THE

TENTH REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS

APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO

THE MANAGEMENT

OF THE

POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

REGISTRATION OF LETTERS.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

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1838.

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

TENTH REPORT of the COMMISSIONERS appointed to inquire into the Management of the POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

REGISTRATION OF LETTERS.

MY LORDS,

THE *safe* and speedy conveyance of letters, for the benefit of trade and commerce, was the primary consideration with the Government on the first establishment of a General Post-office.

The revenue, which it was expected would arise from the exclusive privilege conferred on the Postmaster-General, was held to be of minor importance. This principle is recognised in the preamble of the different Postage Acts, which were passed from the time of the Commonwealth down to the 10th of Queen Anne, when the English and Scottish offices were united under one Postmaster-General.

The Postage Duties must, therefore, be looked upon not merely as a source of Revenue, but as the price paid by the public for the performance of a particular service, which it has been found expedient to have executed under the control and supervision of the Government.

With respect to the Rate at which this service ought to be performed, we have not been called upon to offer any opinion.

The recommendations contained in our former Reports have accordingly had reference to the general management of the Office, and the mode of providing for the conveyance of the mails by land and sea.

We have suggested such alterations, with a view to expedite the conveyance of letters, and multiply the communications by post, as we thought could be effected without materially diminishing the Revenue of the Department, having always, in the first instance, considered, in obedience to your Lordships' desire, whether any increased expenditure, which it was proposed to incur, was likely to be compensated by a corresponding increase of Revenue.

The observations which we shall now submit to your Lordships have reference solely to the *safety* of letters conveyed by post; a subject which has not hitherto received that consideration which it might have been expected to have obtained, in consequence of the numerous applications made for missing letters, and the enormous amount of property alleged to have been lost in its transit through the Post-office Department.

From a Return lately presented to the House of Commons, it appears that the applications for letters containing property, alleged to have been lost, average upwards of 1,200 a-year, and that the property claimed as lost, within eight years, exceeded £600,000 in value. Parliamentary Return, No. 497 (1837).

The whole of this loss has been attributed to fraud or negligence on the part of the officers of the Department, although there can be little doubt that many of these letters claimed as lost were never put into the Post-office: some of them probably purloined by the parties to whom they were entrusted to be posted at the receiving-house, and part, undoubtedly, abstracted by clerks and letter-carriers of the Department, who have great opportunity and inducement to commit fraud from the difficulty of detection.

With the public it is a subject of just complaint, that, whilst they are prohibited from transmitting their correspondence, of whatever value or importance, through any other channel than that of the Post-office, the Department will not give an acknowledgment for the receipt of such letters, or afford the means of proving their delivery, or tracing their loss.

It is true that of late a system of registration has been adopted for letters which are discovered, in their progress through the Post-office, to contain coin; but this security is not extended to bills, bank-notes, or documents of value, it being expressly forbidden to register any other than "Cash-letters." Appendix No. 3.

The mode of transmitting these letters, and the nature of the check afforded, is detailed in the evidence of Colonel Maberly and the Presidents of the Inland and Twopenny Post Departments. Appendix Nos. 7. 4. 6.

Appendix Nos. 9, 10.

For some years previous to the consolidation of the Irish Department with the General Post-office here, a very extensive system of registration existed in Dublin, embracing *every letter*, not being a single letter, without reference to its contents.

Appendix Nos. 11, 10. Appendix No. 9.

The only objection to the plan appears to have been the almost unnecessary extent to which it was carried. The benefit and security which were afforded to the public may be ascertained by a reference to the accompanying statements of Sir Edward Lees, who first introduced the system, and Mr. Burrowes, who had to superintend its operation as chief officer of the Inland Department.

Appendix No. 7.

On referring to the evidence of Colonel Maberly, it will be observed that the subject of registration has lately occupied the attention of the Postmaster-General, and that he was inclined to extend the plan, now adopted for the security of cash-letters, to other correspondence, on payment of a certain fee, and under some restriction as to the period of receipt and delivery.

Appendix No. 11. Appendix No. 8.

Sir Edward Lees has proposed a different mode of registry from that now in use for cash-letters, and Mr. Louis has suggested a plan of transmitting registered packets, with a view to prevent delay in what are termed the *Forward Offices*, where the letters have to be re-sorted, and where alone there is a chance of any practical inconvenience being experienced.

Appendix Nos. 4, 5, 6.

Although there is some difference of opinion as to the best mode of accomplishing a more general registration of letters, all the officers agree as to the expediency and practicability of introducing some additional security for correspondence of value.

We consider it unnecessary to enter into any minute detail as to the mode of accomplishing this object. The arrangements can only be made by communicating with the surveyors and practical officers of the Department; and we shall now point out what we think ought principally to be attended to, whatever the system of registration may be.

It is essential that a complete check should be maintained from the period a letter is placed in charge of the Post-office until it is delivered to the individual to whom it is addressed, and that there should always be the means of tracing its progress, through however many hands it may pass.

It will also be satisfactory to the party registering to obtain an acknowledgment of the registration, whilst, on delivery, the letter-carrier must require a receipt, which ought to be the only evidence admitted of the arrival of the letter at its destination.

To defray the expense of registration, and in some measure with a view to limit its adoption, a small fee may fairly be charged, in addition to the ordinary postage to which the letter will be liable. We conceive that this fee ought not in any case to exceed 2*d.*, and we hope that it may be reduced to 1*d.*, if it is found that this charge will be sufficient to defray the expense of registration.

Appendix No. 2. Appendix No. 11.

We may here observe that the exorbitant charges on the registration of foreign letters have been almost prohibitory in this country, and that, although the rate is now in some instances reduced, it is still in every case unnecessarily high, and the public are prevented from resorting to registration, although they would otherwise gladly avail themselves of it.

Appendix Nos. 11, 29.

The number of foreign registered letters received *in* London during the last two years has been about ten times as great as the number of registered foreign letters dispatched *from* London; whilst in Edinburgh, during the same period, only one foreign letter has been registered, in consequence, as the secretary states, of this protection for correspondence not being available to the public for a less fee than 2*s.* 6*d.*

However small the fee may be, it will undoubtedly be considered as an additional premium paid to insure the safety of a letter; and, in case of loss, some compensation may reasonably be expected.

We have, therefore, resolved to propose to your Lordships, that, if a registered letter is purloined or lost in passing through the Post-office, the party to whom such letter is addressed, in the first instance, or, in case of no application being made by him within a limited period, the party who registered the letter, shall receive £5 as an indemnity for the loss, and that this sum shall be payable without reference to the value or contents of the letter, and no further indemnity given, whatever may be the value of the enclosure.

Appendix Nos. 11, 17, 18.

We do not anticipate that any objection can be raised to this proposal, from an apprehension that the Department would be called upon to pay any large sum for the loss of registered letters. It will be seen, on referring to the statement of Sir Edward Lees and the Returns received from the Dublin Post-office, that, during the period the system of registration was adopted in Ireland, there was scarcely an

instance of a letter being lost, without the loss having been traced to the party through whose negligence it occurred.

It also appears that, although the number of letters registered was very great, and annually increasing, the total number of lost letters during eight years amounted to 18, whilst the number registered exceeded two millions (2,171,152): of these 18, twelve were lost in the first two years, and only six in the next four years, previous to the abolition of the registry. In London, the number of cash-letters registered from 5th January 1834 to 5th January 1837 has been 570,204, whilst the number lost during the same period has been only ten.

Appendix No. 18.
Appendix No. 17.
Appendix No. 18.
Appendix Nos. 15, 16.

If your Lordships approve of the proposal we have now made, it will be desirable to provide for the recovery of the penalties by summary process, and also to protect the Post-office from the payment of any indemnity in cases where it can be proved that the loss of the letters has been occasioned by storms at sea, by fire, robbery of the mails, or any cause other than the fraud or negligence of the officers of the Department.

To prevent delay in the dispatch of the correspondence from the Metropolis and some of the larger towns, the period for receiving registered letters must be limited; but we think that in London they may be posted up to within three hours of the period fixed for the departure of the mails.

Money-order Office.

This office was established in 1792 for insuring the safe transmission of small sums of money by post, and principally with a view to the accommodation of soldiers and sailors. It has been stated that the plan was approved of by the Postmaster-General, although no express authority appears to have been given, nor has the management of the business ever been subject to any official control.

Appendix Nos. 1. 13.

Several of the clerks in the General Post-office were originally concerned in the Money-order Office, but it has now devolved entirely on Mr. Watts, one of the presidents of the Inland Department, who advances the capital necessary for conducting the business.

Ibid.

The remittances are confined to sums not exceeding £5. 5*s*., and the profits arise from a per centage, at the rate of 8*d*. in the pound for sums above 10*s*., a charge of 6*d*. being made for any remittance under 10*s*.

Ibid.

In addition to this poundage, a stamp-duty of 1*s*. is payable by the sender of money-orders of the amount of £2 and upwards.

Appendix No. 4.

The deputy-postmasters in the country are employed as agents, and share in the profits of the concern.

The correspondence and letters of advice relating to the Money-order Office are sent free, under the official privilege of the Secretary, printed covers being used for this purpose. This privilege is not limited to letters passing to and from London, but extends to the letters of advice between the country deputies, and consequently is liable to much abuse.

Appendix No. 1.

We have already had occasion to express to your Lordships our concurrence in the recommendations made by the Revenue Commissioners with respect to the abolition of private trading under official privileges, nor have we met with any case in the course of our investigations where a traffic of this nature was carried on in a more objectionable form than in the present instance.

We, therefore, recommend that the privilege of franking may be withdrawn, and that the office shall no longer be in any way recognised by the Postmaster-General. This will have the effect, as is stated by the proprietors, of immediately putting an end to the business as far as they are concerned. The Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, conceiving, from the evidence they obtained, that the principal object of the Money-order Office was the transmission of small sums to persons who had served their country, were of opinion that this should be provided for through the Departments of the Army and Navy, and that it would not be requisite to sanction any establishment of this description in connection with the General Post-office. We are, however, informed that, although soldiers and sailors are much in the habit of sending money-orders, that the greater proportion of them are obtained by the poor and labouring classes (particularly Irish artizans and workmen employed in the Metropolis and large towns throughout the kingdom), who are anxious to remit some portion of their earnings to their relatives and friends. Your Lordships, we feel satisfied, will not be disposed to deprive them of the accommodation which they now have for this purpose. We are anxious that every facility and encouragement

Appendix No. 1.
Ibid.

should be given for making these remittances, and are satisfied that the business will be done in a more satisfactory manner by the Department, and at less expense, than by individual proprietors. Arrangements should, therefore, be made, on the introduction of the registry system, for the transmission of remittances by post, and the profits, *if any*, carried to the account of the Revenue.

The deputy-postmasters, who will be employed as agents under the direction of the Post-office, are already required to give security for the money passing through their hands, which will protect the Department against the losses by defalcation which the proprietors now sustain. The business, in other respects, may be conducted for a very trifling expense, and we should therefore recommend that the poundage be reduced, and beg, at the same time, to suggest to your Lordships' consideration whether it might not be expedient to remit the stamp-duty on orders of the value of £2, and not exceeding £5. 5*s*., if it is found that the orders continue subject to this tax after the business has been transferred to the direct management of the Post-office.

Appendix No. 20.

The produce of this duty amounts to about £400 a-year. If it was remitted, a great boon would be conferred on that class of people who now are in the habit of sending small sums by post.

We believe that, in place of charging from 3*s*. to 4*s*. for an order for a couple of pounds, payable in Scotland or Ireland, the remittance might be made for as many pence, provided the transmission of these sums ceased to be a source of profit, and the poundage was reduced to the lowest rate that would defray the expense.

In case the change which we propose in the Money-order Office shall be carried into effect, your Lordships will be the best judges of the equitable claim which Mr. Watts may have for compensation. At the same time, we cannot help calling your attention to the great discrepancy which exists in the Returns which have been made to us, at various times, of the net profits of this office, although we are not disposed to attribute this circumstance to any wilful misrepresentation on the part of Mr. Watts.

Appendix Nos. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. 28.

Office of Woods,
January 1838.

DUNCANNON.
H. LABOUCHERE.
SEYMOUR.

LIST OF APPENDIX TO TENTH REPORT.

EXAMINATIONS.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ACCOUNTS.

EXAMINATIONS.

MINUTES of EVIDENCE taken before the COMMISSIONERS appointed to inquire into the MANAGEMENT of the POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

No. 1.

Monday, July 13, 1835.

Daniel William Stow, Esq. was examined as follows :—

Examinations.

No. 1.
D. W. Stow, Esq.
13 July 1835.

What is your office?—I am superintending president of the Inland Office.

What are the particular duties of your office?—Superintending and taking cognizance of that part of the duty which relates to the Inland Department in sending out letters from, and receiving them in London; checking the account of the amount of postage, regulating the different attendances, and answering the various complaints and reports that are made relative to that department, and superintending the General Post letter-receivers.

Are you connected with what is called the Money-order office?—I am.

What is the nature of that establishment?—It is to grant moneyorders to the public on their making application for the same for sums under five guineas by drawing orders upon the deputy postmasters in the country to pay the same, sending them a letter of advice and giving to the party a money-order to transmit or to do as he pleases with,—perhaps in order to elucidate the plan, I had better hand in the forms which I have brought with me. Upon application of the public, for instance, if a sum of money is to be paid by the postmaster of Saxmundham, he is furnished with this letter of advice to pay such specific sum, and therefore we know perfectly well that the sum in question can only be paid to the person *named in that letter of advice* (Elizabeth Haslett), and no other person but she could receive the money, which is the only, as well as most perfect security, we can hold out to the public. Upon the miscarriage or loss of a money order we invariably make it good to the parties: supposing, for instance, the money-order on Saxmundham to have been lost by accident, and the party being able to prove that such order had not been paid (which can be easily checked by reference to our books), and the name of the person sending the money-order down to Saxmundham being proved, in that case the money would instantly be repaid to the applicant, or by issuing a second order for the same sum without any charge whatever.

What charge do you make?—Eightpence in the pound, sharing the poundage with the different postmasters. In Dublin, the agent takes a larger share of the poundage; in England, the postmasters have twopence upon London orders, reserving sixpence for the proprietors, which makes up the eightpence. The agent in Dublin is allowed threepence out of the eightpence upon every order he pays, and fourpence in the pound for every order that he draws.

Of course a certain capital is necessary to conduct this business?—Yes.

Is that capital private property?—It is the private property of Mr. Watts and myself; we are the only proprietors in London, and we furnish, whenever it is necessary, money to the different postmasters; if more orders are drawn upon them than it is convenient for them to pay, they draw upon us at sight, or we send down immediately any amount that they may want, so that they are never put to inconvenience. The establishment of the Money-order office took place about the year 1792. One of the then clerks of the road made application to the Postmaster-General, Lord Walsingham, in consequence of the variety of complaints that were made at that period, of cash being lost out of letters, there being no proper security. The object of the application was, to be allowed to draw upon the country postmasters for sums not exceeding five guineas, making the whole of the money received by them as agents to the clerks of the roads on account of sums received for newspapers, a fund for the payment of money orders, so as not to trench upon the public Revenue. Subsequently it branched out more extensively; at first it was confined to some large towns, but that was before I had anything to do with it, and therefore I can only speak as far as I have learnt at different times some little history about it.

Is the establishment under the control of the Post-office?—We can do nothing without it; it is sanctioned by the Postmaster-General in as far as permitting the letters of advice, &c., to pass free; if that permission were to be withdrawn, of course there would be an end of the establishment, because the postage of a letter of advice going to a distant post-town would be more than the amount of poundage taken for the payment of the order, and therefore it could not be carried on without we had such permission; we always consider ourselves under the direction of the Post-office.

Have you the use of a franking stamp in the Money-order office?—We have a stamp with the Secretary's name upon it; but, upon examination before the Commissioners, they con-

Examinations.

No. 1.
D. W. Stow, Esq.
13 July 1835.

ceived some improper use might be made of it, and it has ever since been locked up by Mr. Watts, and only used by himself; all our forms are printed.

Do large sums of money go through the Money-order office in the course of the year?—Yes.

Is it extensively used by the public?—I think it is now rather upon the decline; during the time of the war it was very much resorted to by sailors at the different ports, and soldiers, by prize-agents, by serjeants from the Horse Guards or Chelsea Hospital, to pay pensioned soldiers, by the Trinity House, India House, and by the Society for Paying Small Debts, as the readiest way of sending small remittances to remote parts of Ireland and Scotland which could not otherwise have been so easily got at.

Are there not means in the departments connected with the Admiralty and the War-office of transmitting such small sums to sailors and soldiers without resorting to the Money-order office?—I don't know, but it was certainly very extensively resorted to; that was a question it would not have become the proprietor to put, we acted under the directions we received.

Is it much used by other persons than soldiers and sailors?—Yes, by a great number of the lower Irish people to whom we offer sheets of paper to prevent their paying double postage, the order being printed upon the top so as to give them the opportunity of writing to their friends on the blank part; but it is a curious fact, that a great number of the Irish people employ an amanuensis somewhere in St. Giles's, and therefore prefer having an order in the common way without being printed on a sheet of paper, and take the same away to get a letter written by the above person whom they pay for that purpose. We have also orders for the express use of the Irish, printed in red, to be transmitted to Cross Pool. The Liverpool postmaster states that he fills up the form for Ireland, where the party wishes to send the money, and the money orders printed in this form (as before stated), are sent over without further expense than the single rate of postage.

Have you seen the return presented to the House of Commons relating to the Money-order office?—No, I have not.

Look at that return. [*The return was handed to the witness.*]—This is a copy of one that was sent to me from the House of Commons: certainly no account is kept of the Money-order office in the General Post-office.

Should you have any difficulty in furnishing to the House of Commons, from the records of your office, the information which is sought for in that order?—The only difficulty would be the time it would take in making up the account; there would be no other difficulty; such a return I am proceeding with at the present moment; I will make it as complete as I possibly can, but it goes into much detail.

Is your office under the roof of the Post-office?—No, it is in Noble-street; it never was in the Post-office at all, nor have we any sort of allowance; the only assistance we have is receiving and sending the orders under official forms; we pay our own clerks, our own stationer, and rent, &c., in fact, every expense connected with the office.

What number of clerks have you?—Four; their salaries amount to £205 a-year; the rent is £50 a-year.

What have been the profits upon the average for the last few years?—I average them from about £235 to £240 to each proprietor; but my partner, Mr. Watts, can, if necessary, more fully explain that when he arrives in town, as he keeps the account.

What situation does he fill?—He is one of the presidents.

Does the management of this Money-order office occupy much of the time either of yourself or Mr. Watts?—Only in the middle of the day; but I seldom do more than attend to any complaints that may come from the Postmaster-General, or the Secretary, or anything of consequence that may occur. Mr. Watts attends between the hours of morning and evening duty when he has no public duty to perform.

You hold some other situation in the Post-office?—Not any other, except superintending president; I was formerly one of the clerks of the roads.

You receive compensation for that?—I do.

Did not the Commissioners for the Revenue Inquiry object to the system upon which the establishment was conducted?—They did.

Has any alteration been made in consequence of that recommendation?—Not any; I have seen the report of the Commissioners recommending that the profits of the Money-order office should be carried to the Revenue, and discontinued.

Should you see any objection to making it an immediate part of the Post-office establishment?—Not any; of course I am their officer, and it is my duty to obey; there would be no difficulty about it, and I think I can point out an easy way of management supposing it to be made an official concern.

State any suggestions that occur to you.—For instance, supposing the postmaster in any country town was to pay £20 on account of money-orders drawn upon him; at the expiration of certain periods, when he was required to remit to the General Office, he might return these orders as so much revenue; he would have no other means of doing it, supposing it was an official concern.

Then the public would be liable to the losses in that case?—Of course; we have sustained very heavy losses, I cannot say to what amount, in the course of a number of years; but one instance I remember in the postmaster of Sheerness, twenty-five years ago, when we lost three hundred and odd pounds by his running away; at that time the money-orders were not so limited: the postmaster used, on the occasion of shipping putting into Sheerness, to remit prize-money from that port to a considerable extent.

There were three partners in the establishment at the time the Revenue Commission inquired into the subject?—There were; it must have been a Mr. Desborough, who is since dead.

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No. 1.
D. W. Stow, Esq.
July 13, 1835.

That vacancy has not been filled up?—Yes, by Mr. Faulkener, who is also dead; it rests entirely with the proprietors, as I stated before; the six clerks of the roads made an offer to my Lord Walsingham, by the senior clerk Mr. Edmund Barnes, to undertake the issuing of money-orders; these six persons misconducted the scheme, and great confusion arose, which induced Mr. Barnes to make an offer to myself, and Mr. Slater, to become partners with him to carry it on, since which time we have had Mr. Desborough, Mr. Watts, and Mr. Faulkener, as partners. Mr. Desborough, Mr. Slater, and Mr. Faulkener are all dead, and it is now confined to Mr. Watts and myself.

Is the consent of the Postmaster-General necessary in case of a partner being admitted?—No, not at all; we have never considered that necessary; it is more of a private nature, both with respect to the management and controlment of the clerks.

Are any of your clerks also Post-office clerks?—One person we employ after he has done his duty at the Post-office; we pay him £30 a-year; but it does not interfere with his official duty. Many of the young men engage themselves in merchants' counting-houses in the middle of the day to occupy themselves as well as they can; and this is a very deserving young man.

Have you any other observations to make?—No; but if in going over the papers I should find anything that would throw light upon the subject, with permission, I will send it.

No. 2.

Thursday, December 22, 1836.

Charles Wagstaff, Esq., was called in, and examined as follows:

No. 2.
Charles Wagstaff, Esq., 22d December 1836.

What situation do you hold at the Post-office?—Superintendent of the Foreign Office.

What are the duties of that situation?—Various. To check the accounts of the office generally; to make returns of the Revenue to the Receiver-General, and send copies of the same to the Accountant-General; to superintend the whole business of the department, and report, as occasion may require, to the Secretary.

Are you acquainted with the system of registration of letters which is established in France?—No further than with such as they send to us. They send over a letter-bill, upon which is entered the addresses of the letters and the number of each; and they acknowledge the receipt of those forwarded from this country.

Have you any system for the registration of foreign letters in England?—Yes.

Will you explain what that system is?—It is merely to take the address of a letter in a book of registry, and then give a receipt to the party tendering it, charging the amount of postage and also the charge of the registry, half-a-crown: formerly it was a guinea outward, and five shillings inward, now it is altered, and we charge half-a-crown on all.

This system is only applied to foreign letters at the post-office?—Only to foreign letters.

There is no power of registering an inland letter?—I believe not.

Are many letters registered under this system?—Very few, indeed; and since the late convention with France, which came into operation in July last, they do not appear to have increased considerably.

How long is it since the alteration was made in the charge?—In July last.

And there is no great increase in the number?—There is a very trifling increase.

Are the public generally aware of this power of registration?—It was in July made known publicly by a printed notice from the Post-office to all the deputy postmasters, that foreign letters might be registered, and that the charge for the registry would be half-a-crown in this country, and the double postage, whatever that postage might be, for France.

Are you aware whether in France the registration of letters is not very general?—I have understood that it is very general.

Have you understood that a large revenue is derived from the additional postage charged upon that registration?—I have heard so.

Do you know what the charge now made in France is for the registration of letters for England, whether it is higher or lower than what is charged here for the registration of letters for France?—It is difficult to say: in France the charge depends on the weight of the letter.

Is not it considerably higher in this country than in France?—I should think, taking the average, it is much the same. Instead of charging half-a-crown for the registry, as we do, they charge double the postage of the letter or packet. Upon a letter weighing heavily it would be enormous, but upon a single letter ours is the higher. Merchants frequently send heavy packets of bonds, bills, and, occasionally, jewels; upon such the charge for France is very high.

When you say that, from the mode in which they are charged in France, the charge is in some cases more and in some cases less in France than it is in this country, it is presumed that the greater part of the letters are either single or double letters?—Those coming from France are generally single or double letters; but those we send registered to France are frequently much heavier, and the charge is very high for registering, because we receive the French charge as well as our own, and the whole of the postage, both English and French.

No. 3.

December 22, 1836.

Samuel Johnson, Esq., was called in, and examined as follows:—

No. 3.
S. Johnson, Esq.
22 Dec. 1836.

You are Superintendent of the Inland Department at the Post-office?—I am.

Will you have the goodness to state to the Commissioners whether any system of registration

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No. 3.
S. Johnson, Esq.
22 Dec. 1836.

of inland letters is at present established at the Post-office?—There is, as far as regards letters absolutely containing cash.

Will you describe the manner in which a money-letter is received at the Post-office?—A letter containing cash, tendered at the Post-office as a money-letter, is received and registered, and a receipt is obtained from the party upon its delivery.

No fee, or additional charge, is required of the party bringing a money-letter?—None whatever.

Would you take a letter, containing bills, as a money-letter?—Certainly not.

Should you see any objection to the system already in force with regard to money-letters being extended to other letters, containing inclosures of value?—The applications at the Registry-office would be so exceedingly numerous, that I conceive it would interrupt the business to the extent of rendering it impossible to dispatch the mails in the evening, or the letter-carriers in the morning, at the usual period.

Do you conceive, if a small charge was made for registering letters, that that would not be a sufficient check to prevent the business of the Post-office being unduly interrupted by improper applications?—It must depend a great deal upon the amount of that charge.

Do you happen to be aware of the system which is practised in foreign countries, especially in France, with regard to the registration of letters?—Not exactly.

Have you ever heard that a considerable additional revenue is derived to the state from the charge made for the registration of letters?—I have heard that a very considerable charge is made for registering letters; but I have never heard the amount of revenue derived from it.

If the charge was sufficient to prevent any persons, except those who had really letters containing inclosures of value, from registering them, do you conceive that the business of the Post-office would be unduly interrupted?—We are so pressed for time, that even the addition of 200 or 300 registered letters would interrupt our proceedings very much.

Do you mean that it would interrupt your proceedings if no additional assistance was given you in the way of clerks?—Exactly so.

But if additional assistance were given to you, which probably would be reimbursed to the Revenue by the charge put upon those letters, your objection would then cease?—I think it would be impossible to do it to any extent unless a separate office was established for that purpose.

Do you believe, then, that this privilege, even with a rate of charge upon it, would be very extensively made use of by the public?—I think not, unless the charge was of a very moderate description.

Would it not considerably facilitate the registration of letters, if it was laid down as a rule that no letter to be registered was to be received after a certain hour?—Certainly.

If that rule was laid down, and if a separate office was established for the registration of letters, do you see any material practical difficulty in the way of a system of registration being established?—As regards the dispatch outwards, I think it might be effected.

Would a system of registered letters give much additional trouble in the transmission of the letters through the country, where the letters come to be sorted?—Very considerable; it would increase the duties in all the branches.

Then it would require a considerable addition to the establishment in different parts of the country?—There would be more difficulty, probably, in the country offices, from the short time they have for making up the mails, than even in London; but the surveyors can speak better to that than myself.

Does that observation apply to many places in England?—I should think to most of the commercial towns.

Did it ever occur to you that some system of registering letters, by numbers or otherwise, might be adopted, which would simplify the business and diminish the trouble?—I think some system of that sort might be adopted, simplifying it a little more than the present mode.

You have stated that you conceive the chief difficulty in the way of registration would be in the registering of letters not in London, but in country towns, especially in those places where there was not much time given between the registration of the letters and the departure of the bag?—I think there would be difficulties in both cases; but certainly it strikes me, much more in the country than in London.

No. 4.

Friday, 24th November 1837.

William Bokenham, Esq., examined.

No. 4.

W. Bokenham, Esq.
24 November 1837.

What situation do you hold in the General Post-office?—Superintending President of the Inland Office.

How long have you held that situation?—Since the 10th of October last.

Were you connected with that department of the Post-office before?—Yes, for the last 17 years.

In what capacity?—In different capacities; last in that of vice or junior president.

When letters supposed to contain cash are put into the Post-office, are they registered?—They are.

Are they registered without "money" being written upon them?—Yes.

If it is supposed from their weight that there is money contained in them?—Yes, from their weight or feel.

Are any registered which do not contain money?—No, I think not; if any, they are very few indeed.

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No. 4.
W. Bokenham, Esq.
24 November 1837.

What is the average number of registered letters passing through the Post-office daily?—About 350 through the Inland-office.

Have the goodness to describe the manner in which those letters are registered?—A money letter given in at a receiving house, and its contents made known to the receiver, is entered by the receiver on his letter-bill—it is then wrapped in the letter-bill, and sent in the paid letter-bag to the General Post-office. The opener of the bag is held responsible for the safety of that letter until he has obtained the signature of the money-book clerk upon the letter-bill itself. The money-book clerk enters it in a book called the general money book, which is numbered; he also writes the address on an official cover and encloses it in that cover. The money letter in the cover is handed to the clerk of the division, who gives his signature for it, and makes an entry of it on the slip which is the waste-book, as it may be called, of the division (every thing being recorded upon it), and again on the letter-bill going to the town to which the letter is addressed. After that he puts it into the box with the other letters for the same place (tying them up in a bundle) ready to be dispatched.

Does this process enable you to trace a letter so registered till it arrives at its destination?—Very well indeed, the check is perfect; nothing can be better.

Are any of those letters lost?—Very few; on an average, I should say, not two in a year.

The money letters that have been lost at the Post-office have generally been not registered letters?—Just so.

Letters which in fact they do not find to contain cash?—If a letter has been found to contain cash it scarcely can be lost, except through carelessness, in which case the person in fault would be called upon to make it good, or otherwise be dismissed the service.

If a letter be put in at Charing Cross without being delivered to the office-keeper, but slipped into the box containing cash, that letter, as soon as it is discovered to contain cash, would be put among the registered letters?—Certainly, immediately.

Suppose an application is made to the Post-office for a letter which is alleged to be lost where it was not registered, are there any means of ascertaining whether, in point of fact, that letter has been or not lost in the Post-office?—There are no particular means, a general inquiry is instituted and every office searched.

Have you any means of ascertaining whether the letter asserted to be lost has been put into the Post-office?—We have not.

Every receiving-house in London may register to a certain extent?—Yes.

Should you register a letter that in fact contained bank notes if it contained no cash?—We should not.

Why do you make that distinction?—The sovereigns are apt to escape from the letters, they cut through the paper frequently: it is not at all an unusual circumstance for a sovereign to be found on the floor of the office; in fact there are many so found.

Would it not be practicable to carry into effect a more general plan of registration which would enable the department to ascertain whether such letter had been received at the Post-office, and in that case to trace that letter?—I think it would.

Have the goodness to state to the Commissioners any means that occur to you for carrying into effect such a plan?—I think, in the first place, it would be necessary to limit the time for giving such letters in charge.

What limit, in point of time, do you think would be desirable?—I should say they ought not to be received after four o'clock.

Do you mean at the receiving houses?—Yes, in any part of London.

Do you think, in the event of making the system of registration far more general, it would be necessary to limit the number of receiving houses where such registration should take place?—I think it would.

How far would you limit the number of receiving houses?—I am not exactly prepared to answer that question, but I would have the receiving houses fixed in situations convenient to the public and to ourselves, so as to enable us to receive all the registered letters in good time at the general office.

Do you believe that if there was a system of registration introduced by which the public were enabled, at a moderate charge, to register letters put into the Post-office, so that they might be traced in case of loss, the public would avail themselves to a great extent of such a system?—They would if it were attended with a moderate fee.

What would you think a moderate fee for registering such a letter?—From threepence to sixpence; but I think it would be better to limit the fee to threepence up to a certain hour, and an hour afterwards to let it be sixpence.

You would say threepence up to four o'clock, and sixpence from four to five?—Yes.

Do you believe that mucn additional labour would be cast upon the Post-office by the introduction of a more general system of registration?—I think it would, provided it was generally adopted.

Would it be necessary to have a separate department in the Post-office for the entering of those letters?—I should think it would if the increase was very great.

Do you apprehend that the charge which you state as being a reasonable charge for registering letters would pay for the additional labour?—Yes, it would considerably more than pay.

With respect to the post-offices in the country would much additional assistance be required there with respect to those registered letters?—The time being limited I do not think they would require so much additional assistance in the country offices.

The question refers not only to the letters put in there, but the transmission of letters in those called "Forward Offices;" would not there be additional labour there?—Certainly, it would be necessary for the postmaster (provided the system was generally adopted) to have further

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No. 4.
W. Bokenham, Esq.
24 November 1837.

assistance, as he would have to make two entries of every registered letter passing through his office.

Upon the whole are the Commissioners to understand that it is your opinion the more extensive system of registration you have described might be introduced without any greater addition to the establishment of the Post-office throughout the country than would be repaid by the fee which you consider reasonable for the registration?—That is my decided opinion.

Do you contemplate in this scheme of registration which you say you think the public would be disposed to avail themselves of to a considerable extent, insuring to the public, on the part of the Post-office, any sums of money which are contained in those letters?—No, certainly not.

Then if a letter is lost the public will have no benefit from the registration?—An inquiry could be immediately instituted, and most likely the person who had taken it would be discovered, there being a perfect check from the time the letter was received till it reached its destination.

Do you think it would be objectionable to make the Post-office liable for small sums sent through the office?—That is already provided for by the Money-order office, which, I apprehend, cannot be dispensed with.

Do you see any objection to the Post-office undertaking, on the part of the public, the duty now performed by the Money-order office as a private establishment?—I do not.

Will you describe to the Commissioners the system on which the Money-order office is at present conducted?—I will, to the best of my ability; but I am not very well acquainted with that office. I understand, for a sum under 10*s.*, a fee of 6*d.* is demanded to insure it; the money-order, however, being drawn on a sheet of paper, the person insuring is enabled to write his letter upon it; consequently, a poor man sending 10*s.* 50 miles from London would be able to send it at a postage of 8*d.* and a fee of 6*d.*; in point of fact, it would cost him about 1*s.* 1½*d.*, as he receives in addition a sheet of paper for his 1*s.* 2*d.*

Do you mean that facilities are afforded by the Post-office to the Money-order office which enable them to transact this business at a cheaper rate than they would otherwise do?—Certainly.

If a poor person wishes to avail himself of the Money-order office he must go to the General Post-office; he cannot do it at a receiving-office?—No, except at the branch office, Charing Cross, and at some of the out-offices in the environs.

What is the largest sum they will undertake to transmit through the Money-order office?—I think it must not exceed five guineas.

Do you know what the Money-order office charges on sums larger than £1?—Eight pence on the pound; in addition to which, when it exceeds the sum allowed by the Act, the party sending the money is obliged to pay for the stamp.

Even if the registering system which you recommend should be introduced into the Post-office, if the Money-order office remains as it is, with the advantages in the nature of postage allowed to it by the Post-office, it would be able to transmit the sum of 10*s.* into the country cheaper than the Post-office would if it were a registered letter?—It would.

And the person putting the 10*s.* into the Money-order office would have the additiona advantage of having its safe arrival insured?—He would.

Is there a Money-order office at every Post-office in the country?—Nearly every one. I believe there are some few towns in which the deputies are not agents.

Do you know whether the whole of the business of the Money-order office is carried on by persons in the department of the Post-office, or whether they have a separate establishment of their own in point of clerks?—As regards London, I can answer the question. Mr. Watts is the proprietor of the Money-order office, he is one of the presidents of the Inland-office, and he employs his own private clerks. With the exception of one clerk and himself, they are all unconnected with the Post-office.

If a man sends through the Money-order office, he pays only single postage on his letter: if he enclosed a sovereign in the letter, and registered that letter, he would have double postage to pay for the letter?—Yes.

Supposing it were thought desirable that the Post-office should undertake the business of insuring small sums transmitted in letters from one part of the country to another, do you think that insurance should be connected with a system of registration, or made a separate part of the establishment?—I should say it ought to be entirely unconnected with a system of registration, and for this reason: it would be necessary, if we insured every registered letter, to see the contents of the letter in the first instance, which would be both inconvenient and objectionable to the public.

Do you think the system at present adopted by the Money-order office could be easily undertaken by the Post-office itself, on account of the public?—I think there is not a doubt of it.

Do you believe that, if a good system of registration were generally established for letters, at a reasonable rate of payment, the public would be much disposed to pay more in order to have the amount of the sums conveyed in those letters insured?—I do not think they would.

In registering letters, should you propose that the person who put the letter into the office should have an acknowledgment from the office that the letter was received?—It would be better that he should; but I am scarcely able to form an opinion upon the subject. I cannot judge of the extent to which the system of registration might be carried.

Upon the office delivering a money-letter to an individual now, do they take any acknowledgment?—They take a receipt for it.

If you were generally responsible for every registered letter, up to the value of £1, for instance, would there be any great objection, on the part of the Post-office, to that?—There

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No. 4.
W. Bokenham, Esq.
24 November 1837.

would. A person might bring a letter with a farthing in it, and afterwards say that the farthing had been substituted for a sovereign, if he knew we were responsible. I have seen several cases of the kind—shillings and farthings enclosed instead of sovereigns.

Supposing the responsibility did not apply to the contents, but to the letter itself, would your objection be removed?—I think there could be no objection to the Post-office being responsible for the conveyance of the mere sheet of paper.

No. 5.

24th November 1837.

Mr. *William Holgate* examined.

No. 5.
Mr. W. Holgate.
24 November 1837.

What situation do you hold in the Post-office?—President in the Inland Department.

Have you been occasionally in charge of country post-offices?—I have.

Supposing a more general system of registering letters was introduced into the Post-office so as greatly to increase their number, do you apprehend that any great difficulty would exist in passing those letters through what are called the Forward-offices of the country?—No, I should think not in the larger offices; perhaps it would be requisite to have additional clerks, but in the smaller ones the postmaster could do it with the greatest ease.

Do you imagine that any increase of establishment would be necessary in consequence of an augmentation of the number of registered letters in any of the post-offices throughout the country, except in some of the Forward-offices?—No, I should think not.

Have the goodness to describe to the Commissioners what those cases are, in which an increase of establishment would be, in your opinion, necessary?—I will speak of Birmingham, which is the large office I have principally seen: there the duty is from five o'clock in the morning till twelve at night, with only time for the clerks to go out to get their meals, each in his turn.

Do you mean that at Birmingham the clerks are kept in the Post-office from five o'clock in the morning till twelve at night?—Yes, and frequently later. I was down at several offices at the commencement of the railroad, and I was frequently backwards and forwards at the Birmingham Office. The principal clerk there informed me that, since the conveyance of the bags by railroad has taken place, the clerks were there from five o'clock in the morning till twelve at night, and frequently one in the morning.

Do you mean the same clerks?—Yes, the same clerks; with merely time to go out and get their meals.

How many clerks are there at Birmingham?—I think six.

Are they paid by the Post-office?—Yes.

With reference particularly to the increased duty which would be thrown upon such an establishment as that at Birmingham, by an augmentation of the number of registered letters, would it be considerable in your opinion?—I think it would be considerable, because it is a large mercantile town, and the letters are of more consequence than in such a town as Brighton, where there might be an equal number, but not of the same nature.

At Birmingham, would there not be some increase of duty, in consequence of the necessity of sorting the letters passing through to other places?—Yes, there would be a great increase of duty, as they must be taken in and registered by the clerks appointed to do that duty, and signed for by others, whose duty it would be to enter the address upon the different bills, and see them safely deposited in their respective bags.

There are other offices described as forward-offices, where you think it would be necessary to increase the establishment, in case of the increase of registered letters?—I think it would be necessary in all the large Forward-offices, such as Birmingham, Exeter, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool, &c., because there are mails coming in and going out at all times of the day.

Do you think there would be any difficulty on the part of the Post-office, if a certain increase of establishment were allowed in carrying into effect an extended system of registering letters?—No, I think not. I cannot say to what extent the additional labour might be carried, because I cannot at present form an opinion as to the number of letters which the public might be induced to register.

Do you believe, if a moderate fee were asked of the public for registering letters, they would be induced to resort to it to a considerable extent?—I think they would.

Do you think it would pay the amount of the increased expense of the office?—I think it would.

What do you think would be a reasonable charge for registering a letter?—Sixpence, perhaps; persons sending a letter containing a great deal of property, would be very willing to pay that or even more; others, if the charge were small, would avail themselves of the means of registering a letter they were anxious to secure the conveyance of without its containing property, so that the registration would not be confined to money-letters.

Do you think it would be necessary to limit the time of registered letters being put into the Post-office?—Certainly.

What limit would you impose?—I think they should not be taken in later than five o'clock, as, in the event of a great number being registered, the disposal of them might tend in a great measure to delay the dispatch of the mails, as they must be registered by the clerks appointed to that duty, and signed for by others, whose duty it would be to enter the address upon the different bills, and see them safely deposited in their respective bags.

Would it be necessary to limit the number of places in London, where such letters should

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No. 5.
Mr. W. Holgate.
24 November 1837.

be received?—I think if they were confined to the branch-offices we have in London, it would be sufficient.

How many are there of those?—Four; Charing Cross, Lombard-street, Vere-street, and the Borough.

At present, money-letters are received at the General Post-office till six o'clock?—Till six at the receiving-houses, and seven at the chief office in St. Martin's-le-Grand.

No. 6.

24th November 1837.

R. Smith, Esq., examined.

No. 6.

R. Smith, Esq.
24 November 1837.

You are the Superintending President of the Twopenny Post-office?—Yes.

Have the kindness to state to the Commissioners what is the present system of registration of cash letters which is now in use in the Twopenny Post-office.—All cash letters, whether delivered in charge by the public, or discovered at the receiving-houses, are entered in the proper office; are signed for by the delivering letter-carriers: the letters are accompanied with receipts, and the letter-carrier obtains an acknowledgment from the party to whom the letter is addressed: these receipts are returned to the office by the letter-carrier, and are preserved for some years. When the letter is delivered in charge at the receiving-houses they are entered by the receiver on the bill. I have brought with me one of the letter-bills we use, to show the nature of it [*Producing it*].

Supposing they have jewellery?—Our instructions to the receivers are, to enter letters containing jewellery, lace, and letters containing cash, but not bank notes or bills.

Does it frequently happen that letters which are registered are lost?—No: I have taken an account of the number of registered letters passing through the Twopenny Post-office, and find that last week they amounted to 2,171; that will average about 100,000 a-year. Out of that number I may venture to tell the Commissioners there certainly have not been more than two failures, and one only of recent date, which is now before the Postmaster-general; so that it would appear that the registration is very satisfactory as far as it goes. And it is to be remembered those letters may have passed possibly through a thousand different persons' hands. We have upwards of 400 receiving-houses, upwards of 600 letter-carriers, and between 50 and 60 clerks, sub-sorters, and stampers, all of course in their turn having access to those letters. Out of that number there have not certainly been more than two failures: from my own experience I may venture to say it has not exceeded that on an average for many years.

Do you think there would be any difficulty in extending the system, so as to give the public the option of registering their letters?—No; that never appeared to me to have any great difficulty attached to it, if confined to letters inclosing property.

Do you think the public would avail themselves of it to any extent?—That I am doubtful of; but I think it would be desirable to give them the option of it: at present the public are hardly dealt with. We do not take charge of letters containing bank notes, and yet they must send them by the post: if they had the power of registering them at a cheap rate, and they did not choose to avail themselves of it, I do not think they would have any right to turn round on the Post-office and complain in case of loss.

What do you think would be the proper charge for registering a letter by the Twopenny Post-office?—I think it should be very small. The public have now the benefit of sending letters of value to the extent of 100,000 a-year, and we make no charge for them. I would apply it to letters containing bank notes, or any other they might think it desirable to register, and I think 1*d.* for each letter quite enough, if we are not made responsible for its contents; if we are made responsible, it becomes quite another question, and would require much consideration at what rate per cent. the Post-office should charge.

Do you think it would be objectionable to make the Post-office responsible?—I do; it would cause a great deal of delay in the first instance, and might cause a great deal of litigation. If we are responsible, we must satisfy ourselves of the contents of the letter before it is posted, and the Deputy-postmaster or letter-receiver must be clearly satisfied of the amount of property inclosed when he receives the letter in charge; this would cause much additional trouble and delay.

Suppose the responsibility did not attach to the amount of property, but to a limited sum, and that the Post-office was responsible to the sender of a letter for that amount?—Then I think he ought to satisfy himself that the alleged contents were in it when it was put into the post.

The supposition was that the responsibility of the Post-office had nothing to do with the contents of the letter; but for the contents of any letter which was registered up to a limited amount, do you think there would be an objection to the Post-office being made responsible?—I think it would be open to fraud on the Post-office; for I have known instances where the sender has put copper coin in a letter, and afterwards stated that it contained gold, and charged the Post-office with committing the fraud.

How could there be fraud on the Post-office when the question was only on the delivery of the letter itself?—If a letter is put in, and we are not satisfied whether it contains property or not, then it appears to me it holds out an inducement to fraudulent persons to say "Oh! my letter contained a sovereign, you are answerable for the safe delivery of my letter;" I, therefore, think if the Post-office is to be made responsible, they should be satisfied that the letter or packet contains real value when put into the post.

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No. 6.
R. Smith, Esq.
24 November 1837.

Supposing the insurance on the part of the Post-office applied, not to the contents of the letter, but to the letter itself, would your objection then exist?—No, certainly not.

In that case, do you think the Post-office would be liable to fraud?—No, I do not think they would, for they must neglect their duty if they did not deliver the letter.

And it would be of very easy proof whether they did or not?—Certainly; there can be no difficulty in making the Post-office responsible for the delivery of a registered letter, if they are not to be made responsible for its contents.

Are you prepared to express any opinion whether the system of registration which you have described is applicable to the General-post as well as the Twopenny-post?—I should say, in the General-post it would afford much more accommodation to the public than in the Twopenny-post, because the amount of property sent through that department is so much larger; but I apprehend it is not intended to prevent the public having the benefit of entering their cash letters without the payment of a fee, the same as they have at present; the General-post registered letters passing through London are nearly to the same extent as those passing through the Twopenny-post office daily, so that they avail themselves to the extent of 2,000 a-week for letters going in and out of London; it therefore appears to me that it would not be right to deprive the public of the benefit of registering this description of letters without the payment of a fee.

When a person puts a letter into the Twopenny-post to be registered, do you give the receipt?—No.

Do you think it would be an advantage if a receipt was given, or would it be an inconvenience to the Post-office?—I think it would be rather an inconvenience; it might be a security to the public, but it would entail additional trouble and time on the deputy or receiver. That the thing is practicable there can be no doubt; and probably if the Post-office is to be made responsible for the safe delivery of a letter, it would be necessary for the protection of the Post-office that it should be done, for a party may come and say, I have registered a letter and it has not been delivered, I therefore claim the amount of the penalty. I therefore do consider that, if the Post-office is in any way to be made responsible, it must for its own security give receipts.

You take a receipt when you deliver a letter, though you do not give one when you receive a letter?—Just so; it might be done in both cases, but it must be made a rule of office, and there should be some stamp or form introduced for the purpose.

If a more general system of registration were introduced into the Twopenny-post office department, would it be necessary to limit the number of receiving houses for such letters?—No, certainly not; I would let the public have the full benefit of all the receiving houses for registering their letters.

Not even it case it were made necessary to give a receipt?—No, it does not appear to me that the number would be so great as to render that necessary; if it were so great, the additional payment for the registration would compensate for the additional expense.

How can you trace a letter which has been registered in case it is lost?—There is no difficulty in this: supposing a letter is delivered in charge at a receiving house, it is entered on the lette-bill; and when it arrives at the sorting office, the officer who takes the collection makes himself responsible by signing his name to the bill. He gets an acknowledgment for it from the money letter clerk, and the latter gets the signature of the delivering letter-carrier, who obtains an acknowledgment from the party to whom it is addressed, so that there can be no difficulty in tracing such a letter.

If a letter is put in at any receiving house, the person at that receiving house takes a note of it?—He enters the whole of the address on the letter-bill, but his instructions do not require him to make any other memorandum; some of the letter receivers, for their own satisfaction, copy the addresses into a private book, but if the receiver makes it a rule to enter the letter on his letter-bill as soon as he has received it in charge, it is not necessary that he should do more, because the letter-bill remains at the General office for some years, and the officer's signature to the bill is a complete discharge to the receiver. If the number were to increase to any extent, it would become necessary to have more assistance to make the entries, as the addresses have to be copied sometimes three, or even four times over.

No. 7.

Saturday, 16th December 1837.

Lieut. Colonel *Maberly* was further examined as follows.

No. 7.
Lt.-Col. Maberly.
16 December 1837.

Has the subject of the introduction of the system of registration of letters been lately under the consideration of the Post-office?—Yes; the Postmaster-general, after an interview with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was very anxious that some system should be devised, consulted with me, and ordered me to carry it into execution, as upon inquiry it was found that the regulation of the office, which at present is, that all letters which evidently contain coin should be registered could be extended to all letters indiscriminately.

You mean that the public should have the power, upon paying a certain sum, to have any letter registered, that they may desire?—Yes.

What sum do you propose should be paid by the public for the registration of a letter?—We thought that 3*d*. would be a very fair sum.

Can you state to the Commissioners what is the system pursued with what is now called a money-letter at the Post-office?—The principle is this: that every person through whose hands a letter passes, from the time it is given to the receiver, or put in the Post-office, till the

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No. 7.
Lt.-Col. Maberly.
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time that it reaches the hands of the party to whom it is addressed, shall receive a discharge for this money-letter; such is the principle: the details by which this principle is carried into effect in the system of registration we propose are as follows: The receiver, or Post-office, to give a slip of paper to the party registering the letter on his payment of the registry fee, with the name of the party to whom the letter is addressed upon it. This letter will be delivered to the clerk of the money-book, who will give a discharge to the window-man for it by entering it in a book, and will sort the letter in question to the particular division to which it is to go. The clerk of the division will receive the letter, will enter it upon the letter-bill, sign the money-book, and enclose the letter to the postmaster; the postmaster will send back the bill, which will be considered a receipt that the letter has been duly received, and will send it out by the letter-carrier to the party to whom it is addressed, with a printed receipt, which the party to whom the letter is addressed will sign and deliver to the letter-carrier. The postmaster, after a certain time, will send back this receipt to be filed in the London office. The division clerk will enter it also on what they call the slip.

Do you believe that if this system were applied to the registration of letters generally, it would give almost complete security?—I do not see that any system could give greater security than this. You have the party who originally posts the letter getting an acknowledgment that he has posted the letter which has been registered. You have this letter traced through every hand through which it must pass, till it gets to the party to whom it is finally directed; each party being discharged from the responsibility of the letter in its course to the individual who is to receive it.

Is a letter containing a sovereign charged as a double letter?—Certainly, any inclosure.

Is your system only intended to apply to letters containing cash?—To every letter indiscriminately.

Have you considered how this system is to be maintained through the Forward offices?—There may be some difficulty, and there will be a very great difficulty should those letters ever be numerous through the Forward offices, from want of time. I think that so long as they are within reasonable compass it can be easily managed.

Under the present system money-letters are transmitted as registered letters without any payment?—Those letters which are discovered to contain coin are registered without any payment.

Under the altered system which you proposed to introduce would that free transmission of money-letters be continued?—Certainly not; our proposition to the Treasury is to do that away. At the same time, I think we should continue it in the Twopenny-post for our own protection.

Do not you think it might be expedient to charge a less sum than threepence for registering a letter?—I am not prepared to give an opinion upon that point. Our recommendation is chiefly based upon the impression that you would not have a great additional quantity of letters registered over that which we now register in conformity with our own regulations. If we were to have a very greatly increased number it would put us to considerable inconvenience in the country offices.

Up to how many hours before the departure of the mail could you register letters?—It must entirely depend upon the number. In London we propose to fix four o'clock, in order that we may collect from the receiving-houses, and get all the registered letters in between five and six.

Do you propose to give the public facility for registration at every receiving-house?—At every receiving-house.

Do you think it would not be sufficient to have a certain number without extending it so far?—It would not give nearly the same accommodation. For instance, a merchant in Lombard-street having a great number of valuable letters to register, what an inconvenience it would be to him to send up to the Post-office.

Do you think it would be objectionable to render the Post-office liable for the safe transmission, not of the contents of the letter, but of the registered letter itself, in a small sum, say 40*s*. or 5*l*.?—It seems to me so.

What objections occur to you to such liability?—I do not see why the public should be called upon to pay to the individual for the negligence or fraud of one of its officers, when in point of fact it has taken, supposing the Post-office to do its duty, every possible precaution against such fraud. It seems to me, therefore, that you would be punishing the wrong party. As a compensation to an individual who has sent a valuable letter which is lost by the neglect of an officer of the Post-office, to offer him £2 or £3 is little short of an insult. Those are simply the two reasons I have.

Do you think it would be advisable for the Post-office to undertake the duties which are now discharged by what is called the Money-order office?—It could be very easily done, but I fear it would throw upon us a great deal of additional duty, and we have quite enough to do at present without anything further being thrown upon us.

That duty is now done by persons on a private account, and consequently, is found to be remunerative?—It is remunerative. The Commissioners will find a return of the profit of those gentlemen stated in a return that was made to them of the fees and emoluments received by different officers at the Post-office.

Do not you think that, in point of principle, it is objectionable that a private establishment of this description should exist in connexion with a public department?—Perhaps it would be more regular that the Post-office should undertake it. I have rather expressed my own individual opinion than anything else. I see no objection to it, except the one I have given, which may perhaps be called a selfish one.

Supposing the duties now discharged by the Money-order office were undertaken by the

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No. 7.
Lt.-Col. Maberly.
16 December 1837

Post-office, and a system of registration was established such as you have in contemplation, what do you suppose would be the best and cheapest mode for a poor man to send a small sum of money to another through the Post-office?—Under £2, according to the existing regulations, he can send a sum through the Money-order office at a much cheaper rate than he could by the system of registration which we propose to establish; and this entirely arises from the concession which has lately been made of charging only as single letters sent through the Money-order office, whereas a letter which would be brought for registration, and which contained money, would of course be a double letter, causing it to be more expensive to the individual sending it, than if he had gone to the Money-order office. At present, if it is £2 and under five guineas, the limit of the Money-order office, the price of the stamp on which the bill for the money is drawn, is charged to the party, consequently the Money-order office, between £2 and five guineas inclusive, might be more expensive. In most of the cases, however, if this office was transferred to the Post-office, it might be a question whether a stamp would be necessary; a mere transfer would be sufficient, as the postmaster who was ordered to pay the money, would be in general indebted to the Post-office. Whether the Post-office would be permitted to do this without drawing a bill for the sum in question, which bill must be on a stamp, is what I cannot take upon myself to say, as I do not know how far such a practice would be a breach of the stamp laws.

If the Money-order office was united with the Post-office, do you think the charge might be somewhat reduced from eightpence in the pound which is now demanded?—Much would depend, of course, upon whether a stamp would be necessary or not. If a stamp was unnecessary, I should say it might be largely reduced, and then we should do it much more cheaply; in addition to which, the business being done by mere transfer, and without the risk of any remittance of money as at present, the charge might be still more reduced, and yet the system pay its own expenses.

No. 8.

16th December, 1837.

No. 8.

George Louis, Esq. and W. Bokenham, Esq.
16 December 1837.

George Louis, Esq., and *William Bokenham*, Esq., were further examined, as follows:—

(*To Mr. Louis.*) In the event of an adoption of a system of registration for letters, do you apprehend that great difficulty might take place in their transmission through what are called the Forward-offices in the country?—I think there might be considerable difficulty, but I am not prepared to say that the difficulty would be so great that it might not be overcome by additional hands in some cases, and in other cases, by perhaps partial additional assistance.

In what would the difficulty mainly consist?—It would seem to me to consist in registering the receipt of the letter, and then making another entry for forwarding it on to the Corresponding office; but, perhaps, there might be something in the shape of covers in which the letters that are registered might be put at the first office, directed to the ultimate post-town, and that only the cover would be seen directed to the postmaster of that town, with a certain number. But all this would require, I think, a good deal of consultation with practical officers; and, unless the opinion of others would appear to render the thing perfectly difficult and prohibitory, I would advise, if the Government determine upon having a system of registration, that the practical officers should meet myself, or some other officer, at some place for a day or two to discuss the matter calmly and quietly over. I think that a plan might be hit upon that would effect a system such as might be desired; but it should be recollected (and I speak on a matter of this kind with a great deal of deference as to its practicability) our object hitherto has been to limit the time as much as possible at the Forward-offices that there may be no impediment to the transmission of letters from one end of the kingdom to the other.

Under the present system by which money-letters are conveyed, do you find that there is considerable difficulty in obtaining a receipt from the party who receives such a letter?—It has not for the last two or three years been in my province to know much about the transmission of money-letters; but when I was in the West of England, as surveyor of that district, I did not myself hear of there being any particular difficulty in it, but it is right I should say that money-letters are generally addressed to people in a humble sphere of life; and although merchants and bankers and great trading persons could have a sort of register of their letters at present under the money-letter system, by putting a small coin in the letter, they have resorted to it much less than might have been expected. Although it does not give the security of registry, still there is a trace of such a letter to be found in the different offices.

If a person writes "money-letter" upon it, and takes it to the office, does he get a receipt from the postmaster?—No: no receipt is given: the postmaster takes it in, and enters it, not upon the mere declaration of the party that it is a money-letter, but by satisfying himself, by feeling that it contains a coin of some kind.

Do you think, if the post-office gave a receipt in the first instance to the person putting it in, it would be objected to if they demanded a receipt upon the delivery of the letter?—I do not think it would be generally objected to: Mr. Bokenham will be able to say, as regards London, what the effect would probably be.

(*To Mr. Bokenham.*) What is your opinion upon that point—if, when a letter is put into the Post-office a receipt is given to the person putting it in, do you think the public would object to the Post-office demanding a receipt upon the delivery of the letter?—No, I think not: we should insist upon having a receipt. as we do at the present time for money-letters.

You now refuse to leave money-letters without a receipt?—We do.

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George Louis, Esq. and W. Bokenham, Esq.
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In the same manner that you now refuse giving up a money-letter without a receipt, might you not then fairly refuse to give up a registered letter without a receipt?—Certainly.

Upon the delivery of a money-letter you do not require the receipt to come from the person to whom it is directed, but from any individual in the house?—We endeavour to get it from the person if possible.

But in case he is out, you take it from some other person in the house?—Yes; in the case of bankers we never expect to get a receipt from one of the partners in the firm.

Since you have attended the Commissioners, have you further considered what system of registration it might be expedient to introduce into the Post-office?—I have, with reference to London.

Will you state to the Commissioners the result of the further consideration you have given to the subject?—I think the letters might be received, and a receipt given to the party bringing them.

At every receiving house? or would you have it confined to a few receiving houses?—I should rather have it confined to a few, in certain parts of the town. The form of receipt that I propose giving to the public at the chief office would be something of this kind [*producing a Form*]—filled up ready to hand out as the letters are brought in; the rest would be done by a stamp: consequently the window clerk would only have two figures to make in ink, which figures would refer to the full address of the letter in the register.

[*The witness delivered in the Form which is as follows:*]

General Post-Office.	General Post-Office.	General Post-Office.
REGISTERED, P. 50.	REGISTERED, P. 50.	REGISTERED, P. 50.
N. 1.	N. 2.	N. 3.
16 DEC. 16, 1837.	16 DEC. 16, 1837.	16 DEC. 16, 1837.

Page
No.

General Post-Office.

A Registered Letter, directed to
Mr.
received the above
postage

How would you forward the letter to its destination?—If I thought the letters would not be very numerous, I should prefer the present system of money-letters; but if they should increase too much, it would be better to send a list with the addresses to each town.

When you say you would carry it on upon the present system of money-letters, do you mean that you would enclose those letters to the Postmaster of the town?—Yes.

But in case of a great number of those letters coming, you think that would be attended with inconvenience?—It could not be done; it would be impossible.

Then you would enter them upon a slip of paper?—Upon a slip of paper—tie them up in it, and mark the amount of postage upon the outside, and deliver it to the division clerk, who would make an entry of it upon the Bill to Liverpool, simply saying, instead of so many letters, "One Registered Parcel."

Would you put the registered letters in the separate bag?—No, in the common bag; the list, after being checked by the Postmaster at Liverpool, should be returned to us as an acknowledgment of his having received the letters entered thereon.

And upon the delivery of the letter to the individual, you would take an acknowledgment—as you now do upon the delivery of a money-letter?—Yes, in the same way.

Do you think that would be secure?—I think it would be secure. Our present system has answered very well, and this is but a slight deviation from it.

Upon the present system, when you have registered letters as money-letters, have many of those letters been lost?—No, very few; some through dishonesty, but in almost every case the person has been detected,—in one or two instances by carelessness, but then the officer in fault has been called upon to make the contents good.

At present, in the Forward offices, when the letters are re-sorted, do they send back an account of the money-letters in the office?—The letters are inclosed in separate covers. For instance, take Hamilton; a letter from London to Hamilton would be sent to Carlisle, but the cover would be addressed to the Postmaster of Hamilton, the Postmaster at Carlisle would have nothing more to do with it than to put it into the Hamilton bag, making, at the same time, an entry of it upon the bill sent in that bag.

According to the present system, if a money-letter is lost, the question always lies between two individuals at the point up to which it is traced?—Yes.

Do you think the plan of registering by stamps which you have described to the Commissioners might be universally introduced in the country as well as in town?—I think not, except in the larger towns.

You think it ought to be confined to London and the larger towns?—Certainly.

For what reason do you think it ought to be so confined?—I think that the deputies in small towns and the General-post receivers would not pay sufficient attention to stamps.

What plan would you suggest in those small towns for the registry of letters?—That a small docket, containing the name and address, should be handed to the party, making it as

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simple as possible. Two words would be sufficient, the surname and the name of the town. Their own daily stamp would show the date.

(*To Mr. Louis.*)—For the purpose of passing the registered letters through the Forward offices, do you think it would be more convenient that the registered letters should be in a separate bag, or in the bag with the other letters?—I think a separate bag would be rather an impediment; the bags are now so very numerous and they would increase the number. It occurred to me, that the best mode to pass registered letters through the Forward office quickly would be, by their being enveloped in a packet from the corresponding office addressed to the ultimate office. At the Forward office they must still make a simple entry—perhaps the mere name outside, and the post-town. The name of the party to whom the letter is addressed may be put outside, and the post-town, and the cover addressed to the postmaster.

Would it not do if they copied the stamp in some way so as to identify the letter by putting G. P. O. and the number of the letter, with a mark so as to identify it? Would it be necessary to recopy the whole direction?—Not to recopy the whole direction, but simply the name and the post-town to which it was going.

What length of time do you suppose it would take to bring into operation a system of registration?—I am not exactly prepared to say, but I think that three months would be a large margin. I think it very desirable that the surveyors should meet myself or some other officer for two or three days, to discuss the matter thoroughly, and to draw up such a plan as they think may be best adapted to meet the object in view. From long experience I should recommend such a course, as I know the advantages that may be derived from a personal interview—one or two words dropped often give a new turn to the thoughts of a person on subjects of this nature.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ACCOUNTS.

No. 9.

Correspondence, &c.

No. 9.
Mr. Burrowes on the System of Registering Letters.
17 December 1835.

A Statement on the System of Registering Letters, as practised in Dublin, previously to April 1831.

THE registration of letters had existed in the Dublin Post-office some years antecedent to 1831, (the period of the junction of the departments of both kingdoms,) when it was immediately discontinued, without, it is to be feared, due inquiry being made into the system, or time taken to ascertain its practical results. As head of the particular department, where its working could be best known and appreciated, I can testify the benefit and security it is capable of affording to the public at large in the transmittal of property through the post-office.

There was this objection, however, to the principle as then acted on—the *extent* to which it was carried. It professed to take cognizance of every letter, not being a single letter, passing through the post-office. This I consider quite superfluous, and more than was necessarily required. As, for instance, fully three-fourths of the franked letters alone are, what is technically called, double letters, from the envelopes that cover them, and a much greater number, I am satisfied, contain no valuable property whatever. Instead of this, it would have been sufficient, I think, to apprise the public at large of the advantage intended for them, and then leave it to their own judgment, to avail themselves or not, of what a simple but well-digested plan could not fail to secure.

The practice being again about to be resumed, under the provisions of the 5th clause of the recent Post-office Act, I take leave, in contemplation of such an event and at his request, to submit the following observations to Mr. Gardiner on the subject.

And first of all, so far as this country is concerned, I should very much doubt the policy of the *additional* postage authorized by the Act. During the five or six years the system had prevailed here no such charge was ever made; and therefore I much question if it would not materially check, if not in many instances totally prevent, the public availing themselves of its advantages. Besides it might add (and with justice) to whatever feeling of disapprobation or dissatisfaction the withdrawal of the advantage had created, to have its restoration now clogged with any impost, however moderate or modified, in the shape of additional postage.

The prevalence of such an impost in the London office (where, I believe, it exists at present in the shape of a "fee of office") forms, in my mind, no just grounds for the adoption of anything similar in Ireland and for this, amongst other reasons—it is only, I believe, resorted to there, with *foreign letters*, containing very valuable enclosures, and then only in consideration of the facility with which the sender is thereby enabled to effect an insurance on the property so sent. But for this I doubt if the practice would ever have prevailed.

If security can be afforded to the public, in transmitting property through the post-office (and I have no doubt whatever it can), I think they have a right to it, without any additional charge beyond the legal postage to which ordinary letters are subject, inasmuch as it is fair to presume the Revenue can in no case be a loser, from the very nature of the letters likely to be sent as "registered letters." Whether the postage is to be paid, by either the sender or the receiver, they are sure to be released, which is more than can be said of the ordinary run of letters.

During the period the registration of letters prevailed in the Dublin office, it was optional with the public to pay the postage in the first instance or not, as they pleased. This led, as a matter of course, to the creation of two distinct checks—one for the paid, the other for the unpaid letters; and, coupled with the gratuitous act of the Post-office above alluded to, tended very materially and unnecessarily to add to the duty, as well as the number of hands requisite for its performance.

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No. 2.
Mr. Burrowes on the System of Registering Letters.
17 Dec. 1835.

In lieu of this I should recommend a different system. I would leave it to the parties themselves to decide what portion of their correspondence they were desirous should be treated as "registered letters;" and such letters I would have, in every instance, post-paid at the time of putting them into the post-office. This I should be disposed to make a "*sine qua non*" of the new regulation, limiting their receipt in Dublin to the hours of from 10 to 4 o'clock each day, and in the country to correspond with the arrival and dispatch of the mails. To such of the public as wished to avail themselves of the system, it would afford every legitimate advantage they could seek for or require, while it would tend very materially to simplify and render perfect the operation, and make it next to impossible for a letter of the description to go astray or be lost. But though I give this opinion on the necessity and advantage of having the postage paid in the first instance, I by no means desire it should be considered conclusive on the subject, that being a point more properly for the decision of others.

With respect to the general system for registering letters at the period alluded to, it embraced (as I have already stated) the two descriptions, paid and unpaid letters. The paid letters were received in the Paid-letter office, and a receipt given for each if required—the unpaid letters in a distinct office, and by an officer specially appointed for the purpose, who also gave a receipt for each if required. It had been the practice in the Dublin office, long prior to this, to enter the address of *all paid letters;* the single letters in one book, and the double letters in another, whether registered letters or not, it was all the same. At the commencement of the business each evening (and as often afterwards as occasion made it necessary), the double paid book and letters came into the Inland-office, where the latter were distributed by the junior officer round to the different roads, taking the initials of the officers attached thereto in the paid book, for such as belonged to each division, until all were disposed of. The addresses of those letters were afterwards entered on the back of the office letter-bill (*vide* the Letter-bill herewith, then in use) that accompanied the letters to the country. This bill each postmaster was bound to send back by return of post, stamped, signed, and dated, in proof that all so far was correct.

General Post-Office, Day of 183 .

		£.	s.	d.		Postmaster's Column. £.	s.	d.
Amount of letters to	Sum No. 1				Amount of letters as actually received from Dublin.			
	,, ,, 2							
	,, ,, 3				Additional charged by me on letters which were undercharged.			
	,, ,, 4							
	,, ,, 5							
	,, ,, 6							
	Total . . £				Additional charged by me on newspapers either written on or containing enclosures			
	Total sum for which I am accountable . . . £							

Stamp, sign, and return this Bill. Postmaster.

The unpaid letters *from* Dublin underwent somewhat a similar process. Besides being entered by the registry clerk in his book, they came into the Inland-office each evening in a locked box, and sorted according to the divisions or roads to which they respectively belonged, the letters for each road being accompanied by a document, in which were entered the name and address of each letter; this the officer at the road signed, first satisfying himself it corresponded with the number, &c., of the letters he had received, and it was then returned to the registry-clerk as his discharge, so far as the Inland-office was concerned. The *total* number of those letters was then also entered on the back of the postmaster's letter-bill above alluded to. A similar memorandum of both paid and unpaid letters was made on the office slip.

The letters from the country to Dublin underwent very nearly the same routine. The names and addresses of all double paid letters were entered by the postmasters on the backs of their letter-bills, which, to distinguish them, were of *red paper*—the unpaid on a different document, called the Registry-bill, and the bag openers at the different tables (*eight* in number, from A to H inclusive) were held responsible for the due disposal of those letters, both one and the other; and to make this the more certain, they were obliged to initial (what were called Table-sheets, now disused, and which contained the names of the different post-towns, the bags from which were opened at each respective table) opposite each town, for such bags as they had opened, so that before the morning business had terminated, it could be seen by whom any given bag had been opened, and whether all had regularly arrived or not. In addition thereto, the "table-sheets" alluded to contained a general abstract of the business performed at each table; the amount, for instance, of postage on letters for delivery in Dublin, the number of double, paid and registry letters, and their disposal; and finally, those sheets, after being made up and balanced, were obliged to be vouched by the signatures of all the parties engaged at the different tables, not only as a proof that everything was correct, but as a reference in case of future inquiry. If anything went wrong or astray, it was sure to be detected and corrected ere the morning business had terminated.

The *franked*, not being recognised as registry letters till after their arrival in Dublin, were necessarily treated differently. Their selection did not take place until after they had passed the *inspector of franks;* but as no record had previously been taken of their address, that duty devolved on the letter-carriers, in the manner hereinafter pointed out.

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No. 9.
Mr. Burrowes on the System of Registering Letters.
17 Dec. 1835.

The registered letters each morning for Dublin thus consisted of three kinds or descriptions, the *taxed*, the *paid*, and the *free*.

For the taxed letters, four letter-carriers were specially selected to receive them, in the first instance, from the Inland-office (the amount of postage being first told as on ordinary letters, and entered in charge against the letter-carrier's office); one took the letters from A and B tables, another C and D, the third E and F, and the fourth G and H.

In like manner there were two other carriers for the paid, and two more for the free letters, each of them taking charge of the entire number of letters belonging to four tables.

PARTICULARS of the Receipt and Distribution of Double Taxed Irish Letters on the Morning of the Day of 183 .

	No. of Letters.		No. of Letters.	£.	s.	d.
		Delivered to				
Received from Tables A B		Nos. 1				
		2				
		3				
		4				
		5				
		6				
		7				
		8				
		9				
		10				
		11				
		12				
		13				
		14				
		15				
Alphabet,		Alphabet,				
Total,		Total,				

PARTICULARS of the Receipt and Distribution of Double Free Irish Letters on the Morning of the Day of 183 .

	Letters.		Letters.
		Delivered to	
Received from Tables A		Nos. 1	
B		2	
C		3	
D		4	
E		5	
F		6	
G		7	
H		8	
		9	
		10	
		11	
		12	
		13	
		14	
		15	
Alphabet,		Alphabet,	
Total,		Total,	

The letter-carriers, who thus took charge and became responsible for those letters, were each provided with books (*vide* herewith) in which they entered the total number each had received, and next the particular walks or carriers amongst whom they had been distributed for delivery, satisfying themselves, of course, that the latter, in point of number, exactly corresponded with the former; and the other, by whom those letters were ultimately delivered, were obliged to detail the name and address of each of the three descriptions of letters they had received in books with which they were provided for that purpose (*vide* herewith).

Date.	No. of Letters.	From what Post-town.	To whom.	Residence.	Table Letter.

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No. 9.
Mr. Burrowes on the System of Registering Letters.
17 Dec. 1835.

The paid letters from the country passing through Dublin were signed for at the different roads in the mornings, in the same way as those of the preceding evening from the paid letter office, and the taxed and free were deposited in the registry-clerk's box, with a ticket from each officer of the number so deposited, and they all came back the same evening, their names and addresses being in the mean time regularly entered, together with such as had been received by him from the public in the course of the day.

In the day time two additional officers were employed to transcribe fairly into books, for the purpose of reference, one the address, &c., of the unpaid registry letters taken from the dockets sent up by the postmasters, the other the double paid letters, taken from the red paper letter-bills.

No letter leaving Dublin for England would be allowed to be registered at all; and those coming from England could only be attempted after the arrival of the mails, and therefore hurriedly and imperfectly performed.

From the foregoing statement this conclusion may be very fairly come to; that the paid letters alone enjoyed the full benefit and advantage of the registry system, whether from Dublin, for Dublin, or passing through Dublin; the unpaid letters only partially so, as applying to those leaving Dublin for the country, and those from thence for the Dublin delivery. The free letters can be hardly said to have enjoyed the benefit of the system at all.

Originally the number of the public who *voluntarily* availed themselves of the system were comparatively few, and therefore it would be difficult to say the extent to which it is likely to be made available in future; but I should say, with the restriction to which I have alluded, *three additional hands* would be amply sufficient for its due execution. But there is one thing necessary to state, from the total change that has taken place in the manner in which the duty of the Inland-office is now performed, from what it had been at the period alluded to, it will require serious consideration to devise a plan or system to meet the altered state of things.

To James R. Gardiner, Esq., &c., &c., JOHN BURROWES.
17th December 1835.

No. 10.

Correspondence.
No. 10.
Sir Edward Lees to Mr. Gardiner.
29 January 1836.

DEAR SIR, *General Post-office, Edinburgh, 20th January* 1836.

I PRESUME you may by this time have reached London from Liverpool, and therefore return you the paper which you left with me, and on which you desired my sentiments for the information of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry. I can have no difficulty of conveying to you my opinion on that document, on the general sentiments stated in which my views differ but little from those of the gentleman (Mr. Burrowes) who framed it. Upon the principle of establishing a system of registry of letters containing property and confided to the Post-office —upon the importance of such a system, on its practicability and its efficacy, my sentiments are so well known, and are so explicitly set forth in page 797 of the Nineteenth Report of the Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, that I need scarcely do more than refer you to that Report, and to add that my opinion remains unchanged and unchangeable; and that, both in Ireland and in this country, I consider such a system perfectly practicable and essentially necessary, far more so in Scotland than it ever was in Ireland. How far, under the more extended and more complicated machinery of the British Post-office, such a measure would be equally practicable in London, and in some of the larger commercial towns in England, I am not prepared to say; it must depend upon local and contingent circumstances, and be the result of experiment. I am a great advocate, however, for the experiment; and my impression is, that it would be both practicable and successful. Founder, as I was, under the Postmaster-General, of the scheme which was successfully tried for eight or nine years in Ireland, I had it carried there to an extent (as the enclosed paper states) which I certainly would not be inclined again to force into operation; but this very extent of the Irish experiment will, I hope, have had its use in enabling the Commissioners to form some data on which to calculate the chances of success that might attend a similar trial in England.

With respect to the registry of outward letters from either Dublin, London, or Edinburgh, there can exist, I apprehend, no doubt whatever. I consider it perfectly practicable, and by no means likely to militate with the dispatch and expedition indispensable to the proceedings of the Inland-office, even, I should hope, in London. The disposal of the registry books, to which Mr. Burrowes refers, and which I left behind me in Dublin, is certainly greatly to be regretted; for, in addition to their loss as a record of evidence liable to be appealed to in the courts of law, I lament the want of them at this moment as depriving the Commissioners of undoubted testimony of what had been done each day with reference to those letters which reached the capital from the interior, and were delivered under the registry system of check in Dublin, and passing through Dublin; but my memory enables me to state, and I think pretty accurately, that the number of letters thus checked, and alphabetically registered according to their addresses, averaged 800 daily; and that, on Mondays, they may have amounted to 1,100. This number also passed under all the arrangements of security with an establishment of about 40 clerks and 45 letter-carriers.

In the office in London there are 80 clerks and 280 letter-carriers; so that it would be fair to admit that 2,200 letters might be checked off in London by the officers of the Inland-office, being but double the number that were disposed of in Dublin. But, whatever difficulty or interruption to the business of the Inland-office might be experienced from the registry

Correspondence.

No. 10.
Sir Edward Lees to Mr. Gardiner, dated 29 January 1836.

system, the material trouble would not be in that, but in the letter-carriers' office; and there, it would seem, there is a force exceeding by six times what there was in Dublin; and that consequently, where in the one case the addresses of 1,100 letters were subdivided to and entered in books by the letter-carriers, 6,888 might undergo a similar operation in the other case, without assigning a greater number than 24 letters to each letter-carrier. But is there any danger of having any such number as this to deal with, limiting, as I would, any renewed trial to the registering of letters containing *bonâ fide* property, either in specie, bank notes, or other negotiable securities?—Certainly not. I do believe the greatest number of such letters would never exceed 500, and most probably would never amount to anything like that number.

On the propriety, in the event of any new experiment being made, of subjecting registered letters to an impost, a good deal may be alleged both for and against it. If there is to be a tax at all, it should be a very small one, and intended more as a penalty against unnecessary applications than as an indemnity for expense on the part of the public. The applicant for registry should obtain a receipt for his letter; and, if a tax is to be imposed, I would carry the principle of accommodation to the utmost extent by taking the address of the applicant, and apprising him afterwards of the safe delivery of his letter. Suppose the tax were to be but 2*d.*, and that the letters amounted to 500 daily, it would produce a revenue exceeding 1,200*l.* a-year, more than amply abundant, in my judgment, to defray every increased expense that would be required for conducting the registry system over the United Kingdom. In Dublin, unless the establishment there is very much curtailed since I left it, I do not think that any increase of officers whatever (except the registering clerk) with the system thus confined to property-letters, should be called for; and in Edinburgh, I should be prepared, whenever the Postmaster-General should deem it necessary to make the trial, to assist his lordship without the augmentation of a single officer, unless the letters shall exceed 100 in a day; and then one officer would be sufficient, unless the letters should exceed 500.

Impressions similar to these induced me to dissent from Mr. Burrowes when he proposed to close the Registry-office at so early an hour in Dublin as four o'clock P.M. Under the limited operations to which I would confine its arrangements, I see no necessity for abridging one moment of the public accommodation; and, as the post-paid letter-office in Dublin is kept open till six o'clock P.M., so I would extend the hour for registering property-letters to the same hour of the day. But I would require the registering clerk, in place of (as under the former system) taking his letters into the Inland-office, and there obtaining separate receipts for each letter, I would require him to enclose, in sealed covers, the letters for each town, directed to the deputy postmaster himself; the individual letters to be all stamped and taxed by the registering clerk, and the aggregate tax of the whole to be taxed on the outside of the postmaster's packet; each packet to contain a docket of the addresses, to be certified and returned by the postmaster by the first post. By this means all access to the letters will be cut off from the officers of the Inland-office, and scarcely any interruption, and no possible delay, produced to its general arrangements. This plan, it is true, would impose great responsibility on, and great confidence would have to be placed in, the registering officer; and a man of tried integrity would have to be selected.

I also dissent from Mr. Burrowes's recommendation, when he proposes, as a necessary measure of registration, that the postage of the letters should be paid beforehand; and I am the more averse to such a restriction if it is intended that any additional charge should be imposed upon the act of registering. In this respect I would leave the public perfectly unfettered, as contributing much to the success of the principle by affording greater facilities to the public accommodation.

But, as a necessary preliminary to the revival of the registering system at all in Ireland, I would deem it essentially necessary to restore the arrangements which I left in force in the Inland-office there for the distribution of the morning duties, and the resumption of those table-books and sheets which Mr. Burrowes states have been laid aside and disposed of. The practice of these books, the regularity of the system they established, the security they afforded to the passage of the letters from the bag-openers, through the stampers, taxers, and sorters, to the letter-carriers, constituted the only complete check that can be effected on property so fractionally divided, and passing rapidly and in great numbers through many hands in a few moments. Individuality of responsibility was narrowed, through their means, to a very circumscribed circle; and a letter could not have passed through any hand without that hand being known, and at any time, if necessary, identified afterwards. I offer this opinion, not in theory, but from the experience of one who learned the first rudiments of his official education in passing through all the practical duties of that very branch of the department; and, as such, I have no hesitation in asserting that I know of no system so well calculated to obtain the objects of security and dispatch combined with simplicity.

I am, dear Sir, yours very faithfully,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq.

EDWARD S. LEES.

No. 11.

No. 11.
Sir Edward Lees to Mr. Gardiner.
8 December 1837.

SIR, *General Post-office, Edinburgh, 8th December* 1837.

IN reference to the communication which you addressed to me on the 4th inst., and my letter of acknowledgment of the 7th inst., I beg to state, that not having in my recollection precisely the information which on former occasions I may have transmitted to the Commissioners of Inquiry respecting the system of registration established in the Post-office

Correspondence.

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Sir Edward Lees to Mr. Gardiner.
8 December 1837.

of Ireland, I fear I must enter somewhat more into detail on the present occasion than the Commissioners may deem necessary.

The system I left behind me in operation in Ireland was one of very considerable extent, and it was one of progressive growth in its principle. It embraced in its arrangements of security every letter that was over single, whether it was a paid or an unpaid letter, whether it was a franked or an unfranked letter.

1st. It protected letters from England to Dublin.

2nd. It protected letters from the capital to every post-town in the kingdom.

3rd. From every post-town to the capital.

4th. From every post-town to every other post-town, passing through the capital.

5th. From every post-town to every post-town, and not passing through the capital.

Under this registration there were daily accounted for, and alphabetically recorded in the secretary's office, from 800 to 1100 letters.

It was never intended by myself in recommending this system to the Postmaster-general, nor was it ever held out to the public, as certain security for its property against robbery. No checks that human wisdom has ever yet devised can guard the public against plunder if individuals are prompted, regardless of detection with the chance of escaping punishment, to violate their trust and embezzle what may be committed to their care. But the Irish arrangement did this much—it enabled the Postmaster-general to determine at once by whom a fraud was actually committed, at least through whose negligence it was committed; and this had so far the effect of attaining the object in view, that, if my memory rightly serves me, during the nine or ten years that the system was persevered in, but two instances of loss occurred, and the parties were immediately ascertained. When I say but two instances of loss, I mean of letters that were actually registered somewhere during their transit through the Post-office. It is true that letters containing single Bank notes were stated on different occasions to have been purloined, but in such cases the letters had not come under the operation of registering, having been so folded by the writers of them to evade double postage as to escape the discernment of the postmasters in the country. But the value of the measure is best attested by the immense reduction which it produced in the payment by the Bank of Ireland under bonds of indemnity annually on half bank notes lost in transmission by post, and by the immediate cessation of continual expenses previously paid to the Post-office solicitor for his professional charges in searching into the particulars of asserted losses. If I remember correctly, the savings alone exceeded by three times the amount at which the registering system was carried on.

Nothing I consider could be more simple than the arrangements of the Inland sorting-office in Dublin, under which this system was conducted. Its table-books daily exhibited the name of every person who opened each mail-bag, who stamped each letter, who sorted it, and who finally delivered it to the letter-carrier. Of this class there were eight of the most experienced and the most expert selected, who had charge of the subdivisions of the letters by streets; and this measure was resorted to in preference to continuing the practice previously in force of having the street assortment prepared in the Inland office, because, 1st, It was presumed the letter-carriers were themselves best acquainted with the localities of the city, and consequently the assortment was more expeditious; and, 2ndly, It put an end to a practice at once both tedious and dangerous, as leading to fraud by continual changing and exchanging of letters between the carriers, occasioned by the incorrect sorting in the Inland office from inexperience or neglect. This too was done without the sacrifice of any necessary check on the letter-carriers' office as either a security to the revenue of postage or of the letters delivered in under registry; because, whilst the charges were given in from the one office to the other at different periods of the morning, and in various amounts, the aggregate of the entire charges of the carriers was made to correspond with the sum charged in the balance sheet of the Inland office, and the gross number of registry letters delivered into the office was obliged to be proved by the individual books of the letter-carriers, in which their exact addresses had to be entered by themselves.

This was the system in force so far as the Inland and Letter Carriers' offices were concerned regarding *inward letters* for the capital.

The arrangements connected with the *outward letters* were still more simple, if possible. An officer styled the "Registry Officer" was in attendance from an early hour in the day until 6 P. M. Every person offering a letter to be registered obtained a receipt, which was stamped with the day of the year and month, and a number from 1 to 480 denoting the post-town the letter was addressed to. The address of the letter was immediately entered in a book, and from that book it was copied into a separate sheet or list, of which there were eight in number, corresponding with the roads or divisions of the Inland office. The letters were deposited in a secure box in the Registry office, also divided into eight divisions; and at a certain hour in the evening the registry officer went into the Inland office with his eight slips, or sheets, with the addresses of the letters entered on them. The box was opened, the letters were taken out and compared, and the slips signed and certified by the clerk of each road and returned to the registry officer. The letters were then entered and charged against the deputy postmaster.

Although the very extended scale to which the system was carried on in Ireland may serve as an important guide to the Commissioners and the Postmaster-general in demonstrating to them what may be practicable in the event of its introduction into the post-offices of Great Britain, or of its revival in Ireland, I would by no means recommend its adoption in either country on such a general plan; and I would modify and render more simple some of the arrangements for conducting it, without, however, at all affecting its principle. I would, in the first place, confine the registry exclusively to letters containing property, and perhaps to

Bank notes, or any negociable paper. I am not sure whether, at first, I would encumber the system by registering specie-letters or valuables, such as trinkets. The Post-office stands in a very different position now towards the country from what it did when the mail-coaches were first established. There were then few stage or any public conveyances, and consequently very limited opportunities of transmitting small parcels through the country. Conveyances are at present every where to be found, and under the system of booking much greater security afforded.

In how far, however, even on this reduced plan, as compared with what was done in Ireland, it might be practicable to carry on in the London office a system of registration, I feel it presumptuous in me to hazard an opinion, totally unacquainted as I am with the interior arrangements of the Inland office there, and the mode in which its various duties are performed; particularly those of the morning, or inward mails. What was practicable in Dublin may be totally impracticable in an office of such magnitude without creating a delay to the correspondence that would be felt as a grievance. I have never seen the working of that office; I neither know its strength of hands nor how its duties between the bag-openers, stampers, sorters, chargers, and deliverers are arranged so as to establish identity, indispensable to the carrying on of any system of registry. But I should hope, as far as outward letters are concerned, no difficulty would be experienced, either at the chief office or the principal district offices, in receiving, up to a certain period in the evening, letters, and passing them through the Inland office under the necessary checks of registry. Indeed it might be deemed advisable to increase the number of district officers for the greater accommodation of the public; for I would not extend the system indiscriminately to the smaller class of receiving houses through the city. Perhaps, too, the Postmaster-general might, in order to counteract the effect of too great a pressure on their officer in the evening, or of resorting to the alternative of greatly augmenting the establishment, have recourse to a measure which in Dublin I was prepared to recommend for adoption in case of necessity; namely, that all, or some portion of all, the letters put into the receiving houses for the interior, should not only be stamped with the day of the month, but taxed and assorted into separate divisions corresponding with the divisions of the Inland office; and that on reaching St. Martin-le-Grand the letters should thus pass at once to the separate roads; thus not only saving much time, diminishing the number of hands through which the letters have to pass, but leave at disposal a considerable number of officers to assist, if necessary, in conducting the operations of the registry system. The letters might be made up in bundles with the particular road or division indorsed on each. In contemplating such a measure as this in Ireland, it occurred to me as very immaterial, either to the individual or the department, so far as any useful check was answered, so as the stamp designated the day of the month, whether the impressions and the tax were put on at the receiving house or at the principal office.

I am equally ignorant of what changes may have been made in the arrangements of duty of the Dublin office since I left, or what may be the existing regulations, to authorize me to hazard an opinion as to the most practicable and least expensive mode of re-establishing a system of registry. I have ever regretted the abolition of the important checks I left in force in that department; at least I lament that, in abolishing what was found in practice, it was not deemed necessary, at all events, to remodel it, and bring its operations within such limits as would have extended security to letters containing property. Of its practicability there can be no question, but of its expediency and propriety the Postmaster-general must have been the best judge. But I am persuaded strong impressions must have been made on the mind of the Duke of Richmond to have determined his Grace to have abolished it.

Of its practicability in this department I have no doubt whatever, although I shall have to contend with difficulties, that present themselves neither in London nor Dublin, from confinement of space, a very crowded inland office, the frequent arrival and dispatch of mails, the assorting of inward and of outward mails, at the same time and by the same officers. In any attempt therefore to introduce it here, I would by all means proceed gradually, and aim at the perfection of the system, as I did in Ireland, step by step. I would at first recommend that it should extend only to letters transmitted to and from Edinburgh, and the General Post-offices through the kingdom. I would not include either the sub-offices or penny posts, except those in the neighbourhood of the capital. After a fortnight's successful trial, I would then extend it to Glasgow and the different offices (about 80 in number) with which the Glasgow office has direct accounts. I would next have it applied to all post towns in the interior, the postmasters of which have accounts direct with each other, and leave, as the final experiment, the application of the system to letters denominated "Forward Letters."

In the protection of letters of this class I perceive the only serious difficulty that can be encountered is applying the necessary checks without delaying the mails in their transit through the country, or detaining over a post the letters themselves. In preference to doing either of these, I would suggest that letters coming under this head should not be allowed at all to wander through the cross posts, but should be transmitted direct to Edinburgh or Glasgow, and registered in either of these towns, as the case may be, and from thence carried on under the proper checks. The delay of a post I consider of very minor importance compared with the advantage of giving security to private property; and I am sure the public at large will entirely unite with me in this sentiment. Besides, when individuals are taught to feel confident that their remittances are to be preserved from plunder, they will very readily arrange the period of their remittances so as to prevent disappointment to their correspondents.

In conducting a system such as I propose, it is not possible to calculate on the exact expense that may result from it. That can only be ascertained from experience, resulting from the extent to which the necessities of the public and its demands may require. But I am quite sure the expense must be trivial compared with the advantages of security, if not more than

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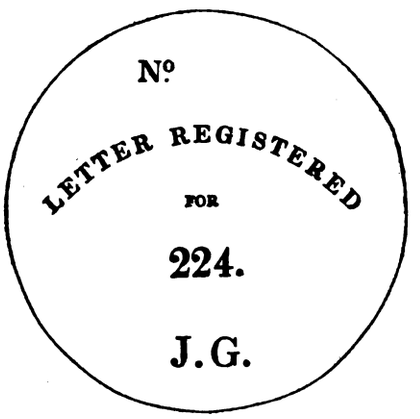
No. 11.
Sir Edward Lees to Mr. Gardiner.
8 December 1837.

exceeded by the actual saving of legal and other expenses now incurred; but I shall at any time be prepared to undertake it at an expense here, at first, not exceeding £150 a-year, to pay one additional officer £100 per annum, and £25 to each of our present bar-clerks for their increased trouble and responsibility.

I would suggest that, in this city and in Glasgow, the principal offices should be the only places of registry; that the public should be allowed to have their letters registered until one hour before the dispatch of the particular mail by which the letter is intended to be forwarded; that the registering officer, on coming on duty each morning, should prepare a certain number of receipts on a card of this form:—



That the one side of this receipt shall simply exhibit two numbers, the upper one signifying the numerical order in which the receipt was given, and the centre figure or figures denoting the post-town to which the letter is intended to be sent. The figures to be written in black or red ink, according as the letter may or may not be post-paid.

The reverse side of the receipt is to bear the official stamp of the day of the inland office.

The individual applying to have his letter registered I propose should, with his letter sealed, deliver a duplicate of its address, signed by himself. I do this with a view to guard against errors in making the necessary entries in the registry-books, arising from the hurry and pressure of different people applying at the same time.

I propose that, as there was in Dublin, there shall be here a registry-box, with divisions corresponding with those of the inland office; that it shall be secured immoveable from the ground by any one but the registry-clerk; that there shall be envelopes of parchment of this size and form:—

REGISTERED LETTERS.

To

The Postmaster

of

Dumfries.

Postage 17*s.* 6*d.*

or larger when necessary, into which all the letters for each town shall be placed; that each envelope shall be sealed with a seal, such as,

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Correspondence.

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Sir Edward Lees to Mr. Gardiner.
8 December 1837.

that in this seal there shall be a moveable figure, to be known only to, and used by, the registry-clerk himself, and to be inserted in the seal and impressed the last moment before he surrenders up his parcels for dispatch. This precaution suggests itself as a security to the registry-clerk against subsequent abstraction, and attempted counterfeit of the envelope seal after the parcel has left his possession. He will previously have taken the sealed envelopes to the different roads, and obtained the signatures of the responsible clerks to his lists for their receipts. Before quitting his office each day, he will have to sign the registry-book and impress the last page of entries with a distinct impression of the day-stamp and his seal.

Each envelope will contain a schedule, in which will be recorded the addresses of the letters themselves, which schedule will have to be admitted and certified, or returned objected to, according to circumstances, by the particular postmaster to the registry-office.

The proceeding in the country post-towns is very simple. It can only extend to the procurement of a receipt from the party himself, or the known messenger of the party, and retaining possession of that receipt.

The regulation for the transmission of registered letters from the country to Edinburgh need not be less simple. A receipt will have to be given, entries will have to be made, a schedule of addresses will have to be prepared, and then enclosed in envelopes, sealed and addressed to the

President of the Inland Office,
G. P. O.,
Edinburgh.

That a system of this description cannot be carried on without some, and experience may prove a very considerable, expense, I am ready to admit; and it must naturally become a question whether individuals immediately profiting by its facilities and accommodation should contribute to this expense, or whether the funds of the Post-office should in part or exclusively defray it. Were I asked my opinion on this point, I should say certainly the Post-office should pay the entire charge, not only because I am of opinion that the department will be fully indemnified in the saving of legal expenses and other charges it is now subject to for prosecutions and for inquiries, but because I feel, putting every other consideration of the public interests out of view, that, when the law gives the Postmaster-general an exclusive monopoly of conveyance, when the public cannot remit their remittances and letters through any other channel than the Post-office, and if they do so they are subject to many penalties, I do consider that it is the imperative duty of the Postmaster-general, having once received within his custody a letter with money in it, to adopt every means, no matter what the expense may be, to deliver it safely to the person it is intended for, and has been paid to carry it. But let us just consider what the increased expense can possibly be. I can anticipate no necessity for any large increase of establishment of officers; and therefore the remaining expense can be only called for on the ground of stationery and printing, and envelopes and sealing-wax. Now one pound of the best sealing-wax, which costs just 3*s.*, will enclose 400 envelopes.

A sheet of parchment, the skin costing 2*s.*, will form twelve covers, that is, 2*d.* for each; but each cover may carry from one to three letters. It is, therefore, satisfactory to know that the smallest possible charge against the public will fully indemnify the Post-office, if not overpay it; and I confess I am inclined to suggest that a charge of not more than 2*d.* or 3*d.* may be demanded on the registry of each letter, more that it may operate as a guard against unnecessary applications, than as a means of remuneration to the department for its outlay.

But under no circumstances can I recommend that for any losses that may be incurred under the best-regulated system of registry, either by open violation on the highways, by fraud, or by official neglect within the department, shall the Post-office revenue be held legally responsible, or be liable to repayment, whether the sum be £2 or £200. I consider such liability on the part of the Post-office would be highly dangerous to the public interests; a door would be thrown open to perjury and fraud, and lead to demands that the whole receipts of postage would not pay. The Post-office can do no more than establish and follow up every practicable check, and incur every necessary expense in affording expeditious and secure transmission and delivery; and if it does thus much, I think it performs everything the public has a right to demand or expect. But this I would do in addition; I would reserve a power in the official bonds of all the officers and deputy postmasters, holding their securities responsible for the amount of all losses sustained by individuals by reason of fraud or neglect; the obligation to be enforced at the discretion of the Postmaster-general. I am of opinion that this dread would operate as a very salutary check both against fraud and carelessness; for even in the case of fraud, I am convinced that individuals will oftentimes be deterred from committing the act from considerations towards their patrons and friends, when insensible to all personal feelings of remorse or apprehension of self-disgrace.

I need only observe, in addition, how unacceptable to the public, and how futile any system of registration must prove, if encumbered with any but a very moderate tax; that for nearly two years past a regulation for registering foreign letters has existed in this office, but not available to the public at a less fee than half-a-crown. The consequence of this has been that, during that period, only one letter has been transmitted registered.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq., EDWARD S. LEES, *Secretary.*
&c., &c., &c.

P.S. I am sensible in suggesting, for objects of security and expedition, envelopes of parchment, I have selected an expensive sort of cover. In working the system, perhaps, envelopes of strong paper, with parchment bands (such as I send herewith), may be found to answer all purposes. E. S. L.

Correspondence.

No 12.
Sir Edward Lees to Mr. Gardiner, recommending that the Registration should be confined to Bank Notes. 10 December 1837.

No. 12.

SIR, *General Post-office, Edinburgh, 10th December* 1837.

IN my letter of the 8th inst., not having assigned any reason for suggesting that, on any experiment of re-establishing a system of registration of property letters, that at first it should be confined merely to letters containing Bank notes, and should not be extended to letters conveying specie or trinkets, I beg to mention that I was induced to recommend this, in order that, on the first operation of the measure, it should be as exempt, as far as possible, from every incumbrance that might endanger its success. It occurs to me that, with the friction of carriage, letters containing moveable enclosures, occasioning weight, might afford protection to persons disposed to be fraudulent, by enabling them to abstract such articles, and sheltering themselves under the possibility of accidents of carriage. We have had repeated instances of the escape of specie from letters, occasioned by friction and its consequences; ~~besides, both~~ in Ireland and in this country, one pound notes are in circulation, and I think it will be the less important to the public to have recourse to the post for the transmit of specie. In England, therefore, it may be a matter for consideration whether or not all remittances under £5 (the smallest Bank note in circulation there) may not be transmitted under a new system of money-order office, by abolishing the present establishment altogether, and giving the present incumbents, who have the management and profit of it, compensation for their losses, making it entirely a public Post-office concern; and, by great moderation in the charges of remittances, enable the public more generally to take advantage of it as a medium of sending in safety all sums under £5.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq.,
&c., &c., &c.

EDWARD S. LEES, *Secretary.*

No. 13.

Mr. Watts on the Establishment of the Money Order-office. 17 October 1837.

No. 13.

SIR, *General Post-office, 17th October* 1837.

I BEG to acknowledge the receipt of your letter requiring a copy of the minute, or other document, of the Postmaster-General sanctioning the establishment of the Money Order-office, and also a return of the profit of the concern for the year 1836.

I have to state, respectfully, that I am not in possession of any paper or document of any kind relative to the establishment of the office; it however obtained the sanction of the Postmaster-General in the year 1792; and I take the liberty to refer you to the Eighteenth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, p. 154, wherein may be seen the date of its establishment, and other particulars.

The profit the concern yielded in the year 1836 amounted to £578. 13*s*. 4*d*.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq.
&c. &c. &c.

R. WATTS.

No. 14.

Lieut.-Col. Maberly stating that no portion of the Profits of the Money Order-office has been carried to the Account of the Revenue (since Mr. Stow's death), nor at any other period, 2d January 1838.

No. 14.

SIR, *General Post-office, 2d January* 1838.

I BEG to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th ult., and to state for the information of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, that no portion of the profits of the Money Order-office has been carried to the account of the Revenue since the death of Mr. Stow, or at any other period.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq.
&c. &c. &c.

W. L. MABERLY.

No. 15.

Return of the Number of Cash Letters registered in the Inland Office, London, from 5th January 1834 to 5th January 1837; also an Account of

No. 15.

A RETURN of the Number of Cash Letters registered in the Inland Office, London, from 5th January 1834 to the 5th January 1837.

An ACCOUNT of the Number of such Letters ascertained to have been lost within the above period, and stating whether the Lost Letters contained Property, with the Aamount, Value, or Description of the Property, and stating also whether any and what portion of this Property had been recovered.

the Number of Lost Letters within the above period, stating the amount or value of Property lost, and whether any portion had been recovered.

Date.	Amount, Value, or Description of the Property.	Whether any and what portion of this Property had been recovered.
24th November 1834. .	One Sovereign	None recovered.
30th May 1835	A Locket.	
17th August 1836 . . .	Two Sovereigns	
1st September 1836 . .	One Sovereign	

Inland Office,
30th December 1837.

T. W. Bokenham,
Superintending President.

No. 16.

No. 16.

Return of the Number of Cash Letters registered in the Twopenny Post-office, London, from 5th January 1834 to 5th January 1837; also an Account of the Number of such Letters ascertained to have been lost within the above period, with the amount, value, and description of the Property they contained, and stating whether any and what portion of such Property had been recovered.

A RETURN of the Number of Cash Letters registered in the Twopenny Post-office, London, from the 5th January 1834 to the 5th January 1837.

271,479

An ACCOUNT of the Number of such Letters ascertained to have been lost within the above period, and stating whether the lost Letters contained Property, with the Amount, Value, or Description of the Property, and stating also whether any and what portion of this Property had been recovered.

Date.	Amount, Value, or Description of the Property.	Whether any and what portion of this Property had been recovered.
24th May 1834	One Sovereign	None recovered.
12th October 1834. . .	Half Sovereign	
22d January 1835 . . .	Ditto	
11th June 1835	Two Sovereigns	
5th April 1836	One Sovereign	
29th May 1836	Ditto	

Twopenny Post-office,
30th December 1837.

R. Smith,
Superintending President.

No. 17.

A RETURN, as far as it can be made out, showing the Number or Average Number of Letters registered in the General Post-office, Dublin, during each Year the system of Registration was in force there.

Class.	Description of Registry.	Average Number of Letters registered in each of the undermentioned Years:— 1823, 1824, 1825, 1826, 1827, 1828, 1829, 1830.	Total for Eight Years.	Remarks.
1st	Unpaid Letters from Dublin and from Interior passing through Dublin.	27,258	109,032	This class commenced in 1827.
2d	Unpaid Letters from the Interior to Dublin.	120,500	964,000	
3d	Paid Letters from Dublin to the Interior.	45,122	360,976	For Class No. 3 no Books can be found; the average has been taken from the best information to be obtained from the officer engaged in that part of the registry.
4th	Paid Letters from the Interior to Dublin.	45,122	360,976	
5th	Paid and Unpaid Letters passing through Penny Post-office.	10,621	84,968	
6th	Paid and Unpaid Letters selected in passing through British Mail-office.	36,400	291,200	For Class No. 6 there never were any books; the registry was kept on slips, and consisted of Letters selected as being Double passing through the office from Great Britain.
	Total . . .	285,023	2,171,152	

Arthur Greene, *late Registry Clerk.*
James Curran.

Aug. Godby,
General Post-office,
Dublin, 6th January 1838.

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No. 18.

An ACCOUNT of the Number of Registered Letters which were *ascertained* to have been Lost during each Year the System of Registration was in force in the General Post-office, Dublin, stating in each Case whether it was alleged that the Letters so lost contained Property, and if so, giving the Amount, Value, or Description of the Property, and showing whether any and what part of this Property had been recovered.

No.	Where Posted.	Date.	To whom addressed.		Contents.	Result of Inquiry.
			Name.	Residence.	£. s. d.	
1	Clones . .	18 Jan. 1824	William Nixon Wright.	5, Erne-place, Holles-street.	1 5 0	Deputy at Clones paid the amount to the writer.
2	Dublin . .	27 Jan. ,,	Andrew Carty .	Killucan	10 0 0	Deputy at Killucan ordered to pay £1.
3	Clogheen .	13 Feb. ,,	C. Gilloghy . .	Chancery-lane, Dublin	5 0 0	Mr. Johnston, Inland Office, obliged to pay £5.
4	Tarbert . .	20 June ,,	John Hewson .	Stephen's-green, Dublin.	50 0 0	Half notes. This, with other letters, were taken out of the mail by post-riders on that line of road.
5	Miltown. .	16 June ,,	Mr. Staunton .	Register-office, Dublin	2 0 0	Officer stated on the docket the non-arrival of the letter, though entered. Wrote to Miltown, desiring to pay the sum lost.
6	Dublin . .	11 Aug. ,,	James Connelly	Dundalk	30 0 0	Protested bill. Wrote to postmaster to inform him he should be accountable for the contents.
7	Ditto . . .	28 Sept. ,,	Mr. F. E. Browne	Clare	Contents not stated.	Postmaster of Clare stated this letter was re-directed to Ballina, but observed no check. Ordered to pay the amount.
8	Ditto . . .	11 Feb. 1825	Thomas Conway	Rathdowney	5 0 0	Officer at post paid window. Ordered to pay the £5. Letter not entered on paid book, although a receipt was given for it.
9	Derry. . .	26 Aug. ,,	George Gwynne	Golden-lane, Dublin	2 0 0	This letter could not be traced beyond the Alphabet office.
10	Frenchpark	19 Oct. ,,	Mr. Dowdall. .	Daniel-place, Dublin	. . .	Half notes. Particulars not stated. Without effect.
11	Letterkenny	30 Oct. ,,	Dr. Bell. . . .	Hume-street, Dublin	2 5 6	Mislaid in the Carriers' office, where all trace was lost.
12	Dublin . .	26 Nov. ,,	Mr. Macklin . .	Monaghan	Contents not stated.	Result not stated.
13	Ditto . . .	3 Mar. 1826	Cath. Flanagan	Maryborough	1 10 0	Postmaster to pay the amount.
14	Ditto . . .	18 May ,,	Mich. M'Donagh	Clifden	4 0 0	Without effect.
15	Ditto . . .	10 Jan. 1828	B. Kennedy . .	Newtown Barry . .	1 10 0	Mis-sent to N. T. Limavady by Mr. Warburton, re-directed by deputy there, but could not be traced afterwards.
16	Ditto	5 Mar. 1829	Thomas Gill . .	Athlone	Post bill, amount not stated.	This letter surreptitiously obtained by some improper person in Athlone. Case handed to solicitor for his disposal.
17	Kilcullen .	27 Nov. ,,	Miss Kelly . .	4, Circular-road, Dorset-street, Dublin.	2 0 0	This letter lost in Letter Carriers' office. Case investigated by Sir Edward S. Lees. Letter traced to West, the letter-carrier, who could not account for it. Letter-carrier suspended. Entered on registry.
18	Moate . .	18 April 1830	Isaac English, Esq.	Bachelor's-walk, Dublin.	18 0 0	Letter supposed to be lost by negligence in Inland office. See Inland-office Order Book, 4th May 1830.

ARTHUR GREENE, *late Registry Clerk.*
JAMES CURRAN.

AUG. GODBY,
General Post-office,
Dublin, 6th January 1838.

No. 19.

Amount of Money sent through the Money-order Office in London from 6th January 1834 to 5th January 1837.

No. 19.

AMOUNT of Money sent through the Money-order Office in London from 6th January 1834 to 5th January 1837.

	£.	s.	d.
Amount of money sent through the Money-order Office, in London, from 6th January 1834 to 5th January 1835. . . .	12,966	14	5
6th January 1835 to 5th January 1836	12,736	12	4
,, 1836 ,, 1837	12,817	11	11
The amount paid in London within the same period.			
6th January 1834 to 5th January 1835	11,128	14	8
,, 1835 ,, 1836	10,758	7	1
,, 1836 ,, 1837	9,747	10	11
Expense of managing the money-order business, from			
6th January 1834 to 5th January 1835	485	10	11
,, 1835 ,, 1836	490	5	1
,, 1836 ,, 1837	491	12	9

Money-order Office,
2d January 1838.

R. WATTS.

No. 20.

Account of the Amount of Stamps used for Money-Orders, for the Three Years ended 5th January 1837.

No. 20.

An ACCOUNT of the Amount of Stamps used for Money-Orders for the Three Years ended 5th January 1837.

From 6th January 1834 to 5th January 1835	£452	6	0
,, ,, 1835 ,, 1836	425	4	0
,, ,, 1836 ,, 1837	391	13	0

(Signed) JOHN LAST.

No. 21.

No. 21.
Account of Poundage on Money-orders.
2d Jan. 1838.

	£.	s.	d.
Amount of Poundage received on Money-orders, from 6th January 1834 to 5th January 1835	2,099	1	9
Out of which the Postmasters receive for paying the Orders	940	13	8
	1,158	8	1
Expense of Management	485	10	11
Leaving a profit of	672	17	2
From 6th January 1835 to 5th January 1836	2,019	6	11
Deduct for paying	912	16	3
	1,106	10	8
Expense of Management	490	5	1
Leaving a profit of	616	5	7
From 6th January 1836 to 5th January 1837	2,078	14	6
Deduct for paying	943	6	0
	1,135	8	6
Expense of Management	491	12	9
Leaving a net profit	643	15	9

Money-order Office,
2d January 1838.

R. Watts.

No. 22.

No. 22.
Account No. 21 amended.
3d Jan. 1838.

	£.	s.	d.
Account No. 21 amended; showing the amount of poundage received on money-orders drawn from 6th January 1834 to 5th January 1835	2,099	1	9
Out of which the deputy postmasters receive for paying them	940	13	8.
	1,158	8	1
Expenses	575	10	11
Profit	582	17	2
From 6th January 1835 to 5th January 1836	2,019	6	11
Deduct for paying	912	16	3
	1,106	10	8
Expenses	580	5	1
Profit	526	5	7
6th January 1836 to 5th January 1837	2,078	14	6
Deduct for paying	943	6	0
	1,135	8	6
Expenses	581	12	9
Profit	553	15	9

Money-order Office,
3d January 1838.

R. Watts.

No. 23.

No. 23.
Account No. 21 further amended.
8th Jan. 1838.

		£.	s.	d.
Account No. 21 further amended; showing the poundage received on money-orders from 6th January 1834 to 5th January 1835		2,099	1	9
Poundage to postmasters	£940 13 8			
Losses by ditto	47 19 4			
		988	13	0
		1,110	8	9
Expenses		589	8	3
Profit		521	0	6

No. 23.

Account No. 21 further amended. 8th Jan. 1838.

Account No. 21 further amended, &c.—*continued.*

		£. s. d.
6th January 1835 to 5th January 1836		2,019 6 11
Poundage to postmasters		912 16 3
		1,106 10 8
Expenses		580 5 1
Profit		526 5 7
6th January 1836 to 5th January 1837		2,078 14 6
Poundage to postmasters	£947 6 1	
Loss by ditto	22 10 9	
		969 16 10
		1,108 17 8
Expenses		576 6 4
Profit		532 11 4

Money-order Office,
8th January 1838.

R. Watts.

No. 24.

Account No. 21 again amended. 10th Jan. 1838.

No. 24.

ACCOUNT No. 21 again amended.

		£. s. d.
Amount of poundage received on money-orders, from 6th January 1834 to 5th January 1835:—	Poundage paid to postmasters	940 13 8
	Losses by ditto	47 19 4
	Expenses	664 8 3
		1,653 1 3
	Profit	446 0 6
£2,099 1 9		2,099 1 9
		£. s. d.
6th January 1835 to the 5th January 1836:—	Paid to postmasters	912 16 3
	Expenses	580 5 1
		1,493 1 4
	Profit	526 5 7
£2,019 6 11		2,019 6 11
		£. s. d.
6th January 1836 to the 5th January 1837:—	Paid to postmasters	947 6 1
	Losses by ditto	22 10 9
	Expenses	576 6 4
		1,546 3 2
	Profit	532 11 4
£2,078 14 6		2,078 14 6

Money-order Office,
10th January 1838.

R. Watts.

No. 25.

Comparative Account, showing the discrepancy which exists in the different Returns which have been made relative to the Money-order Office.

No. 25.

An ACCOUNT of the Net Profits of the Money-order Office for the Years 1834, 1835, and 1836, as stated in Four different Returns which have been made to the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry.

Date of Return.	Net Profit, 1834.	Net Profit, 1835.	Net Profit, 1836.
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
1st Return, dated 2d January 1838	672 17 2	616 5 7	643 15 9
2d ,, 3d ,,	582 17 2	526 5 7	553 15 9
3d ,, 8th ,,	521 0 6	526 5 7	532 11 4
4th ,, 10th ,,	446 0 6	526 5 7	532 11 4

N.B. The Return presented to Parliament in July 1835 states the profits for the year 1834 to have been £520; and Mr. Watts, the proprietor, in his letter of the 17th October 1837, says that the net profit for the year 1836 was £578. 13s. 4d.

No. 26.

No. 26.

Comparative Account, showing the discrepancy which exists in the different Returns which have been made relative to the Money-order Office.

COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT, showing the Amount of Poundage stated to have been received by the Money-order Office, in the Year 1834, together with the Expense of Management and Net Profits received by the Proprietors, as taken from Six different Returns made to Parliament and the Post-office Commissioners.

		£.	s.	d.
1st	From Parliamentary Return, dated the 21st July 1835	2,237	7	1
2d	,, Return made to Fee Committee, dated the 30th January 1837	Not given.		
3d	,, Return to Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, dated the 2d January 1838	2,099	1	9
4th	,, Ditto amended, dated the 3d January 1838	2,099	1	9
5th	,, Ditto further amended, dated the 8th January 1838	2,099	1	9
6th	,, Ditto, dated the 10th January 1838	2,099	1	9

Expenses of Management of the Money-order Office for the same period as stated in the above Returns.

		£.	s.	d.
1st	From Parliamentary Return, dated the 21st July 1835	647	6	0
2d	,, Return made to Fee Committee, dated the 30th January 1837	Not given.		
3d	,, Return to Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, dated the 2d January 1838	485	10	11
4th	,, Ditto amended, dated the 3d January 1838	575	10	11
5th	,, Ditto further amended, dated the 8th January 1838	589	8	3
6th	,, Ditto, dated the 10th January 1838	664	8	3

Net Profit from Money-order Office for the same period as stated in the above Returns.

		£.	s.	d.
1st	From Parliamentary Return, dated the 21st July 1835	520	0	0
2d	,, Return made to Fee Committee, dated the 30th January 1837	520	0	0
3d	,, Return to Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, dated the 2d January 1838	672	17	2
4th	,, Ditto amended, dated the 3d January 1838	582	17	2
5th	,, Ditto further amended, dated the 8th January 1838	521	0	6
6th	,, Ditto, dated the 10th January 1838	446	0	6

No. 27.

No. 27.

Table of the Rates of Poundage to be received by the Deputy Postmasters for all Orders granted by them

TABLE of the Rates of Poundage to be received by the Deputy Postmasters for all Orders granted by them.

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
For any sum not exceeding	1	0	0	to take	0	0	8	Out of which the Postmaster will debit his Quarterly Account.	0	0	5
Above £1 0 0	do.	2	0	0	do.	0	1	4		0	0	10
,, 2 0 0	do.	3	0	0	do.	0	2	0		0	1	3
,, 3 0 0	do.	4	0	0	do.	0	2	8		0	1	8
,, 4 0 0	do.	5	5	0	do.	0	3	4		0	2	1

Poundage allowed to the Deputy Postmasters for the Payment of Money-orders.

CROSS ROAD ORDERS.

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
For any sum not exceeding	1	0	0	. .	0	0	3
Above £1 0 0 do.	1	10	0	. .	0	0	4
,, 1 10 0 do.	2	0	0	. .	0	0	6
,, 2 0 0 do.	2	10	0	. .	0	0	7
,, 2 10 0 do.	3	0	0	. .	0	0	9
,, 3 0 0 do.	3	10	0	. .	0	0	10
,, 3 10 0 do.	4	0	0	. .	0	1	0
,, 4 0 0 do.	4	10	0	. .	0	1	1
,, 4 14 6 do.	5	5	0	. .	0	1	3

GENERAL POST-OFFICE ORDERS.

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
For any sum not exceeding	1	0	0	. .	0	0	2
Above £1 0 0 do.	1	10	0	. .	0	0	3
,, 1 10 0 do.	2	0	0	. .	0	0	4
,, 2 0 0 do.	2	10	0	. .	0	0	5
,, 2 10 0 do.	3	0	0	. .	0	0	6
,, 3 0 0 do.	3	10	0	. .	0	0	7
,, 3 10 0 do.	4	0	0	. .	0	0	8
,, 4 0 0 do.	4	10	0	. .	0	0	9
,, 4 14 6 do.	5	5	0	. .	0	0	10

All Orders for £2, and upwards, must be drawn on the Stamped Form supplied from the Money-order Office.

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No. 28.

Correspondence relative to Returns from Money-order Office.

No. 28.

Correspondence relative to the Money-order Office Accounts.

No. 1.

SIR, *Office of Woods, 3rd January* 1838.

I REGRET being under the necessity of troubling you so frequently on the subject of the Returns from the Money-order Office. I took the liberty of inquiring yesterday whether the total expense of management for the years 1834-5 and 6 had been given, and should feel obliged by your informing me; and also whether the net profits are correctly stated in the accounts transmitted to the Commissioners, because there appears to be a discrepancy between them and the Returns formerly made to the House of Commons and the Committee on Fees.

I have, &c.,

R. Watts, Esq., Money-order Office. (Signed) J. R. GARDINER.

No. 2.

SIR, *Money-order Office, 3d January* 1838.

I REGRET extremely to give you this trouble, but unfortunately being absent from the office by illness, my clerk, in making out the account of profit, has been inaccurate; I therefore am desirous of rendering the Return as perfect as I can. I now beg to enclose the corrected account (see Return, No. 22); and am, Sir,

Yours, &c.,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq. (Signed) R. WATTS.

No. 3.

SIR, *Office of Woods, 3d January* 1838.

I HAVE received the amended accounts, but cannot yet reconcile them with the Returns which were formerly transmitted from the Money-order Office. I regret the trouble which you have been put to, but I am still fearful that there is some inaccuracy, which I should have been glad to have had corrected before transmitting the accounts to the Treasury.

I have, &c.,

R. Watts, Esq., Money-order Office. (Signed) J. R. GARDINER.

No. 4.

SIR, *Money-order Office, 4th January* 1838.

I BEG to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3d, and it is with great concern I learn from it that the Return made some time ago of the profits of the year 1834 is at variance with that sent yesterday. I have not a copy of the statement, but should it be a smaller amount than that now sent, I am willing to abide by the larger sum. I grieve to have occasioned you so much trouble.

I have, &c.,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq. (Signed) R. WATTS.

No. 5.

SIR, *Money-order Office, 8th January* 1838.

I NOW have the honour of sending you what I can confidently assure you is a most correct statement of the Money-order concern for the years required (see Return, No. 23). I regret very much that, owing to my absence from the office by severe illness, my clerk was not able to furnish it in a proper state, not having access to my private ledger; the trouble you have had, and the delay it has occasioned, I hope you will have the kindness to excuse.

I have, &c.,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq. (Signed) R. WATTS.

No. 6.

SIR, *General Post-office, 8th January* 1838.

HAVING referred the enclosed papers, which you with left me on the 5th inst., to Mr. Watts, acquainting him with the desire of the Commissioners of Inquiry to be furnished with some explanation as to the apparent discrepancy between the Return he lately made direct to your order, of the amount of profits of the Money-order Office in the year 1834, compared with the Return made through this office in 1835 for the same year, Mr. Watts acquaints me that he has now forwarded an amended Return with the required explanation. The Return made from this office to Parliament in 1835, and again to the Treasury Fee Committee in November, but afterwards transferred to the Commissioners of Inquiry, were both prepared from statements furnished by the proprietors of the Money-order Office at the time, and which were certified to be correct by the parties.

I have, &c.,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq. (Signed) W. L. MABERLY.

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No. 28.

Correspondence relative to the Money-order Office Accounts.

No. 7.

SIR, *Office of Woods, 9th January* 1838.

I REGRET exceedingly the trouble you have had about the Money-order accounts, and that you should have been put to so much inconvenience in your present state of health. I have no doubt of your anxiety to furnish correct information to the Commissioners, but am sorry to find that the accounts as amended will only lead to the supposition that the former Returns made to Parliament and to the Fee Committee were inaccurate.

I have, &c.,

R. Watts, Esq., Money-order Office. (Signed) J. R. GARDINER.

No. 8.

SIR, *Office of Woods, 10th January* 1838.

I HAVE received your letter of yesterday's date, stating that Mr. Watts has acquainted you that he has now forwarded an amended Return of the profits of the Money-order Office, with an explanation of the apparent discrepancy between the Return formerly made to Parliament and the Finance Committee, and that which has been recently sent to the Commissioners of Inquiry. I regret much to find, on referring to Mr. Watts's letter, that no satisfactory explanation is given of this discrepancy, and I find that not one of the five Returns which have been made of the profits of the Money-order Office for the year 1834 corresponds with another. The first of these, which I obtained for the Post-office Commissioners, and which was afterwards presented to Parliament, is dated 16th July 1835, and signed by Mr. Watts and the late Mr. Stow. The second, which was prepared for the Fee Committee, and afterwards transmitted to the Post-office Commissioners, is authenticated by your signature. The third, fourth, and fifth are signed by Mr. Watts. Having been instructed by the Post-office Commissioners to examine carefully the Returns appended to their Reports, and to endeavour to have them made as correct as possible, it becomes my duty to call your attention again to the accounts which have been transmitted by the Post-office, and also by Mr. Watts individually, relative to the Money-order Office. I regret being obliged to trouble you so frequently on the subject of these accounts, but, as they are to be laid before Parliament, I think it important that there should be no inaccuracy, or apparent inaccuracy, on the face of them, the more especially as, in case of the abolition of the Money-order Office, and a claim for compensation being made by Mr. Watts, the Lords of the Treasury would probably refer to these accounts in the consideration of such a claim.

I have, &c.,

Lieut.-Col. Maberly. (Signed) J. R. GARDINER.

No. 9.

SIR, *General Post-office, 11th January* 1838.

I HAVE to acknowledge your further letter of yesterday's date, and regret to find that Mr. Watts's explanation of the discrepancy in the Returns made by the proprietors of the Money-order Office should not have proved satisfactory. I have lost no time in again calling upon Mr. Watts on this subject, and I beg to enclose his statement of this date for the information of the Commissioners, transmitting an amended Return, for the accuracy of which he assures me he can vouch.

I beg to point out to you that the Returns made through this office to Parliament in July 1835, and to the Treasury Committee on Fees in January last, both state the net profits of the Money-order Office, in the year 1834, at the same amount, viz., £520, so that there is no discrepancy on this point in the official Returns. I have already explained to you that those Returns were made upon the statements furnished at the time by the proprietors, and authenticated by their signatures, and that the Postmaster General having no means of checking or controlling the accounts of the Money-order Office, his Lordship could not be responsible for their accuracy.

It is evident that the three Returns which you designate as Nos. 3, 4, and 5, made by Mr. Watts direct to the Commissioners during the last week, are contradictory; and upon comparing the enclosed amended Return with that made to the Fee Committee in January last, I observe a further variance as regards the net profits for the years 1834 and 1835. The net profits for 1834 are stated in the Treasury account of 1837 at £520; Mr. Watts now returns them as only £446. 0*s.* 6*d.* In the Treasury account the net profits for the year 1835 are stated at £458. 15*s.* 4*d.*; Mr. Watts now returns them at £526. 5*s.* 7*d.* I have, therefore, felt it my duty, before I forwarded the enclosed (see Return, Appendix No. 24), again to direct his attention to this additional discrepancy. He has once more compared the enclosed Return with his books, and assures me that it is the real and correct account. He laments that, having no trace of the papers or calculations from which the Returns were made in 1835 and 1837, he is quite unable to account for their inaccuracy; and repeats, what he has already stated in the enclosed letter, that he can only throw himself on the indulgence of the Commissioners, expressing his regret for the trouble which has been occasioned.

I have, &c.,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq. (Signed) W. L. MABERLY.

No. 28.

Correspondence relative to the Money-order Office Accounts.

No. 10.

SIR, *Money-order Office, 10th January* 1838.

I WAS honoured by your letter of the 9th, the contents of which have given me the greatest concern. You only do me justice when you say, you give me credit for being anxious to make my Returns correct. I most certainly always have been, and so was my late partner, Mr. Stow, when making out together the account of the year in question, namely 1834, yet, wonderful to say, we never once thought at the time of charging the account with the interest of the money employed in carrying on the concern, nor did it ever occur to my mind when called upon to make any of the various Returns within these last few years. I have, however, at length discovered my former inaccuracies, and can only rely upon your favourable indulgence for such gross blunders. I beg now to send herewith what I hope may prove a satisfactory statement, it being my most earnest wish that every paper coming from me should be fair and candid to the greatest degree. I plead guilty to having signed many inaccurate papers, but without design.

I have, &c.,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq. (Signed) R. WATTS.

No. 29.

Account of the Number of Foreign Letters registered in London in 1836 and the Three first Quarters of the Year 1837.

No. 29.

ACCOUNT of the Number of Foreign Letters registered in London in 1836 and the Three first Quarters of the Year 1837.

Year 1836.		Three Quarters of 1837.	
Inwards	1,336	Inwards	1,045
Outwards	116	Outwards	130
	1,452		1,175

Foreign Office,
December 1837.

C. D. WAGSTAFF.

London: Printed by W. CLOWES and SONS, Stamford Street,
For Her Majesty's Stationery Office.