pay for a single Letter, above sixty miles, four-pence ; above one hundred, six-pence, above two hundred, eight-pence ; not above three hundred, ten-pence, &c.

Suppose the charge here in future was at the following rates.

A single Letter

Not exceeding 20 miles	2d.
40	3
60	4
80	5
100	6

and after that, an additional half-penny on every Twenty miles to and from any part, whether it went through London or not ; or, suppose no Letter was charged less than three-pence, as before the Act of 1765 ; perhaps too a much less charge, in proportion to the distance beyond one hundred miles, than that proposed, would be better.

The gross Receipt of the Post-Office annually, from the time Charles the Second first established it, to the Act passed by Queen Anne, for its improvement, gradually increased to one hundred and eleven thousand four hundred and sixty-one pounds, and now is understood to be about five hundred thousand pounds.

From the proposed and other improvements, some reform in the conduct and expence of the packets, the increased price of postage, the Tolls for the Mail Machines, &c. the Revenue would not only be increased to a very considerable amount, but the public be much better accommodated.

Postage is really no Tax, but a fair and reasonable price for so much labour, which Government, by its monopoly, is enabled to do cheaper than any Individuals, and should do quicker and safer, or lay its account to the public's employing other carriers in preference to theirs.

N. B. This plan is incomplete, the regulation of the Franks, and other matters intended to be introduced into it not being fully digested. The best Check on Franks it is presumed would be the Members writing the day of the month and year on it, which should be charged if not sent to the Office the day it is dated.

APPENDIX, No. III. (A)

OBSERVATIONS on Mr. PALMER's Plan for Reform and Improvement in the Management of the Business of the General Post-Office.

1. **T**HE Post, from the necessity of the Business to be done at the various Offices it stops at, cannot travel with the same expedition as many other conveyances do, which are not subjected to the like stops.

2. It is granted that the Post, of late years, has been but too frequently robbed; but it is apprehended, not so often as Stage-Coaches, &c.

3. This Article granted.

4. An idle Post-Boy, or as idle a Machine Driver, are equally unfit for the care and protection of the Mails.

5. The Post is equally safe as any other conveyance without a Guard, though it may not be quite so expeditious, for the reason assigned before.

6. The comparison of the travelling of the Post and the Diligences between London and Bath, it is apprehended, can scarcely hold good in respect to the whole Kingdom, for that Road, if not the very best, is inferior to few.

The Post and the Diligences between London and Bath travel the whole way on the same road, except that, between Hungerford and Marlborough, the Post is obliged to quit the turnpike-road, in order to go through Ramsbury. There will not be many instances found, in the other parts of the Kingdom, of the Post and Stage-Coaches travelling so great a distance on the same road

Mr. PALMER's ANSWER to the OBSERVATIONS on his Plan for Reform and Improvement in the Management of the Business of the General Post-Office.

1. **T**HE Machines generally stop to change their Horses at the same Towns the Post-Boy does his Mail, being the most likely for Passengers and Parcels to them, as well as correspondence for the Post, the delay necessary to each much the same.

2. The proportion of Stage-Coaches to the Post are out of all comparison, therefore the former are more frequently robbed; but I propose a Guard, and that Guard to be a regular Soldier of character; though I believe scarce a single instance can be produced, of a Machine being robbed that was guarded, even by such people as the proprietors furnish.

4, and 5. I rely on the Guards more than the Drivers, whose honesty I do not vouch for; though few instances can be produced of their robbing the Coach intrusted to their care.

Two Post-Boys indeed in this neighbourhood only, (one with the Mail from Bristol, the other from Wootton-under-Edge) have been transported, within these twelve Months, for taking Letters out of the Bag.

6. It holds good to a variety of other places, as well on the great as the cross roads; they are increasing too both in number and speed every day. Diligences now go regularly, in sixteen hours, from Bath to London, which is nearly seven miles an hour, including even the stoppages for Breakfast, Dinner, &c.; and though this is insisted on as one of the best roads in the kingdom, and the Post has a very trifling deviation from the main road, yet, on an average, it takes nearly double the time of the Diligences to perform its journey, it being generally thirty hours, which is but little more than three miles and an half an hour.

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

together, for the Post is frequently obliged to quit the direct roads for others, to supply many Towns with their letters.

The Diligences between London and Bath may, at present, perform that journey in seventeen hours, which makes the rate of travelling something more than six miles an hour, including the time lost by changing of Horses, and refreshment of Passengers, &c.

7. The remedy proposed for contracting with the Masters of Diligences, to carry the Mails, and a Guard to protect them, is too speculative to give a certain opinion upon, or what the expence would be, if such a scheme was practicable.

8, and 9. Supposing the Diligences can be made to travel eight or nine miles an hour, yet the quarter of an hour proposed for the change of Horses, and for each Post-Master to dispatch the Bag in, is not sufficient: for unless the bye and road letters are to be left behind, it will require half an hour at most Offices, and at some of the large and central Offices an hour or more to send off the Bags.

If the bye and road letters are to be left behind, then the whole commercial correspondence of the Country will be flung into the utmost confusion, and will justly raise such a clamour as the Post-Master General will not be able to appease; and if this is not to be the case, the Diligences will be found not to travel much faster than the common Post, and perhaps not quite so expeditiously, if, in addition to the time which must be allowed to the Deputies to make up and send off their Bye-Bags, the Passengers time for refreshment is considered, which will be found necessary upon such long journeys as from London to Newcastle and Edinburgh, from London to Carlisle, from London to Chester and Holyhead, from London to Carmarthen, from London to Exeter and Plymouth, &c. for, upon some of these journeys, besides the time allowed for Breakfast and Dinner, some hours are allowed the Passengers for sleep, and if these hours for refreshment and rest are not allowed the Passengers, the Mail Diligences will have nothing to carry but some few short Passengers, besides the Mail and Parcels, therefore the Contract for these Mail Diligences must fall the heavier upon Government.

Mail Diligences, if established, must pursue the present course of the Post upon all the cross-roads, to preserve the regular and established mode of conveyance of letters

8, and 9. The first part of the Observation answered in C.

Their arrivals and departures must certainly be fixed so as to give the greatest possible communication, punctuality and dispatch.

The Mail and Diligences (the latter in half the time of the former) go from Bath and Bristol precisely the same road to Exeter and Plymouth, and, I think, to Falmouth, except an inconsiderable deviation of the Post through Wells to Exeter, which any of the Proprietors, for a small addition to their pay, and the advantage of Passengers and Parcels, to be taken up there, would be induced to do. On all the other roads likewise, they travel a great part the same way, except to Portsmouth, which, so far from being as beneficial to public correspondence as possible (according to the statement of A) I believe to be just the reverse, and actually prejudicial to the Revenue. The case being, that Diligences go every day from Bristol and Bath, through Warminster and Salisbury to Southampton, Gosport, and Portsmouth; whereas the Post goes only three times a week, and, from the course it takes, is extremely tedious, being not less than three times as long in passing as the Diligences; thus the capital Towns are precluded from the expedition necessary to *their* accommodation, by an attention to the convenience of the subordinate places, some of which are so very insignificant in their Trade and Inhabitants, that even A admits that they have not a road that Carriages can possibly travel on. Supposing the Mails to be conveyed even in the present manner, and not by Diligences, such abuses should no longer be suffered. The Post ought to go directly from Bristol, and thence to Salisbury, Southampton, and Portsmouth; and the Mail to Bradford, &c. should be confi-

OBSERVATIONS.

between the great and manufacturing Towns; and their arrivals and departures must be so fixed as to meet, at the center Towns, the Post to and from London.

The Diligences now established from Bath and Bristol to Exeter, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Birmingham, Liverpool, Oxford, Chester, &c. it is apprehended, do not travel upon the cross-post-roads, but take the turnpike and nearest roads, so that by these conveyances many Towns will be deprived of the present communication with other Towns, by the established cross-road posts; and in future the Public correspondence must be regulated, not by the best method to accommodate Trade in general, but so far only as it may be done where the Stage Coaches go.

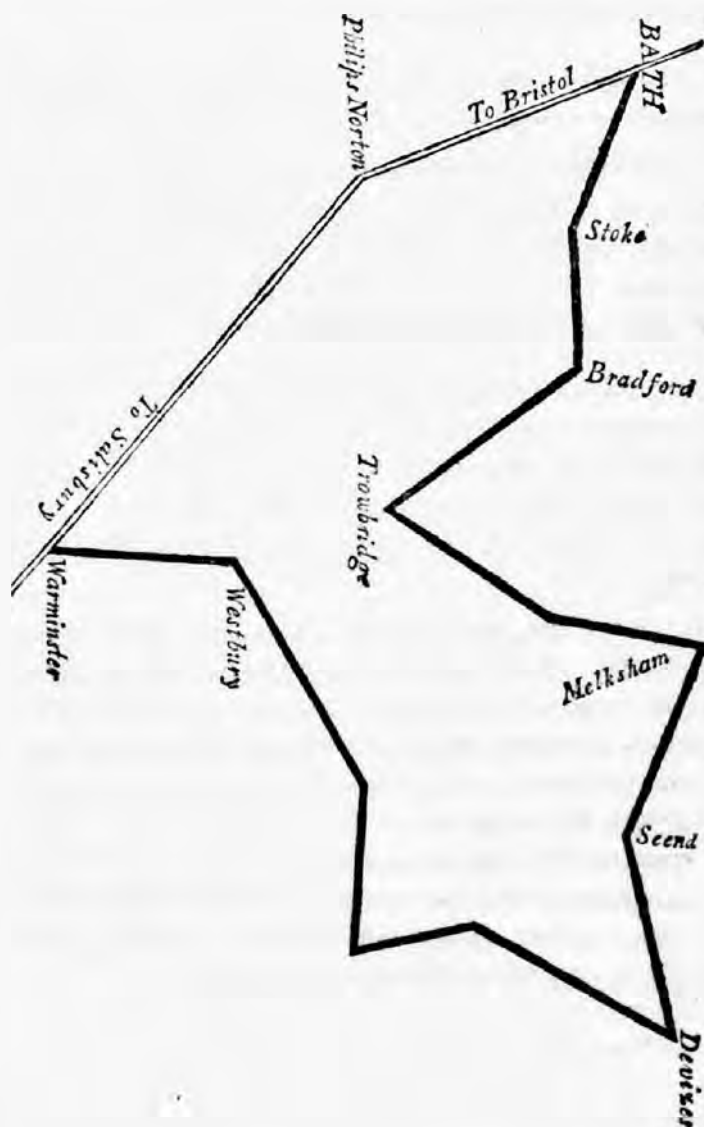
The Cross-Post from Bath and Bristol to Portsmouth, in order to be as beneficial to the public correspondence as possible, passes through Bradford, Trowbridge, Melksham, Devizes, Westbury, Warminster, Heytbury, Salisbury, Stockbridge, Winchester, and Fareham; the Diligence from Bath must go another and a nearer road, for by the road this Post goes, no Diligences in many parts of it can possibly travel, and the circuit the Post is obliged to take, to accommodate the Public correspondence, no Diligence would chuse to make, even if the roads would admit of it, if the Masters of them depend upon carrying Passengers.

In short, if the Mails are to be conveyed by Diligences, the roads they are to take (which in many cases they cannot possibly travel) and the time of arrival and departure must be regulated to the accommodation of correspondence, not that of Passengers, and the matter will be this, viz. that the Mails will be conveyed by Diligences instead of Carts, and on Horseback.

The delay at the different Offices, as it is termed, is the time taken by each Deputy to prepare and send off the bye Letters, and cannot possibly be dispensed with.

ANSWER.

dered as a separate branch, to be brought to Warminster, and taken up by the next Mail from Bath; all which might be effected without any additional expence to the Office, as a Mail now goes four times a week from Bath to Frome, and six times a week betwixt Frome and Warminster. The annexed Plan will better explain the difference between the present and the proposed rout.



** The open line shews the direct road; and the black, that which the present Post goes.

It may also be proper to observe, as a farther proof of the facility of effecting it, that *Diligences* go every day through Bradford, Trowbridge, Melksham, and Devizes, from Bath to London. The delay at various Offices greatly exceeds the time *allowed*, and farther enquiry has confirmed my opinion, that less time than is given is sufficient to many of them.

OBSERVATIONS.

10. The Military Guard proposed will fall more properly under the consideration of the Commander in Chief of the Land Forces, than that of the Post-Master General; but if each Diligence which can possibly take a Bag from London to the Town, to which the Diligence may be destined, is guarded in the manner proposed, it will require no inconsiderable number of Soldiers to do that duty throughout the Kingdom.

11. This falls under the consideration of Parliament, and the Commissioners of the various Turnpike Roads.

12. The Vice Chancellors of the two Universities have the privilege of authorizing persons to carry letters to and from the Universities, but not to collect letters upon the road for other places, which it is apprehended is not of material injury to the Revenue.

13. As the Revenue is very much injured by the Stage Coachmen conveying letters, in defiance of the penalty to prevent it, what is proposed in this Article, of securing the postage, and permitting the Coachmen (in the cases mentioned) to carry the letters, may deserve some future consideration.

14. The Deputies, did they know the exact time of the arrival of the Mails at their Offices, cannot fill up the Post Bills and seal their Bye Bags till they have received and opened the Bye Bags coming to them, in order to circulate such letters as they may find in the Bags to be forwarded by that Post.

The time that will be requisite to do this business in has been mentioned before; to leave the letters behind, as proposed in this Article, will occasion very serious complaints for the injury done to correspondence.

15. If the present hours should be changed for the departure and arrival of the Mails at London, the present regulations for the arrival, and departure, of the various cross-road Posts, where they are calculated to meet the Mails to and from London, will be absolutely destroyed, and that part of the public correspondence, will be flung into irreparable confusion.

ANSWER.

10. A Guard may be thought necessary only to the great roads and principal cross roads, but, if it should appear to be equally proper for the others, there is certainly a sufficient number of Soldiers who can be spared for the purpose.

14. There can be no doubt that a reasonable time should be settled for this duty, but when settled it ought as certainly to be regularly observed; the leaving the Bag is proposed only when the Post-Master exceeds the time allotted him, and is intended to excite complaints for such gross neglect, which, whenever they occur, will most effectually be remedied by the general application of the inhabitants, who, on these occasions, will no doubt endeavour to prevent such injuries to their correspondence till the evil is remedied by the appointment of a better Officer.

How the London Office is now settled, I cannot precisely say; but they used to delay the distribution of letters till all the Mails arrived, though to a very late hour; so that one negligent Post-Master in the most insignificant Town might delay the delivery of letters to the whole Metropolis.

15, and 16. Answered in C.

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

The alteration proposed in the hours, will, it is pretty certain, be attended with more general inconvenience, than be of general utility, and by the proposed change of hours, Government Dispatches must be sent by Express, or delayed till the next departure of the Post, when they cannot be brought to the Office in time to be forwarded by that Post, the expence of which will be enormous.

16. No Committee of Gentlemen can be so proper judges of a general regulation for correspondence, as the Post-Master General, and the Officers under him; local situations beget partiality, and this is proved to be the case, from many applications for the improvement of the correspondence of some Towns, which, if complied with, would have been very prejudicial to the correspondence of other and more important places.

17. Granted.

18. The Merchants and Bankers of London, it is apprehended, will not readily consent to the alteration of the present hours, for the departure of the Mails from London, to that of seven or eight o'clock in the evening, which may deprive them of the necessary time to transact their business, and to write their letters in, to go by that Post.

19. It is pretty certain, that if the Diligences are to travel upon the Post-Roads, and are to be subject to the same necessary stops at each Office as the Posts are, exclusive of the time required for the refreshment of Passengers, &c. nothing like half the time can be saved as is imagined by the Scheme, therefore it is presumed, the advancement proposed on the postage of letters, will occasion some murmurings.

20. Granted.

21. The scheme pointed out in this article, may merit the future consideration of the Board.

22. The improvement of the Revenue, by adopting the whole scheme proposed (as far as it goes) can only be ascertained by an experiment, which in some cases appears impracticable, and on the whole, too hazardous to run the event of its succeeding; and to make the trial of it upon any one single road, such as the road from London to Bath and Bristol, which as the Mail and the Diligences travel thereon for the greatest part of the same way; the experiment, if it were to answer, might give en-

18. The delivery of the letters is perfectly practicable by the Plan, at nine or ten in the morning at the latest, instead of twelve and one, two, three, four, or later in the afternoon; so that the Merchants and Bankers might have more and better hours for the transacting business and answering letters, than they have at present, and the Office to shut at seven.

19. It can be effected: including every necessary delay.

A recommendation came from the Office, I understand, to advance an indiscriminate penny on all letters, without the least offer of improvement in their conveyance or safety.

22. The experiment is practicable, wherever Diligences are established, and the Proprietors are willing to contract.

Where there are several roads betwixt Cities, different Diligences go different ways, as from Bath and Bristol to London, through Newbury, Andover, Salisbury, and Oxford; and in those places, where so many Diligences are not established, they take different roads alternately.—It has been before observed, that where there is

OBSERVATIONS.

couragement to establish it on other roads, where the Mails and Diligences take different routs to the same place, and where, after the experiment is made, it might fail of success, a trial therefore, upon an easy scale, should not be the standard for a more general and intricate regulation.

ANSWER.

any considerable deviation from the great road, it should be made a distinct branch, and the correspondence of large Towns not delayed on that account.

I do not wish the carriage of the Mail to be confined to Diligences: Use them only where the Proprietors will convey it quicker, cheaper, and better, on the whole, than it can be done any other way.

They go as expeditiously on many roads, as on the Bath and Bristol, and as fast again as the Post, and undoubtedly, with the additional advantage of carrying the Mail, they might all be brought to the same speed.— Let the experiment be first made on any of those roads, where the Proprietors have already had the spirit to bring them to this perfection; but if it could be done only, on the Bath and Bristol, without any additional expence to the Office, or inconvenience to other places, I see no fair reason why those Cities, and London, and of course the intermediate places in their mutual correspondence, should be precluded from so considerable an advantage. The trial of it on the Bristol road, being considered as on an easy scale, is a very great mistake; for to convey the Mail backward and forward 120 miles, to allow any tolerable time betwixt the opening and closing the Offices at London and Bristol, so as to carry on correspondence consistently with the regulations of both: to accomplish this at such a distance, and in three days, (which is now performed in six) will be certainly one of the most difficult trials in the whole Country.

The amount of the Observation, is merely this,— Don't try it at all, least it should succeed.

APPENDIX, No. III. (B.)

OBSERVATIONS on Mr. PALMER'S Plan for Reform and Improvement in the Management of the Business of the General Post-Office.

1. THE Post cannot travel with the same Expedition that Chaises and Diligences do, on account of the business necessary to be done at the Office in each Town through which it passes, and, without which, correspondence would be thrown into the utmost confusion.

2. It is very much to be lamented that the Mail has been frequently robbed, but the best method to prevent it appears to be a Guard on Horseback from Stage to Stage, upon the great roads, the expence of which would be great.

3. The best and safest method of preventing any loss to individuals, is certainly that of cutting the Bank-Notes in two, and not sending them at once; for the real owner being in possession of one half, the robber can make no use of the other, and experience has shewn, that no invention can prevent daring desperate fellows from attempting it, as was lately the case upon the North Road, where an iron Cart, as strong as an iron Chest, was slooped, and taken out of the road, and broke open with instruments made on purpose by the thieves themselves: and when desperate fellows have once determined upon a Mail robbery, the consequence would be murder in case of resistance.

4. This Article is fully announced in No. 2, with respect to its security; and the other complaint would be effectually remedied, if Surveyors are frequently upon the road, to see that proper Horses and Drivers were employed.

5. The Post is as safe as any other Carriage, for Diligences and Stage-Coaches are frequently robbed, and the Post very seldom; and no penalty can deter persons from sending Letters and Parcels by Coaches, &c. if it suits their convenience more by that method than by the Post, but very few will adopt it, as the Post is the cheapest conveyance in the Kingdom.

Mr. PALMER'S ANSWER to the OBSERVATIONS on his Plan for Reform and Improvement in the Management of the Business of the General Post-Office.

1. ANSWERED in A. No. I.

2. On the great Roads it would probably be sufficient; yet I rather think the proposed Guard on a Carriage, perfectly free to use his Fire-Arms, would not only be better than on Horseback, but no additional expence.

3. I believe it may be the best and safest method (where no Guard is allowed) though it occasions double Postage for Bills, already heavily taxed, and delay in their remittance.

The power of expediting such a Cart as here described, must be lessened, as the strength of it is increased; they might as well formerly have sent their running footmen express in a suit of armour. The Observations, No. 2 and 10 having advised an armed Guard, sufficiently refute the inconsistency of this latter remark.

4. Allows the abuse. More Surveyors certainly necessary to see the business properly done.

5. The first part of this Observation answered in A. No. 2.

Proper modes of preventing inaccuracy in the Post, I recommend, above all penalties.

Though single and double Letters are cheaper by the Post than Diligences, yet packets of Letters, or Bills, in proportion to the number they contain, are dearer.

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

6. The Diligences set out from London, as well as the Country, at different hours from the Post, which is unavoidably from one to three in the Morning; and though the Bath road is the best in the Kingdom, and Carriages travel upon it with greater expedition than upon any other road, it does not appear, from the account, that they travel at so great a rate as seven miles an hour, and the Post ought to travel, barring accidents, at the rate of six miles, to give time sufficient for doing the necessary business at each Office, for the regular circulation of the Letters.

7. The business of the Post-Office is of such a nature as to require that all persons concerned in the management of it should be immediately under the controul of the Post-Master General; and if the conveyance of the Mails is to be intrusted to the care of the Drivers of Diligences, &c. the greatest confusion will probably soon be the consequence.

8. No Diligence in the Kingdom travels at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour; and though a quarter of an hour may be sufficient for doing the business at some small Offices, half an hour at some, and at other Offices an hour, is hardly sufficient for doing the necessary business. At some small Offices, half an hour, and at other Offices an hour, is hardly sufficient for the proper circulation of the Country Letters, as is well known to every body conversant in Post-Office business.

9. The Mails, as is said before, are in general dispatched between one and three in the Morning, but it sometimes happens that they are not dispatched till much later, and Passengers, so far from preferring the Diligence that had the charge of the Mails, would object to them on that very account; for they must be either at the Post-Office or the Inn by One, and perhaps wait there two, three, or more hours before they set off.

10. A Soldier certainly is the properest Guard, and the most likely to answer the end proposed, but that cannot be obtained but by an order from his Majesty, or the Commander in Chief, or by act of Parliament. The punctual arrival of the Mails at their places of destination, might be frustrated by various accidents, and often by the

6. Answered in A, No. 6.

7. The Proprietor of a Diligence might be put as completely under the controul of the Post-Master General, and as fully obliged to perform *his* contract as a Post-Master (exclusive of the check and care of the Guard). He will be at least as careful of the character and conduct of his Coachman, to whom he intrusts a valuable Carriage, Horses, Parcels, and Passengers (in all which he suffers loss if they receive injury) as a Post-Master can be of the character of his Boy). The Mail bags likewise may be placed in a proper case and situation, to be locked up and opened only by each Post-Master.

8, and 9. Answered in A. No. 8, and 9.

10. The more speedy and punctual the Post is, the sooner and more effectually the alarm, on its robbery, can be given.

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

uncertainty of their departure from the General Post-Office, and in case of a robbery the alarm would not be given the sooner on account of a person being sent in search of the Mail.

11. The Mails and Expresses are already exempt by Law from payment of Tolls, &c. If the Diligences carrying the Mails are to be exempt, there must be an Act of Parliament for it.

12. The Universities have a privilege to send Letters to any place, in a direct line, without being subject to the penalty, but not to leave or collect letters upon the road.

13. Nobody will ever send letters by Diligences but from necessity, as the difference in the expence is so great; and if the Letter is of consequence it will be sent by Express, or a servant on purpose.

14. Every Post-Master is so well acquainted with the time the Mail ought to arrive at his Office, that he endeavours to get his business as forward as possible before it arrives; but it is not sufficient to have his bag ready, he must open the Bag or Bags he receives, and take out such Letters as are for Towns and Places in the road, between his and the next stage to be dropt by the Rider; at some places small Bags are to be made up with the Letters for the Towns and Villages, and Gentlemen's Houses in the Neighbourhood; at others, Bags which are to turn into the Cross road, branches and join others at a certain point; and if this part of the Post-Office business was to be altered or neglected, a great part of the circulation of Letters would be interrupted all over the Kingdom. The pay of the Post-Masters is upon the most frugal Plan, though it has of late years been greatly augmented.

15. If the present hours fixed at all the Offices in the Kingdom, with the greatest care and attention to their regular plan of correspondence, which has been established, after long experience, were to be altered, it would throw the well-established circulation of letters into the greatest confusion for the present, and would be many years before it could be restored to the degree of perfection it now has.

The regulation hinted at relative to Government Dispatches, does not depend upon the Post-Office, but upon the Secretary of State's Offices.

13. Diligences go much faster than expresses, including even their necessary delays: they go at various hours, and how extensively has been shewn.

14, 15, Answered in C.

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

16. Every body suggests naturally what strikes themselves, as the frequent applications to the Post-Office prove; but it is the business of those who are employed in the Post-Office department to study and adopt such regulations only, as tend to the improvement of correspondence in general, and no regulation ought to be made in any Town to the prejudice of the correspondence of another; but where it can be done consistent with the general good of correspondence, it always is, and ought to be adopted.

17. This is certainly true, and is constantly attended to.

18. It is much to be wished that the time for shutting up the Office could be fixed at an early hour, but as many considerable Merchants have at different times expressed a disapprobation of any alteration, it is to be apprehended that a general meeting will be of the same mind; but if they should not, the Gentlemen of the Law will most probably oppose any alteration in the present hours of shutting the Office.

19. There is no doubt but that Letters might be delivered at any distance in straight lines in less time than they are at present, but that would in a great measure destroy the well-regulated circulation of Letters, so beneficial to Trade and Correspondence in general, for it appears from the accounts that the Bye and Cross road correspondence, is of more consequence to some Towns than even the London, and therefore is to be taken the utmost care of in every regulation relative to the conveyance of letters; and as letters and packets cost much more by carriers, &c. than by the Post, it therefore proves that it is more out of necessity than by choice, that it is preferred in some instances to the common Post.

20. It is certain that the alteration of the rates of Postage in the year 1765, has not been attended with every good consequence then expected from it, and has been some loss to the Revenue; and if any future regulation should be made something like the proposal in the plan, &c. will, it is probable prove very beneficial to the Revenue.

21. The Revenue of the Post-Office is an increasing Revenue, and might be much increased if the privilege of Franking was abolished, and each single letter that was conveyed by the Post upwards of 100 miles, 6d. without any further addition or alteration,

19. Answered in C.

20, and 21. Whether to adopt the rates of postage proposed, or others, will require much consideration; what is mentioned by this gentleman may perhaps be best, yet as the Act of 1765 has in some respects lessened the Revenue, (before which time no letter was charged less than three-pence) possibly it may be thought right that no letter should be now charged less than two-pence; the increased price in proportion to distance might also, I think, go as far as eight-pence, which is the extent of the present charge of a letter through London.

The observation respecting Franks is very just, nothing can be more partial than their distribution; which is grown to great excess, and could Members be prevailed

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

The public have a right to expect every improvement that can be made for the benefit of their correspondence, and the Post-Masters General have always been ready to adopt every probable means for that purpose; but as the safe and expeditious conveyance of the Mails to and from every part of the Kingdom, is an object of the greatest consequence, the conveyance of them by Stage-Coaches and Diligences does not appear to be the plan best calculated for that purpose, nor likely to answer the general convenience of correspondence so well as the present arrangement, which has from long experience, been found to be the best for keeping up a regular communication between all the principal Trading, and other considerable Towns in the Kingdom, and any alteration in the present method should be well weighed before it is adopted, and perfectly ascertained to be as feasible in practice as it is specious in Theory, for to alter the present mode might be attended with very serious consequences to correspondence.

on to give up this privilege, it would certainly greatly benefit the Revenue: the improvement of the Post might be some inducement to them, for at present many Members of both Houses are at a very great expence both for expresses and packets by the Diligences, from the want of such improvement; some check on their excessive abuse is absolutely necessary; with a view to which I suggested in the original plan, a regulation that appeared to be the plainest and best for this purpose.

APPENDIX, No. III. (c)

OBSERVATIONS on Mr. PALMER's Plan for Reform and Improvement in the Management of the Business of the General Post-Office.

1. **T**HE Speed of the Post has in many parts increased with the improvement in the roads, but it may be otherwise in some places, where impediments to its progress have increased by the great increase of weight, and in the number of places the Riders or Drivers must call at to deliver letters in their respective stages, which in common justice cannot be prevented.

2. Considering the number of Mails continually travelling, the robberies are few; when such robberies do happen, the public safety, no doubt, is affected, but not often materially injured, and need never to be so, if the sender of the Bills were to copy and cut, or indorse them before sent by Post; there are no other means of preventing robberies with effect, as it has been proved that the strongest Cart that could be made, lined and bound with Iron, was soon broke open by a Robber, against whom it would be therefore in vain to attempt such kind of defence.

3. The safety of the Post respecting Bills, as has before been hinted, entirely depends upon the conduct of the senders of Bills. In other respects, the Post is much more safe than Diligences or Stages, some or other of which are robbed almost every night in the week, but it is well known, through the influence of the Proprietors with the Printers of Newspapers, information thereof is often kept from the Public.

Mr. PALMER's ANSWER to the OBSERVATIONS on his Plan for Reform and Improvement in the Management of the Business of the General Post-Office.

BEFORE I proceed to answer this report I must beg to observe, that however contemptuously some of the remarks in it are expressed, I have nevertheless considered them with the utmost care and most impartial attention, and am chiefly concerned to find the habits of Office seem to create a sort of confirmed opinion of its perfection, and resistance to all improvement.

1, 2, and 3. Partly answered in A. B.

All idea of protection to the Mail is here given up; the Public are told they must cut their Bills in two: be at the expence of double postage for them, and besides, add another day's delay to all the present grievances; and then, if the Mail should be robbed, they are informed that no material injury can be sustained.

As some answer to this extraordinary assertion, I shall mention only a few instances that have occurred, even in the narrow circuit that I have had opportunities of observing, of the expence and great inconvenience that have accrued from the mismanagement of the Post; nor can any one doubt of what consequence its safety, regularity,

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

and dispatch, may be in a commercial Country, or of the variety of mischiefs that must follow from the contrary.

No later than the last Assizes at Salisbury, there was a trial for the robbery of the Mail.

It is peculiarly unfortunate, that from the whole of the evidence on that Trial, the defenceless state of the Mail has become a matter of more general notoriety, so as almost necessarily to become an incitement to the future repetition of the offence.

In the prosecution of the two WESTONS, above seventy Witnesses were brought to London from various parts of the Kingdom, and of course several of the Post-Masters and their servants, through whose Offices the Mails robbed had passed: to their probable neglect whilst absent.

Frequent instances have occurred, even in this City, of considerable losses by robbery of the Mail; one Banker lost above £500, and was obliged to attend the Trial, with two of his Clerks, in London.—Another of this City states as follows: “ That he sent £3,700 in various Bills
“ and Drafts by the Mail, which was robbed by the
“ WESTONS, says he was at £24 expence for Advertise-
“ ments, and Hand-Bills upon the occasion, that he suf-
“ fered considerably by being obliged, after repeated
“ delays and excuses from many of the Drawers of the
“ Bills lost, to take Drafts at long dates, in lieu of those
“ lost, and by the Drawer of one Bill proving insolvent,
“ he has lost £56, the Indorsers being exonerated owing
“ to its being lost, and this might have been the case with
“ many others.” It is inconceivable their trouble in writing so great a number of letters, and being obliged to give security at considerable expence, to more than twenty people, on their paying the amount of Bills lost; and had not £600 in Bank Notes been fortunately cut, and only the halves sent, and £300 in Bank Post Bills been very particularly indorsed, the whole would have been lost.

4, 5, 6, 7. It is more expeditious upon the whole, because the generality of Stages do not average more than five miles an hour whilst travelling.

The case in point will not do to build the comparison upon, because from the multiplicity and overabundance of Diligences upon the Bath road, the spirit of opposition runs exceeding high, uncommon exertions are made in consequence, the Passengers are hardly allowed time to stretch their legs, much less for rest and diet; and so, with light weights, or empty carriages, away they whirl—With the Post, such expedition is impracticable; the Bye-letter business must be done at each Office, and that business is not to be done in less

4, 5, 6, 7. The comparison (at the end of this answer) betwixt the Post and Diligences in various Towns, does not confirm the expedition of Diligences, being confined merely to the Bath road.

The bye-letter business can be done in half the time that is allowed, or even less, at an infinite number of Offices, with ease and safety, instead of the extreme of hazard, though at others the time they have may be barely sufficient.

This I insist upon, both from enquiry and observation, previous to the Plan being sent to the Treasury, and also by farther Examination since the receipt of the observations; and I must add, that the requisite speed may be

time than the time allowed any where, without hazarding, in the extreme, the regularity and safety of correspondence. It is a misfortune, indeed, that business of such consequence is so much hurried in many places, and that the Inhabitants of places, removed from London, do not understand, that whilst they are attempting to quicken the conveyance of their letters to and from that city, they are hurrying the intermediate Post-Masters too much for common safety. It seems likewise to be forgot, or not known, that Persons living at places, however insignificant between stages, have a right to receive and send their Letters by the Mail Drivers, and that such has, always is, and must be, the practice. Each stop will unavoidably require five minutes; and, though one stop is only allowed in each Town or Village, these stops are in many stages numerous, in some they exceed twenty; in few are less than eight or ten; suppose them to average twelve in each stage, here is an hour's delay which the Rider has to make up; the fact therefore, is, and long experience has established it, that in some stages it is not possible to get the Mails forward at the rate of six miles an hour; in others, where the stops are less numerous, they get on faster; and so, betwixt the one and the other, the rate of six miles an hour is pretty well kept to. It will also be found, notwithstanding these impediments, that, taking the Kingdom throughout, the Mails keep pace with the Coaches and Diligences which start with them; for even at Weatherby, where I am at present, on the great North Road, where Post-Coaches and Diligences have long been established and carried on with spirit, those that leave London rather before the Mail, arrive later in general, because the Passengers find it necessary both to eat and sleep by the way; how, therefore, would the Mails get forward by these conveyances, which must not only indulge the Passengers, but also let the Post-Masters do their duty, in receiving, taxing, sorting, and forwarding of Letters? besides, on most of the great roads, having an increased Load from the Mails of many hundred Weights, which, with the Diligences and Passengers, no pair of Horses could drag along. Perhaps the Gentleman who wishes for this alteration is not aware of the Bulk and Weight of the Mails out of London, but draws his conclusions from the Bath Mail, a trifling branch from the great road, and as it were terminating there; and, that so far from London as Weatherby, near two hundred miles, the Mails weigh from four to five hundred weight; at Ferrisburgh, only one stage South, much more.

obtained in most places, consistent with the time now allotted them.

That it is possible the Surveyor may be mistaken in the observation which the above refers to, will perhaps appear, on examining his report of the delay, which cannot, he says, be dispensed with, in the delivery of letters by the Mail-Carriers in the Villages, &c. betwixt the Post-Towns.

He states that the stoppages in some stages are numerous, that they exceed twenty, in few less than eight or ten. That each stop will unavoidably require five minutes; but he says, putting them to the average of twelve only, there is an hour's delay in each stage for this business; whether he mistakes or exaggerates in this account will appear from the following circumstances.

I have now before me Copies of the Way-Bills from the Treasury, which they sent for to the Post-Office, that I might know the hours the Post sets out from, and arrives at, the principal Towns; added to these, Mr. Todd gave me a Way-Bill he had just received with the Northern Mail, and pointed out to me the exceeding punctuality and correctness of the Post-Masters, in so long a journey as from London to Edinburgh, three hundred and ninety-one miles; in this journey, of the greatest correspondence, which consists of twenty-eight stages, all the Officers are allowed but half an hour each, except two only, viz. Weatherby, one hundred and ninety-two miles from London, and Berwick, one hundred and forty-four miles farther, one hour each.

The Post-Master in no one place exceeds the time allotted for changing the Mail, and completing the whole business described by the Surveyor.

At Haddington, both going and returning, the Post-Master took a quarter of an hour only; and at Coltsworth, on its return, twenty minutes; the travelling betwixt every stage was done precisely within the six miles an hour allotted, except one place in the return, where an hour was lost.

To the arrival and departure in this Way-Bill, each Post-Master's Name, or his Deputy's was signed; and Mr. Todd very justly commended their merits, observing that it was the road formerly most complained of, and now the best regulated in the Kingdom.

Now, supposing the Surveyor not mistaken in his assertion of the average hour's delay, and taking the average of three hundred and ninety-one miles on the twenty-eight stages, at fourteen miles per stage, which they perform

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

exactly in two hours and twenty minutes, the hours delay in each stage reduces it to one hour and twenty minutes; thus, according to the Surveyor's statement, every Horse through every stage travels at the rate of ten or eleven miles an hour, dragging a Cart loaded with a Boy or Man, and Mails of four or five hundred weight or more.

If according to his assertion on a long stage of eighteen miles, where the stoppages are most frequent, you take them at only twenty (whereas he says they exceed twenty), then deduct one hour and forty minutes for the twenty stops from the three hours allowed for the eighteen miles, it will appear that the Horse travels thus loaded, eighteen miles in one hour and twenty Minutes, which is from thirteen to fourteen miles an hour; a perversion of the Fact, too gross to require any comment.

On receipt of these Observations, and the Surveyor's statement of the weight of the Northern Mails, I immediately went to Salisbury, the centre of the *Western* correspondence (which is considered, I believe, as next in consequence to the Northern district), to enquire into their weight; I found that their Mails down (which go directly through Salisbury to Exeter, for Somerset, Devon, and all Cornwall), weigh, on an average, at the most from two hundred and eighty to two hundred and ninety pounds, (a Bag, very trifling in respect to weight, is left at Andover,) and that the Bags *up* weigh from one hundred and eighty pounds to two hundred pounds weight; but supposing them to be three hundred pounds weight down, and two hundred pounds weight up, the average will be two hundred and fifty pounds; but from this we have to deduct seventy-six pounds, the weight of two outward heavy leather cases, which, in the proposed Plan, is quite unnecessary; and thus it appears, that the average of the greatest line of correspondence in the Western Post of the Kingdom is one hundred and seventy-four pounds. It must be observed that this direct Mail goes only three times a week, being the general Post Nights, the other three nights it goes through Bath and Bristol, where the average weight of Bags to Exeter, Plymouth, &c. is not above twenty pounds, but let it make the one hundred and seventy-four pounds, two hundred pounds, and send it six times per week the straight and direct road through Salisbury, and it reduces the weight to the average of one hundred pounds only; so that this luggage is not equal to the average weight of an outside Passenger by fifty or sixty pounds. Bath and Bristol Bags together do not average forty pounds; now

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

from these very heavy Northern Mails, (for I would no more suppose the Surveyor would exaggerate the weight of the Mails than what he calls its necessary delay; deduct the many outward heavy Cafes; of which only two weigh seventy-six pounds; and let them go and return immediately and directly every day, to and from the principal Towns, and there can be no doubt but their weight would be sufficiently reduced, and the Public accommodation more regular and complete, instead of experiencing the difficulties and impediments so hastily suggested as the consequence of my Plan.

In reply to the very extraordinary speed which the Surveyor has communicated to his Post, I will just state a few plain Facts, in order to prove that the superior expedition of Diligences over the Post, is, by no means, confined to the Bath road only, viz.

As per Way-Bill.	Monday Night's Post arrives at Bath Wednesday Morning from 7 to 10.	The Diligence arrives in 16 Hours.
	Monday Night's Post arrives at Bristol Wednesday from 7 to 11 and 12.	The Diligence in 17 or 18 Hours.
	Monday Night's Post arrives at Gloucester Wednesday Morning about 6.	The Diligence in 16 Hours.
As per Way-Bill.	Monday Night's Post arrives at Norwich Wednesday Morning about 6.	The Diligence in 15 or 16 Hours.
	Monday Night's Post arrives at Worcester Wednesday Morning about 6.	The Diligence in 17 or 18 Hours.
	Monday Night's Post arrives at Birmingham Wednesday Morning about 6.	The Diligence in about 15 or 16 Hours, and when an opposition was supported, often in 12 and 13 Hours.

I have no account in the Way-Bill of the Shrewsbury Post, one hundred and sixty Miles from London, but am informed the Monday nights letters do not arrive till

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

Thursday Morning; the Diligences at six in the Morning arrive there at noon next Day, and the Coventry, Litchfield, &c. Letters in that road, might be delivered by this Carriage on the Tuesday, instead of the Wednesday by the Mail.

Monday's letters to Exeter, arrive at 8 and 9 on Thursday Morning, often 11 and 12, and later.

Tuesday's letters at 8, 10, and 12, Thursday night.

The Diligence which leaves London at 6 in the Morning, arrives about noon, 1, 2, and 3, next day.

Salisbury and all intermediate places of course in the same proportion.

To Shrewsbury one hundred and sixty, and Exeter one hundred and eighty miles from London, Passengers content themselves with sleeping in the Carriage; nay, at Exeter this affair (so much insisted upon in each of the Observations, of time being allowed on long journeys for Passengers to sleep at the Inns) is considered of so little importance, that one or two Coaches set out every night at eight o'clock, to London, from Exeter, we will say Monday night, and arrive in London about eight on Wednesday morning, so that they are two nights in the Coach; the Tuesday night, indeed, they are allowed two hours to sleep at some Inn, and this short indulgence the Passengers very often dispense with, that they may get the sooner to the end of their Journey.

So far from its being an impossibility to convey the Bath Mail by the Diligence to London in sixteen or eighteen hours, I will give up every part of the Plan, if it cannot be accomplished even in less time, consistent with every necessary business at the Offices, and on the road, to suit likewise the London Office, and leave very sufficient time to answer Letters received at Bath, betwixt the coming in and going out of its Post.

With respect to the objection which the Surveyor so often and so anxiously urges, of the inconveniences that may arise to the Passengers in the Diligences, from travelling with such extraordinary expedition, I have only to inform him, that the actual case is, that such Diligences as are already most expeditious, have constantly the most custom; and those that set out at night, which are far the greatest number, and where the Passengers of course sleep in the Carriages, are never without employment.

The advantage of quickly expediting the subject business of their journies, compensates, to the parties concerned, for the want of their actual indulgencies.

But suppose an impossibility, that the Bath Post in particular, could be brought to London in sixteen or eighteen hours, keep to the present hours of dispatch from Bath, and it would arrive at the General Office in the afternoon, when all the Letter-Carriers were delivering their morning letters, too late for a general distribution that night, even with a fresh set, and whilst the Officers in the Office were preparing for the dispatches into the Country. Bring it earlier from Bath, and the Inhabitants of that City will have less time to write the Answers to the Letters received.

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

8, and 9. As the Mails neither do, nor can leave the General Office at the same hour every morning, Mail Diligences would be less regular than others; and as to the Guard, he might be waited for at every ale-house he should pass by.

The delay at the different Post Offices in the road to London is regulated by circumstances, such as the coming in of branch Mails; hours fixed for the accommodation of Inhabitants of large Towns and the like; and if the Mails do but get to London for the letters to be sorted, and sent out in the general delivery, all is well.

10. I cannot think that a Guard to each Mail would add to its safety, and I am persuaded would cause delays, whether ill or well paid for his trouble. He might indeed take his seat upon the Coach or Diligence, but how the heavy Mails are to be got to, and from thence, at every stage, is not easy to contrive. With respect to the security to be expected from the swiftness and punctuality of these Mail Diligences, I do not see how it can arise more than from the present mode of conveyance.

They would not be more regular in their arrivals, being governed by nearly the same circumstances, and as liable to accidents on the road, which may be supposed to detain them, without giving the alarm of their having fallen into the hands of robbers, which therefore would not be guessed at, or known sooner than at present; because, at present, when a Postmaster has reason to apprehend either a robbery or accident, he naturally sends in quest of the Mail, and if the former has happened, he is authorized and directed to spread the alarm, and to offer a reward of fifty pounds for apprehending the Robber; and he is likewise to send immediate notice to the Post-Master General.

11. An exemption from the payment of Tolls, might save something to the Proprietors of the Mail Diligences, but nothing in proportion to the extra charge they would make for the conveyance of the Mails, more than is now paid.

So that thus far it pretty clearly appears, to my humble apprehension, that the plan of reformation and improvement would neither accelerate the Mails in their conveyance, insure their safety, nor save expence, but very much the contrary; for surely it is more rational to suppose, that the present unincumbered mode of conveying the Mails, and unconnected as they are with other Persons and things than those immediately concerned, must be more expeditious, safe, and less expensive, than if

8, and 9. The Mails most certainly may leave the Post-Office at a regular hour; and as to the Guard, the Surveyor chuses to substitute the negligence of a Post-Boy, for the order and regularity of a Soldier on duty.

Information not being given to the General Post-Office of the irregularity and shameful neglect of the Mails, and their arrivals at places distant from the Capital, is perfectly consistent with the Surveyor's opinion, that all is well, if the Mails do but get to London to be sorted and sent out in the general delivery; be that delivery ever so late.

11, 12, 13, 14. Both Mail and Guard will be conveyed full as cheap, and much swifter by the Diligences, and as to any incumbrance the Contractor alone is to look to that, to provide for the due conveyance of the Mail and Guard, being the only object to the Post-Master.

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

clogged, as proposed in the said Plan. It may be so in some instances, but, to avoid a partial evil, you may bring on a general one.

I apprehend, that under the present Post Acts, the Post-Master-General cannot grant any such powers to their Deputies or their Carriers as here mentioned; and if they could they might think it dangerous to countenance in any respect the conveyance of any letters whatever by Carriers, Coachmen, &c. for fear of opening a wide Field for fraud, for it would not be possible then to prevent such Carriers and Coachmen, from collecting and carrying other Letters, because detection would be more difficult; and they, of course, would be more confident and daring in the practice.

There does not appear to be any cheaper conveyance than by Post for Letters, none safer, and none can be made swifter to carry with it all its parts, its bye Letters, its universal accommodation and regularity. The mode of managing the bye Letters, which in most places are as numerous as the Letters to and from London, does not appear to be all understood, otherwise this part of the Plan could never have been suggested.

14. The safety or security of the Letters, seems also here to have escaped attention, no provision being made to guard the Bags and Mails in the absence of the Post-Master, against the number of idle people, who generally crowd the Yards and Doors of Inns.

Indeed, it is a pity that the Author of the Plan, should not first have been informed of the nature of the business

What power the Post-Masters do not at present possess, and may be necessary, will of course be granted by Parliament.

Wherever the Diligences are already more expeditious than the Post, the fact is, that they carry away much of the business of the Post, nor can that defalcation from the Post Revenue increase, unless an absolute permission were given for so conveying them. That I might form some judgment of the number of letters sent by Diligences, I desired three Persons, who are in the properest situations for such a purpose, to observe, as correctly as they could, what number of Packets, which they supposed might contain letters, were sent weekly to and from Bath and Bristol, and London; they all report that several hundreds are sent every week, and that they are sure the number has sometimes exceeded a thousand. I rather think they are mistaken, though if we allow to every Diligence and Flying-Machine that travels six days in a week only, to and from London, and those Cities, which are fourteen or more, only three Packets each, they amount to 504 Packets a week; and if you rate them only at the charge of a double letter each, they amount to sixteen Guineas a Week, or £873 12s. per year. On every other Road, likewise, where the speed of the Machines far exceed that of the Post, they inform me, the number of letters sent by them are to the same extent, in proportion to the correspondence of the Cities they communicate with, and that in some, they are even privately collected, and sent in a Box, to a very considerable amount.

A moderate check might perhaps be of service; at least A. and B. seem to think so, but these are minutiae, and as I said before, the Post having the monopoly, it ought, by its intrinsic superiority, to be preferred to every other conveyance.

The Surveyor will forget that a Soldier is recommended as a Guard to the Mail.

Since the receipt of the Observations, in order to observe more accurately on the actual state of the present conveyance by the Post, I have carefully attended to it, at Southampton and Portsmouth, and have again reviewed the process of it through Bath, Bristol, Wells, Taunton,

OBSERVATIONS.

in question, to make him understand how very differently the Post and Post-Offices are conducted to what he apprehends, and that the constant eye that has been long kept towards their improvement in all situations, and under all circumstances, has made them now almost as perfect as can be, without exhausting the Revenue arising therefrom.

The Salaries to the Post-Masters are settled with economy, but in general are proportioned to their trust and duty, whether by night or by day, and really negligent Servants meet with their deserts when detected, which however neither is, nor can be done so easily as in the Excise, where the checks being once formed will answer for every Officer. In the Post-Office that cannot be to such extreme exactness, the operations being necessarily as different as possible, and yet the Servants of the Post-Office cannot be very negligent or dishonest without detection.

ANSWER.

Exeter, &c. (see the Schedule annexed*) and I should not have failed to extend my enquiries still further, but that I considered those as a sufficient refutation of the Observations of its perfection and regularity, and that I thought it became of more consequence to answer the Observations as soon as possible, in order, that in case the Office chose to advertise for Contracts for expediting the Mail, they might commence it before the depth of Winter, and the most discouraging Season of the Year, for Persons to enter into such Contracts.

That the Post-Masters Salaries are proportioned to their trust and duty, I by no means agree; what might have been sufficient many years ago, both as to Salary to the Master, and for allowance as to his Riding Work, when the expence of living, house-rent, and taxes, and also the purchase and keep of horses were much cheaper, is now very narrow; and it should be remembered that the monopoly of private Posting, which by former Acts of Parliament, was annexed to the Public Post-Masters, was by a later statute withdrawn from them. The restraining Clauses in the Post-Act of Charles the Second, and Queen Anne, repealed by the of George. The consequence of all which is, that the Post-Master endeavours now to make up for the lowness of Salary, by retrenching the proper and due expence of the riding work, and with that view either employs miserable Cattle himself, or contracts (if possible) with a neighbouring Inn-Keeper, at an under rate, who executes the business with the refuse of his Stables and Post-Boys.

* State of the arrival of the Post, as mentioned in the Way-Bills, and of the time they really arrive at the following Places.

By the account in the Way-Bills, the Post is said to arrive,

At Bath, Three in the Morning.

Bristol, Six Ditto.

Southampton, Seven Evening.

Portsmouth, Six Ditto.

Exeter, Half past Four Ditto.

On personal enquiry, I find it comes in thus much later.

Seven, till Ten, or later.

Nine, till Twelve.

Nine, oftener Ten and Eleven.

Too late often to deliver at Night.

Nine, Ten, and Eleven at Night.

The intermediate Post Towns, such as Salisbury, &c. must of course be as shamefully neglected.

I have received accounts from Persons of the first consequence and character in the Mercantile and Manufacturing Line, from a variety of other places, who speak with the utmost indignation of the delay of their Posts, and from the time they mention of the delivery of their letters, their arrival in the Way-Bills, sent the Treasury, must be equally mis-stated with those in the Schedule.

I have not the most distant suspicion, that the arrivals could be antedated, to make the Post appear more expeditious than it really is, yet it must very plainly appear, however well informed the Office may be of the arrival of the Mails in London, that they have been very much deceived in the reports made to them of their punctuality in places distant from the Capital, though it is asserted in the observations, that by the constant Eye kept over them, in all situations, and under all circumstances, they are as perfect as can be.

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

The Post-Master at Wells, sends a Horse four times a week to Bridgewater, which is twenty-one miles from thence; stays all Night twice, and brings back three times; going likewise three times a week to Bristol, (which is 21 miles), and for this riding work, he is allowed 88l. per year.

All the letters on the Axminster branch, from Bath, Bristol, Wales, &c. are separated and charged at his Office; and the Exeter, Plymouth, and Cornish Mails unnecessarily detained, whilst that business is transacting. The whole of his Salary is 24l. per year. Out of this he pays four pounds per year to his Deputy at Glastonbury; and, besides the rent for his House and Office, eight pounds per year land-tax, from a former Post-Master, from some Election dispute having been assessed to the full rent; and still farther, in diminution of the balance of Profit in this account, he has the established four pounds eleven shillings to pay, every three years, for the renewal of his Commission to this valuable Appointment.

At Salisbury, where the duty is heavy, the trust great, carried on at very late hours, and very well done, the salary is very inadequate; and the present Post-Master pays forty pounds per Year to the Widow of the former, out of it. The riding-work he has lost considerably by, and has now contracted with an Inn-Keeper to do it.

The delay at the Office, and on the road betwixt Amesbury and Heytesbury, (which is but about sixteen miles) is such that it frequently is five, six, and seven hours performing.

From Wellington to Tiverton, near Exeter, (being only fourteen miles), it is often six hours performing; and at Exeter they complain heavily, that in addition to the delay of the Mail, from the Post-Master's employing one deliverer of letters only, it is twelve or one o'clock, and later in many parts of the Town, ere they receive them; and this, most probably, from the Salary being insufficient to induce them to attend properly to the duty.

The latter part of the observation confesses the inefficacy of the present checks on the Post-Masters, if the above instances did not confirm it.

15. The bonus now fixed for sending the Mail from the great Offices in the Kingdom, are calculated to give the Inhabitants all possible time for answering their letters from London, consistently with the safety of their arrival in London for delivery. As they are now fixed also, and as the arrivals at the Offices in the great lines happen, they govern the departures from Towns in the branches and in the cross roads, which, by any alteration of con-

15. How just the first part of this observation is, will appear from a few instances I have selected from some of the Way Bills sent from the Post-Office to the Treasury.

	Received.	Returned.
Coventry	11 at night	9 in the morning.
Litchfield	6 in the morning	3 ditto.
Oxford	11 at night	6 ditto.

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

sequence, would be totally deranged, and the whole correspondence throughout England, through London, as well as the bye and cross roads, would be thrown into the utmost confusion, which no time could so completely settle as it now is: by the same rule, any material alteration in the departure from London would have singular bad effects.

The mode of waiting for Government dispatches, as has been the case, has indeed had very bad effects in the Country, by putting the arrivals out of all course, but how far that can be remedied, I do not take upon me to say; it undoubtedly has been found necessary, or it would not have been practised.

	Received.	Returned.
Chester	- 7 ditto	- - 1 at noon.
Dover	- 7 ditto	
Portsmouth	20 minutes past six	at night.
Warwick	1 in the morning	8 in the morning.
Harwich	- 7 in the evening.	
Huntingdon	$\frac{1}{2}$ past 3 afternoon	40 min. past 4 evening.
Berwick	- 1 in the morning	9 in the morning.
Peterboro'	8 at night	- - 6 ditto.
Hull	- 12 ditto	- - - $\frac{1}{4}$ past 9 ditto.
York	- 9 ditto	- - - 11 ditto.
Leeds	- $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 ditto	$\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 ditto.
Halifax	- 12 ditto.	
Manchester	8 in the morning	1 in the afternoon.

Supposing the time of arrival at these Offices is strictly observed, as stated in the Way-Bills, and is not so much later as those enquired into; yet several of them, and those principal Ports and Manufacturing Towns, not only suffer from the slowness of the Post, but lose another Post in the Answer, from the hours of their arrival and departure being so well calculated to give the Inhabitants all possible time for answering their letters.

What follows is indeed very alarming, if the succeeding paragraph did not tell us that the Office, "waiting for Government dispatches, has indeed had very bad effects in the Country, by putting the arrivals out of all course." It must therefore very frequently have totally deranged the whole correspondence of the Kingdom, and thrown it into this very confusion, which no time, he declares, could so completely settle as it now is.

Yet, instead of wishing this grievance removed, he furnishes government with arguments for its continuance; and takes upon himself to say, that it undoubtedly has been found necessary, or it would not be practised.

16. It is not probable that any set of Gentlemen, Merchants, or Out-Riders, can instruct Officers brought up in the business of the Post-Office; and it is particularly to be hoped, if not presumed, that the Surveyors need no such information. Besides, it cannot be doubted, because experience shews it, that every Man you consult would confine his ideas to the place of his Residence or connection in business, as from Bath to London, the intermediate places between which are the most trifling in the way of correspondence of any set of Towns, for such a distance, that can be found on any line from London, and can give no notion at all of the bye and cross road correspondence.

OBSERVATIONS.

ANSWER.

17. The shutting up the Office at seven or eight o'clock in the evening is impracticable, and the lowering the postage of packets of an ounce or upwards, surely would, at the same time that it was sinking the revenue, increase the weight of the Mails, already too much loaded and incumbered by wet Newspapers, which help to retard their conveyance; how then would they be got forward with the addition of Parcels, and what is to defray the expences such an increase of weight must occasion?

18. I presume not to enter into a discussion of the propriety of the present rates of Postage, but perhaps an higher rate to places, distant from each other above one hundred, two hundred, and three hundred miles, might increase the revenue without being thought unjust.

I, however, beg leave to refer that, and what follows of the reform, to superior judgment. But, upon the whole, I may venture to say, that the Post, as now managed, is admirably connected in all its parts, well regulated, carefully attended to, and not to be improved by any person unacquainted with the whole, but will stand the test of enquiry, and do honour to its conductors.

Such, however, is the very humble opinion of a Surveyor.

As there are some points very strongly insisted on by all three of the Observers, which possibly I may not have sufficiently answered—

I will mention first, with respect to the speed and extent of Diligences, that, by the order sent from the Treasury to the Post-Office, for the different Post-Masters in the Kingdom, to send an account of all the Coaches, Diligences, &c. that went from their respective Towns, with statements of their speed, and the number and price of turnpikes on the Road, &c.

I hoped to have made out a clear and full state of the speed and punctuality of the Diligences, compared with that of the Post, through the whole Kingdom; yet, though some of the letters were perfectly clear and satisfactory, the greater part were so much the reverse (many of them from Coach-Masters refusing to give any account, from the apprehension that additional taxes were intended by the enquiry, &c.) that it was impossible to be effected, nor indeed was it absolutely necessary; enough being stated to shew the slowness of the one, and the expedition and extent of the other.

From this information, and what I received from the Stamp-Office, I find these carriages are now established

ANSWER CONTINUED.

almost over the whole country; that they increase daily, both in their number and expedition; and are so settled as not only to meet the London Diligences from the great Towns, &c. but also to communicate in a direct line with each other, on all the principal cross-roads throughout the Country, and are absolutely forming a very extensive Post, with Guards, well conducted, from the parties concerned being specially interested in their success, and far more expeditious, regular, and safe, than that established by Government. Without insisting, therefore, on the increasing loss the Post must necessarily sustain, from the infinite number of Packets sent by the Diligences, can any one hesitate whether the greatest possible expedition and safety should be given to the Public Mails, or entertain a doubt that the first country for Manufactures and Commerce, provided too with the best roads and horses in the world, should submit to its mode of general correspondence, being one of the slowest, most irregular, and (with a standing army) most unprotected conveyance in this country?

Admitting the principle, therefore, of some reform on this business to be absolutely necessary, there can be as little doubt of effecting it on my Plan without additional expence: for, by contracting with the Proprietors of the Diligences, and by gaining exemptions from Tolls, the Mail and Guard might undoubtedly be conveyed with the proposed speed and safety, and yet the rate of charge remain as low as at present.

With respect to punctuality, I have every reason to suppose it would be more accurate, from the reforms taking place; for if the Diligence, by any accident, should be later than the allowed time at some Posts, the Proprietors would be obliged to make it up in others, so as to accomplish the journey in the time contracted for; the Deputies also would not have two businesses to transact, that of their Office duty, and of the riding-work: while the General Office would derive still further clearness and precision, from the circumstance of having single Contractors to attend to instead of a multiplicity of them. Whereas, by the present mode, if but one of the Post-Masters, or the Inn-keeper he contracts with, neglects his duty, he may retard the arrival of the Mail, and the General delivery of Letters, in London or elsewhere; no one Post-Master being now obliged to exceed his six miles an hour, to make up for the neglect of another.

It is unnecessary to enter here into the different rates of speed that may be most proper to different places, with the numberless other matters to be attended to in such an undertaking; it must appear very plain, that eight and nine miles an hour now, is not more than equal to six, comparing the roads, at the time Parliament settled the original rate, to what they now are; that the imperfect and bad state of them, at the former period, made it necessary to take the rout, which, however, is now continued without such necessity, the roads to every place of consequence being direct and excellent, an advantage which the Proprietors of Diligences have properly attended to, with very inconsiderable deviation from the principal roads, and no ill-judged neglect of the greater or the minuter concerns, the more subordinate place being omitted in their track, to be attended to by other carriages.

To the other observations equally insisted on, respecting the Mails setting out at an earlier hour from London, and that hour not liable to alteration or delay, and less time being allowed to some of the Offices*, I have to observe, that the proposed Plan is on the direct principle to prevent this very confusion which the Observations acknowledge the Offices are now liable to; by making the earlier hour agreed on, fixed, and permanent, by which means

* A. states these difficulties, "That the cross-road business will be absolutely destroyed, and flung into irreparable confusion;" and, lest this should not deter the Post Master General from any attempt to get out of the old track, he adds "that the whole commercial Correspondence of the Country will be flung into the utmost confusion, and will justly raise such a clamour, as the Post-Master will not be able to appease."

B. states, "That it will throw the present well established circulation of Letters into the greatest confusion, and would be many years before it could be restored to the degree it now is."

C. "into the utmost confusion, which no time could settle so completely as it now is."

ANSWER CONTINUED.

they will only have one alteration of the time at the various Offices to make, instead of perpetual irregularity and confusion.

Yet, with much inconsistency, they first admit the existence of this evil, and then take pains to solicit, not its abolition, but its continuance: one of them answers for Government—another for Trade—another argues, that if Merchants give it up, the Lawyers will not. I am persuaded, however, that all have too much judgment and liberality to persevere in bad customs, when it is proved, that both themselves and the Public, will be benefited by their exchange for others.

As a day will be gained by the proposed alteration, both to and from London, in most parts of the Kingdom, and in some even more. A Minister exchanges his power, of doing a most serious injury to public correspondence, whenever he may chuse to delay the Post a few hours for his dispatches, to the power of serving that Public, and having those very dispatches arrive as soon at their destined stages, if he should even delay them till seven the next evening, with the advantage likewise of receiving an answer to them, if necessary, a day sooner.

Much expence would be saved, instead of incurred, in Expresses, under the proposed regulation of the Post: the superior speed of which would, in a great measure, supersede the necessity of them.

As there can be no doubt, but that the arrival of the Mails could be so regulated, that the delivery of the letters at the Office, should never exceed nine or ten o'clock in the morning at farthest; Merchants, Tradesmen, and others, would have an equal number of hours, and those much better, for the dispatch of business on 'Change, the Alley, fulfilling orders, &c. than they now have, exclusive of the before-mentioned advantage in the increased safety, punctuality, and expedition of the Mails. When they are informed too, that, unless an early hour at the Office in London takes place, a great number of capital Towns cannot receive their Letters, and return answers so as to arrive the next day in London, (which must, in some measure, inconvenience themselves too) I have no doubt, from their general liberality, of their immediately acceding to so necessary an alteration; nor would the Gentlemen of the Law, I think, be less inclined to do so. Hitherto, indeed, it could not be expected that they would give up any time, when none was given to them, nor attention paid to their immediate accommodation.

The bye and cross-road business is by no means so general, so intricate, or tedious, as is represented; the Way-hills from London to Edinburgh prove this assertion; nor can it be doubted, if a Post-Master, and the person he may contract with for the riding-work, were both certain of the exact time of the arrival of the Mail, particularly in the night, instead of waiting one, two, three, and more hours for it, but that he could be ready and prepared to do that business in a quarter of an hour, which he is now allowed half an hour for the performance of.

I am very certain that a quarter of an hour is sufficient to a great number of Offices, and that, to many, even five minutes is enough, though, on some roads, the time given may be very proper; but I rather think the expedition may be obtained to almost every place, consistent with the time now given to the Offices for the dispatch of all their business (I do not mean the abuse of it), though at the worst, wherever it might be necessary to delay sending the bye and cross Post-Letters to the following day. By the increased speed they would arrive as soon, and, from many places, sooner at their destination than they do at present; and the convenience would be gained to the great communications, without the least prejudice to any other parts of the country.

The other impediments which they say render it impossible for the Post to go faster; such as leaving letters at numerous separate houses, small towns, or villages, &c*. Whether exaggerated or not, is very immaterial; it

* "Which, however insignificant (the Surveyor observes) have a right to receive and send letters by the Mail-Driver, that such has, always is, and must be the practice, and states that a delay of an hour in each Stage, of course twenty-eight hours in the road from London to Edinburgh is the consequence of this regulation."

ANSWER CONTINUED.

may be admitted. That such indulgencies might be suffered in the infancy of the Post, when the Trade, Manufactures, and Correspondence of the Kingdom were inconsiderable, in respect to what they now are; there being then few intermediate houses or places to stop at, and Letters but seldom passing to and from them. But it is surely absurd to infer that, in the present times, the principal great Mail from the Capital, and the chief Mercantile and Manufacturing Towns, should be delayed for so inferior a purpose as the receipt and delivery of Letters at Villages or private Houses. Yet it is remarkable that this strange principle, so strongly insisted on, and so violently extended in one respect, is so little attended to in another, that, in the case of Foreign Letters, all those directed to Exeter*, must pass from Falmouth, and be forwarded one hundred and eighty miles to London, and afterwards, of course, received back before their actual delivery at the place of their destination.

The same is the mode from every Packet-Port to every other mercantile and trading City in the Kingdom, instead of their being separated and distributed from the Offices of the Ports they arrive at.

I have only further to observe, that, after all the Observations and tedious Answers that may be written, it can be ascertained only by trial; and that, if the Office will but take up the Plan with good humour, I have not the least doubt of its being effected.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS.

If the Mails are to be conveyed by Diligences, which is, in fact, taking the present riding-work out of the Deputies hands, in order to put it into the hands of the Masters of Stage-Coaches, how are Expresses to be conveyed, and by whom? Will Masters of Diligences engage to keep Horses and Riders throughout the Kingdom, to convey Expresses not only to and from London, but likewise for conveying such as are to be sent across the Country? And how can such a contract be made? unless by making the whole body of Masters of Stage-Coaches parties to it; and that is impossible. This service, though not of the least advantage to the Revenue of the Post-Office, is yet of such public convenience, that it cannot be laid aside, and must be performed by some persons, either by the Masters of Stage-Coaches, or by the Deputies; but, if the riding-work is taken out of the hands of the Deputies, it cannot in reason be required that they should keep Horses for the purpose only of conveying Expresses, which, even now, at the low rate allowed for carrying them, cannot pay the expence of keeping the Rider and Horse.

ANSWER.

One of the Post-Masters on the Portsmouth-road informed me, that, if it was not for the advantage he gained by the Expresses, the Post-work was not worth his doing; particularly since he had the new-invented heavy Mail-Cart to drive, to which he was often obliged to put two Horses.

No Post-Master keeps Post-Horses on purpose for accidental Expresses; if he does not keep an Inn, he hires them of those who do, at three-pence per mile, and sometimes has a little allowance when expresses are frequent: the charge of a Post-Horse to a Traveller is but three-pence per mile, exclusive of Duty, the same Price as paid for Expresses; there can be no doubt therefore of an Inn-keeper's furnishing a Post-Master, and, if thought necessary, an Act of Parliament may oblige them.

The proposed Expedition by the Post, will be much greater than that of any Express, according to the present rate, and would overtake it setting out later. The Monday's Post to Plymouth arrives on Thursday night, and is frequently not delivered till Friday morning; by the proposed method it would be delivered very early on Wednesday morning, and the whole day left to answer the Letter.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Post-Masters will be relieved from a business which they lose by, Government get no advantage by, and is a great expence to the Offices of State and Individuals.

It may be worth remark, great number of the Post-Masters are Inn-keepers; many of them Proprietors of Diligences; it is their interest, therefore, to delay the Mail, and forward the Diligence that carries Letters.

* After various Petitions, their Letters from the Lisbon Mail are, I think, allowed to be left as the Mail passes through.

From this time, till the meeting with the Post-Masters General, and their Officers, at Mr. PITT's, the 21st of June, 1784, other objections were made, containing little more than a repetition of those which preceded them, though written with more asperity and contempt of the Plan. In a conference of some hours, at Mr. PITT's, every objection being overruled, the Plan was settled, to commence on the 2d of August following. After this, the Officers sent me another volume, stating their ideas of what had passed at Mr. PITT's, with various trifling, and perplexing queries, and observations, which, however, I fully answered; when a Board being held at the Post-Office, by the Post-Masters General, at which I attended, after a variety of further objections from the executive Officers, the Lords CARTERET and TANKERVILL, not only ordered that every request that I had made at Mr. PITT's, as well as at the Board, should be complied with; but directed all their Officers, in the strongest terms, to give every assistance to the Plan.

At a meeting of these Officers, soon after, at the Post-Office, notwithstanding the former directions from the Post-Masters General, the objections were again renewed: it was insisted that I should not interfere with, or give directions to the Post-Masters on the road, but they should perform their duties in the old manner; and I was seriously given a paper, describing the duties at each office, with directions that they should be strictly observed; and that the Coachman should stop to collect and deliver Letters on the road, between stage and stage, as the Post-Boys had been accustomed to do, and which was one of the many abuses complained of in my Plan. The time allotted for these duties was above ten hours between London and Bristol; the whole time allowed the Contractors, for the performance of the journey, being only sixteen hours; but on my threatening to go immediately to the Post-Masters General, and represent their conduct, the opposition was given up, and I left town with an assurance that I might settle all regulations as I pleased.

On the 19th of July I wrote from Bath, to the Secretary, in the civillest terms, that I had settled every regulation, both with Post-Masters and Contractors, to my satisfaction, and for the most perfect accommodation of the public, even between the Stages, as well as the Post Towns. I received no answer to this letter; but, a few days only, before the Plan was to commence, the Contractors came to me to give me up their engagements, as a Surveyor had been down the road, unsettled every regulation I had fixed, and insisted on the old duties and delays being precisely adhered to, both by Post-Masters and Contractors; amounting to ten hours, as before described, and this without the least communication with me, either from the Office, or by the Surveyor, so that I might not know, or have time to counteract the mischief. The following letter was likewise sent to all the Offices, to confirm the Surveyor's orders.

GENERAL POST-OFFICE, July, 27th, 1784.

SIR,

From the inclosed Advertisement, you will be informed, that the Mails to and from London, and Bristol, and the intermediate Towns on that Road, are to be conveyed, by way of an Experiment, in Stage Coaches, or Machines, to commence on Monday the 2d of August next; and it is supposed will arrive at, and depart from your Office, nearly about the hours mentioned in the Advertisement.

In order to give this mode of dispatch a fair trial, you are to get the whole of the business at your Office in the utmost forwardness, that when the Mails arrive there, they may be detained no longer than is absolutely necessary for opening the Bags, taking out, sorting, taxing, entering in the Post Bills, and Vouchers, putting again into the Bags, and sealing them; such Letters as you may find in the Bags to be forwarded with those from your Office, to other towns, or that may be for places on the road short of the next Office: these last-mentioned Letters are to be given to the Drivers of the Stage Coaches, or Machines, to be dropped at the usual places on the road, who are to account to you for the Postage of them, in the same manner as the Post-Boys do at present.

The Way-Bills, accompanying the Mails, you must sign, with so much exactness, as even to be able to swear to the truth of it, was it to be required.

The Expresses are to be conveyed by the Masters of the Stage Coaches, or Machines, who are authorized to carry the Mails, and they are to cause the Persons, employed by them in your Town, to sign the Way-Bills, which will go along with the Expresses.

I am,

Your assured Friend,

ANTHONY TODD, SECRETARY.

N. B. It was ordered likewise that the Coachman should collect all the Letters on the road to be delivered, sorted, taxed, &c. at the next Office, previous to the departure of the Coach.

Having with some difficulty quieted these people's minds, I drove immediately to London, and having on the Sunday threatened to stop the Plan, and lay the transaction before the Public, I, in consequence, obtained the letter underneath.

To the several POST-MASTERS between LONDON, BATH, and BRISTOL.

GENTLEMEN,

Notwithstanding any directions you may have already received from hence, or from the Surveyor, you are hereby required to comply with all such orders as you may receive from Mr. PALMER respecting the conveyance of his Majesty's Mails, Letters, and Expresses, until a fair and full trial can be made of the new method of conveyance by the Mail Diligences, and you are to continue to convey all Expresses as at present.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your assured Friend,

ANTHONY TODD, SEC.

General Post-Office,
July 31, 1784.

I resettled the regulations at the various Offices on the road, and was in time to direct the Coach to set off the next day from Bristol, being Monday the 2d of August.

In this, as well as various other instances preceding the trial, I had experienced so insidious and inveterate an opposition from the Office, that I thought it best, for some time, to have persons constantly go up and down, in the Carriages, to watch the due execution of the Plan at all points; the Officers not failing to give me daily proofs of the necessity of this precaution, till I was obliged to send a Memorial to the Lords of the Treasury, stating their conduct, and that unless *ample and sufficient powers were given me*, it would be utterly impossible to carry my Plan, for the improvement of the Posts, into execution, &c. upon which their Lordships sent the annexed minute to the Post-Office.

(MINUTE, 21st AUGUST, 1784.)

“ Write to the Post-Master General, and acquaint them that my Lords are so fully convinced of the advantage which the Public is likely to derive from Mr. PALMER's Plan of improvement of the Post, if it succeeds, that they are desirous *every possible assistance and furtherance should be afforded to it*. Acquaint them that Mr. PALMER complains of his having hitherto been impeded and thwarted in it, and desire they will therefore give the most positive orders to all their officers to afford every assistance to Mr. PALMER in carrying the same into execution; and that they will *furnish him with such powers, as will effectually secure the obedience of the several Post-Masters to the Directions they shall receive from him, respecting the due and effectual execution of his Plan*.

I likewise received the following Note.

Mr. ROSE presents his compliments to Mr. PALMER, and sends him the inclosed Memorial—It will be left to Mr. PALMER where he chooses to try his next experiment; but Mr. ROSE thinks that Norwich, Nottingham, Liverpool, and Manchester, are very important places—Mr. ROSE will write to the Post-Office for the accounts mentioned in his Memorial.

Treasury Chambers,
August 23, 1784.

And, in consequence of my complaint to the Post-Masters General, a Letter from Mr. TODD as follows :

To the several POST-MASTERS in the Road betwixt LONDON and BRISTOL.

GENERAL POST-OFFICE, *September 17th, 1784.*

SIR,

Mr. PALMER having complained that his Plan for conveying the Bags of Letters by the Mail Diligences has been impeded and thwarted, notwithstanding my Letters of the 30th and 31st of July, to the several Post-Masters upon the Road, between London and Bristol, I am now again to direct you, by command of the Post-Masters General, to afford him all possible assistance in carrying his Plan into execution, and *to attend to any instructions you may receive from him, the same as if you received them from hence.*

I am, &c.

ANTHONY TODD, Secy.

Immediately on the receipt of the preceding note from Mr. ROSE, I had entered into contracts for the two roads to Norwich and Yarmouth, flattering myself that, at last, all opposition from the Post-Office was at an end, and that I should be suffered to proceed, without further interruption, to the improvement and extension of my Plan ; but, to my very great disappointment, I received as follows :

APPENDIX. No. IV.

GENERAL POST-OFFICE, *September 23, 1784.*

SIR,

I am authorized to acquaint you, in answer to your Letter of the 19th instant, that no Avertisement, or circular Letter, is, for the present, to be sent from hence to the several Deputy Post-Masters, with a view to the extension of your project.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

ANTHONY TODD.

In consequence of which, I immediately wrote to Mr. ROSE, and received the following letter.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 26th of last month is but just put into my hands, which I mention to account for your not hearing from me sooner ; where the delay has been, I know not.

With respect to the Guard, there are many objections to employing Soldiers, and difficulties in the way of doing it ; that can, however, make but little difference in point of expence or safety.

The Post-Office has stated the expence of the old mode, and of yours, making the latter much more considerable than the other ; and say they can prove the number of letters to Bath and Bristol, is much reduced since they have been sent by the Diligence. I have this morning desired the particulars of those statements, to enable a judgment being formed of them ; till that is done, it will not be adviseable to give further directions for extending the Experiment : I shall certainly have the papers early in the next week, and will write you immediately after I have considered them ; in the mean time, you had surely better not incur further expence or trouble.

I am surprized you should think it necessary for us to let Mr. Todd know we are in earnest in the business, after the communication of the Minute, of which you had a Copy, and with which you expressed yourself perfectly satisfied; he has besides been told frequently and seriously, how much it is wished a fair trial should be had, and every possible assistance given.

I am persuaded that, on all Roads where Carriages carrying the Mails are exempted by the several Acts, they are not subject to pay Tolls, let them carry what they will besides the Mail.

I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful humble Servant,

GEORGE ROSE.

October 3d. 1784.

To Mr. PALMER.

My patience being quite exhausted at this renewal of opposition from the Office, and the prospect of endless delays and obstructions, I wrote in a spirit of vexation to Mr. Rose.

DEAR SIR,

I certainly was most perfectly satisfied with the minute you mention, because it was so fully and strongly expressed, that I thought Mr. Todd would not dare to disobey it; but when finding not the least notice taken of it, I wrote to the Post-Masters General for the powers it so clearly directs me to be furnished with for carrying my Plan effectually into execution on other roads. I am answered by Mr. Todd that he is authorized to tell me that no letters will at present be written to the Deputies, with a view to the extension of my *project*, and that no advertisement will be even inserted, to remedy, as I desired, the numerous mistakes which arise from his not sufficiently acquainting the Public with the difference of the hour of the Post going out to Bath and Bristol from the other roads: After such a disregard to the resolutions of your Board, can you be surprized that I desire you will let him know that you are in earnest? he certainly has never yet thought so, or imagines he has an interest sufficiently powerful with Administration, to prevent any ill consequences to himself from disobeying their commands. Nay, do not even you now tell me, in contradiction to your former directions, and after I have made agreements in consequence of them, that it is not adviseable to extend the experiment, till papers are laid before you from the Office, by which it is to be proved that the number of letters from Bath and Bristol is much reduced, since they have been sent by the Mail Diligence? An assertion so false and impudent on the very face of it, so utterly unworthy any other notice than contempt, that I would as soon seriously set about to disprove an assertion, that it was darker than midnight because it was broad day. In regard to their statement of the difference of expence betwixt the old and new System on this road, it was stated by them, at Mr. PITT's, before the trial, and allowed by Mr. Todd himself to be no object, if the Plan was practicable or possible; it therefore forms no new argument against it; but I have again to observe, what I have frequently said before, that, if there should be any additional expence, it will be where the Mails are divided, and to those very few places, where nine miles an hour are necessary to give them full accommodation, and there only during the first year of so extraordinary an exertion; for, whenever the contract is renewed on this road, it will be made at less expence than the old establishment was. On some roads it will be greater, on others less; but, upon the whole, I insist upon it, it will be full as cheap to Government as the old mode; and if it were otherwise, the Post business, which used to be carried on by Diligences, being gained to the Office, with the many savings to Government in consequence of this improvement, would most amply repay such expence. In short, I feel it ridiculous in me answering more arguments, or giving myself further trouble about it. I see too clearly the power of the connexions of the Post-Office, and the intentions of Ministry; I only wish I had been at first dealt plainly with, as it would have saved me an infinite deal of tedious attendances on the Treasury, expence, trouble, and the neglect of concerns, real and important, of my own. I shall certainly follow your advice in not incurring more, for as the Plan is to be dropt, *I will never accept of any thing for what I have done.* I hazarded that, and the neglect of my other affairs, in the prospect of great advantage to myself and family, if my Plan succeeded: it has done so even beyond my expectations; and, was it made general (and there is no good reason why it should not be so) *I think I have an undoubted claim*

to the terms submitted to Mr. Pitt, and not objected to before the trial; but there is an end of the business, and every thing relative to it, except Mr. TODD. I have, thank God, a few friends in Parliament, independent of party, of Administration, and, what appears of still more consequence, the Post-Office, who will lay that worthy Gentleman's conduct before the House; with whom, I have some reason to think, he will not dare trifle in the manner he has done with Administration. I shall write immediately to the Contractors for the Norfolk Mails to stop proceeding in any further expence for carrying the Plan into execution on those roads.

And am, dear Sir,

Bath, October 4, 1784.

Your most obedient humble Servant,

J. PALMER.

However impatient this letter may appear, it is an additional proof of the nature of my agreement and the plainness of my conduct with Government; the independent ground on which I stood; my determination to accept of nothing if I did not succeed; the great expectations I had formed of advantage to my family, if the Plan should prove successful; and my undoubted claim in that case on Government, for the performance of the agreement on their part. Nor was the most distant hint given me, when the extension of the Plan was afterwards determined upon, to raise a doubt in my breast respecting their faithful observance of it. Mr. ROSE very naturally took offence at the letter; but was soon satisfied, that the provocations and delays from the Post-Office ought to excuse it. He again, therefore, supported the Plan with his usual warmth, and sent me in November and December more volumes of objections; these, in a very short time, were proved by me to be totally fallacious, and selected on purpose to deceive the Post-Master General, as well as Administration; and the very reverse to what they had urged was clearly substantiated from accounts called for by me, and which they were obliged to produce from their own Office. The expence of the new mode of conveyance was proved to be less than the old, the number of letters by it greatly increased; and, on the fairest and fullest comparison of three months between Bath and Bristol, where the Plan was established, and the Towns of Norwich and Birmingham served in the old Plan, the Tax being equal to all, the increase of revenue was proved on the former to be in the proportion of six to one.

On a comparison with Exeter, where the Tax, from the distance, was double, the increase was in the proportion of two and a quarter to one, in favour of the new system. In the intermediate places, between Bath and London, and Norwich and Birmingham, about seven to one; and betwixt those places and Exeter about three to one. My refutations of these further objections and fallacious statements, were so fully to the satisfaction of Government, and the replies from the Office to them so contradictory and absurd, that they were given to me with an observation, that they were unworthy any answer. Short extracts, from one of their papers of objections, with my answer, are inserted; and shew the then miserable state of the Cross-Posts, even from their own accounts of it.

EXTRACT from further OBJECTIONS to Mr. PALMER'S PLAN, for improving the POSTS of this KINGDOM.

“ If the present course of the Post is to be altered, the whole system of conducting the Bye and Cross-Road Letter Business must go through an entire change. The taxing and circulating of Letters must be new modelled at every Post-Office in the Kingdom, new and uncertain channels must be found out for the conveyance of them at different turns into other roads and branches, and new Checques and Accounts must be invented to

answer a new Mode of Conveyance, all of which every Officer, now employed to manage that branch of the Revenue, will have to inform themselves, and of many other particulars, before they can be able to issue proper Instructions to the Deputy Post-Masters for their conduct; and this business will be varying, as Mr. PALMER proceeds further in the execution of his Plan, which will be a Work of infinite labour and much time, and it is apprehended will not be perfect at last.—Every Post-Town in the Bye and Cross-Roads is a centre to itself, and the duty of it varies from the next Office in some degree more or less, as the situation of those Offices may happen to be.—Not general but particular instructions must be prepared for each Deputy, adapted to the circumstances of the situation of his Office, and this is to be done with above 300 Post-Towns; should the whole Scheme be put into execution at once, must be a work of great care and labour, and to do it by piece-meal, the time and difficulty will be infinitely greater, and the confusion more increased, for what may be done on one part of a road, if but a Branch, or a Cross-road communication should be afterwards altered, the whole business must be done over again; and if an entire road was completed, (it may, for Argument sake, be said the Chester,) yet, when either the North or the Bristol road is settled, then all the Communications between them must go through another long and tedious arrangement. It is very confidently asserted, from what has been reported, of the manner Mr. PALMER proposed to establish, for the speedy Conveyance of the Mails, that from the first outset of it, it will very considerably reduce the profits arising from the new rates of postage on Letters, not only passing upon the Bye and Cross-roads, but likewise to and from London, if it is meant to alter the present Course of the Post. The injuries and confusion expected to arise from such a measure, cannot be too often or too strongly represented. Mr. PALMER'S idea seems chiefly confined to expedition, on straight and the nearest Turnpike Roads, and to that purpose every other consideration must give way; and where his plan is defective or impracticable, it must be patched up, by having recourse to the Old Mode of Conveyance, so that if so much of his Plan as may be practicable was to be carried into execution, it would then be but an imperfect piece of business. Mr. PALMER in his answer says, “The Contract from Bristol to Portsmouth, is for those Cross-
“ Posts, which Mr. ALLEN in his observations upon my Plan, and in the Conversation at Mr. PITT'S, particularly
“ selected as utterly impossible to be effected, I therefore thought it more fair for me, to try the most difficult first,
“ and have not the least doubt of making them as perfect and regular, as the new Post from Bristol to London;” all that can be selected from Mr. PALMER'S Answer, in order to obviate the Objections mentioned above, is, that the Stage-Coach Master will contract to carry the Cross-Post from Bristol through the Bradford Branch, to Devizes, and the Mails to and from Bristol, Bath, Salisbury, Southampton, and Portsmouth, &c. and to and from Exeter, and the intermediate Places, every day in the Week. To come at a more particular knowledge of Mr. PALMER'S intentions of conveying the Cross-Road Letters in the Branch between Bath and Salisbury, and from thence to Portsmouth, it will be proper to make the following Queries, viz. If the Cross-Post is to be conveyed between Bristol, Bath, and the Clothing Towns of Bradford, Trowbridge, Melksham, and the Devizes, by his Stage-Coach, and no further, in the Salisbury Branch, how is the present line of communication between the before-mentioned Towns, as also Marlborough with Lavington, and Tinhead, and the Clothing Towns of Westbury, Warminster, and Heytesbury, and the Villages in the Bourne to Salisbury, to be kept up? And how is the correspondence between Bradford, Trowbridge, Melksham, the Devizes, and Marlborough, with Salisbury, Hartford-Bridge, Basingstoke, Andover, Amesbury, Odiam, Alton, Petersfield, Havant, Portsmouth, Gosport, Fareham, Southampton, Isle of Wight, Lymington, Winchester, Stockbridge, Pool, Winbourne, Blandford, Wareham, Corfe-Castle, Dorchester, Weymouth, Bridport, Lyme, Shaftesbury, Mere, Wincanton, Heydon, and Sherborne to be carried on? If the Stage-Coach from Bristol, Bath, and Salisbury, to Southampton, and Portsmouth, is not to go through Stockbridge, Winchester, and Fareham, which is the present course of the Post, from Salisbury to Portsmouth, and from which the Letters for Alton, Odiam, Petersfield, Gosport, Southampton, Isle of Wight, Lymington, and Rumsley, at present branch off, how is the communication to be preserved between Gosport, Fareham, Petersfield, Alton, Odiam, Rumsley, Winchester, and Stockbridge, with all the Towns and Places between Salisbury, Bradford, Bath, and Bristol? And if the communication by the old branch, between Bath and Salisbury, is cut off at the Devizes, how are the Letters from Hampshire, and most parts of Dorsetshire, for the Devizes, Marlborough, Melksham, Trowbridge, and Bradford, to be conveyed? When these Questions are answered, another very important Point must be settled,

viz. The times of the arrival and departure of the cross-road Mails, at the different Offices, whether by Stage-Coaches, or by any other means, so as to prevent any impediment or delay of the correspondence of the Towns before-mentioned, to other parts of the Kingdom; and this calculation must be formed with great judgment and exactness with regard to the bye and cross-road correspondence in general, in order that those Mails may fall in with the arrival and departure of the London Mails, at particular Towns in their passage; that Letters may be forwarded by them, without putting the Revenue to an additional Expence, by sending the cross-road Letters forward by a distinct Conveyance. To illustrate this matter, it will be necessary to state a case of a Letter from Dublin, to Penzance, in Cornwall.—From Holyhead, this Letter is conveyed by the Mail, for London to Chester, and from thence to Exeter, it is conveyed by the Cross at Exeter, it falls in with the Mail from London, to the West, and is conveyed from Exeter by that Mail to Penzance. By these means, there is about 217 miles of additional Expence of riding work saved to the revenue. Upon the whole, the more Mr. PALMER's Plan is considered, the greater number of difficulties and objections, start to its ever being carried completely into execution; and whatever additional expence or loss may attend the revenue, or inconvenience, injuries, and confusion befall the public correspondence, the Officers belonging to the Post-Office ought not to be censured for them, who have, to the best of their judgment and experience, given their separate opinions against the utility and practicability of the Scheme *in toto*: And it may, with the greatest truth be asserted, that those opinions have not been formed in a dislike to new and feasible Plans, for Improvement and Reform, nor in an obstinate attachment to long habits and old customs, nor to any mean sinister view, of retaining, if any there are, Perquisites enjoyed under the Old Establishment, which there are not.—Lastly, where difficulties shall arise, either in respect to the circulation of Letters, or in tracing out, and fixing the proper Taxes, which can only be done by pursuing the route of the Stage-Coaches, and knowing where they change Horses, in order to charge the Letters by the Stages or distances, in forming Checque Accounts, to be kept of the produce of them, or any other matter belonging to the management of Letters, or when complaints are made of inconveniences, or injuries, sustained by Individuals, in their usual correspondence, in consequence of the alteration of the present route of the Posts by the new Plan, should it become general, or if greater and more beneficial Improvements can be given to correspondence by any alteration of it after it has been established, and in what manner, and by whom are these points to be settled? But the mode of doing this, must be found out by the Inventor of this new Mode of Conveyance, who alone should be responsible for any injury or impediment the public correspondence may sustain, through any fault or defect in the formation of his chimerical Plan of Improvement and Reform: All these foregoing observations comprehend a very small part only of the Kingdom."

EXTRACT FROM MR. PALMER'S ANSWER TO THE FURTHER OBJECTIONS.

MR. PALMER is fully aware of every temporary injury that may possibly arise to Correspondence, or the Revenue of the General Post-Office, by any practical failure in his Plan, and is sufficiently guarded against them all, excepting only the mischief that may arise to his Plan, to correspondence, and the Revenue of the General Post-Office from the machinations of the Post-Officers. These he shall endeavour, as far as possible, to guard against; and, though unfortunately it may not be in his power to prevent, he will take sufficient care to expose the authors of them, be they who they may, sensible as he must be, that they will use every possible means to complete their prophecies.

To answer further, these additional remarks of Mr. ALLEN's, were only to repeat what has been said again and again; and, after all that can be wrote on the subject, it must depend on what I do, and my ability in carrying my Plan into execution, rather than on arguments and refutations.

It may, however, be expected, that I should say something more in answer to his queries, his statement of the perfection of the present Cross-Posts, and the alarm he endeavours to excite of the ruin that must fall on them, on Correspondence, and the Revenue, by my Plan, though he professes to know nothing of it, and only to guess at my intentions, and to speak on reports of what I mean to do. I should really have no objection to open the whole of my Plan to the Office, would it answer any other purpose than exciting further delays, disputes, and objections. I shall, however, thus far say of the present Cross-Posts in general, and my intended improvements of them, that, being fully of opinion, on the strictest examination, that they are established on very wrong and mistaken principles, I intend, wherever I find their circuitous routs injurious to Correspondence, to carry them as far as I conveniently can in direct lines through principal Towns, and to accommodate those I leave out of the present chain, by branches, fitting them in, of course, at proper hours, with the direct lines so established; and on this principle I engage, that Bristol, and Portsmouth, shall have their Correspondence guarded every day in the week, instead of three days, and in one-third of the time they have it at present, unguarded. That all the intermediate Places, in the present circuitous Chain, shall enjoy, in a great degree, a proportionate improvement in their Posts, and this, at no greater Expence to the Office than the old Establishment. It is asserted, that I injured the Branches on the Bath Road and the Cross-Posts, when my Plan was first carried into Execution there. The contrary is the case, and the Cross-Posts are multiplied and partially benefited; and, though it may appear strange, when I am condemning the circuitous route of the old Post, yet this has been effected by a circuitous route of Letters by the new Post, of sixty miles, from Bath to Bradford, instead of seven miles, the direct line. These Cross-Posts, and likewise from Trowbridge, Wellbury, Warminster, Heytesbury, &c. &c. with Devizes, Melksham, Bath, Bristol, &c. &c. had only a three days Cross-Post, which is now exchanged for a daily one, which has the additional advantage of arriving and departing with their London Mail; and this is effected from the great Expedition of the Mail Coach, which crosses the Bradford and Devizes Branch at Marlborough, to which Office all the Letters from these Towns are sent by the up-Coach at night, where they are sorted and dispatched, according to their different directions, by the down-Coach the next morning, by passing over the ground so rapidly, and in the night, which not only thus extends and improves, but saves the expence of these Cross-Posts. These Branches are fitted in, and partake the benefit of the new Plan; but the inhabitants of the various Towns have petitioned Government to be allowed a Mail-Coach for their personal convenience in travelling, and the security of a Guard to their Correspondence. A Coach to and from Marlborough only, could not answer to Proprietors, In obedience to commands from the Treasury, I have stated the Terms on which it can be given, and it rests with Government to grant the Prayer of their Petition, or not, as they may judge proper.

Mr. ALLEN desires I will inform him, "how, in my proposed alterations, I intend to settle the various Cross-Posts, so as to fit in properly with each other, and prevent any impediment or delay in Correspondence; for that it requires great judgment and exactness to do this, and make them fall in likewise with the London Mail, so as to prevent any additional expence by conveying them separately?" To illustrate this, he states the case of a Letter from Dublin to Penzance; which I beg leave to illustrate still further, by stating the actual Progress of such Letter. As there is only a Cross-Post three days in the week from Ireland and Chester to Penzance, all the Irish Letters which arrive, for the West, on the day that Post does not go, of course lay in the Chester Office twenty-four hours, till the next day. On the common days they likewise wait there many hours after their arrival, before the Mail is dispatched; at Bristol they likewise wait twenty-four hours for the arrival of the Mails sent from London, on the bye nights, to be conveyed on with them from Wells, &c. and on to Exeter, where they again wait above twelve hours, to be conveyed on with the Mails dispatched from London on the general nights; from whence they proceed to Penzance, at little more than the rate of three miles an hour. Incredible as this may appear, such is really the state of these Posts; and, in addition to it, the General-Post through Wells, Bridgewater, &c. and Exeter, are so strangely regulated, that two London Mails come in and go out on the same day, and two days Mails arrive, and are delivered together, in London; so wonderfully are the General and Cross-Posts made to benefit each other and the Public! The whole of this Correspondence I engage to make perfect every day in the week, the Mail to arrive and depart at fixed hours each day, at the same rate of expence as the old Establishment; and every part of it by Coaches guarded, except one or two Links from the Chester Road to Birmingham. To effect this, a Coach will leave Holyhead, every morning, for London; the

West Letters will be separated at Chester, as usual, and taken on by this Coach to Stone, Litchfield, or Coventry, as on further examination may best suit; from thence by Horse to Birmingham, thence by Coach to Bath, or Bristol; thence by Coach, with the Wells, Bridgewater, &c. London Mails, on to Exeter, where they will meet the Mail-Coach from London, through Sarum; and the whole Mails be conveyed on together by Coaches, to Falmouth, and Plymouth. They will proceed on with very little delay, where they fit in, I may almost say, uninterruptedly, and in one third at least the time it is at present performed in. When Mr. ALLEN therefore, considers the present State of these Posts, he may reasonably, I think, drop his Apprehensions of any Injury, or impediment Public Correspondence may sustain from my *Chimerical* Plan of Improvement and Reform.

J. PALMER.

The Letter which follows, in defiance of the Minute from the Treasury, of the 21st of August, is the copy of a general Letter sent, in answer to the numerous Memorials and Petitions, from all parts of the Kingdom, both to the Post-Office, and the Treasury, praying the extension of my Plan to their various Towns: though the assertions contained in it, had been proved unfounded; the correspondence on the London, and Bath, and Bristol-road, having then been conducted, for near four months, in the most perfect manner, and highly advantageous to the Revenue.

TO JOHN OLIVER, ESQ. MAYOR OF SHREWSBURY.

SIR,

GENERAL POST-OFFICE, Nov. 25th, 1784.

The Memorial, signed by yourself, and a number of the Gentlemen Tradesmen, and Inhabitants of Shrewsbury, has been presented to this Office by Commodore JOHNSTON, from his brother Mr. POULTNEY, and laid before his Majesty's Post-Masters General, praying that the Mails may be conveyed by Stage-Coaches or Diligences to Shrewsbury, upon a Plan similar to that on the Bath and Bristol Road, and that Mr. ROBERT LAWRENCE, of the Lion-Inn, was the most proper person to undertake the business.

A safe and speedy conveyance of Letters is certainly very desirable, but ought only to be obtained upon general grounds, and all parts of the Kingdom accommodated alike, as far as the nature of their situations will admit; and it has ever been the object of this Board to afford to all considerable trading Towns as much time as possible for answering Letters; for, whilst most places of note, throughout the Kingdom, have a six days Post, and the inhabitants are all upon a footing, the arrival of the Mail a few hours sooner or later, can be of no great consequence, except at London, where as early a delivery of the Letters, and as late a departure of the Post as possible, are of the utmost consequence to the Correspondence of the whole Kingdom.

The trial at present upon the Bath and Bristol Road has drawn on applications, similar to this from Shrewsbury, from many parts of the Kingdom; but when you are informed that the Correspondence of Bath and Bristol only, are in any degree benefited by this Plan, that many considerable Towns upon that Road are in a worse situation than before, and that near one-third of the Letters are every night left behind; and that the cross-road Correspondence is very much deranged by it, as the Coaches cannot stop at each Town, to allow time for the Post-Masters to sort and forward the Letters, not to mention the extra-expence to Government of more than 1200l. a year upon that single line of Road, you must be convinced how very difficult it will be, for the Post-Master General to venture upon any further project, for fear of throwing into confusion the Correspondence of the whole Kingdom, which has been brought to its present system by degrees, after long experience, and mature consideration, so that it would be hazardous indeed to alter the mode.

After all, the Correspondence of this commercial Country is of too great a magnitude to be connected with any other business, or made subservient to the will of Passengers, and the arrival and departure of Coaches and Diligences at different Stages, who will not easily submit to the time of the dispatch of the Mails from this Office, which never, from the very nature of the business, can be exactly ascertained, or to stop at the different Offices

upon the Road, to allow the necessary time for the Post-Masters to stamp, sort, tax, and make up the Bags with the Letters, for places upon the Road, and for the branches on the bye and cross-roads.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient, and most

Humble servant,

ANTHONY TODD, SECRETARY.

About the end of January, 1785, the Plan was directed to be extended to Norwich, through Newmarket, and to Yarmouth, through Ipswich and Norwich, and on the Cross-Posts from Bristol through Bath, Salisbury, and direct to Portsmouth; which, in consequence of further impediments from the Office, did not commence till the Spring; the former, the 28th of March, and the latter, the beginning of May; when, having received a Letter, by Dr. PRETTYMAN, from Mr. PITT, that he thought it necessary I should come to Town immediately, to carry my Plan fully into execution, I wrote the following answer:

FROM MR. PALMER TO MR. PITT.

SIR,

May 5, 1785.

I had the honour of your Letter on my return from Portsmouth, and immediately wrote to the Contractor at Nottingham, to forward the Carriages, &c. Soon as he is prepared, I will obey your commands, in carrying the Plan into execution on that Road. I have settled the regulations for the Cross-Posts from hence to Portsmouth; the alteration is much to the satisfaction of the different Towns it will accommodate; and it starts next Monday.

They will now have a direct, and expeditious Post, guarded six times a week, instead of a slow, and circuitous one, and only three times a week unguarded. The terms with the Contractors, merely the exemption from the Turnpike-Tolls, and the allowance of Guards; so that Government will save the greater part of the old expence.

I had agreed for the London Mail to be conveyed to Portsmouth on the same terms as the inhabitants had petitioned for the new mode, and were doubly anxious for it, their Mail having been robbed a few months ago; but the Secretary, instead of sending Letters to the Post-Masters to observe my directions for that purpose, sent the same Surveyor, who was so industrious to defeat the Plan on the Bath Road, last Friday only, to Portsmouth, to agree with the different Post-Masters, to convey the Mail seven Miles an hour, for which they are to be paid an extra sum per mile more than the usual charge*, which was to commence the very day I came there. I could therefore give the Post-Master no direction for that Road, Mr. TODD chusing to do this, without giving me the least information of his intentions; by this improvement at last, supposing it to be even kept up to, Government is at a much higher expence for conveying the Mail than ever before, instead of saving almost the whole of it. The inhabitants will have only four hours betwixt the arrival and departure of their Mail, instead of twelve, as they would have by mine, and it remains unguarded; this he has done without any sort of communication with my Agent on the business, though he sees him almost every day, and, I believe, has fully understood from Government some time past, that the new Plan was to be extended over the whole Kingdom. Since my absence from Town, he likewise has thought proper to suffer an entire alteration in the mode of delivering the Letters, so that those by the new Plan, instead of being delivered early in a morning, are not delivered till almost too late in the afternoon to send an answer. I am sure, Sir, if you could be aware how complex a business this is, and how difficult to unravel, what, though simple in itself, they have made so perplexed; to teach the Post-Masters the new regulations, which will enable them to do their duty in a plainer manner, and less liable to mistakes; to settle the different parts, as I proceed, so as to fit in with the general Plan, and suffer no present mischief. Involved as you are in such various and greater concerns, you would yet spare a few minutes, I am sure you would, to put a stop to the misconduct of that Office, and leave my mind free to pursue my Plan, without having it taken up with guarding against, and curing their shameful practices. I want no sort of assistance from them; all I desire is, that they may not be suffered to do injury. The state of the interior management of the Post-Office business is full as

* This price was 9l. per mile, instead of the old charge of 4l. 13s. 4d.

bad, or rather worse than I stated in the Memorial I had the honour to submit to the Treasury. The mistakes are innumerable, and the daily loss to the Revenue very great; nor can it be otherwise, on the present system; the remedy for it is even more plain and simple than that for the exterior department: and if you will permit me, I will regulate it in less than a fortnight, to your's and the Public's satisfaction, even at a less expence to Government than the present mode, and with much more ease to the different Officers. Indeed the Plan cannot be further extended 'till I am suffered to establish regulations within the Office, to fit the new ones without; as the new and old Plan now act against each other. Having obtruded thus far on you, Sir, with my complaints; I must beg leave to trespass a little further, and have done.

It is nearly approaching to three years since I first submitted my Plan to your judgment, that you kindly encouraged it, and I attended your commands in Town. I have sent a statement of my journies, attendances, &c. to my good friend Lord CAMDEN, for your inspection, by which you will see that, exclusive of my expences, almost the whole of my time and attention from October 1782, to the present moment, has been employed in this business; and I submit to your justice, whether the expence actually incurred, prior to the first trial of my Plan the 2d of August last, should not now be paid, and my appointment made out.

Your obliging message by Mr. PRATT, before the trial, that if the Plan did not succeed, I should be fully paid for my expence and trouble; if you recollect, Sir, I *disclaimed*, and chose to sit down, in that case with my disappointment and loss, *and let my reward rest only on my success*. My time and attention, prior to the trial, I do not account, though, if I discovered any ingenuity, activity, or perseverance through it, my family might have been benefited by their exertion to other objects.

The success of the Plan, Sir, I believe, has exceeded both your's, and the public's expectation; I am sure it has my own in some points, though not in others; but it has not fallen short in one. A circumstance, I believe, almost as new to administration, in the various Plans that are submitted to them, as a popular tax, which the Post-Tax really is, where the accomodation has been given with it.

It incurred no new expence, or inconvenience in the old establishment, even in the trial, but what was occasioned by the opposition from the General-Office.

It conveys the Mails in half the time they used to be, and guarded under regulations that will, in a great measure, enforce themselves; and where it has been carried into execution, has immediately occasioned an increase of revenue to the Post-Office.

It having been proved, that it is scarce possible for greater neglect, or abuses to prevail, than in the conduct of the old Post, that, in consequence of it, a great share of the correspondence was carried on by Coaches, to the detriment of the Post-Revenue; that the new Tax, coupled with the old Plan, would have increased such defalcation, which the statements given into the Treasury, comparing the great improvement of the Revenue from the Tax, upon the new, opposed to the old establishment, have very fully proved.

It was promised in the Plan, to give the improved expedition and security to the great Roads from London, and some of the Cross-Roads, for the payment of three-pence per mile, the allowance for Guards, and an exemption from Turnpike Tolls.

The Contracts are made for the greater part of the Kingdom, from London, for the allowance of Guards, and the exemption of Turnpike-Tolls only; likewise for all the Cross-Posts, six times a week, instead of three; so as to make those Posts as regular and perfect as the general one.

This accomodation will be given to the Public, and the arrival and departure of the Mails, all over the Country, will now be regular, expeditious, and safe; on plain, simple, and certain principles: instead of the reverse, it

will not only save many thousands a year, in the expences of the riding-work, &c. but, in consequence of the superior mode of conveyance to any other, add very greatly to the Revenue, by the increase of correspondence through the Post-Office.

In the progress of this business, I have had every possible opposition from the Office; I have neither spared trouble, nor expence, to inform myself in every department of it, so that I might carry my plan completely into execution, and defeat their repeated attempts to ruin it. I have been perfectly open, and kept no one secret from Government, or derived one shilling advantage from any Contract, but acted in every respect to the best of my judgement for the Public, *nor can I gain the least advantage from my agreement, till I have completed the Plan over the whole Kingdom, as my per centage on the increased revenue from the Tax, without the accommodation, will not pay the very great expences I am obliged to incur in the establishing it.*

I have only to thank you, Sir, for the very warm and steady support I have received from you in this business, without which, indeed, it could not have succeeded, and to hope, in addition to the rest of your favors, you will excuse this long letter.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

With the greatest respect,

Your obliged and obedient Servant,

J. PALMER.

Soon after I had the honour of seeing Mr. PITT, and received his directions to extend the Plan, during the Summer, to as many of the principal Towns in the Kingdom as I should think adviseable, and that after this was effected, *in the Autumn, my appointment, and every thing should be settled to my satisfaction.* The Post-Master General having, in consequence, sent letters to all Post-Masters, directing them to comply with all such orders as they might receive from me, or any persons I might authorize as my Agents, expressed in a manner perfectly to my satisfaction. I lost not a day in effecting this object, and though it was complex and difficult, from the nature of the business, as well as the number and variety of Contractors, Post-Masters, and other Persons whom I had to agree with, and instruct; yet, freed from official persecution, and left to the guidance of my judgment, I travelled some thousand miles, and accomplished a business of great magnitude with equal expedition and effect.

On my return I received from Mr. PITT, by Mr. PRATT (the present Lord CAMDEN) an offer, as a modification of my original agreement, *of a fixed and certain salary of 1500l. per year, and two and a half per cent. on the whole further increased Revenue beyond the tax; instead of two and a half per cent. on the whole, from the first commencement of my Plan, and before the tax commenced without a salary, to be paid up likewise immediately, for my time and expences,*

In my answer, I expressed my satisfaction at this proposal, but that I understood *my per centage would be fully secured to me on every future object whatever.* I requested, likewise, that my expences might be paid from the time I was employed, October, 1782, as before settled, till the Plan was carried into execution; *that an average of the net Revenue should be struck for ten years, previous to that time, that 80 or 100,000l. should be added to that sum for the tax, and the per centage to commence on its future excess;* that I hoped my expences would be allowed me for the next two or three years, as they would be considerable, and my per centage could increase only by degrees to repay me, and *enable me to lay by a fortune for my family.* I trusted, therefore, to Mr. PITT's generosity, should they be deprived of me, ere that was effected, that *he would recommend a proper provision for them,* as a reward for any good I might have been an instrument of his giving to the Country. To this I received the following answer from Mr. PRATT

THE HON. J. J. PRATT TO MR. PALMER.

DEAR PALMER,

BRIGHTHELMSTONE, *October, 1785.*

I gave Pitt your letter, and I think, though he does not quite allow all you mention to be a fair demand, that you have reason to be satisfied with what he seems willing to grant—*He likes your proposal for drawing the average of the net revenue of the Post-Office for ten years, and afterwards adding the tax, and giving the two and a half per cent. upon the surplus as you state it—He seems willing to allow, that your salary of 1500l. a year, should commence when he came into Office last, which is now very near two years, and he is certainly not accountable for any delay prior to that period, and this, I own, I think a very handsome offer.*

With regard to your expences being paid after your salary is fixt, if you remember, I told you, you would find some difficulty in carrying that point; and I think it cannot be given, for in your first proposal, the two and an half per cent. was to cover your expences, which would only be considerable for the first year or two, and the improvement on the revenue would amply pay you.

The present settlement is only a modification of your proposal, and I think fairly takes in that part of it.

I dare say you will find no difficulty in having it *secured to your family, if any thing should happen to you—This business seems now to be drawn to a conclusion.*

I own, as far as I have been concerned, I cannot think of pressing any thing more; the offer, in my opinion, is liberal, and the manner in which it has been explained, still more so; you will be to consider *whether it will satisfy you.* Pitt seems to think that the appointment should be such *as to secure you against any change of administration;* he goes to town on Wednesday, and I think if you were to call, or send, he would very likely see you; but if you should not see him then, he comes to stay the beginning of next week.

I am,

Sincerely your's,

J. J. PRATT.

To this I *acceded*, and the agreement was considered on both sides *as finally settled.*

An appointment was in consequence made out for me, *agreeably to this modification of my first agreement*, with which having expressed myself satisfied, it was sent from the Treasury to the Attorney-General, and I once more felt myself happy in the idea, that my Post-Office troubles were at an end, and that I had only to look forward to the extension and improvement of my Plan, of the revenue, and my fortune.

APPENDIX. No. V.

(COMMISSION.)

“ *Whereas*, it has been represented unto Us, that the appointment of a fit and proper person to be Comptroller and Surveyor-General of the Revenues of our Post-Office in Great Britain, will greatly contribute to the advancement of the same; *And Whereas*, J. PALMER has been recommended unto Us for that purpose, he having invented, and partly carried into execution, a Plan for extending and improving the Posts, and for the more safe, ex-

peditions, and regular conveyance of the Mails within our said Kingdom, which has already proved highly beneficial to the Trade and Commerce thereof; WE do hereby appoint him, *for and during his Life*, Surveyor and Comptroller-General of the General Post-Office of Great Britain, *with all its connections and dependencies*; of all Post-Masters, Contractors, Deputies, Accomptants, Comptrollers, Surveyors, Clerks, Sorters, Window-Men, Letter Receivers, Carriers, Messengers, and other Officers, and Servants, thereunto belonging; giving and hereby granting for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, to the said J. PALMER, *full power and authority* to suspend any such Officers or Servants for neglect of Duty, or of such Instructions or Directions as they have already received, or shall hereafter receive from our Post-Master General, or the said J. PALMER, *for the above purposes, as well as for the better conducting the business of the said Office*; and in order to a due and strict examination of all Expences incurred in the management of the said Revenues, it is Our Will and Pleasure, *that no Bills whatever, respecting the same, shall be paid, until they are examined and signed by the said J. PALMER, or his Deputy*, who are hereby authorized and required to call for such Accompts, and order the same before them, from Time to Time, when they shall judge it necessary: And we having taken into our Royal Consideration, the good and faithful services of the said J. PALMER, for the advancement of Our Revenue, and the advantage of the Commerce and Manufactories of Our Kingdom of Great Britain, by greatly accelerating the Conveyance of our Mails and Packets; are also graciously pleased, *as well as a Reward for such Services, as to encourage him to continue his exertions for furthering the same*, to give and grant for Us, our Heirs and Successors, to the said J. PALMER, an Annual Salary of 1500l. to be paid to him without deduction or abatement of any sort, out of the Revenues of our said Post-Office, together with a further allowance of such sum of Money Annually, as shall be equal to Two and a Half per Cent. on the Surplus of the said Revenues, on making up the Accompts, at _____ over and above the Sum of _____ l. which accompts, it is Our Will and Pleasure, shall continue to be made up, and the Balance struck in the same manner as at present; in which, for the purpose aforesaid, no additional Pension, or Charge, on the said Revenue, of the General Post-Office, shall be included, as a deduction from the Net Revenue, on which the said per Centage shall be calculated, except for Salaries and Expences actually incurred in the Management of the same."

But further delays arose to the completion of this appointment. Winter closed in; opposition Coaches were established on most roads, against the Mail Coaches; the Office again reared its head; many Post Masters, who kept Inns, even entered into bonds and penalties of 500l. each, never to be concerned in Mail Coaches, and did every thing possible to discourage the Contractors from proceeding in the undertaking, whilst every art was used by the Officers to make the Plan unpopular, and to defeat every exertion I could make for its support. The weather and roads were this season uncommonly bad, and the Contractors being frightened by the opposition, &c. grew dissatisfied, and ungovernable: their Coaches became irregular, and at last, under these accumulated disappointments, and vexations, I was myself seized with a nervous fever, and, under the depression which those disorders occasion, wrote to Mr. PITT.

MR. PALMER TO THE RIGHT HON. WM. PITT.

About the End of JANUARY, 1786.

SIR,

Nothing but the very hard and pressing situation I am in, should have obliged me to intrude on you about my Business, knowing the many greater objects you have to attend to. Really, Sir, you cannot conceive how much the Plan suffers in consequence of the Delay, and how very possible it is that its Ruin, as well as my own, may be effected by it.

I have been waiting in town near four Months for the completion of my Appointment, which is to give me *that authority, by which, only, the Plan can be perfected*; when I should have employed this time in various Parts of the Kingdom, to follow up so new, so extensive, and complex a business. The circular Letters from the Office have done serious and increasing mischief; the Post-Masters fully understand the hints they convey, and the Contractors grow indifferent to a Business they are taught to believe will not be lasting.

My Banker, after having in the most friendly manner advanced me betwixt 3 and 4000l. without any regular mortgage being made out, on assurances for a long while past of being soon paid, has, at last, declined advancing any more—what he has done, has indeed been much more than I could expect. From Mrs. PALMER's severe illness my Family are quite neglected, and my Theatres as bad. I do assure you, Sir, my distress of mind is such that it is scarcely bearable, which must apologize to you, and induce you to forgive me for giving you this trouble, and appearing presuming or ungrateful to you for your very great kindness. I am sure, Sir, you would be truly concerned to find that you had completed your kind intentions when too late.

I have the honour to be,

With the greatest respect, Sir,

Your most obliged,

And sincere humble servant,

J. PALMER.

Mr. PITT immediately appointed a meeting with the Post-Masters General, who were so alarmed by the Representations of their Officers, and their earnest Solicitations to be allowed once more to state further Objections, by which, *from the experience they now had in the Progress of the Plan*, they should prove it had been productive of all the ill consequences they had originally foretold, that Mr. PITT was, in consequence, prevailed upon to receive an official Statement sent him from the Office.

APPENDIX. No. VI.

TO THE RIGHT HON. THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

MY LORDS,

On the first of last month we transmitted to your Lordships the Copy of an Application from a number of the most respectable Merchants of London, respecting the great inconvenience they experience from the late alteration of shutting up this Office at the early hour of seven in the evening.

We now beg leave to enclose a Copy of the Resolutions of the Meeting of Merchants and Tradesmen, held at the London Tavern the 10th past, which was presented to this Board by Mr. Sheriff SAUNDERSON, the Chairman, and the Committee appointed at that Meeting, who have again attended us this day, stating that the time limited by the General Post-Office for receiving Letters ought, in the opinion of the Meeting, to be extended from *seven in the eve 'til ten*, as the Merchants and Traders cannot otherwise conduct their business in that department with the necessary dispatch; and that it was the wish of the Meeting that such other measures might likewise be adopted, as might further tend to *remove the inconveniences which had hitherto been experienced from the establishment of Mail-Coaches*.

We have assured them, we would represent their case in the strongest terms to your Lordships' consideration, and that we had no doubt their application would be favourably attended to, as we are persuaded, from experience, that the first object should be as early a delivery of Letters in this extensive Metropolis, which pays so very considerable a proportion of the Revenue of the Post-Office, and as late a departure as possible; and, indeed, in our opinions, the Office *should be kept open till eleven*.

Every exertion has been used towards dispatching the Mail-Coaches at the time fixed for their departure from hence; and full authority for the whole management, wherever the Coaches have been established, was given to

Mr. PALMER and his Agents. We have, however, in consequence of numberless complaints, been reduced to the necessity of enquiring, by circular Letters, what alteration they had made respecting the Circulation of Bye and Cross-Road Letters in particular, which have been considerably deranged and delayed, and in many instances charged, with an higher rate of Postage, by means of their being sent by circuitous routes, as will appear by the enclosed List, (No. I.) from different parts of the Kingdom, which have already come to our knowledge, and by which a Tax of 25 per Cent. upon an average has been laid upon such Bye and Cross-Road Letters.

Before the establishment of Mail-Coaches the Revenue of the Bye and Cross-Road Letter-Office was progressively increasing year by year, upon the average, for the last ten years, to Midsummer, 1784, 2000l. per year; but upon comparison of the Quarter ending the 5th of January, 1785, with the Quarter ending the 5th of January, 1786; notwithstanding this additional charge of 25 per Cent. upon the old Rates, that branch of the Revenue, as appears by No. II. has decreased 224l. 8s. 3d. in one quarter, making 897l. 13s. for a year.

By the enclosed Account (No. III.) of the amount of Letters to and from this Office for four months, from the 1st of September, 1784, to the 5th of January, 1785, and for the like four months from the 1st of September, 1785, to the 5th of January, 1786, it appears that the Revenue, for these Letters alone, has decreased 1436l. 18s. 10d. during that period, making 4310l. 16s. 6d. for the year, notwithstanding many Bye and Cross-Road Letters have lately been forced through London.

From this comparison of the Gross Produce of inland Postage for four months, and from every other comparison we have been able to make, we are perfectly satisfied that *this Revenue has been very considerably decreased by the Plan of Mail-Coaches*, especially when it is considered that it has been increasing, in a regular progression, yearly, for these last nineteen years, from the first whole year on the commencement of the franking Act, in 1765, to the 5th of April, 1784, at the rate of about 9000l. per year.

From an experiment we have made upon the West Road, last Summer, we are perfectly satisfied that the Mails may be conveyed as expeditiously by Carriages for that purpose, as by Mail-Coaches, without deranging the Cross-Road Correspondence; for, whilst the regulations and acceleration were suffered to remain in that road, the amount of Postage was considerably increased, and a decrease immediately took place upon the establishment of the Coaches to Exeter, and to the Towns through which they passed.

We are, therefore, of opinion that the Mails should be conveyed by Carriages, for that purpose only, with such improvements, and security, as may ensure an early arrival of the Post in London, and afford a general accommodation throughout the Kingdom.

We are, with great respect,

My Lords,

Your Lordships most obedient

And most humble servants,

TANKERVILLE,
CARTERETT.

General Post-Office,
March 10, 1786.

TO THE RIGHT HON. THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

THE MEMORIAL OF JOHN PALMER.

MY LORDS,

Your Memorialist begs leave to state to your Lordships, on the contents of the Memorial from the General Post-Office, that he has conversed with some of the principal Merchants who made the first application for a later hour for the departure of the Mails to the Post-Master General, as well as with many others of the first

consequence in the City of London, who express the greatest satisfaction * at the benefits they derive from the safety and expedition of their Correspondence by the Mail Coaches, and how perfectly it met their approbation, when (as at first) in addition to every other advantage, the delivery of the Letters was at so early an hour; that they fully understand how much the Plan has suffered by the opposition it has encountered at the General Post-Office; and that the late delivery of their Letters, and the inconvenience they sustain, from that part of the Plan not being yet perfect, has been chiefly owing to such opposition; that, satisfied its principle is to extend, improve, and protect their Correspondence as much as possible, they are content to wait the effect which *the powers he shall be invested with*, to restore the early hour of the delivery of Letters, and to finish and perfect his Plan, may have on their Correspondence, not doubting his exertions to do every thing in his power for their satisfaction.

He begs leave to observe, that the meeting at the London Tavern was composed of about thirty Persons, of whom the greater part were Coach-masters and their connections, who had been refused the conveyance of the Mail on exorbitant terms; that no person there would even avow the advertisement which called them together; and that he has good reason to suspect such meeting was managed merely to prejudice the Plan, and excite a clamour against the early hour of the departure of the Mails.

The best hour for London is that which gives the greatest space betwixt the arrival and departure of its Post, and yet leaves sufficient time for Letters of importance, from London to great commercial and trading Towns, to be answered by return of their Post.

Your Memorialist perfectly agrees with the declaration, which states, from experience, that the first object is the early delivery of Letters; but he has to add, that the late delivery is owing to the conduct of *an Office over which he has no controul*; and he moreover ventures to engage, under forfeiture of his employment, that if that part of the business was put under his inspection and management, the Letters should be delivered so early as to give general satisfaction to the Inhabitants of the Metropolis; and he assures your Lordships, that as you are sensible the terms he made the contracts on for the conveyance of the Mails, are such as to admit of infinitely more being paid, if necessary, without the expence being equal to the old establishment; so, likewise, the rate of speed, as well as the hour of departure, are such as to allow of further indulgence in both, without prejudice to the Plan, which has been drawn every way as tight as possible, to give it the strictest trial, knowing its advantages and popularity would combat such a test in the out-set, and that any indulgence in the terms of conveyance, rate of travelling, or hour of departure, would be afterwards the better received.

The Coaches are frequently detained half an hour, and even an hour, after their time; which ill agrees with the assertion "that every exertion has been used towards dispatching the Mail-Coaches at the time fixed for their departure," though nothing is more easy than to adopt regulations for dispatching them constantly at the precise hour fixed.

The delay and irregularity in consequence of this, at the various places where the Horses are changed, particularly in the night, break in upon the System, and occasion increased delay and irregularity as they proceed, and likewise in their arrivals, on their return to London.

As to the "full authority given him and his Agents for the whole management where the Coaches have been established," Letters were certainly written to the different Deputies to that purport; but he is sorry to observe, those nominal orders have had so little effect on the Post-Masters in the Country, that they have been in various instances counteracted by those, who appear to have thought it safer to disobey or to neglect such orders, than to comply with them: upon what grounds they have presumed to act in this manner, your Memorialist is at a loss to account, unless they had received secret instructions to counteract the Plan; and that there is some foundation

* Sir JAMES SANDERSON, amongst others, was satisfied from my representation.

to suspect that the late circular Letters alluded to were sent with a view to provoke and excite complaints, may be inferred from Mr. Todd's having acknowledged to Mr. Bonnor, that the Letters certainly were capable of raising doubts and suspicions in the minds of the Post-Masters respecting the continuance of the Plan; and admitted, that the best information to be obtained from them must be extremely incomplete, and in no degree equal to what the said Agent offered to furnish; yet the offer was declined, and the partial conclusions to be drawn from the Post-Masters' answers, were preferred to a complete body of information, which was too easily open to detection to justify a moment's doubt of its accuracy. Yet, after the numerous Letters written for this purpose, and the great pains taken to collect evidence against the Plan, it ends in the List (marked No. 1.) of places to which Letters are said to be charged with an increased Postage, and that they are much deranged and delayed in consequence of their being sent by circuitous routs. In answer, your Memorialist begs leave to observe, that all Letters by the Coaches to and from London, and all the great Towns in the Kingdom, go now in direct lines by the new Plan, wherever it is extended, instead of circuitously to many places as by the old Plan; of course the charge of Postage for Bye and Cross-Road Letters cannot be there increased; and by reference to the said Paper (No. 1.) the remarks made on it by the Surveyor he has employed, as well as the said Surveyor's Letter, and List of Places (No. 2.) where the Postage is charged less than before, and their Posts much extended and improved, the above Statements will be found to be not only fully refuted, but that the very reverse is the fact.

On the various charges of the decrease of Revenue which follow, your Memorialist begs leave to observe, that such Statements are not only fallacious, but false. Respecting the deficiency in the Cross-Posts of 224l. in the comparison betwixt the Christmas Quarter of 1785, and that of 1786 (No. 3.) "though the said Revenue had increased at the rate of 2000l. per annum for the last ten years," it must be observed, that 204l. of that sum is on the North Road, where the Mail-Coaches are not yet established; and that the increased Revenue on those Roads for the last three years, by the Statement (marked No. 4.) sent from the General Post-Office, was really no more than 1,551l. for the year 1782; 1,424l. for the year 1783; and 1,119l. for the year 1784; instead of 2000l. per year, as set forth in the Post-Master General's Memorial: and by the account of the increase of Franks (marked No. 5.) it will further appear that the said Revenue has been injured within the time mentioned above 2000l. a year, which accounts for the increase not being equal to the year before: the conduct of the Officers, likewise, has been such, that if the days of correspondence had not been doubled in many parts, and other improvements by the new Plan had not operated to its prevention, the decrease must have been far more considerable.

Amongst a variety of other complaints, Mr. A'COURT, Member for Heytesbury, assured your Memorialist, that Letters to and from that place and Winchester, have been seven or eight days on the Road; when they ought, by the regulations settled, and the expedition of the Coach, to be delivered the day after they were put into the Office.—Letters from Bath and Bristol to Exeter have been frequently a week on the Road, instead of two days, and the detention of Letters in many other parts equally shameful; though the Cross-Posts to these places are six, instead of three times a week.

When the Coaches were established on the Norfolk, and Suffolk Roads, the Cross-Posts to and from all that part of the Kingdom and the North, through Caxton, rested in its progress 16 hours one way, and 14 the other; and once a week, Sunday, 40 hours one way, and 38 the other. Your Memorialist altered it so, that only four hours were lost one way, and about two the other; and a day was gained each way in the expedition of that correspondence.

When the hour of the departure of all the Mails from London was altered from 12 to 8, it was settled with the Secretary, that to prevent any confusion in the General, as well as the Cross-Posts, the Mails by the Carts should not be sent off before the usual time, till alterations were previously made at the various Offices to agree with it; yet notwithstanding it was thus settled, the Carts were dispatched at once, at the same hour as the Coaches, by which the above regulations, as well as many others, were totally deranged, and a confusion occasioned, which is scarcely to be expressed; whilst to every enquiry and complaint at the Post-Office, the general answer was, that it was owing to the new Plan, which would ruin the correspondence of the Kingdom, and now the Public would be sensible of it.

The experiment said to be made last Summer on the West Road, in expediting the Carts, was attended with at least one third additional expence to the old charge, and without a guard; which, if extended through the Kingdom, would have increased the expence of Riding Work many thousands per year, exclusive of law charges for prosecutions for robberies of the Mail; and most probably it would soon have sunk again into its former abuse and neglect, as it was merely set up either to prevent or anticipate the effect of the Mail Coaches on that Road; for by the Letter your Memorialist received a few days ago from Truro (marked No. 6.), the Mails, on the Plan they set up, on the remainder of that Road from Exeter to Falmouth, have not been conveyed for some time past at the rate of even four miles an hour.

No Statement is sent to prove the truth of the charge, that the Revenue on that Road decreased on the establishment of the Coaches; but if there was, he should have little doubt, but that on examination it would appear like the rest of their Statements, to be founded in error.

The unwarrantable assertion, that "the Revenue on the Inland Postage has been increasing in a regular progression yearly for the last nineteen years, at the rate of about 9000l. per year," is likewise disproved by the Statement (No. 7.) given into the Treasury on a former occasion by Mr. Todd; by which it appears, that even on the gross receipt, the increase is about 3000l. per year only; that the expence for Riding Work and Post-Masters within that time, is increased from 15,649l. to 34,861l. per annum; the dead and overcharged Letters from 2,470l. to 8,312l. per annum; that the net Revenue has increased only to about 1,600l. a year, in consequence of the Rides being extended; and that in the two last years of that Statement, it will appear to have even decreased.

To the very erroneous Statement (marked No. 8.) given in of the amount of Letters from the 1st of September 1784, to the 5th of January 1785, and from the 1st of September 1785, to the 5th of January 1786, to deceive your Lordships into an opinion that the Revenue has decreased 4,310l. 16s. 6d. per year, in consequence of the new Plan, notwithstanding many Bye and Cross-Road Letters being, as they assert, lately forced through London; your Memorialist answers, that as to the latter circumstance, he recollects only two or three instances of such orders being given, and those in Offices of very little consequence; but he fully remembers that on the very day the Coach from London started through Sheffield, orders were sent for all Letters from that part of the Country to the West, to be sent in future through Birmingham, instead of going through London, as usual; thereby preferring a Post, slow, circuitous, unguarded, and only three times a week, to a six days Post, swift, safe, and regular; and this on the very day the General Post from thence through London to the West was made perfect.

To satisfy your Lordships, that no means, however unworthy, are left untried at the General Post-Office to prejudice your Lordships against the Plan, your Memorialist begs leave to state, that they first demanded from the Accomptants' Office a five months' comparative account, which, if given in, would have reduced the pretended deficiency of 1,436l. 18s. 10d. on four months, to 925l. 9s. 10d. on five months; and of course the 4,310l. 16s. 6d. to 2,221l. 3s. 7d. per annum; the Months of January, therefore, not so well answering their purpose of deception, were dropt. In addition to this conduct, he has to state, that in the Book, where the arrivals, and amount of West India and American Mails are kept, those of all Ship Letters are regularly entered on the same pages, and mixt with them; which, to make the Inland Postage complete, should have been cast up, and deducted, with the amount of the West India and American Mails, and which no one could possibly overlook, or be ignorant of; yet, on examining these accounts, and finding they would reduce the four months 1,436l. 18s. 10d. to 1,028l. 8s. 9d. or 4,310l. 16s. 6d. to 3,085l. 6s. 3d. per annum, they were omitted.

Your Memorialist, therefore, thought it best to demand a six months Statement (marked No. 9.) instead of the four, with the amount of all Ship Letters, as well as of the West India and American Mails; and likewise of the decrease on the Revenue by Franks, during these periods, which are marked (No. 5.); by these Papers, it will clearly appear, that the Revenue has increased, on the whole, 342l. 7s. 8d. per annum, instead of decreasing 4,310l. 16s. 6d. notwithstanding the increase of Franks in the last six months is equal to 6,946l. per annum, which they have likewise avoided taking the least notice of; and on comparing the increase of the Revenue on

those Roads where the Coaches are established, with its decrease, where the Plan is not extended (as by No. 10.), the Revenue is already benefited by the Plan upwards of 10,000l. per annum, exclusive of the very great saving in the conveyance of the Mails by Coaches.

Having thus, and he hopes to your Lordships' satisfaction, answered the several charges brought against the Plan, your Memorialist begs leave to express his hopes, that no further arts from that Office may prevail, in longer preventing your Lordships from carrying your intentions, respecting him, into execution; both with regard to the immediate making out his appointment, and the discharge of the expences already incurred in the manner your Lordships some time past thought proper to settle.

And further, to urge the necessity, as well as justice, of such a measure, your Memorialist begs leave to state as follows:—

That it is now between three and four years since the Plan was first approved (viz. October 1782), and he was employed by Government in it; that neither himself nor Agents have yet been paid one shilling towards their expences; that by the various changes of Administration, and the opposition from the General Post-Office, the trial of the Plan was delayed till the 2d of August 1784; that after a month's progress, Government was so satisfied of its advantages, that a resolution was passed at the Treasury to that effect, and requiring the Post-Master General to give it every assistance; and your Memorialist was directed to make out contracts, and extend it over the whole Kingdom.

That when the Contractors for Norfolk, Suffolk, &c. were prepared to start the beginning of the following October, they were stopped by representations from the Post-Office, strongly insisting that the Post-Revenue would be ruined by the Plan, with many other reasons why it should not proceed; by their delay in giving in statements to prove this, and the papers required from their own Office, necessary to disprove them, when given in, a long time elapsed; every thing, however, urged by them, to delay the Plan, having been at length in the fullest manner, refuted it was extended through Norfolk and Suffolk, March 28th, 1785, and on the Cross-Road to and from Bristol and Portsmouth, in the May following; after this further trial, it was again ordered to be extended through the Country, and Contracts were entered into for most parts of the Kingdom.

On the 25th of July, it was carried into execution to Leeds, Manchester, and Liverpool; and from that time only to October last, it was extended to Portsmouth; to Pool; to Gloucester and Swansea; to Hereford, Carmarthen, and Milford Haven; to Worcester and Ludlow; to Birmingham and Shrewsbury; to Oxford, Cirencester, &c. to Chester and Holyhead; to Carlisle; to Dover; to Exeter, through Salisbury; and to the same place through Wells and Taunton.

Your Memorialist therefore hopes, that whatever inaccuracies may be reported to have occurred in the regulations at the various Post-Offices, or irregularities in some of the Coaches, may be imputed to the difficulties and delays from the General Post-Office, which reduced him to the very short time he had to travel over so great a space of ground, to settle regulations at the numerous Offices, form agreements with the different Contractors, and to carry them into execution on so many roads, before the approach of winter; to the very limited and unequal number of people he ventured to employ in the business, as well as to the extreme neglect of most of the Post-Masters, though many have behaved in a manner that does them very great reputation.

Your Memorialist believes Mr. ROSE will do him the justice to say, he stated to him, that he thought it better to carry the Plan as generally into execution as was practicable, before the winter, to save the great expence in the riding-work, and that it might have as full a trial as possible; satisfied that any irregularity, or abuse, that might occur in the new system, owing to the hurry it was established in, would still leave it preferable to the old, in its best state: for if any Coach came in too late for the delivery one day, the Public would, even in that case, have their Letters earlier the next, than by the old Post, exclusive of its safety, and gaining a day in its return. Mr. ROSE

will, no doubt, recollect likewise, that so late as November last, your Memorialist represented, that unless his appointment was made out, with full powers to establish and enforce new regulations in the interior, as well as exterior departments of the Post-Office, as circumstances might arise to make them necessary in so large and complicated a business, he could not, while certain Officers at the General Post-Office, as well as other persons, practised every art, and excited every opposition against it, be answerable for any ill consequences attending it.

The Plan has, however, surmounted these severe trials, which have been exceedingly aggravated by the roads being deeper, and worse, than for many years past, and hay, corn, and straw, double its usual price; notwithstanding which. Contractors are ready, after this experience, as soon as your Memorialist, being fixed in his Office, shall satisfy them of the determination of Government to make the Plan permanent, to engage to convey the Mails in the most regular and complete manner over the whole Kingdom, under any penalty; the highest terms demanded, even where the Roads are worst, the Mails heaviest, and the turnpike tolls least, being the exemption from the penny per mile duty.

He presumes to press the completion of his appointment the more earnestly, as the *Plan suffers extremely for the want of such powers*; and that before he can proceed to any new roads, he must settle the necessary regulations at the General Post-Office, for an early and regular delivery of the Letters, and departure of the Mails, as well as various others, of material consequence to the well ordering the business, and for the improvement of the Revenue. He must then proceed to the perfect regulation of the Roads already established, and hopes to extend the Plan to York, Newcastle, Hull, Edinburgh, &c. according to the Prayer of the Petitions from these places, and to the whole Kingdom, on the General Post; and the greater part of the Cross-Posts, before the end of the Summer, which will be scarcely practicable, if every advantage be not taken of the good state of the Roads in the Spring, and measures adopted, without loss of time, to forward the necessary preparation, for which your Memorialist is the more anxious, as it is manifest, while the extension of the Plan is delayed, the Revenue loses every day, not only in what it would gain by the increased correspondence, but by the great saving in the Riding-Work.

J. PALMER.

March 11th, 1786.

The references alluded to in the foregoing papers are not inserted, being too voluminous, and the facts contained in my answer having been fully admitted.

Mr. PITT was so highly satisfied with my answer, that he expressed the strongest approbation of it, and indignation towards the Officers, who had so grossly deceived the Post-Master General, and assured me that my appointments, powers, &c. &c. should be no longer delayed; it, however, did not take place till the following Autumn, from causes described in my Memorial. Mr. TODD at this time expressed his concern at any misunderstandings that might have arisen in the progress of the business; he observed that, in the situation he held as Secretary, it was his duty to report the opinions of the executive Officers, and that he had been much deceived. He congratulated me on my ultimate success, and declared that he should be happy, in future, to contribute to it; nor have I had any reason since that time to doubt the sincerity of his declaration.

My proposals, contained in the letter to the Commissioners, to farm and manage, independently, some distinct branch of the Post-Office, was to avoid the possibility of any dispute with the Post-Master General, or their Officers.

APPENDIX. No. VII.

GENERAL POST-OFFICE, May 21st, 1788.

GENTLEMEN,

After the various Papers you have been so good as to examine into, I flatter myself it will not remain a doubt but that *my original agreement with Government should be now completed, or such a one as may give me equal emoluments. I mean, that my expences should be paid up to August 1784; that an average should be struck of the net Revenue of the Office to that time, or the April preceding: and that I should have two and a half per cent. on the surplus, which is to include my salary, and every expence of travelling, &c. &c. This was my agreement, as it was given to Mr. PITT with Mr. ALLEN's narrative, prior to my Plan being commenced; and I was assured from him, by his Secretary, that the terms were fair, and he had no objection to them, if the Plan succeeded.* In my hasty Letter to Mr. ROSE, I repeated my right to that agreement, if the Plan had gone on; and I was again employed, without any explanation to the contrary. You will have observed, from the commencement of the business till this moment, I have been anxious only to have such part of my agreement confirmed, as might give me *sufficient powers to carry my Plan fairly and fully into execution; and from the time of the signing my appointment till now, how well it has proceeded, how well the improvements have daily gone forward, and to what extent they are proceeding in every department of the Office, perfectly confident in my own mind, that when this was perfected, and laid before the Minister, I could safely rely on his justice and integrity.*

It must be apparent, that I have more than fulfilled every engagement I made with Government; the contracts for conveyance of the Mail are made at 20,000*l.* a year less than I originally proposed, and were first agreed for; the acceleration and extension of the Posts, and the convenience, are far greater than I promised; the Mails being now conveyed, not only in half the time they used to be to most parts of the Kingdom, but in one third, and even one fourth of the time in many of the Cross-Posts; those Posts are likewise made daily, instead of three days a week, to 320 Towns, and likewise the additional convenience given to 201 Towns on the General Posts, according to the Statements accompanying this Letter, from which it will appear, that the whole of the present charge for Mail Coaches, at 1*d.* per mile, amounts only to 10,138*l.* 16*s.* 11*d.*; this, at 3*d.* per mile, the original price, would have made the charge above 20,000*l.* per year more; the charge of this ground, at the Old Office price, would have been 15,885*l.*; and at the price the Office gave, where they endeavoured to anticipate my Plan by increasing the speed, viz. 3*d.* per mile each way per day, or 9*l.* per year, the same price as was first paid to the Mail-Coaches, it would of course have made the same difference of expence, viz. above 20,000*l.* per year. In this charge of 10,138*l.* 16*s.* 11*d.* is included the increased Posts to most of the above number of towns, which would have cost the Office, at the old price, 17,243*l.* 18*s.* 10*d.* and at their increased price, 43,602*l.* 18*s.* 5*d.*

The Guards have been considered from the beginning, to be balanced by an expected decrease in the expence of prosecutions for Robberies of the Mails; the Bills for the Westons only, having exceeded 4000*l.* and there having been no one Mail on this Plan, robbed from its first commencement, except two or three Bags stolen from the Liverpool Coach, whilst the Guard left it to go to the Post-Office at Knutsford, during the races there, and in the infancy of the undertaking.

It may not be improper to remark here, that the price they are obliged to pay in Ireland for the conveyance of their Mails is 6*l.* the English mile; that in consequence of the frequent robberies there, they have found it necessary that a Guard should attend it on horseback, during the night; the expence of both is 12*l.* per mile; the expence of the Guard, and conveying the Mail by our Coach is 4*l.* per mile only. In their endeavours to establish my Plan in that Country, the terms offered by Contractors, in consequence of the Advertisement from the Post-Master General (the Office to find the Guard) have some of them been at one shilling per mile, each way, which is at the rate of 36*l.* per mile per year: but the very lowest terms they can get any persons to adventure upon it, are for 6*d.* per mile each way, which is at the rate of 18*l.* per mile per year, for what is performed with us at 3*l.*

But the establishing safe, easy, and expeditious Carriages, guarded, whose punctuality may be depended on, under the controul and regulation of Government, not only affording great convenience to the Public in themselves, but inducing the Proprietors of other Coaches to study the accommodation of travellers, *I do not consider as the least part of the advantages of the plan to a commercial and trading Country.*

Considering all these circumstances, and comparing my plan and duties with Mr. ALLEN's, my conduct likewise towards Government and the public with his, as well as Mr. TODD's, without meaning to depreciate the merits of the one, or insinuate reproach against the other; considering too the great advantages Mr. ALLEN enjoyed from the Profits of his Farm during his life, I can say above 15,000l. per year, the great fortune likewise acquired by Mr. TODD, and the liberal establishment he has been enabled to support, I must think myself most hardly treated, *if I am not enabled to live, and support my Family respectably, and to give my Children good education, and leave them good fortunes.*

My own conduct is before you, Gentlemen; I have had no secrets, nor have endeavoured to make a mystery of a business which is in itself simple, and which can only be perfect in proportion to its simplicity. My greatest anxiety has been to perfect my Plan, to give every accommodation to the Public, leaving the reward to follow my service, and to depend entirely on, and be proportioned to that service; nor has it been the least unpleasant part of the business, that the circumstances of my family, and the duty I owe to their interest and happiness, have obliged *me to claim my reward as a bargain*, instead of leaving it as I wished to do, and indeed where it must be left at last, to the justice and generosity of my Employer; the truth of it really is, that I find I have spent, since I came to Town, in the maintenance of my Family, the education of Six Children, and the many journies I have made, Chaises, Clerk, Servant, and sometimes a Surveyor with me, full a thousand pounds per year more than my salary, which is about what the per centage would amount to, viz. 2,500l. per year.

It is to be remarked, that the amount of the Tax has fallen far short of my expectations from the Letters under an ounce, being now charged treble postage only, instead of every distinct bill and inclosure being charged as a single Letter, as was the case before the late Act; on a moderate calculation, this makes a difference of 20,000l. per year to the Revenue, many great Houses being at a less expence for Postage by this regulation, than even before the Act which laid the additional Penny.

A most serious hardship likewise, both in the reputation of the Plan, as far as it professes to improve the Revenue, and my own advantage, arises from the growing abuse of franking, since the first year after the late Act for restraining it; prior to that time, the Members considered the Act agreeably to its spirit and intention; their franks were never sent to the Post-Office, unless the Members were actually in the Town or its Vicinity, from whence the Letter was dated on the very day of such date. Since that time, the Act has been so differently construed, that Franks, dated on the same day, by the same Member, have been sent from places three and four hundred miles distant from each other, so that the abuse is growing as great as ever; their increase is already near 30,000l. per year, and counteracts every possible exertion for the increase of the Post-Office Revenue.

On giving this every consideration, I really find that I cannot live respectably in the Office I am placed, with the various expences it subjects me to, for a less Sum annually; this I would not exceed, and *propose laying by the increased per centage beyond that Sum for my Children.* I have taken myself out of every business and employ, to confine myself entirely to the duties of my Office, which scarce leave me an hour to the enjoyment of my Family. The losses I have sustained, from my total inability, from October, 1782, to think of my Theatres, or any other business, my mind being entirely absorbed in this during the struggles, are not only very great, but the various and accumulated expences which I find from that time I have incurred, since I have been able to look into my Accounts, are so far beyond what I had any idea of, that I am ashamed of my negligence and folly to all my private concerns, and could not presume to ask Government to reimburse me, what I must consider as in a great measure adventured or given up to establish my Plan and Character, or purchase my Employ. I will now beg leave to mention what I imagine must strike you, on reading Mr. ALLEN's own account of his Plan and transactions with Government.

He would not trust them with any part of his Plan, or his method of conducting it during his life : in his bargain, he had 100*l.* for every 50*s.* which I am to have, and, for the first twenty-one years, kept back his proposed improvements in the General Post-Office : at last, when called on for additional rent, instead of it, he scantily dealt out a very few of his improvements every seven years, as he had occasion to solicit a new lease, so few, that the increased expence to him, at each of the three renewals when he made these additional Posts, could not exceed 500*l.* per year each time, and these were settled in such a manner, to accommodate and advantage his Cross-Posts, that though he might call them a six-days General Post, yet, in fact, to many places, from the circuitous rout they took, they remained an irregular three-days Post only, as may be seen in the Statements accompanying this Letter, two Mails coming in and going out on the same day.

What the Cross-Posts might be before Mr. ALLEN's improvements, I do not know, or how well his regulations might be adapted to the accommodation of the Country in the year 1720. What I found them, what they now are, and the still further state of improvement they are placed in, the papers before you clearly shew.

His Narrative, with the extraordinary calculation it contains, fully explains the merits and extent of his Plan, his Conduct to Government, and the Country, his bargain, and the advantages the Public and himself derived from it : my own Plan, my conduct to Government, the duties I have to perform, the probable advantages to the Public, and to myself, from what I conceive to be my agreement, is likewise with you. If it should not be thought proper to confirm that agreement, I take the liberty, agreeably to my promise, to propose the following. I will engage to farm the Cross-Posts for my life, on the following terms : To rent them from April, 1786, when the new Tax had taken its full effect, at 2,000*l.* per year additional rent, to what may appear to be, at that time, its clear annual produce ; and, at the expiration of every seven years, or further limited time, to add half my net profits of the highest year, during my lease, to such rent, and to farm it on at these increased rents ; paying for every additional expence of new Rides, Clerks, Post-Masters, &c. or increased Salaries in the improvement of these Posts. The Produce of the Country Letters to be kept up by me, and made equal to what it is at present. On the condition this farm is granted me, I will place the Office safe, in the only part of my Plan that I understand objections are still insinuated against, or apprehensions entertained about ; viz. the payment to the Contractors, in which, it is reported, they are dissatisfied, and will be paid either the price of the first engagements, or, at least, equal to the payment for conveying the old Mail ; that, in the first place, this would make above 20,000*l.* per year additional expence, or, if doubled only, above 10,000*l.* per year. Enemies to the Plan believe these complaints, wishing them true ; and indeed people have not been wanting to foment them : but Proprietors of Coaches are mostly a set of people that are influenced by the moment, and seldom look beyond it. I find them, therefore, in Summer, when the Roads are good, and their Coaches well filled, in good humour, and as contented as such people can be ; in the Winter, when the contrary is the case, and their horses of course distressed, it is with great difficulty they are kept to their duty, nor would any payment then satisfy them. The most effectual method I have found of keeping them in order, and at their present price, has been by treating them friendly, giving them every fair allowance for accidental deficiencies in their duty, and threatening to establish Coaches myself on those Roads where Contractors are most refractory, a remedy which it may, hereafter, perhaps, be necessary to adopt. On condition, therefore, that my proposed Farm of the Cross-Posts is granted me, I will engage to contract for the conveyance of the Mails, on the ground the Mail-Coaches now travel, which gives the accommodation of daily Posts to the increased number of towns before-mentioned, at the same rate of speed they have gone these twelve months past, at the old expence on these roads, viz. 12,115*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* The price now paid the Mail-Coaches is, 10,13*l.* 16*s.* 11*d.* except : n additional charge from Exeter to Falmouth, where 100*l.* a year is paid extra for conveying the Foreign Mails, and from their uncertainty of passengers ; and the old Mail price of 4*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* per mile for the Bye-Coach from York to Hull, instead of 3*l.* the Coach having been dropt, not answering for Passengers.

In the sum of 12,115*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* I mean to include the salary and expences paid Mr. HASKER, which from his merit must be the same as the Surveyors ; likewise that of all the other Superintendants of Mail-Coaches, of all

Expences, and other expences, when the Coaches are behind their time at those places where the branches, or Crops-Posts fit in; when they break down too, or any other accident happens, that prevents their proceeding, and likewise for conveying the Mails in deep snows, floods, &c. when the Coaches cannot travel.

I would engage, likewise, in any future extension of the Coaches, as from Edinburgh to Aberdeen, and to Glasgow; from Carlisle to Glasgow, to Portpatrick, to Edinburgh, or on any other Roads, to perform this duty at 4l. per mile, including all incidental expences as above; the 1d. per mile each way is 3l. os. 10d. per year; and as these distant and bad Roads must require nearly one Superintendant for every hundred miles, it cannot be done for less; the least pay on the old establishment is 4l. 13s. 4d. per mile. For many years before my Plan, the payment was 8l. per mile, where the Mails were heavy, and the duty done regular as on the North Road, as far as Newcastle, and the expence 9 and 10l. per mile on the first stages out of London, besides the cost and repair of carts; where expedition is likewise required, to fit in the Branch-Mails, at particular situations with the Coaches, Post-Masters will not, nor indeed can they, perform their duty under 6 or 7l. per mile. This Contract to be coupled with that for the Crops-Posts, and my payment to be made equal to my original agreement, till this commences.

My other offer is as follows:—

By the inclosed statement it will appear, that from the year 1771, the net Revenue of the Penny Post-Office has not increased 1,000l. per year, and from the year 1777 to 1787, that is, in ten years, not above 200l. per year; the net Revenue in 1771 was 3,934l. 16s. 10d. in 1777, 4,654l. 9s. 3d. and in the year 1787, 4,859l. 7s. 9d. in the year 1786, it was only 4,551l. 8s. 4d. The highest year's produce, except one, is 4,910l. 7s. 2d. and the greatest sum it ever produced, was 5,157l. 4s. in 1784, since which time it has been decreasing.

You are in possession of the general out-lines of my Plan for the improvement of this Post, which is of very great importance to the Capital and its vicinity; the additional expence, to carry this Plan into execution, will be considerable, but at the same time that it benefits the Penny-Post, it will materially advantage the General-Post.

I propose farming this Post for my life at 5,000l. per year, to be at the whole of the present and all future additional expences of Clerks, Horses, &c. &c. for the improvements, and to take this Farm in lieu of my per centage, but to retain my present salary, and to be allowed a Chaise, when travelling, and three guineas per day, for the expences of myself, Clerk, and Servants.

By some mistake in the Act of Parliament, though the Postage of the Penny-Post Letters to the Country is 2d. yet, in their return to Town, it is only 1d. If this is amended, and they are charged with 2d. to and from London and the Country, and I may be permitted to leave the Public at liberty to pay the Postage, upon putting their Letters into the Office, or when delivered, as in the General-Post, I will, on that condition, give up my Salary likewise.

I have now troubled you, Gentlemen, with all I have to say on this worn-out subject, and whatever the issue may be, I beg leave to express my thanks to you for your patience and candour. You will, I dare say, think, that, *after having fully performed all my engagements with Government, those due to me, after so long and severe a trial, should be no longer delayed*, that I should be relieved from that anxiety which has so long preyed on my mind, and my arrears be paid up, that I might get rid of those incumbrances I have unwarily drawn on myself. Part of this delay has indeed arisen from my wish that Mr. PITT might have the fullest trial of the Plan, ere my appointment was completely settled, and my desire, as I expressed before, that the report of its merits, its effects on correspondence, and the Revenue, whatever they should prove, might come from you.

I have the honour to be,

With the greatest respect,

Gentlemen,

Your most humble Servant,

JOHN PALMER.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF ENQUIRY.

“ Considerable alterations and improvements have been lately effected in this department, by the ability, ingenuity, and industry of the present Comptroller-General; who has not only accelerated the conveyance of the Mails, and improved the Revenue, but established many useful and necessary regulations in the interior of the Office, which, previous to his appointment, appears to have been in a very relaxed state of discipline, and in much disorder.

To trace his plans and improvements, to recite the whole of the disorder he found in many of the branches, and the many obstacles he had to encounter, would far exceed the bounds prescribed for our Reports; we shall, however, notice some of the evils and inconveniences he has remedied; inconveniences which affected individuals, and evils which diminished the Revenue.”

Here follows a description of some of the improvements.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF ENQUIRY.

“ The salary of the Surveyor and Comptroller-General should continue to be 1,500*l.* per year, clear, with a house in the Office for his residence, and coals and candles for his use therein only.

“ The present Officer claims a further compensation, for having suggested and carried into execution, the Plan for extending and improving the Posts, and for the more safe, expeditious, and regular conveyance of the Mails, by which the correspondence of the Kingdom is improved, and the Public Revenue increased.

“ His merit certainly entitles him to reward. He states, that he understood *his original agreement with Government to be, that his expences should be paid to August, 1784: that an average should be struck of the net revenue of the Office to that time, or the month of April preceding, and that he should be allowed two and a half per Cent. per Annum, on the future increase of such Revenue, which allowance was to include his salary, and every expence for travelling, &c.*”

“ The opposition which Mr. PALMER experienced from the oldest and ablest Officers in the service, who represented *his Plan not only to be impracticable, but dangerous to Commerce and the Revenue*, induced us to examine, and to weigh with great attention, the numerous documents and information which have been furnished us by *both parties, in opposition and in support of the measure.*

“ In consequence thereof, we are enabled to state, that Mr. PALMER has exceeded the expectations which he held forth in his first proposal with regard to the dispatch and the expence; at the same time that the revenue is augmented, answers are returned to letters in less than half the time, and with a degree of punctuality never experienced before; *the expence is at a less rate per mile than upon the old Plan, and has been effected for 20,000*l.* less per Annum, than the sum first proposed by Mr. PALMER, and the Accounts of the Post-Office are undeniable proofs of the Revenue having increased.*

“ In addition to the general opposition which Mr. PALMER experienced, he states, that a competition was attempted, by endeavouring to convey the Mails upon the old Plan, with greater dispatch; but after increasing the expence, from about 3*l.* a year per mile, to 9*l.* the attempt was abandoned.

“ As an engagement had been entered into about the year 1720, by the Post-Master General for the time being, with the late RALPH ALLEN, Esq. for farming the Cross-Posts, and which met with the approbation of the public, we were induced to enquire into the particulars, by which we found, that those improvements were of a limited nature; that Mr. ALLEN did not disclose his plan and mode of conducting it for above forty years, and that the profit which he derived therefrom, was very large; whereas the improvements suggested, and already executed by Mr. PALMER, are far more extensive, and of so much importance to the commerce of this country, *as to have justified the measure,*

although it had been accompanied with additional expence. At the same time, Mr. PALMER has acted with openness, and without reserve, nor is it probable he will ever reap the benefit which Mr. ALLEN obtained.

“ We must further observe, that Mr. ALLEN met with none of those difficulties that Mr. PALMER has experienced, and which required all his activity and perseverance, aided by the firm and liberal support of Government, to surmount, against a most powerful opposition, and every obstruction that could be thrown in his way by Officers in this department.

“ The account inserted in the Appendix, will shew the produce of the Post-Office Revenue for the last thirty years, and which has been increased, in consequence of Mr. PALMER's Plan.

“ The improvement of this Revenue by the extension of commerce, and growing prosperity of the country, had been materially checked by the slow progress of the Post, as the speed with which the Stage-Coaches travelled, had induced great numbers to prefer that conveyance for their letters, although at the risk of incurring the penalty in case of discovery, and also at an expence of 2s. 6d. and 3s. for every letter or packet; most of those letters are now sent by the Post, and if the same dispatch, safety, and punctuality, which are the great features of Mr. PALMER's Plan, continue, the conveyance of letters by other means will be prevented.

“ Under these circumstances, we are of opinion, that Mr. PALMER is justly entitled to the compensation he claims, and which is a very small part of that Revenue, which his ingenuity, activity, and zeal, have created, over and above the convenience and numerous collateral advantages, which the public, and more particularly the commerce of this country, reap from the safe and speedy conveyance of the Mails.

“ We cannot recommend, that the alternative proposed by Mr. PALMER, for farming the Cross Posts, or Penny Posts, should be accepted, because we think it absolutely necessary, for the purpose of securing to the public hereafter the benefit already derived, and what may be further expected from this Plan, that Mr. PALMER should be interested in the productiveness of the whole Post-Office Revenue, and which might otherwise fall back into its former state of delay, irregularity, and confusion.”

APPENDIX. No. VIII.

COPY OF MR. PALMER'S LETTER TO THE RIGHT HON. WM. PITT.

SIR,

GENERAL POST-OFFICE, Dec. 30, 1788.

I should not have troubled you in the present situation of public affairs, but from the extreme inconvenience I experience in my arrears not being paid up, and the anxiety I feel to have my emoluments finally settled by you, under whose encouragement and sanction I had the honour to commence, and have perfected my undertaking for the improvement of the Posts.

I believe it is unnecessary to repeat my engagement, but lest it should have escaped your memory, Sir, I beg leave to state, that if I succeeded I was to have two and a half per cent. on the future increased Revenue of the Post-Office for my life, from its commencement, to be paid for my expences and trouble from the time I was first employed till the Plan was suffered to be carried into execution. This sum was to include my salary for every duty of office, my travelling expences, &c. &c.

A subsequent engagement was afterwards acceded to on my part, with a view only to my being established in the Office, and getting possession of such powers and authority over its Officers, as could alone enable me to proceed with effect.

In this settlement I repeatedly requested of the Post-Master General that I might be allowed to take my appointment *for the present with its powers only, and without any emolument whatever.* This proposal not being agreeable to their Lordships, and as they did not approve the mode of payment partly by a salary of 1,500l. per year, and partly by a per centage, they commissioned me to propose to you, Sir, as a final settlement of the business, to waive my claims to the per centage altogether, and to receive a salary of 3000l. per year certain. But you considering the mode of payment originally settled by a per centage as the best security for the public accommodation and the Revenue, I agreed for the present to take my Office in any manner the Post-Master General might think proper; at the same time declaring, *I should not desire to hold my appointment if I did not fully succeed in performing all my engagements with you, and if I did, I hoped those entered into with me would be equally regarded; which you was so good as to promise me should be fulfilled when I had completed my Plan, and should come forward with my claims.*

I have the happiness to understand, Sir, that my conduct in this business has met your approbation, and I take the liberty to observe, for your further satisfaction, that the contracts for the conveyance of the Mails are now made at 20,000l. per year less than I originally proposed and engaged for; that I have likewise exceeded my promise in the rate of speed, the regularity and extension of the Posts through the whole Kingdom; and particularly to the City of London, the early and regular delivery of the Letters is far beyond my promise, or the expectation of the most sanguine of my friends, and even at this unfavourable season.

I beg leave therefore, Sir, to express my hopes that you will order a payment of such sum as you may think just, for my time and trouble, from October, 1782, to the 1st of August, 1784, when my Plan was first carried into execution; that an average be struck of the net Revenue of the Office up to that time, and that a sum equal to two and a half per cent. on its increased annual Revenue be paid me, which is to include my salary, all travelling expences, &c. &c. whatever sums I have received from the Office to be deducted from this account; that, in future, a sum be paid me quarterly in a proportion within the supposed yearly amount of my per centage, and the balance to be paid me every year on settling the accounts in the April quarter.

I take the liberty, Sir, likewise to propose for your consideration, whether the juster, as well as simpler mode of regulating the accounts, and fixing the sum from which my per centage is to commence, will not be by first stating the gross produce of the British and Foreign Postage, and then deducting from it the Post-Masters' salaries, payment for conveyance of the Mails either by Horse or Carriage, for Guards, and for dead and mis-sent Letters, and the per centage to commence on the net revenue after these deductions, as they are the only charges under my controul, and I ought not to be benefited or injured by any increase or decrease of expence that does not form a part of my Plans, and which I cannot check.

I hope, Sir, it may not be imputed a vanity in me to mention, that, though Mr. ALLEN, as appears by his narrative, derived upwards of 12,000l. per year from his very partial improvements of the Cross-Posts only, the regulations I have introduced, independent of their effect on the General Posts throughout the Country, have increased that particular branch of the Revenue more in the course of two years, than he did during the whole forty years he farmed the same.

It may not be improper to add, that I have long since had in contemplation various other Plans, which I conceive to be of the greatest consequence to the correspondence of the Kingdom, and more particularly of the Metropolis and its neighbourhood, which I should ere now have digested and carried into execution, had the settlement of my affairs left my mind sufficiently at ease for that purpose.

I have the honour to be,
&c. &c. &c.

J. P.

APPENDIX. No. IX.

MR. PALMER'S LETTER TO THE POST-MASTERS GENERAL.

MY LORDS,

PUTNEY, Oct. 12, 1790.

I am concerned that your Lordships' attempt to supersede my commission, and the ill effects which I apprehend may arise to the Correspondence of the Country from your further interference with my regulations, oblige me to apply to the Minister for his accustomed support, by whose warrant I received that commission, and to whom only I consider myself responsible for my conduct; for, *though I am nominally under the Post-Master General, I am virtually under the Treasury.*

The original Warrant, which I have the honour to inclose your Lordships, will shew you, that it was intended *I should hold my Office under the Crown, and not the Post-Office, for reasons too obvious to the Minister.* This Warrant being submitted to the opinion of the Attorney-General, he advised, that, according to the present constitution of the Post-Office, my employ could be legally held only under the Post-Master General, *by a warrant from the Treasury, directing them to grant such appointment, with the powers expressed in it.* It was therefore, made out in the manner I now hold it, *as a matter of present necessity.* Your Lordships, therefore, venturing to supersede a Commission, *granted under a Warrant from the Treasury to a former Post-Master General,* for services the Lords Commissioners had expressed themselves so partial to, and under such particular circumstances as will appear by the enclosed Treasury Minute, contradicting too the orders given by them in consequence, *in their circular Letter to all Post-Masters, in the year 1785,* has, I think, been rather a hasty and ill-advised measure, and not consistent with that judgment and temper which usually guide your Lordships' conduct. No man, I am sure, in this Kingdom, is more sensible than I am to the necessity of proper subordination, or the respect due to the Nobility of this country, or has higher obligations to them; and I am sure I cannot give a stronger proof of it, than in still retaining my respect and esteem for your Lordships, after the very unhandsome and unprovoked conduct you have used towards me.

Both your Lordships, on accepting your appointments, knew my situation in the Office, *and found me in the uncontrouled exercise of the powers the Warrant from Government had directed to be given me,* your Lordships having an undoubted right, if you saw me at any time proceeding wrong, or any ill effects arising from my conduct, to report it to the Treasury; but I challenge your Lordships to put your finger *on one single blot committed by me, from the moment I took my appointment, till this time.* Why, therefore, this wanton interference, threatening me, and insulting and degrading valuable officers, who are known to be attached to me, and at a time when they are particularly distinguishing themselves for the good of the service? Indeed, my Lords, if you persist in such treatment of them, I shall not have an Officer of any value remain with me, if they can possibly get situations in any other employ.

Your Lordships have been informed of the disgraceful opposition to my Plan before I came into office, which made it necessary for the Minister to give me *powers to act as I pleased in the arrangement of the Posts, and conducting its business;* the inclosed Letter to all Post-Masters will shew it. And can it be supposed that, after the success and beneficial effects, which were *the consequence of those powers being given me,* I am to be deprived of them, and expected to conduct so complex and difficult a business, or *extend my Plan with less powers,* that my regulations should be submitted to an Office so liable to change, to every Post-Master General to check and controul them; and, to do which, he must either advise with the Officers under me, *or those most active in a former opposition to ruin my Plan?* If this were the case, however well disposed your Lordships may be, do you think it could exist, or the Public be long in possession of its benefits?

Mr. PITT, my Lords, has made a purchase of my ingenuity and judgment, such as it is, *and I am to act upon that judgment, and no other person's whatever,* subject, if I do wrong, to your Lordships' observations and report to the Treasury.

Nor is this, by any means new to the Office. Mr. ALLEN, for a very partial improvement of the Cross-Posts, *had not only the power and management delegated to him, but the estate itself, and that without any controul whatever*; nor would he even inform the Post-Masters General of any part of his Plan; as soon as they were satisfied, from his character, and the few hints he gave them, that it would be a benefit to Correspondence, and some advantage to the revenue, *so far from being jealous of parting with their authorities, they solicited Government that they might do it, and gave him every possible encouragement.*

He had a complete farm of these Posts during his life, the time he held it, forty-two years; and got by his Statement *above 12,000l.* a year by them.

I have the satisfaction to remark to your Lordships, when I began the improvements in the Cross-Posts, though the Revenue was then decreasing, that during the short time I have managed them, its Revenue has increased considerably more than in the whole forty-two years Mr. ALLEN farmed them; indeed nearly double, notwithstanding the enormous increase of franks. The more extensive and superior advantages correspondence derives from mine, the Public, as well as your Lordships, must be sensible to. *He had the whole of the increased Revenue, and the most uncontrolled power in the management of these Posts. I have two and a half per cent. only, on the whole increased Revenue of the Office; and am expected, for that consideration, to conduct and improve the whole Posts of the Kingdom:* And your Lordships command me to manage this Plan, of so much greater magnitude and difficulty, in trammels and fetters. From this feeling, I have delayed carrying into execution many of my Plans, which would have given great accommodation to the Public, and proved very popular, as well as productive to the Revenue; *because I would not submit them to the judgment of others, and render myself liable to a renewal of my former opposition.*

In respect to any commands your Lordships may think proper to send me, I must observe, both our appointments and powers are derived from the same source; though for different considerations, your Lordships, for that for which all power is delegated—to do good: mine not only to do future good, but for having done great good in the Department we both act in, *preceding my appointment.* Why is the per centage indeed given me, but to interest me in the care of every thing whatever, by which the Revenue of the Office may be affected? Your Lordships cannot be injured in your fortune by a mismanagement of it; I may, and that to the ruin of my income, &c. &c. &c.

I have the honor to be, &c.

MINUTE OF THE COMPTROLLER-GENERAL TO THE POST-MASTER GENERAL.

COMPTROLLER-GENERAL'S OFFICE, April 14th, 1791.

The Comptroller-General informs the Post-Master General, agreeably to the declaration they have before obliged him to make to them, that he considers his commission as held under, and himself *responsible ultimately to the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury only, by his agreement, as well as by their warrant of appointment, originating with them.*

He has informed their Lordships, his motives for not answering several of the Post-Master General's minutes, which he trusts cannot but be satisfactory to them. The same reasons will prevent him from answering any others their Lordships may send, but such as appear to him absolutely necessary. He is anxious, that their Lordships may not consider this conduct as meant in the least disrespectful to them. *It arises from that regard every individual has a right to pay to his own interest, peace, and character.*

From a conviction, that it is impossible for him to proceed to necessary and extensive improvements in the correspondence of the Kingdom and its Revenue, or to preserve those he has already carried into execution from ruin under his present powers—from this conviction only, he claims from Government those powers originally promised him.

The Comptroller General is informed, that the Post-Master General's Letter to Mr. PITT, does not come officially before the Lords of the Treasury; and that there would be an impropriety, as the matter stands at present, in the Comptroller-General's answering it to the Treasury, though its having been entered on the Post-Office Books makes it an official charge against him. That the properest method to be taken, will be for the Post-Master General to address it to the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury; and at the same time to send with it copies of all other Letters, or Papers, that may have been entered on the Books, since the Comptroller-General's first appointment, that may accuse him of misconduct, or in which any doubts may be expressed of the merits of his Plan, the expence of its establishment, and the conduct of it. Its effects on the Revenue, and the injury or advantage it may be to the Public, or wherein Government may have been deceived, and led into the making an improper agreement with the Comptroller-General, and in what parts the Plan may have failed in the expectations held out to the Public, as well as the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury.

These, with all other observations their Lordships can make, together with all information they can gain from their oldest, most experienced, and confidential Officers, will be necessary to accompany the said Memorial. The Comptroller-General, therefore, requests their Lordships will have the goodness to send the above Papers as early as they conveniently can, for the information of the Lords of the Treasury, *that he may be enabled to answer them as soon as possible.*

Their Lordships remark, that his second question was meant for insult, obliges him to say, that such meaning was, and ever has been, very distant from his thoughts towards their Lordships; his disposition being as little inclined to give an insult, as to put up with one.

Their Lordships will be sensible, he could put the question in no other shape to them, when they recollect, *on every occasion, where an increased price has been demanded for conveying the Mails by a Cart, such demand has been at once invariably complied with by their Lordships, but when required for the conveyance by a Coach, and their Lordships have been assured, that the terms were even less than the Mails could be conveyed for by a Cart on the same Road;* though twice informed of this by the Comptroller-General, and pressed by every reason he could urge, why such demand should not be immediately complied with, and the ill consequences of delay pointed out, yet their Lordships thought proper to refuse such payment, without permission being first obtained from the Treasury, and chose to protract the application for such payments for near three months.

The Comptroller-General knows of nothing in his department, which has at any time whatever called for their Lordship's interference, the ill consequences arising from their Lordships so frequently taking upon themselves to intermeddle in the management of his plan, he has too often experienced; of which the Lords of the Treasury, *as well as the Public, will be fully informed in his Memorial to their Lordships,* which will accompany his answer to the Post-Master General's Letter to Mr. PITT, or to the charges against him, which their Lordships may send to the Treasury.

J. P.

APPENDIX. No. X.

FACTS tending to prove, that in order to secure the effectual execution of any duty, and increase the Revenue of any Office, it should be made the direct interest of the executive Officer to promote the same; sent with the Remonstrance to the Lords of the Treasury: viz.

When the Merchants applied for a better delivery of Foreign Letters, the old Officers, seconded by the Post-Master General, *having no interest in the Revenue, and without any communication with me, proposed to incur an expence of 6,000l. and upwards, in buildings and alterations, and a further annual expence of 567l. in new Officers and Letter-Carriers, the Merchants being to wait till the buildings were completed.*

On hearing, by accident, of this Plan, I undertook to effect what was required *immediately in a more perfect manner, without laying out a shilling, or incurring any expence, except about 50l. per annum, at the utmost.* It was, however, settled at your Lordships' Board, at an additional unnecessary expence of about 800l. per year, notwithstanding the experience had *of the former conduct and the judgment of these Officers,* without my being *ever allowed a trial,* and the general state and management of this Office, *being even worse than the inland department before I undertook its reform.*

The Post-Master General, having raised the Salary of the Tewksbury Post-Master, from 28l. to 72l. per annum, on insufficient grounds, without any communication with me, as had before been the general custom, I remonstrated on the impropriety of this unnecessary increase, and the danger of such a precedent, which, if followed up, to other Officers, would have occasioned a loss of 20,000l. per year to the Revenue; upon which, your Lordships expressed your disapprobation of the measure, and wrote, by your Secretary, that on the Comptroller General's Remonstrance, your Lordships did not see any reason, upon the Post-Master General's statement, to authorize the increase of Salary they had granted; and such is the unavoidable delay that must arise at your Lordships' Board, from the want of a *proper Comptrolling Officer to judge of, and immediately report on the Post-Office business;* though the Remonstrance was sent to your Lordships on the 25th of November, 1790, this answer was not received till the 24th of August, 1791.

Notwithstanding this check was given to a conduct so dangerous to the Revenue, from the want of the Post-Master Generals being acquainted *with the executive duties, and respective merits of the Applicant's,* and chusing to *rely on the advice, and to communicate only with these old Officers;* great additional and heavy expences have been of late incurred, which any one, *well informed or interested in the Revenue,* would easily have been able to prove, either totally unnecessary, or much reduced, and, amongst others, *the late expenditures of above 20,000l. in alterations in the Post-Office Buildings.*

In the agreements for the Mail-Coaches, that have occasionally attended his Majesty, the Post-Master General have uniformly contracted at treble the price they were procured for by me, when not interfered with.

Their Lordships unnecessarily putting the Letter-Carriers in Liveries, extremely to their dissatisfaction, which if extended to those of the Penny-Post, must at least cost 1,000l. per annum.

In respect to the mismanagement of the Packets, and the West-India, and American correspondence, I have understood that Lord WALSHINGHAM sent out the Packets, *for one whole year, without their Captains.*

Some minutes and correspondence of his Lordship's with the Post-Master of Quebec and Halifax, that I have perused, exceed even those which respect the home department, in their numerous and extraordinary queries, schemes, regulations, &c. &c. In which his Lordship proposed, very seriously, a sort of Cross-Post Packets, to be established between Halifax and Barbadoes, and other West-India Islands, and actually did establish a Weekly Post across the Wilds of America, between Quebec and Halifax, at an enormous expence; utterly useless, and, from its nature, quite irregular, it having been sometimes two, and even three months, in conveying a single Bag.

He also bestowed a Salary of 250l. per annum on the Post-Master of Halifax, in Nova Scotia, with considerable arrears, which I think, for want of proper explanation, was confirmed by your Lordships, at the same time that the Post-Masters, in the other West-India Islands, of treble the receipt, and duty, had only 80l. per annum; previous to this, his payment was about 40l. per annum; and in the manner of some other Offices, by a grant of 20l. per cent. on the gross receipt, which receipt amounted, I think, to about 200l. per annum only, his duties being far inferior to any English Post-Master of 20l. per annum Salary.

These facts, however, can be easily ascertained, by reference to the Office-papers, as well as whether the before-mentioned wild and expensive scheme is still continued.

From their Lordships having, in many instances, preferred the conveyance of the Mails, in the old mode, by horse or cart, to the new plan, and that at an equal expence, the Mail-Coaches are dropt on several Roads where they had been established highly to the satisfaction of the public, and not extended to many other places, where they might be to very great advantage: the Mails are, of course, become not only unsafe on these roads, (where three robberies of them have already been committed since the Coaches have been discontinued) but the Cross-Posts have been greatly deranged, and the correspondence of the Country, and its revenue, materially injured: and the Public cannot be aware of these abuses, being regularly informed, by advertisements from the Post-Office, that the West India, American, Lisbon, &c. Mails, are sent by the Mail-Coaches, though they have been given up a long time, from Exeter to Falmouth, and Plymouth, and the whole of the Mails on those Roads ever since, *conveyed on the former unguarded and irregular system.*

In some of the recorded minutes of complaints and charges against me, it is asserted, that the Mail-Coaches could be hired 12,000l. per annum, cheaper than I had contracted with BESANT and Co. to furnish them at; and that other Contractors, procured by their Lordships, would convey the Mails at 4,000l. per annum less than those contracted with by me at the price then paid: yet they have themselves, since my suspension, contracted with this very company, for a term of years, at the same price they so much condemned, instead of 12,000l. per annum less, and with the said old Contractors, at an unnecessary expence of 1,000l. per annum more, instead of 4,000l. per annum less.

Since my suspension, their Lordships have taken the Officers patronized and formed by me, and who were in the general conduct of my Plan under me, and advanced their Salaries, though some of them, previous to this event, had been particularly discountenanced by them, and could get neither Salary nor arrears for valuable services. To support my Plan with any tolerable regularity, the Post-Masters General have been obliged to give to these persons *powers which they had disputed and denied to me*, and every possible encouragement to their exertions of every kind, with a most profuse and ill-judged expediture, to obtain every required accommodation: yet the arrivals and deliveries have not been better in London, in the Country much worse, and particularly at Bath and Bristol, as well as other parts of the Kingdom, so much so, as to excite great complaints and dissatisfaction, though had I not been so wantonly interfered with, delays would not occur a dozen times in the year, instead of (as now) nearly through the whole Winter.

Some of my further proposed Plans, which (relying on the faith of Government) I never made a mystery of, and gave, as mere sketches, have, as I understand, been attempted to be carried into execution, in a manner not so beneficial to the Public, either as to accommodation or Revenue, as I flatter myself they would have been under my own direction; some have been executed partially and improperly, others established in a most profuse and ill-judged manner, and many obliged to be laid aside.

Many Coaches are now established on a system very loose, irregular, and dangerous to Passengers and Correspondence.

Several Mails, likewise, which should have been sent by the Coaches, and of course considered as perfectly safe by the Public, have, since my suspension, been *stolen out of the Post-Office Yard*, as well as other places, and *even from the Boxes of the Mail Coaches.*





CEDRIC CHIVERS BATH.
1987

