

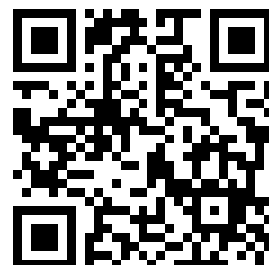


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# HOUSE OF LORDS

## THE SESSIONAL PAPERS 1801-1833

Vol. 251

1829

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# HOUSE OF LORDS

## THE SESSIONAL PAPERS 1801-1833

Vol 251 (1829)

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Examinations.

No. 102.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
14 August 1823.

## Appendix, No. 102.

Thursday, 14th August 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in, and made the following Statement.

I HAVE brought with me an account of the arrears of postmasters for the period directed, and an account of the present arrears.

[*The Witness delivered in the same.*]

A book has been laid before the Commissioners under your signature; under whose superintendence was that book prepared?—Principally under my own eye.

It contains a statement of the duties, salaries, emoluments, deductions, and various other particulars of all the offices, beginning with that of the postmasters-general?—Yes.

Was that submitted to the postmasters-general?—No; they were not in Dublin; but under the authority of my own patent, and by the instructions of Government; I am authorized to sign by command generally all documents in their absence, taking upon myself the necessary responsibility on the subject of them.

It appears here that Lord Rosse has received one half of the salary; will you state why that so appears, as it is understood that Lord Rosse was serving without salary?—The other moiety was deducted under an order from the Treasury in the year 1822; but Lord Rosse having served the six months previous to that time, of course received the salary for that half year.

The powers of the postmasters-general and your power are stated accurately in this book?—As far as I know they are.

Their attendance is stated to be when requisite; will you have the goodness to state what that attendance has been, taking it for the last two years?—During that period the two postmasters-general did not attend together at all; each of them has been in attendance within that period; but at this moment the exact periods of the year at which either of their lordships were there I am not prepared to state, nor the exact quantum of time they have personally been in attendance; but generally, I do not think the attendance of either of their lordships at any time exceeded a week at a time, probably not so long.

When they did attend what personal superintendence did they exercise over the office, or did they exercise any?—They remained in the board-room a proportion of the day, and any detail of business that it was requisite to bring before them their lordships attended to. When I first knew the post-office there was a board regularly every Wednesday, and both the postmasters attended.

What members of the department form what is called a board?—Properly speaking, it should be either of the postmasters-general; indeed, more properly speaking, it should be both; and the act of either postmaster-general I consider as legal. The secretary should be in the board-room, and if it is necessary, the minute-clerk; but properly speaking, I do not suppose the minute-clerk is absolutely necessary.

During the last two years has any board been held?—Not in the regular way that I would call a board; I mean a board like this; nothing of that description. I have attended in the board-room, and business was transacted more in the nature of conversation. I think a sort of a board was held by Lord Rosse within two years, in which some mail-coach business was transacted in the regular way. Another board was held by Lord O'Neill, in which a very detailed number of applications for new established posts was disposed of.

Have Lord O'Neill and Lord Rosse been in the habit, if not together, of separately exercising an interference in the management of the post-office?—Very little, personally, in Dublin. The mode in which the business has been principally conducted is by correspondence between myself and both of them.

Is it your object, when you correspond with the postmasters-general on any subject, to write the same letters to both, and to consult them equally on all points?—Not in all cases; on several cases certainly; but principally I have been in the habit of communicating with Lord Rosse: in the first place, his lordship is nearer to Dublin; in the next place, I understood (not in a regular official way) that Government thought better that Lord Rosse should take a more active part of the management; Lord O'Neill or Lord Rosse mentioned that to me; therefore I have, in probably the majority of cases, been in the habit of communicating with Lord Rosse.

In what cases or in what description of cases have you thought it right, contrary to that principle, to refer to Lord O'Neill?—There has been a good deal of difference of opinion at different periods, I am sorry to say, between the postmasters-general; measures have been decided on by Lord Rosse which Lord O'Neill has not ever given his consent to; and Lord O'Neill has thought it his duty to give his sanction to that which Lord Rosse has not had the same sentiment upon.

In such cases, where there is a difference of opinion between the postmasters-general, what is done?—It is very hard to give a positive answer upon that, for I have experienced considerable difficulty from that very cause in several instances; and, without apprizing the postmasters-general in all cases of the variance which has existed between them, I have endeavoured on my own responsibility to do the best I could.

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If the postmasters-general differ on a point, does the thing remain undone, incomplete?—If I could charge my memory with the particular instances, I have no doubt I should find some which remained in abeyance, and some which I have executed myself on my own responsibility; and it would be almost impossible, from the constitution of the post-office, to carry it on in any other manner.

Suppose that both the postmasters were to take an active interest in the post-office, and that the postmasters should be in the habit of differing on a great many points that come before them, would it be possible, consistently with the constitution of the office, to carry on the business at all?—Certainly not; the only alternative left to me in that case would be to go to the Lord Lieutenant.

Having had an understanding that the active part of the business was to be conducted principally by Lord Rosse, when you have referred to Lord O'Neill, has it been at your own suggestion, or in consequence of any desire expressed on the part of Lord O'Neill on that particular point?—No; I am not aware that Lord O'Neill has ever done so; it was at the suggestion of my own mind.

Will you state any instances in which you have felt it proper to pass by Lord Rosse, and to take the direction of Lord O'Neill, he not being in the active exercise of the duties of postmaster-general?—I think there are very few that I remember where I have made a reference to Lord O'Neill; in most cases, if not in all of any importance, I have followed, as far as I could, my Lord Rosse. I will mention a case in point: for five or six years, or a greater number of years, Lord Rosse has thought it necessary, with respect to the conveyance of our mails, to enlarge the number of passengers beyond the privileges allowed by our contracts; in those cases Lord O'Neill has uniformly opposed Lord Rosse on principle; in those cases I have acted upon my Lord Rosse's opinions; those passengers have been conveyed. We have been censured in several Reports of Committees of the House of Commons for doing so; but, under the circumstances, my impression was, that there was no other alternative at the time but to grant those privileges which Lord Rosse felt himself authorized to confer.

In those cases, in what way did Lord O'Neill interfere?—By positively refusing to sign the orders, and sending them back to me.

The act of one postmaster is legal?—It is.

Having therefore the authority of my Lord Rosse, and you concurring in opinion with my Lord Rosse upon the subject, what brought it under the notice of my Lord O'Neill officially?—Every paper whatsoever goes before each postmaster-general to sign, all our daily proceedings of the office, however minute, and they are regularly made out in my office; and from their appearance, and from their wording, any one would suppose that both postmasters-general are always on the spot. As soon as either postmaster signs them, I send them to the other for his signature; and it is under those circumstances Lord O'Neill has refused to put his signature to those papers.

But you considered it perfectly legal, and yourself authorized to act under the signature of one, that signature being declared sufficient by the Act of Parliament?—Many of our contracts are signed by one postmaster-general.

The refusal of Lord O'Neill to sign was merely in the character of an official protest, and had no effect whatever?—Just so; I think there have also been instances in our expenditure, one postmaster-general has thought it necessary to subscribe for, when the other would not.

Instances of the issue of money?—Yes; I remember cases where Lord Rosse thought it necessary to expend money which Lord O'Neill did not think it necessary, not within some years; for in consequence of a regulation at my suggestion some years back (I believe about 1815) an order for every farthing of money must be signed by both.

In those cases in which the postmasters-general differed, you have considered yourself as an arbitrator between them, and acted on what you thought proper?—Certainly; there is a very unpleasant case which has arisen within these last few months, a case of discipline in the office, in which there is a difference of opinion.

Have you any account in the post-office of the official attendance of the different principal officers for the last two years?—Yes; I have a regular book of attendance, signed every day at ten o'clock, of every officer, high and low, and there is a regular report made of the attendance of each: the porter is held responsible for entering the moment he sees each officer, and it is brought to my room at eleven o'clock.

You have, of course, as chief secretary, the general regulation of every thing which relates to the interior of the office?—Yes.

Of course you exercise a control and a superintendence over all the officers, whether appointed by the postmasters-general or by patent, or in any other way?—Yes; there is no distinction between the patent officers and any others.

You inspect and certify all warrants for the payment of establishment and incidental expenses?—Yes, I do.

Which are all laid before the postmasters-general?—Yes, and signed by them; they sign them at their convenience.

Is it upon a reference to the postmasters-general, or the officers in their different departments, or yourself, that all expenses that are to be incurred are determined on?—Every document goes regularly before the postmasters-general themselves.

The charge, of course, cannot be paid without their passing under the inspection of the postmasters-general, they form part of the incidents; but previous to the incurring of the expense, does the determination to incur that emanate from you or from the person in the department



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department in which the expense is to be incurred, or is it submitted to the postmasters-general previous to the order?—The account and the vouchers come to myself.

Suppose it were felt necessary to make a new office at a certain expense, whether 200*l.* or 2,000*l.*, should you give the order yourself, or should you apply to the postmasters-general for their sanction previously?—I should write to the postmasters-general previously; the very case occurred a short time ago.

Are you to be understood, that all the expenses incurred beyond a certain amount are, previous to their being determined upon, referred to the postmasters-general?—Any thing out of the ordinary course; I should consult the postmasters-general upon any thing beyond the ordinary establishment. The stationery and all those sort of things come regularly before me, and I initial the account for the accountant-general; the accountant-general I hold responsible for ascertaining that he has correct vouchers under my own signature; if he has not, that account should never leave his office.

What is the species of check that those vouchers produce upon the expense?—Every person who has an account with the post-office is obliged to make an affidavit that the articles therein charged are not only charged as moderately as he would charge to any private individual, but as I found some years ago that many of our articles were not provided by persons supplying other persons, I required an addition to the affidavit, and it is now stated, or than they would provide any person requiring them to supply the same articles.

Then you are to be understood, that all those expenses which, though forming part of the incidents, are necessary for carrying on the common business of the office, you incur and dispose of under your own authority; but that all those which are of an extraordinary nature you take the opinion of the postmasters-general upon previously?—Yes; in fact, I would do it for my own sake; for if Lord O'Neill and Lord Rosse did not choose to sign an account for any thing I ordered, I should have to pay it myself.

In the establishment of mails the postmaster is of course consulted, and he signs the contract?—Certainly.

Do you countersign it?—No.

Under whose direction are the contracts made, and in what state are they brought under the cognizance of the postmasters-general?—I do not think there has been a contract signed for these several years.

What process is gone through before mail-coaches are established on any line; by whom is a mail first proposed?—It may happen from an individual application of some person in the country, or from a suggestion by myself to the postmasters-general; I think, in most cases, it has arisen from a suggestion of myself.

Is the consideration of it brought by you immediately before the postmasters-general?—Most probably; if at the moment I expect either of them in town I postpone it, probably, till I see them.

What inquiries are instituted previous to your coming to the opinion that there ought to be such a thing?—We have been always anxious to obtain a mail-coach on any road in Ireland that we could get it on; the only inquiry I am aware of is the actual expense at the time of conveying our mail, under existing circumstances, on the line in question. I should ascertain what the revenues of the post-offices on the line of road were; and I should endeavour to get any information on which the claims of individuals could be fairly founded. Those inquiries are very simple; I make them by letter, mostly through our own surveyors, one of whom is appointed to each district of the kingdom.

Have you no officer established in your office, on whose reports in such cases you act?—We have a superintendent of mail-coaches in Dublin; but I am not aware what particular information he could derive more than the postmasters-general and myself could obtain through our surveyor in the country. If any information was required which our surveyors did not give, I should send down our surveyor. It has always been our object, whenever we had an existing post on horseback, if we could substitute a mail-coach, to do so; and the only reference we think it necessary to make is to ascertain the expense of a mail-coach over and above the expense of the present mode of conveyance; but the moment an application comes up to make a new post-town, or a new arrangement of posts through the kingdom, that is sent to the surveyors to specially inquire into; if they are near the spot they personally proceed there, and make the report immediately; if they are not near, and expedition is not an object, they keep it, so as to avoid unnecessary journeys; they make a report on the state of the town, its population and resident gentry, and every circumstance on which they conceive the claim is founded. In addition to that, we take steps to ascertain the quantum of revenue likely to be drawn from the making of the post. These matters I ascertain before I bring the matter under the consideration of the postmasters-general.

You are not governed entirely by the revenue likely to be produced; but even where the revenue may not be likely to exceed the expense, you are influenced by the consideration of the convenience which will be afforded to the country, are you not?—I am sorry to say that the principle on which we have generally proceeded has been the revenue simply; but there have been several of our mails established for the public convenience; there are several of our mails which contribute nothing to the revenue.

Having determined on the propriety of establishing a mail, what is the next proceeding?—When the case happens to be that of a mail-coach, we advertise for proposals.

In what way are the proposals given in?—Our contracts in this country are of long duration; some have expired lately. The course taken with those was proposals coming sealed to the post-office; they were opened in the presence of all the parties interested, as well as the heads of the different branches of the post-office. The postmaster-general was

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not able himself to attend on the occasion I allude to; it was conducted in the presence of the conducting counsel of the post-office, who attended on the behalf of Lord Rosse, to see that every thing was done in a proper way, and myself.

Before those persons the proposals are opened?—Yes.

What do the proposals contain; do they contain a proposal for the whole line of the road?—Yes; that has always been the case in Ireland, from necessity.

And that from individuals, or bodies of individuals?—In all cases hitherto from individuals. In one case I allude to, which has come recently before us, it was a company, an existing company, belonging to the post-office; they united all their interests.

Of course, you accept the proposal on the lowest terms, if the persons that make the propositions are likely to fulfil them to your satisfaction; you reserve to yourself a discretion?—Certainly; in the cases which have been before us lately there has been no declaration made, yet I am under considerable difficulty as to no less than three lines in Ireland at this moment that were to be lately renewed under this system; the line to Limerick, the line to Waterford, and the line to Enniskillen. They have expired, and proposals were received in the manner I have mentioned, not at the same period, but within a short period of each other. The line to Limerick was in competition between an English company and the late contractor for some years past. The Limerick contract was a contract for thirty-one years, and expired on the 5th of July last. For several years the merchants of Limerick were most anxious to obtain an acceleration of the mail beyond five miles an hour; we were equally anxious to get it at six or six and a quarter. The late contractor, two years ago, when the subject was under consideration, waited upon my Lord Rosse with a deputation from Limerick. My Lord Rosse very properly would not accede to the terms that he wanted, which were for an increase of mileage, an increase of passengers, and a prolongation of the contract beyond the period of seven years. His lordship was good enough to consult me upon it, and I advised him not to accede to the terms. His lordship answered me by stating that he had disposed of the deputation, and had not acceded to the terms. An advertisement was then put into the papers for a contract for seven years. The contractor refused to take any terms less than he had proposed to Lord Rosse. Of course his proposal was not accepted. Nothing more was at that time done upon the subject, because the contract had still two years to run; but the contractor, after various attempts to enforce upon my Lord Rosse a renewal of the contract under a supposed agreement made for the post, obstinately refused to take other terms than he had insisted upon. He remonstrated with the Treasury in England and the Government in Ireland, and a long line of correspondence took place between himself and the post-office. The difficulty we have been placed in was from a subsequent admission of Lord Rosse that he had entered into an agreement.

You were understood to state that Lord Rosse had denied that?—Yes; he denied it at the time. I refer to two years ago, and I have it under his lordship's own hand.

An agreement would of course have been signed if it had been made?—I presume so; but the contractor stated that the deputation from Limerick were witnesses to the verbal agreement. I represented to Mr. Goulburn that Lord Rosse had not bound himself, and I was sorry to receive from Lord Rosse what I felt at the time a severe letter, in return for what I had done to relieve my Lord Rosse from the imputation of having made a most improvident bargain. His lordship admitted that he had made an agreement, if the contractor would agree to limit it to seven years. About this period an English company from Liverpool sent in notice of a disposition to contract for this mail, and they made a proposition to enter into a contract for conveying the mail at the rate that I wished, and upon the terms which Mr. Bourne refused; this was submitted to the postmasters-general. My Lord O'Neill highly approved of it. Mr. Goulburn was extremely anxious to have the contract entered into, but Mr. Bourne still insisted that his contract was in existence. Upon this, Lord Rosse corresponded with Mr. Goulburn, and the result of that correspondence was, that notice was given to each of the parties to send in on a particular day (that was named) fresh proposals. The day arrived. My Lord Rosse having confined the proposal to the two individuals, my embarrassment was again increased by receiving a third proposal from another quarter. This last proposal I found it impossible even to open. The party complained to the Lord Lieutenant, who referred the complaint to the postmasters-general. I understand each postmaster-general has given his sentiments to Government, and the contract remains undecided. When the day came, on the 5th of July, at five o'clock in the evening, we were obliged to make a temporary agreement, or I must have sent off, at eight o'clock that evening, the mails in a post-chaise and four. The situation of the mail to Waterford is still worse.

Will you have the goodness to state that?—That contract also expired on the 5th of July. The advertisement for that was drawn up by Lord Rosse himself, and put into the paper for a mail the entire way from Dublin to Waterford. The proceeding with respect to this was precisely the same as to the proposals being opened, and so on. There was only one proposal, from the former contractor and his partner. The proceeding was sent to my Lord Rosse on the day; and for the first time since the advertisement Lord Rosse was of opinion that no mail-coach at all was necessary to Waterford the entire way from Dublin, but that the mail should be carried as far as Kilkenny on the Cork road, and branch off in some separate establishment to Waterford. His lordship directed me to acquaint the contractor that his terms were not approved, and that he could get no contract till Government should decide. That contractor lays claim to the contract; but after a considerable negotiation with him, which did not terminate till the evening of the 5th of July, I prevailed upon him to continue to convey the mails until the return of Mr. Goulburn.

Are the contracts you enter into the same, in point of form, as those entered into in England usually?—Not exactly, nor probably could they well be. The contracts in England are made with a variety of people, innkeepers on the line; here it is by one contractor for the whole line. Hereafter it is intended that a considerable alteration shall take place in the form of our contracts, to render them a more available sort of instrument, in case we should be obliged to have recourse to legal measures to enforce them.

Instead of the contract being as it is in England, with a variety of innkeepers along the line, each being responsible for his own part, your contracts are with one individual or one company to conduct the mail through the whole of a certain line?—An entire line.

Have you seen or are you aware of the terms on which the contracts are usually made in England?—Yes, I have.

In what particulars do they differ?—The terms in England are considerably cheaper; they are enabled from various circumstances to effect it at less expense.

Is the contract to convey a mail at a quicker rate in England than in Ireland?—There are some mails in Ireland, I think, conveyed as rapidly or more rapidly than in England; our usual rate was four miles, then we increased to five, then five and a half, then six, and six and a quarter Irish. Six Irish is seven English, and a little more than five furlongs; several of our contractors are some of the most important men in the country.

It is stated among the duties of your office, that you receive and examine applications for the creation of new post-towns, and prepare reports on them for the postmasters-general; you conclude nothing?—No; I see that the draughts are according to the terms.

One of your duties is to correspond with the riding surveyors and the inspectors through the country?—Yes.

What are the duties you impose on your riding surveyors?—They have the whole management of the cross-posts.

What is the difference between the riding surveyors and the inspectors?—It is the same description of person.

Does all the official correspondence of the office go through you personally?—Yes, all.

It is all signed by yourself?—Yes; in the accountant-general's office they correspond with some of the postmasters respecting their accounts; those letters the accountant general signs himself; but, properly speaking, I should conceive they ought to be all signed in the secretary's office.

It is stated that the correspondence goes through you, as well that portion of it carried on in the name of the postmasters-general as other; of what nature is that?—All letters to the chief secretary and to the under secretary; all letters to the Lord Lieutenant are signed by the postmasters-general, being more respectful, I presume.

The return proceeds to state, "in the absence of the postmasters-general the management of the department devolves upon him (that is, the secretary), issuing at all times, under their authority, such orders as in his own judgment he conceives necessary for the public service;" are those words, "under their authority," to be understood to mean with their previous concurrence, or that it is an authority that devolves upon you in consequence of their absence?—If a case was pressing, I must act on my own responsibility, using their lordships name; if it was not a very pressing case, and I had time, I should probably consult them.

It is a case on which you would conceive yourself open to exercise your own discretion, whether you should consult them or not?—I am bound by my instructions from the Crown to execute every power of the postmasters-general if they are not there themselves; I have no choice whether to do it or not.

You consider it as an authority derived from the Legislature?—Certainly; the instructions I have received refer to the Act of Parliament; there is nothing in the Act of Parliament upon that subject, but the instructions from the Crown are authorized by the Act of Parliament.

Will you have the goodness to state what officers there are in any department that have any official correspondence of any sort to carry on?—In Dublin there are none, except that the accountant-general may write a few letters on the subject of the accounts, but I conceive there is no other person who has any official correspondence; I am the general corresponding officer of the board. Properly speaking, I think every letter that goes in the name of the postmasters-general should have the secretary's signature.

Then it is quite obvious that, except yourself, there can be no necessity for the power either of franking or of receiving packets?—No; as far as the office is concerned, I am not aware of the least necessity for any officer having that power; for even the remittances from the postmasters in the country come under cover to the secretary.

Do you know at all the grounds on which the privilege has been extended to the different officers in the department?—The surveyors in the country have the privilege of franking letters in Ireland; they correspond direct across the country by law.

With whom do they correspond?—With the deputy postmasters and the resident gentry of the country who choose to write to them on the subject of irregularity; I think the surveyors should correspond with the deputy postmasters, but I do not think it is necessary for them to correspond with any other persons; I do not think that any gentlemen need correspond with the riding clerks; they might correspond at once with Dublin.

Would it not be more desirable, in your opinion, that all correspondence of that kind should come direct to the office?—Most assuredly; with the great rapidity of conveyance now, the delay could be of no consequence.

Examinations.

No. 102.

Sir

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There is an observation on the subject of franking in the Report of the Commissioners in 1810. Has any inquiry taken place into that subject in consequence of that Report, and has any alteration been made in the number of persons who had that privilege at that time; or has it continued the same, without any reference to the Report which was then made?—Whatever additions have been made, there certainly has been no curtailment of the privilege. There was a report made to Mr. Grant just at the close of Lord Talbot's administration upon the subject of franking by the post-office.

Will you state your opinion as to any ground of public utility on which the franking is continued to those holding office in the post-office, the postmasters-general and the secretary being of course put out of the question in the answer you give; the first stated here is the treasurer of the post-office?—He has always enjoyed it since 1802.

Do you know any ground of public utility or convenience, as it respects the public service, for which that privilege is enjoyed by him?—Certainly not; our treasurer, to my knowledge, has no correspondence whatever in official matters. I apprehend it must have been conferred as a privilege, out of respect to him from his situation; as far as I know, there is no other ground for it. There is a great deal of franking; the Government frequently send down to me immense baskets of letters to frank, which they cannot frank themselves.

Have not the Government the privilege of franking whatever they may wish?—Yes; but sometimes they have not time. There are different bodies; the religious societies, and so on, for which they frank; they must be very much pressed, certainly, for the mails are sometimes kept back; the Cork mail was kept back twenty-five minutes last night, and the report to me was, that it was for state letters from the Castle. There are frequently letters also from the army agents in Dublin on the subject of their remittances to the different regiments; those are always conveyed free of postage. When they have not time enough at the Castle to frank all the letters they are sent down to me.

[The witness was directed to furnish a return of all the offices to which the power of franking is attached, and of all the various descriptions of letters which by usage have been permitted in Ireland to go free.]

(*Sir Edward Lees.*)—Even in my own office, for every official letter I get there are ten that I receive under cover for other purposes, many of these under the sanction of Government. It is not only the trouble but the responsibility; half of these letters contain money, and they may be lost.

Is there any public reason why the comptroller of the sorting office should possess the privilege?—There may be more than in the case of the receiver-general; for he might, in the absence of the secretary, if any thing particular occurred, have occasion to write letters down, particularly to the postmasters; but it is a very rare thing; that is the only thing which could have justified the privilege to him; but then, on the other hand, the secretary is always supposed to be on the spot.

What reason is there for the resident surveyor enjoying the privilege?—There is no reason whatever; it is a sinecure, but he exercises the privilege of franking.

What reason is there for the riding surveyors enjoying it?—They correspond with the deputy postmasters.

It would, in your opinion, be more desirable that the correspondence carried on by them should be through the post-office in Dublin?—I should restrict it to correspondence with the deputy postmasters; and if it was necessary to give them the privilege of writing to individuals on business, at all events I would not suffer them to pass through Dublin, for then they might come to the post-office direct.

Is there any reason why the superintendent of the mail-coaches should have the privilege?—He does not frank as the superintendent of the mail-coaches, but in consequence of his being nominally made a surveyor; he is not an established surveyor, but is nominally called surveyor, and under that title, which is not recognized in the arrangement of Lord Clancarty at all, he exercises the privilege of franking.

Do you feel any objection to this recommendation contained in the Report in 1810, that the secretary should carry on the whole correspondence of the department, and the allowance made for the postage of letters which appear to have been addressed on official business to any of the officers?—I think that is done now.

The privilege of receiving and sending letters free extends to all the clerks on the post-office establishment, does it not?—Yes; all the officers of the establishment get their letters free; they are only single letters. In the correspondence which was taking place when Mr. Grant went out of office, it was supposed, and I believe justly, that there was considerable abuse in almost every department. I entered into the nature of the abuse, and as far as I knew the instances themselves, endeavoured to account for them. Mr. Goulburn and I went over the matter, and endeavoured to regulate the principle on which the public officers should receive their letters. It was strictly confined to the different persons in the Dublin offices, and the members of their families actually residing in the house; the abuse has since been greatly diminished.

The clerks in the post-office are not permitted to frank their own letters, but they are directed by you?—Yes; I dare say there are not less than fifty letters on my table at this moment to be franked for the clerks in the post-office; I frank them, but all the clerks in the office, down to the very lowest, receive the whole of their letters free.

Have not those clerks the power of receiving not only letters but packages?—No, only their private letters.

The chief clerk has the power of receiving and sending franks?—Yes; by law he is, as a clerk of the roads, entitled to circulate newspapers free of postage; his correspondence on the

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the subject of newspapers goes free merely on this principle, that the incomes of the clerks of roads are contingent, and that the Government is at the expense of making up to them the difference between a fixed sum and the actual receipt, otherwise there is no necessity for it; it is only imposing on the secretary himself the trouble of franking those letters on the subject of their newspapers.

There are four clerks of the roads?—There are six altogether, four clerks of the roads and two express clerks.

As the public is to make good what falls short, do they account at all to the public for the excess?—Indeed they would be very glad to account for it if there was such a thing, but there is no possibility of an excess ever occurring again. If it had not been for an act passed during the administration of Mr. Pole the Government would never have been called upon again; that Act of Parliament took out of the clerks of the roads nearly the entire of the privilege, and vested it in the editors of newspapers. This was done on the memorial of the editors, who endeavoured to make out that certain persons in the post-office derived their profits from their labours. The Act which was brought in by Mr. Pole had the effect of transferring the benefit from the clerks to the editors themselves. The ground on which this was proposed was, that the postage they would contribute would produce 3,000*l.* a year, which the public lost, as they represented, by the clerks of the roads carrying on their correspondence without charge; the Act of Parliament was passed, and the result was, that in one year the Government were called upon to make good to the clerks that compensation; nearly the whole privilege now is compensation charged against the Government. My emoluments were fixed at 849*l.*, and I do not believe the newspapers produce 150*l.* a year; but the consequence of the measure is, that the editors do not contribute 300*l.* a year postage, for in order to prevent the necessity for correspondence, there is a notice given in the newspaper, that on the subscribers seeing them in a blue cover they are to understand that their subscriptions are at an end, and that no more will be sent unless they are renewed. I have understood last night that those notices would in England be charged with postage, and they should be here in future.

On what ground does a junior clerk of the name of Crofton frank?—The Act of Parliament authorizes two officers, specially appointed by the postmasters-general, to indorse the official letters from the secretary's office, or the different offices in the establishment; they must be strictly on official business, under the penalty for the first offence of 100*l.*, and for the second, of dismissal from office, and disqualification from serving in any public office whatever in future.

By that indorsement those clerks pledge themselves to the belief, at least, that they are official correspondence?—They must be certain of it. They themselves fold and enter them, therefore they are certain that they are public letters.

All those persons in the office who frank, frank and receive without limitation as to weight or number?—Yes.

As to those who have the power of circulating newspapers, is that under an Act of Parliament?—Yes, it is under the original act of 1784.

That Act of Parliament is confined to the circulation of newspapers and lottery slips, is it not?—Yes.

Upon what does the privilege rest of receiving or circulating other publications besides newspapers to any body?—Merely practice, from the year 1784 downwards.

Is it not the case that magazines and reviews also are circulated?—Yes.

Under what pretence is that done?—That has always been the case since 1784. Two years ago a disagreement took place between the clerks of the roads and the other clerks in the inland office as to the right of sending newspapers; the express clerks maintained that they had the privilege of sending to private individuals as well as to taverns, club-houses, and public bodies. The matter was submitted to Lord Rosse, and it was agreed, under his lordship's sanction, that the whole privilege arising from delivering express newspapers in Dublin, as well as the clerk of the roads newspapers, (who at 1784 had the privilege of circulating newspapers from England, as well as from Dublin, through Ireland,) should come into one fund, and that each of them should divide according to a certain rate, and it has gone on in that way ever since; but with respect to periodical works, that was always previously the privilege of the secretary; they now come down to Holyhead, the carriage being paid to Holyhead, and they then come across by the packet. Those reviews and magazines do not come through the post-office in England.

They come without charge?—Yes, of the postage; the conveyance is paid to Holyhead.

By whom?—Through the stage coaches; they come free of expense from Holyhead here, and what are for the interior pass free through Ireland.

You presume that the power of selling at the London prices in Dublin arises from some arrangement made with the persons who supply them in London?—I should certainly think so.

Do you see any convenience to the public that is derived from the enjoyment of this privilege, of circulating publications of various kinds through Ireland, that is equivalent to the disadvantage of the interference that must have with the common course of trade?—No advantage whatever beyond the individual himself and the emolument it produces. To me, I believe it is very small; I will procure against another day an account of what the whole thing does produce, I believe the whole produce among six individuals is not 230*l.* a year.

In the report that was made in 1810 there are various suggestions with respect to different offices; can you state whether all or any of those have been carried into effect by

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orders or regulations subsequently?—I cannot at this moment; we have made a great many alterations since.

Does not a considerable advantage arise to the clerks who have the privilege of expresses?—Yes, it is a very good income under its present circumstances.

Is Mr. Swan, the receiver-general, partner in any house of land agency?—He is; Mr. Stewart's house in Leinster-street.

Do you permit persons who do any of the duties of the post-office to be partners in any other concern?—It has never come before us in any shape; there are several that have other situations of their own in private; several of the clerks in the inland office are attornies.

[The witness was directed to make a return of the names and situations of those persons, who being clerks in the post-office, are holding any other employment not official.]

EDWARD S. LEES.

## Appendix, No. 103.

Friday, 15th August 1823.

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Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES was again called in; and delivered in an account of the Names and Offices of the persons in the post-office having the privilege of franking.

YOU have made a return of the arrears of the deputy postmasters, and together with that return there are a variety of letters of yours pressing on the postmasters-general the consideration of those arrears, but notwithstanding the correspondence has been on your part urgent for a considerable time, it has not been till April 1823 that any one step was taken on the subject?—The most decisive step taken was in April, but even the steps taken in April were not decisive.

It appears that out of those under arrear a certain number have been dismissed, but it appears that for Sligo the monthly instalment is 140*l.*, and the postmaster has 600*l.* in hands, and yet he remained in office?—That has been since disposed of by resignation, and that arrear is secured by Mr. Wynn, the member.

Would there be any difficulty in obtaining successors to the postmasters who are in default?—Not the smallest. The reason Lord Rosse assigned for not removing some others was the expense of replacing them; the very same thing went on for a course of years with our letter-carriers, and it became so bad I took the responsibility upon myself, and made an order that, no matter what the sum was that was due, the moment our accounts became deranged by the money being deficient, that man should be put down to the bottom of the list. There was 300*l.* at a time deficient at that period; there is not now a single deficiency for a considerable time together.

Are you aware upon what ground the letters from the audit board are permitted to go free?—It is under an Act of Parliament.

In what way are the letters that so go from the audit board marked so as to authorize you not to charge them?—As far as I have seen myself they come in printed envelopes, indorsed "Audit Office," and countersigned by some officers of that department.

Have you had reason to believe that those envelopes are very numerous?—I have heard within these two days from the inspector of franks of the English post-office, who has attended in the sorting office, that he has observed that.

Would there be any difficulty in having an account kept by a confidential order given to some clerk upon whom you could depend, of the number and the addresses of the letters for three or four days successively?—None whatever.

Will you have the goodness to have such an account taken, and to furnish it to this Board?—Certainly.

Mr. Thomas Orde Lees, the chief clerk, is the first person next to yourself; his duties, like those of all others, are distinctly stated in the book that has been delivered in, and to which reference has been made in the course of your examination; has that attendance been that which is stated here daily for a certain number of years, and does he actually perform the duties that are here assigned to him?—He is the principal corresponding officer in the secretary's office; he generally carries on under my own directions the principal portion of the correspondence; he writes either from himself or from memoranda the principal letters to the gentry of the country, and in ordinary cases, unless where I find it necessary to do it myself, he writes several of the Government letters.

He performs his duties in person?—Yes, and he is very seldom absent.

The next person is Mr. Harrison, the senior clerk; does he perform the duties of his office in the same way?—Indeed he does, and in a very excellent manner; he is one of the best officers we have.

Who holds the office of second senior clerk, which was held at the time of the return by Mr. Lyster?—The officer next in succession to him at the time, Mr. Crofton.

Does he perform the duties of his office?—He does; at present he is in a very precarious state of health.

The duties assigned to this office are that of carrying on a general correspondence, copying all such papers as may be required by the secretary, and so on; in what respect do the practical duties of that office differ from those assigned to the chief clerk?—He generally carries on the correspondence with the deputy postmasters, and also other letters.

The minute clerk, Mr. John Burrowes?—He is a most excellent officer.

He performs his duties in person, and with great zeal and talent?—Yes, very laboriously.

Who has been placed in the situation which was held by Mr. Crofton?—Mr. Hartwell.

What is meant by "answering the public"?—Answering complaints made personally at the office.

His attendance is daily?—Yes, from ten o'clock till four.

The letter-bill office is the next in succession; do the senior clerk and the second clerk perform their duties personally every day?—Certainly.

Have the officers of this department no relaxation during the year?—Not very frequently. I think Mr. Beare, who is an Englishman, has not been absent twice to see his friends since he was appointed in 1808. That is a part of our establishment where I think our security is rather defective; it is the record of all the revenue of the postmasters of the kingdom; and if an officer there was disposed to enter into a connivance with any of the deputy postmasters, he may do it to almost any amount before it is detected. On my return from Edinburgh, when I went to inquire into the frauds committed in that office last year, it more forcibly than ever struck me that there was a want of perfect security in that branch of our business; and in a conversation I had with my Lord Rosse, at the next interview I had with him, I brought the subject before him. No specific plan is determined on, but it certainly strikes me to be necessary that some scheme should be devised by establishing proper checks, not that I have the least suspicion that any thing wrong is going on there, but it is our duty to prevent the possibility of fraud.

Has any thing suggested itself to you upon the subject that would form a sufficient check?—What occurs to me is this: the defect of the system is a want of due examination and comparison between the dockets which go down to the country, which I produced the other day, which are received from the postmasters, and the entries in the books. It would be a task certainly beyond our present power to do it completely, but it occurs to me that if even once a week there was a special board, and some of the heads of the different departments, including the secretary particularly, the head of the inland office, from which office those documents go, the accountant-general or the treasurer, if we were all to assemble once a week in the board-room, and to take down from the accounts of the preceding month as many as we could go through, and compare the entries in the dockets with the entries in the books of the preceding month (as the books of the current month would be in use), it would at all events have this effect, it would, through terror, prevent the officers in the letter-bill office conniving with the deputy postmasters, for they could not know which particular docket might be the one examined; those dockets come to very nearly a thousand a day; there are nearly five hundred post towns, and there are two for each post town each day, therefore it would be a very laborious duty for the heads of the office to go through all once a week; but I think the comparison once a week would be the best check which could be devised.

Are those dockets, when received, entered into any books?—Daily; and the dockets are recorded twice in the proper divisions prepared for them.

The next person in this return is Mr. Swan; does he discharge the duties which are here specified?—He has a great deal of responsibility, but the duty there specified would not take, with the exception of three days in a quarter, half an hour a day; for the whole of the warrants to which his signature becomes necessary I do not think can exceed 150 in a quarter; he must sign his name to drafts on the Bank 150 times each quarter; he has at the end of the quarter a draft for each officer's salary to prepare and fill up; that he does with his own hand; but generally speaking, the duty of the treasurer is more in its responsibility and the confidence reposed in him, than in any manual labour he performs.

Do you not think that the duties of that office might be added to some other office that is an office of efficiency in the establishment, and be fully performed by one of several persons that might be fixed on who hold other situations?—No doubt, if they could get security; he gives 16,000*l.* security.

Does this duty impose upon them any official correspondence out of Dublin?—Nothing whatever, with the exception of his banker in London, to whom he remits, and with whom he corresponds with respect to the English balances.

How often does he make those remittances?—Regularly every quarter.

What is his attendance?—He is in the post-office some part of every day, but his duty does not require half an hour.

In short, it is an office that in your opinion might be dispensed with, and attached to any other considerable office in the post-office?—Most undoubtedly, if the person can get security.

Might it not be attached to the office of chief clerk, or any other of the higher offices?—Certainly, with regard to its labour.

The attendance of Mr. Swan is stated to be from ten till four o'clock?—Those are the fixed hours of every officer in the post-office; I conceive the time called for to be the time when they ought to attend.

Of course, from what you have stated to be the duties of that office, there can be no interruption

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ruption by his absence from the office on business of his own, nor any inconvenience to the public, except that which must arise from the probable abuse of his privilege in carrying on all the correspondence of his partnership through his privilege as an officer in the post-office?—No.

The next in the order is Mr. Symes, who appears to have a good deal of duty attached to his office?—A great deal too much in my opinion; he is a most laborious officer; a great part of his duty is done out of doors, leaving bills of exchange for acceptance. Were it not that he is particularly circumstanced in his own family, he could not get through the business: he has fortunately two or three sons, who assist him. The disposing of the securities and bills remitted by the deputy postmasters would take a man his entire time: at the same time that does not occur daily: the same thing occurs in my office. I have seen Mr. Harrison, with his two brothers, at my office till seven or eight o'clock at night, but that is seldom.

He performs his duty in person, and is a good officer?—Yes; I do not know of any person who could supply his place if any thing happened to him.

There is a junior clerk, Mr. Harrison, in the same office?—Yes, he is brother to the gentleman I have been speaking of.

Does he assist as much as he should?—He does, and is there every day.

What is the security given by Mr. Symes?—I think, 2,000*l*.

Is there a great deal of trouble in receiving the bills?—An immensity of trouble.

What are the species of bills the postmasters send; private bills?—Drafts payable at sight for Kilmainham and Chelsea pensioners; those we consider as cash; but by far the larger proportion of our revenue is received in bills of exchange and bank post bills.

Mr. Symes also holds an office in the bank of Ireland?—He does.

Does the performance of his duties in the bank of Ireland interfere with the performance of his duties at the post-office?—Not that I have found.

Do you feel that, independent of the effect it may have on the practical performance of the duties by the clerks in the post-office, there is any other objection to their holding situations unconnected with their office?—I am not aware what is the duty of the office he holds in the bank; but I have never found that whatever it is, it has interfered with the performance of his duties in the treasurer's office in the post-office; there never has been any failure whatever reported to me in the performance of any part of his duty; a great portion of the duty he does is out of doors; whether he employs his sons to do that, or to do his duties in the bank, I do not know.

The next in the return is the accountant-general's office; the accountant-general is Mr. Shaw; he is appointed by patent, his attendance is stated to be from ten to four?—He is pretty punctual in his attendance.

What is the duty that he actually performs?—I believe, strictly speaking, it is confined to his signature.

And the signature of what papers?—He signs all the warrants; first and foremost, a weekly abstract to the treasury, all the deputy postmasters accounts, and the quarterly accounts; he signs or rather countersigns all drafts upon the bank before they can be obtained.

The duties assigned to him in this book are not only the signing, but the examination of those different papers, which he signs for the Lords of the Treasury, and so on; does he personally examine those accounts?—I rather think he does not, and I will state why; he was appointed two years ago, and is consequently as yet inexperienced. Lord Rosse knew equally with myself the great importance of having an efficient person at the head of that branch of the business. I found that Mr. Shaw could not, from want of sufficient experience, be competent to do the duty, and that the great weight of the business devolved upon the chief clerk, Mr. Mills, who is a most valuable officer, and I considered it unfair that the weight of the business should be put upon the shoulders of a man who had enough to do with his own duty; and on communication with my Lord Rosse, it was agreed that Mr. Mills should execute the principal duties that I reported did properly belong to the accountant-general himself, and that Mr. Shaw should, out of his salary, make a suitable remuneration to Mr. Mills for so doing. I think it is 100*l*. a year out of Mr. Shaw's salary that he pays to Mr. Mills.

In the entry here there is no notice of any deduction for such a purpose?—I think in fairness that ought to have been stated, and Mr. Shaw ought to have no objection, for it was permitted.

Mr. Mills is a most excellent officer?—He is.

He not only performs the duties of accountant-general, but performs them in a most satisfactory manner?—Most particularly well; I would recommend his books as a specimen.

Will you have the goodness to state your opinion of the effect that would be produced upon the collection of the revenue through the post-office, if, instead of the appointment of the Government to the patent offices, a regulation could be established by which a selection should in all cases be made out of persons who have served a certain number of years in the office, or in the particular department in which the vacancy fell, and that out of that number the Government were obliged to appoint one?—Such a regulation certainly must on principle have the very best possible effect in any department, particularly in the post-office, where so much of the public property is concerned; it would hold out a proper stimulus and emulation to good conduct; but at the same time, one of the ablest officers we have had in the post-office, was an appointment made by the Lord Lieutenant; that was the late accountant.

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If that is important in other offices you will probably think that it is peculiarly so in the post-office, where the public interest is so much concerned in the integrity of the officers?—Certainly.

Is the description of persons that have risen through the gradations of office in the post-office that description that would be the best calculated to fill the higher departments of it, with the exception, of course, of the highest, those of the postmasters-general and the secretary?—I do not think in all cases; I think particularly in the inland office. I would rather see in the inland office the chief officer not rise from the same department to the control of it, for the principle of that office is succession from the very lowest clerk at present, and I think there may be many objections in that particular department to a junior officer becoming the supreme authority in it; many of them in the inland office are extremely young, down to fifteen, and I have already experienced considerable embarrassment from the circumstance of the superintendent not having a perfect control in it; and rising, as he must from the bottom, he becomes, from the first moment of his entrance, familiar with every person in the office; and I do not think that distinction or distance can exist where an officer has risen in that way. As far as the second in authority goes, I think that ought never to be abandoned in the inland office, but I think there ought to be a superior, who has not risen.

Does the same observation apply to any of the other officers, in your opinion?—No, it does not; it is the extent of the office, and the peculiarity of persons in it; persons in all ranks of life, and of all ages, that induce me to say that.

Is the responsibility of the office imposed upon the chief clerk in the accountant-general's office?—No; we held Mr Shaw responsible; if any thing were to go wrong, we should hold him responsible.

Has the second clerk the duties of assistance of the first clerk to perform, or are there any other duties?—They have each specific duties to perform: on my return from London, after inspecting the post-office there, I personally saw each perform his duties.

Are those the same duties as are performed by those persons in London?—The duties in principle are the same; there are a greater number of officers in London.

What portion of the time of the second clerk does the performance of his duties actually require?—I should think the entire.

Is that the same with the third clerk?—Yes; their business is as equally divided as it can be. I think that the best information on those subjects would be obtained by this board from the reports I made to Lord Rosse on my return from London the year before last, of the comparative duties of the officers in London and in Dublin. I entered with great particularity into the duties of each individual in both offices.

The next office in the return is the inland office; the president is Mr. Donlevy; he is a very good officer, is he not?—He is a man of the greatest integrity, and one in whom I have the highest confidence; he attends regularly, but I do not think he has sufficient control over the establishment; he has not the zeal or the energy which are requisite.

Had he risen?—Yes, from the very bottom of the office; he has been in the office ever since 1776.

Does his want of control arise from the having risen from the bottom of the office, or from other circumstances?—I think it is from constitution; he wants that degree of energy which is requisite; he is perfectly independent; he is a man of considerable property. The business of that station is divided between the president and the two vice-presidents, whose attendance is alternate, two each day, beginning at six in the morning, to the dispatch of the letter-carriers, and recommencing at five o'clock in the evening; he has also a situation in the Bank of Ireland, which occupies him from ten o'clock till three.

At what time is the dispatch of the letter-carriers?—Generally between eight and nine; then he attends again in the evening.

During the other parts of the day how is he employed?—Strictly speaking, he should be there between ten o'clock and three, but that has been dispensed with in a great measure.

Has that been dispensed with because his attendance was unnecessary, or as a matter of accommodation in the performance of his other duties at the Bank?—It was considered that he was within reach if he was wanted.

Has any practical inconvenience whatever arisen from his holding the situation he does in the Bank?—Nothing very serious; it is for the purpose of reference only that his attendance could be required during the day; any matters that might oblige individuals to have recourse to him respecting their letters.

If in case of another appointment you were applied to for your opinion, whether it was or was not desirable that the person who was to perform the duties of that situation should hold a situation also in the Bank of Ireland, similar to that which is held by Mr. Donlevy, would you give it as your opinion that it was a matter of perfect indifference?—Certainly not; I would make it a matter of objection that he should not hold both situations; and it was with that view, I make no doubt, that Lord Clancarty obliged Mr. De Joncourt to leave my office, which would now have given him 400*l.* a year, and to confine himself strictly to the duties of the inland office.

Would the performance of the duties of Mr. De Joncourt in your office have been as compatible with the performance of his duties in the inland office as the attendance of Mr. Donlevy at the Bank of Ireland is with his duty as president of the inland office?—Not exactly; because the duties of Mr. De Joncourt in my office might have kept him beyond five o'clock, at which period the duties of the inland office commence.

But there was not that difference between them that you think it compatible with the

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duties of the one where it was not compatible with the duties of the other?—No; I certainly would oblige Mr. Donlevy to attend one part of the day, and it would be very servicable; even if it were to assist in the comparison of the vouchers from the letter-bill office, he might be of essential service.

The next officers in order are the two vice-presidents; their duty is to assist the president in the general superintendence?—Yes.

Do either of them hold any other situation?—I find Mr. De Joncourt has another occupation.

Mr. De Joncourt is stated, in a paper handed in by you, to be a merchant for the supply of coffin furniture; does that interfere with the performance of his duties in the office?—Not in the least, I was not aware of the fact till I made inquiry.

He attends regularly in the office?—Yes, his attendance is very regular.

The duties of the offices of clerk of blind directions, charge delivery, and inspector of franks, are of course all performed in person?—Yes; those offices are all taken by the taxing clerks who have attained a certain rank in the office from seniority.

Are they taken of course by seniority, or by the appointment of the postmasters-general, on a view of the merits as well as the seniority of the individual?—I have never known an instance of the seniority being broken.

Are all men who have been in that situation a certain time capable of performing the duties of those offices?—Certainly; on an average, they must have been at least five and twenty years passing through the different gradations of that office before they come to the performance of those duties.

Will you describe how the duties of inspector of franks are performed?—I do not apprehend that his powers under our acts are by any means so strong as I understand they are in England.

Does he apply his examination to the letters and packets that come from members of parliament only?—By no means; he inspects all official franks.

He is of course aware who those persons are who have the privilege?—Assuredly.

Upon the supposition of any abuse being practised, either in respect of the franks of members of parliament or those of privileged officers, does he bring it before you?—I believe his only practice is to charge the letters himself.

Does he do that without reference to you?—Yes, certainly; I do not remember receiving any report from him upon the subject.

Do you strictly enforce the charging the letters of members, or is there any relaxation in case of their occasionally exceeding their number?—I believe that in respect of parliamentary privilege the members are never permitted to exceed by one without its being charged.

Supposing the inspector had reason to suspect there was a forgery, what would he do?—He would charge the letter with treble postage. There is a very severe penalty for that offence, if proved, which was lately enforced.

Would he not, before he made his charge, report the circumstance to you?—No; he must send the packet forward immediately; he reports it to me, and I write down to the postmaster to obtain the frank, if it can be obtained.

Have any such been obtained?—Yes; there was a case lately of a prosecution of the wife of a clergyman, who forged an official frank and had to pay 50*l.* for it.

Have you ever been in the habit of making any representations to the Government here upon the subject of the abuse of franking?—There was a very detailed representation made to Mr. Grant, about the period of his retiring from administration here, upon that subject.

There were some measures taken here in the course of the last year, were there not?—There were.

Have those measures very much reduced the official franking?—Very much.

Is the franking of the different officers, in your opinion, considered as a part of the emoluments of the office?—Certainly not.

You think that there are no inferior clerks who exercise it for advantage under an agreement with others?—I have never known of such a case; I believe one or two public institutions pay a small fee to a clerk in my office for taking care of their letters.

Can you form any estimate of the proportion between the franks that go through your office under the privilege of members of parliament, and those that go through it under the official privilege conveyed to various persons under different Acts of Parliament?—I cannot at this moment, but I can easily afford the information; but of this I am sure, that on any single night, one official packet will be tantamount to all the parliamentary franks that go through the post-office in Dublin. The other evening when I was in the office there were a number of packets of large size to go by the mails; the weight of the mail-bags in consequence of this is enormous. I am told that in London such packages would not be suffered to pass, but that they would be sent back, even to the offices of Government. There were the night before last thirty packages of as large size as the box on this table, [*about eighteen inches by nine, and six in height.*] They contained books or papers to be sent up to Chelsea Hospital. My idea is, that at all events such packages containing official paper should be kept back and sent on the blank night of the week. There is one matter I have been considering for some time past, namely, the laying down a scale for a reduced postage on packages sent by post by private individuals, that when they come to a certain size the rate of charge should be reduced. I think if that were done, then there might be a restriction at the same time put on the packages sent under privilege; many of them might be sent by the coach, and sending them would in that way contribute in time to our benefit, by obtaining

us the tenders for the mails at a lower rate. The illicit conveyance of letters by stage-coaches is a very serious matter.

Does that prevail to a considerable degree in Ireland?—I am persuaded it prevails to a very considerable extent.

Is there no way of preventing that?—The law for the prevention of that is much stronger in Ireland than in England; we can search houses and carriages from sunrise to sunset, and I frequently sign warrants for that purpose.

Have you reason to believe that it is systematically conducted?—Through the whole kingdom, in every description of conveyance, mail-coach, stage-coach, jaunting-car, and so on.

Have you any belief that the persons running those coaches receive any payment for the conveyance of those letters?—They must receive it.

And that they are conveyed regularly and systematically?—I am very sure of it.

Have you ever obtained any proof of its being reduced to a system?—No; I have never ascertained the existence of distinct agents for the purpose of receiving the letters; generally they are sent by the coachmen; but I have known instances where we have detected, on the information of the mail contractors themselves, parcels made up as such, and conveyed in the coach.

The next officers are the taxing clerks; do they perform their duties in person?—They do. Though the duty of taxing clerk is frequently done by an officer of very inferior rank; when a taxing clerk is absent, his duty must be performed by a sorter; when a taxing clerk or any officer of the inland office is absent, the substitute is provided at his own expense, and the probability is, that that consideration may enable a taxing clerk to obtain leave of absence more frequently than he otherwise would.

Through whom is that leave of absence obtained?—Through the application of the individual, sanctioned by the president of the office, who must state that the absence can be allowed without any danger of interference with the business of the office.

Is that statement made to you?—Yes. I uniformly refuse absence unless it is accompanied by a certificate from the president that the office is sufficiently full of attendants.

What check is there upon the taxing clerks in the performance of their duty?—It is the duty of the president and vice-presidents to be constantly walking about during the performance of their business, and it is their duty to ascertain that the taxing clerks are performing their duty.

Supposing a taxing clerk, in his examination of the letters with a view to charging them, detected a letter with money in it, and did not charge it but put it into his pocket, what would be the means of detection you would have?—From the nature of the duty, such a thing is quite practicable, if a person is so disposed, and if he chooses to incur the risk of its being discovered by the officers who are immediately alongside of him.

Have you ever had any detections made at any time amongst the taxing clerks within your recollection?—I do not remember any one of a taxing clerk; there was one among the sorters very recently.

Is there any length of time that a person must be in the office before he can rise to the situation of a taxing clerk?—No, I do not think there is any specified time; but it is almost impossible for them to rise there, I should think, before fifteen years, from the number in the office, and the number of vacancies which must occur.

To the situation of taxing clerk they rise by gradation?—They do.

Is that ever broken by special appointment?—I have not known it to be.

EDWARD S. LEES.

Examinations.

No. 103.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
15th Aug. 1823.

### Appendix, No. 104.

Thursday, 28th August 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in and examined.

CAN you point out the clause of the Act under which the directions of one postmaster have been acted upon, without both concurring?—I believe there is no provision for it in the Act, but it has always been done. I apprehend that the patents are in the same form as that of my father and myself; we were joint secretaries under one patent.

The Commissioners were proceeding, in the course of your last examination, through the different offices: the next office to that of the taxing clerks is that of the clerk of the money-book; his duty is stated to be to act as a check upon the paid-letter office?—It is.

What is the sort of account he keeps of the money and letters inwards and outwards?—The post-paid books are brought into the inland office at night, where the directions of the letters are recorded; and he examines those books, in order to operate as a check on the postage paid in the course of the day.

With what does he compare them?—He compares them with the letters themselves.

The next description of persons are the senior sorters; their duty is to sort and forward the letters in their respective destinations?—Yes.

The sorters are divided into the different roads?—They are.

Does each senior sorter keep an account of his road?—I do not believe it is the chief sorter

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Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
28th Aug. 1823.

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Sir

*Edward Smith Lees.*  
28th Aug. 1823.

sorter who does that; it is the taxing clerk or assisting clerk. A man may be at one part of the evening a sorter, and at another part of the evening may be assisting in making up the accounts.

The persons, though denominated senior and junior sorters, are employed in all the departments of the office where they are wanted?—Yes, frequently; and frequently junior sorters are employed in the most important departments of taxing.

If a sorter is dishonest, there is but little means of detecting him, is there?—Very little.

Have you had any means of detecting any one of them lately?—There was a case of prosecution lately, where there was an escape under, I think, very peculiar evidence.

What was the sort of fraud he had been guilty of?—He had in fact embezzled a letter, and negotiated the property; the property was traced up to him through his tailor, through whom he received half of a 30*l.* note, passing it as a 5*l.*, and informing him he expected the other half in another letter. The tailor's wife, suspecting that all was not right, desired her husband to go to the bank, and ask whether it was a good note; and on presenting it at the bank, they discovered that a stop had been put upon that note, on a complaint of the person who should have received the letter; the tailor was apprehended by the post-office solicitor, and he immediately gave up this gentleman; the man was tried, and escaped; though his unfortunate father had offered to me that he should plead guilty, if there was the least hope or encouragement that his life should be spared; he escaped, owing to the evidence of a Mr. O'Neill one of the clerks in the office, who swore that he was not on that night what is denominated a sorter, though it was clearly proved that, though he was not sorting at this table, as it may be he was at that table, he was engaged in sorting the letters into the different boxes, comprising the post-town, though he was not at the first table.

Had you ever any detection of a fraud that was said to have been committed in collusion with the postmaster of Clonmel?—Yes, with some person in his office.

Was the description of fraud this, that when the letters were sorted, a number of letters were taken and put into a packet; that that packet was franked, and sent to the postmaster at Clonmel; that he opened the packet, charged the letters, distributed them, and received the money, and then divided it with the sorters or clerks who were in collusion with him?—No, it was not quite so aggravated as that; it was a collusion of several of the postmasters in the bye-letter correspondence of the country, on which there is no check but that of the honesty of the postmasters. The postmaster of Kilkenny was one of the persons engaged in it; he had sent a packet to the assistant postmaster at Clonmel; and this assistant was in the habit, we apprehend, constantly of receiving packages in this way; and the postage was not brought into the account between the two postmasters; it was detected within these six months, and the consequence was, there were three or four postmasters dismissed.

Did you not prosecute them for the fraud?—No.

Why not?—Lord Rosse did not give me directions to do it.

Surely it was as atrocious a case as could have occurred?—Certainly it was; the postmasters were dismissed.

Have you no reason to believe that that is a fraud now practised?—I very much fear that that is a common practice; that at this very time they are pursuing the same course in other parts of the country.

In what way can you proceed to detect such a thing?—Merely by suspicion. If a suspicion exists, we scarcely fail in detecting the parties; it is done at considerable trouble and expense, by employing surveyors on different lines of communication, and their suddenly appearing in the post offices at a certain time, examining the postmasters dockets, and comparing them with the letters; there can be no decided check, if the two postmasters unite together.

Even that would not be sufficient unless you could oblige them to open the packet in the presence of the surveyors?—The surveyors open the bags themselves; the postmaster, who ought to be the check on his neighbour, does not enter the full amount of the letters, but by private marks on the back of the docket they keep up false accounts between one another, so that nothing but a visit from a surveyor can discover it; those dockets passing between postmaster and postmaster never appear in Dublin at all; we receive here only a monthly schedule what each postmaster has charged on the different postmasters, and each correspondent, probably one postmaster, may correspond with twelve other different postmasters, and make up packets for them in the course of the day.

You entertain considerable suspicion that a practice of the same kind still prevails?—I do. Are you taking any means to detect it?—At this moment I am.

Are the sorters and the probationary sorters employed indifferently in the letter or the newspaper office?—Principally in the letter office.

Who are those who are employed on the newspapers?—At present there are six in number, and the probationary clerks; there was an alteration made in 1821 or 1822, but there is one name given to them all.

The next clerk is the tick clerk?—His duty is very simple, to tick off the bags as they are delivered.

The collector of ship letters is Mr. Draper, that is an office which has undergone some regulation lately?—It has within these three months.

What is his duty?—His duty is to bring the letters to the post-office; in fact I do not think now he has any duty at all by the new regulations of the custom-house; I think the surveyors of the custom-house have undertaken to send all the ship-letters to the post-office in bags at particular periods, so that I apprehend the collector of ship-letters will not have any thing at all to do now.

He

He has also the duty of receiving the letters from the packet at Howth on the arrival of the packet?—Yes, that is held by the same person.

The next office is the British-mail office; there are five persons employed in that office?—There are more now; up to the 5th of January last there was that number, but since that period an experiment has been under trial for the purpose of affording a greater protection to letters containing property, and under that experiment two officers have been employed for some time past, whose duty it is to register all double letters happening to be contained in the mail; that was in consequence of serious complaints received from Mr. Freeling, of great deceptions on letters passing between the two offices, which had reached an alarming extent. Mr. Freeling and I were in close and confidential correspondence upon it for some time, and I have made an experiment, which, I am happy to say, has been attended with effect.

What is the experiment you have made?—Of throwing aside all the double-letters; the addresses are immediately entered on slips, each slip containing a certain number of letters, so as to expedite the delivery to the letter-carriers; they are brought into the letter-carriers office, where they are sorted, and there is an account of them kept.

Has any delay been occasioned by this arrangement?—I do not believe that any delay has been occasioned to be compared to the security of the property; we have not since that, which is about three months ago, lost a single letter, but we had lost twenty-five in the month before; one containing above 1,000*l*.

The comptroller of that office is under suspension?—He is.

Under whose charge is the office now?—That of Mr. Leet.

Was the office put under his charge by your direction?—It was.

The comptroller of the British-mail office has the forwarding of the British-mail letters inwards and outwards?—Generally to superintend the whole arrangement of the office, and to observe the conduct of the different officers, and to assist as far as he can generally in the whole management of it.

One of the most important of his duties is the forwarding of the letters into the interior?—No; that is done in the inland office.

He receives them from the coach?—Yes.

He puts them into a state to be sent into the inland office, with a view of being forwarded into the interior?—Precisely so.

That is one of his principal duties?—It is part of his duty; it is his business to see it done as quickly as he possibly can.

Mr. Leet, who is the person in charge, is one of the express clerks?—He is.

Has not he a direct interest in the delay of the letters with a view to the express papers?—If he dare do such a thing.

Is it not a direct interest that he has?—I do not well see the interest.

Is not his interest rather in the delay than the forwarding of the letters with a view to the express papers?—He has that interest, that if the mail came in and could not go forward into the country, but he could get his express papers out, he would have an interest, what the extent of it is I will not say.

Is it not an interest by inducing persons to take express papers?—It is a case which can very seldom occur; so far as it goes it will be an interest.

The Commissioners are led by this to the consideration of a transaction which occurred on the 8th of March, and which has been referred to them by the Lord Lieutenant; which is a point on which there has been a practical difference of opinion between the postmasters-general. The grounds on which Mr. Homan was suspended are stated in a letter from yourself to Mr. Homan, dated the 2d of June 1823, and the cause of his removal is stated to be "his having made a false charge to the Lord Lieutenant against his superior officer in a private manner, not through the regular channel of the postmasters-general, thereby seeking to impress the Irish Government privately with an unfavourable opinion of such officer without any just cause whatever;" that is the ground of suspension as explained by you. It appears that the last bag was brought into the office on that night, according to the statement in the book, at three minutes after seven o'clock; that soon afterwards Mr. Homan made an application to Mr. Leet upon the subject of its being forwarded, and that Mr. Leet refused to receive the letters, they having arrived after seven o'clock. It does not appear that there is any specific regulation existing in the post-office as to the forwarding of the letters if they arrive at any particular time, though, as far as can be collected from correspondence, there is a general understanding, that for the convenience of the public service they should be forwarded, if it can be done, by eight o'clock; at the same time, that upon looking at the returns, there are various instances of their having been forwarded when they have arrived after seven. It appears that Mr. Leet refused to receive them under this supposed regulation or understanding; that immediately after, Mr. Homan wrote a note to you in which he apprised you as follows: "The mail came to the door at seven o'clock; if you order me assistance from the inland office the letters for the interior can be sent off this night, they can be in the inland office in twenty minutes;" that to this you returned an answer. "If it can be done without delaying the mail too long it is very desirable, but as the coaches in some particular places go six miles an hour, delays here are very inconvenient;" immediately after this you saw Mr. Leet, did you not?—The moment that I received that, I instantly returned it by the same messenger, without an instant delay; I had a very particular reason at the moment for doing so. Mr. Homan, on receiving that, communicated my orders, I presume, to Mr. Leet, on which Mr. Leet came to me.

Will you have the goodness to state what passed between you and Mr. Leet?—We had

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scarcely more than one word. I had my watch upon the table, for I must observe to you that day happened to be a very peculiar day; I was always in the habit on Saturday of going down to Howth till the Monday, but I had a particular reason for stopping in Dublin on that day; the English mail had not arrived. I was dining alone with Lady Lees; the instant I got Mr. Homan's note I immediately observed to Lady Lees, "there is something very odd in getting this note;" my impression at the instant, and my declaration to Lady Lees was, that Mr. Homan did not know that I was in the post-office, for I did intend to go to Howth, and every preparation was made to go to Howth, but I had changed my mind very fortunately; I kept my watch upon the table from the instant I received it, and there it remained; when Mr. Leet came into the room he saw my watch before me, I could not mistake one second of the time; the moment Mr. Leet came in he said, "Sir, is it your intention the mail should go out?" I said, "Certainly it is, if it can be done."

Can you state the time of that communication?—Yes, to a moment; it was twenty minutes after the clock struck seven; the watch was lying before me at the moment.

What was the ground of that suspicion on your part, that Mr. Homan should have sent you a note when you were not there?—Because I had, unfortunately, strong reason for months before to suspect that a great deal of unfair means was taken by that gentleman with respect to me.

Were you aware afterwards from any thing that occurred, that he had acted upon the advice of somebody else when he wrote to you?—On that night, no, I was not; Mr. Leet positively protested against the possibility of getting out the letters without a very great delay of the mails; and on that information I said, "Very well, it cannot be helped;" he went away immediately, and I still kept my watch upon the table the whole time; at forty minutes after seven o'clock a second memorandum came in from Mr. Homan to me, stating that his letters were then ready, and that Mr. Leet would not send them; the same note I sent back at the same instant; and in order to prevent any loss of time, if it was possible to save it, in place of directing it to Mr. Homan I sent it directly to Mr. Leet, that Mr. Leet should see that he had my direction, if there was any possibility of doing it, to forward the letters to the country; that note was scarcely gone, when a message came from Mr. Homan for an answer to his last communication; the answer was sent by the same man immediately that Mr. Leet had got an answer. I remember perfectly well my watch being still kept on the table and remaining there till the sound of the horns of the coaches left me for a moment under an impression that Mr. Leet had been able to get them out, for it was considerably after the usual time of departure; that was the whole transaction, as it was confined to the night of Saturday.

When there was that expressed difference of opinion as to the possibility of getting the letters out between Mr. Leet and Mr. Homan, one asking for assistance and saying he could get the letters out if he had assistance, and the other stating the impossibility of it, did you yourself take any means for ascertaining whether that assistance could be afforded, and judge, yourself, of the practicability of it?—It never entered into my mind.

It was a note requesting assistance which had been refused?—I had no assistance to give him.

Did you take any means of ascertaining whether, from the state of the office and the employment of the persons in it at that moment, there were not disposable persons whose assistance could have been afforded?—Mr. Leet's assurance to me was, that he could not get his own business out within the time.

Did Mr. Leet assure you that he had taken any means of ascertaining whether there were any clerks disposable?—No, he did not.

Did you ask him that question?—No, I do not know that I did; between those hours there is no possibility of getting assistance; the extra clerks who want bread and want employment come to the office between five and six o'clock, and that is the hour to get assistance. I never knew an instance in my life of its being procured at that hour. I have on occasions where I thought it could be of use, I have no doubt myself, ordered assistance.

Do not you know that in cases of pressure, when the mail has arrived late, it has been a very common thing for the British-mail office to receive assistance from the inland office?—I have frequently ordered six officers myself to attend when I expected the mail late, but I never knew an instance where I was applied to under the same circumstances.

You do know that in cases of pressure assistance has been received from the inland office, with a view of their being enabled to forward the letters?—I am not aware that under similar circumstances of time it has been done; I have myself anticipated any possible delay.

Do not you know that on application to Mr. Donlevy assistance has been frequently given?—I have no doubt it has.

When that assistance was in a similar manner solicited of Mr. Leet, and he refused to give it, did you feel no obligation to ascertain the fact whether it could be given or not?—Certainly not; I would not take such a responsibility upon myself.

Would you not feel it proper to go down and make a personal inspection of the office, to see whether assistance could be afforded?—If it occurred a hundred times I would not do so; I would not take the responsibility of interfering. I could not tell whether in the mass of duty in the inland office it could be afforded or not, consistently with the duties of that office, acting for the postmasters-general. I hold the head of the inland office responsible for his own duties. I have no power over him at any time. I hold him responsible and would have held him responsible for the non-departure of that mail if it could have been

forwarded, but I would not interfere with his responsibility if I even thought it necessary to go down, which I never considered it my duty to do, to the inland office. I would not interfere against the opinion of the head of the office.

In case of a difference of opinion as to one failing in his duty, would it not be your immediate business to see whether an officer neglected his duty or not, and in that case to report him to the postmasters-general?—Certainly, I would report him if I saw that he failed in his duty; but he best knew his own duty. Mr. Homan should know that it is his duty to keep the mail locked up unless it arrived before seven; I do not mean to say that I would not, if I saw that I could send it forward after seven o'clock, break through the instructions of the postmasters-general, and send it forward.

The Commissioners are not aware of any such direction?—It is contained in the account returned to this Board of the duties of the respective officers.

The Commissioners have not been able to find any such order in writing?—It is contained in the book returned to this Board containing the general regulations of the office; but though that is the rule of the office, I have myself in several instances departed from it where I saw that it was possible to forward the mails into the country.

Should you have thought that instruction so precise, that if the mail had come to the door while the clock was actually striking, at the risk of all the inconvenience to arise from delaying the country letters, they should be delayed for four-and-twenty-hours?—Indeed it would be very hazardous in making any alteration on some nights; on two nights in the week it probably would not, either on Wednesday or Friday; but certainly on the Saturday night, it is a subject of constant anxiety; I certainly would not, knowing as I do the immense pressure of business that takes place on that night different from any other night in the week, and sometimes equal to two nights, I would not have made any alteration. My books I can show for the two years preceding are full of letters on the subject of the necessity of not keeping the mail-coach in the yard while the clock is striking. My Lord Rosse went himself to the office to see the mails off, with a view to preventing it.

Within two years there have been a great number of instances in which they have gone at a much later hour than eight o'clock, and that without any order of Government to occasion it. Mr. Donlevy was directed to take out twenty of the latest periods since 1821, in which the mails have gone late: in 1821 the mail has not gone till thirty-four minutes after eight, thirty-five minutes after eight, thirty-two minutes after eight, forty minutes after eight. In January 1822 fifty minutes after eight, fifty-five minutes after eight, forty-five minutes after eight, forty minutes after eight, thirty-five minutes after eight, fifty minutes after eight?—There is one very necessary fact to observe, that during that period one of the mail-coaches did not leave Dublin till ten o'clock at night; it was optional with me to send off one of the mails to Cork at any hour between eight and ten, according to the arrival of the British mail.

The Belfast coach is one that is too late; the Galway coach appears to be generally very late; the Limerick coach; there is one case in which the Cork mail by Clonmel was detained till fifty minutes after seven?—We consider it imperative upon us, whatever comes into the office before seven o'clock even if the mails are delayed till eleven o'clock, to dispatch; but after seven o'clock, we do not consider it at all practicable, and most particularly on a Saturday night, to send on the British mail. I do not believe, from the information of the people best qualified, that it was possible to send it on that night, the Irish business itself was not disposed of till after eight; and it appears by the account that there were 1,500 or 2,000 letters more than on some other nights, even without the English mail.

Should you not have thought it your duty, if you had come down and found that the assistance of clerks could be afforded, to give an order for it?—If I had seen clerks sitting with their hands before them, and had no business to perform for the remainder of the evening, I should have ordered assistance to be given, but the first thing I should have done in that case would have been to have suspended Mr. Leet for his incorrect representation to me; but although some clerk or clerks might at some particular moment have had nothing to do, in five minutes after he would have had plenty to perform, I apprehend.

But you did not think it necessary to come down?—It never occurred to me to be necessary; I have never done so during the time I have been in my office.

You stated that on a Saturday night, if the mail arrived after seven you would not have directed the forwarding of it; why then did you give a doubtful answer? why did you not at once say that it was after seven o'clock, and therefore it was not to be done?—My reason is, that I would not take the responsibility; at the same time anxious that, if possible, the mails should go forward; each was to act on his own responsibility; if the postmaster-general was on the spot, I defy him to have done more than I did that night.

The event was that Mr. Leet not only gave him no assistance, but withdrew some assistance he had obtained for himself, and that the mails were in consequence delayed?—Yes.

Did the transactions of this evening come before you in any shape?—The reports of the proceedings of the office on that evening, the report of the British office, I got on the Sunday out of the usual course.

The report stated that the country letters had been refused by Mr. Leet, and the newspapers sent in again from the newspaper office to the British-mail office, and the express papers forwarded; the clerks of the roads papers were forwarded that night?—They were; but I know nothing of the newspapers having been returned from the newspaper office to the British-mail office.

Did any of your inquiries lead you to know the period at which those newspapers of

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the clerks of the roads came into the office, the period at which they were sent into the inland office, and the consequence of their being sent in so late?—No.

On seeing it stated in this report that the letters had been refused by Mr. Leet, and that appearing in the shape of a complaint, did you take any steps to inquire into it?—I did; my very first transaction on the Monday morning was to direct inquiries, holding Mr. Leet responsible.

You wrote to Mr. Donlevy, and Mr. Donlevy wrote to Mr. Leet, and Mr. Leet forwarded an explanation?—Yes; those documents form part of the inquiry.

Did you enter into any investigation of the matter contained in the report to you?—It is a very strange circumstance that at the very moment that the proceedings were going on the extraordinary communication came from the Lord Lieutenant by Sir Colin Campbell to me.

Is there a report to you from the inland office?—There is.

Do you remember whether the letters not being sent off till twenty-five minutes after eight, it stated any special reason for that delay?—I do not think there was any special reason for that delay stated.

Is it the duty of Mr. Leet, who was then acting as president, if any particular circumstance occurred that produced the delay, to state it on the report?—Certainly.

Is there any special reason stated on that report?—I believe there is not; but I do not very well recollect now what appears upon that report, but it is before the Board.

Returning to the Saturday evening: in the progress of the thing there was a second application made to you after Mr. Leet's conference with you, stating "the country letters are ready, and will not be received by the inland office?"—Yes, that was at forty minutes after seven.

You wrote on the back of that, "the country letters are to be sent forward if it can be done without delaying the mail too long"?—Just so.

In the first place it must have appeared to you, by the answer you wrote, that when the first application was made to you at twenty minutes after seven, it was not impossible, with exertion, to have sent forward those letters?—No, that does not follow. I entertained no opinion of the practicability; I left the responsibility with Mr. Leet.

Your answer is this, "if it can be done without delaying the mails too long it would be very desirable"?—Certainly.

Then you supposed there was a possibility at least of that being done?—Certainly, I suppose so; I hoped it was possible.

Then at forty minutes past seven your answer infers the same thing, and that they ought to be sent forward if it could be done without delaying the mails too long?—If it was at all practicable. Mr. Leet had my consent to send the mail, but not to delay the coaches too late.

Was there any thing in the hour at which that application was made to you, which, on reflection, you are now inclined to think made it utterly impossible they should be sent on, they being ready at the time stated to you?—Most certainly: I think they could not have been got out till fifteen minutes, or, I believe, ten minutes, before nine o'clock, from the quantity of business which I subsequently discovered to have gone through the inland office that night; from the general pressure on the Saturday night, my general impression, on my hope of salvation is, that they could not have been got out sooner than that at the earliest.

Was that your impression at the time you wrote that note?—Certainly not; I never thought of it at all.

Then it is founded on the subsequent information you have received?—Entirely; when I went into the office on the Sunday morning, seeing that the mail was in at three minutes after seven, it occurred to me, that if the people were at their post, and proper exertion had been made, the British-mail might have been got out by twenty-five minutes after eight.

Did that alteration of opinion you have now stated take place in consequence of the letter addressed to Mr. Donlevy by Mr. Leet, for the purpose of explaining the circumstances of the delay on Saturday night?—Probably, principally so, with the evidence before me of the quantity of letters which had gone through the office on that night, by contrasting the proceedings on that night with the preceding Saturday night, it will appear there were fifteen hundred letters more went through the office than went through the office on the preceding Saturday, though there was a British-mail in it; putting these things together, the impression on my mind on the Sunday morning against Mr. Leet was in a great measure done away.

Did you, on that letter from Mr. Leet, call upon him to state whether he could or could not have rendered any assistance to Mr. Homan when the assistance was called for?—The inquiry was still proceeding; I am not aware that I asked that question; at that moment I was anxious to ascertain the state of the British-mail office when the mail arrived; that inquiry was going on with Mr. Homan; a similar inquiry was going on with Mr. Leet; and the whole terminated at the moment when I received the communication from Sir Colin Campbell; the result would have been laid before Lord Rosse the following morning, if it had not been interrupted by that communication.

This book contains an account of what passed before Lord Rosse, by whom was this taken down?—By the minute clerk, Mr. Burrowes; there were two copies taken, one of which Mr. Homan got himself.

There does not appear in this examination any question to have arisen, or at least to have been pressed, as to the capability of Mr. Leet to have afforded assistance to Mr. Homan, if he



he had been so disposed?—I do not recollect whether Lord Rosse asked any question of that nature, but I know Lord Rosse was particularly scrupulous in asking one or two as to the precise hour they could get the mails out, and Lord Rosse argued, I recollect, in this way, in which many persons not acquainted with the office would argue—“if the mail came at seven you would send it out, if it came in three minutes afterwards, you would not; that would make only the difference of three minutes;” but Lord Rosse was perfectly satisfied.

Have you seen the minute of Lord Rosse?—I have.

Are you aware that an alteration took place in the opinion of Lord Rosse subsequently to that?—I am.

Do you know the grounds on which Lord Rosse changed his opinion; did he enter into any investigation of the subject again?—I am not aware that his lordship troubled himself to enter into the investigation again; his lordship never had the goodness to call for my report on the transaction at all.

Mr. Homan appears to have complained upon the subject of the mails not being sent forward, as early as it was possible to complain; he put it into his return of the Saturday night?—Just so.

Of course that was the proper mode of bringing it under your notice?—It was so.

Are you aware that his next step was to go and prefer the same complaint to the postmaster-general?—I have heard since that he did; but my Lord Rosse was with me all the Monday, and he never even alluded to it; his lordship was with me again on the Wednesday, and he never even alluded to it; and it was on the Thursday evening, at six o'clock, that Sir Colin Campbell came to apprise me of the circumstance.

You have no doubt of the fact of his having gone to Lord Rosse, and made that complaint?—I perceive a very extraordinary, and, to me, unaccountable contradiction, even in my Lord Rosse's statement.

In what respect?—I must read over the papers to state that; it is a transaction of some months back, and I have not it perfectly in my mind.

With respect to the fact of Mr. Homan having made a communication to him the next day; you have no doubt of that fact?—I have no doubt that Mr. Homan went to Lord Rosse, and told him that Mr. Leet had detained the mails; but if I am to believe Lord Rosse, he never heard my name alluded to; he stated that manfully in the presence of the board's counsel and his own confidential lawyer; he complained that Mr. Leet would not send out the mail. By another statement of Lord Rosse, when I had unfortunately written to him a very strong letter, which, on cool reflection, probably I would not have written, his lordship changes about for the first time, and there he gives a different account from what he did on the day of the investigation, and on which his minute was founded.

Mr. Homan does not appear ever to have charged it upon you?—Never, till he went to Captain Webster.

He does not appear to have charged it there?—Then Sir Colin Campbell's communication is not borne out.

It appears, in the minutes of the investigation before Lord Rosse, that you charged Mr. Homan with having communicated to Captain Webster that you had detained the mails for thirty-six hours; and to that there is an admission by Mr. Homan of the statement, with the exception of some errors. The fact appears to be, that Mr. Homan having laid the complaint before you in a report, went to Lord Rosse, who, by his manner of receiving it, did not lead him to hope that he would immediately inquire into it; and, in short, gave him reason to expect that he was likely to leave Dublin without inquiring into it, and that he had then made this communication to Captain Webster, avowedly on his part, with the intention of its being conveyed to the Lord Lieutenant?—I think he stated that he was locked up with Captain Webster in a room, and that their communication took place by question and answer. That Mr. Homan stated in the investigation at the post-office.

That does not appear in the book containing the minutes of the investigation?—I believe it does with respect to Mr. Homan's fearing the matter would not be investigated. He knew that I was investigating it at the time.

He states that he did not tell Lord Rosse that you had delayed the mails?—Lord Rosse states in his last letter that he did charge that against me.

Mr. Homan states in his evidence before Lord Rosse, that he had frequently sent to you before?—He never had in his lifetime. It was not necessary to apply to me, for Mr. Donlevy had always given him assistance when it could be done.

Will you have the goodness to state what it was that Sir Colin Campbell communicated to you, and whether it was communicated in writing or verbally?—I was dressing for dinner when Sir Colin Campbell was announced. I ran down stairs to him, and on the landing-place he immediately exclaimed, “that fellow has again been at work,” meaning Mr. Homan, for Sir Colin had been apprised long before of various occurrences which had impressed my mind with the conviction that Mr. Homan had not been dealing fairly with me.

Was Sir Colin Campbell an intimate acquaintance of your's?—Only since he has been here: he was an intimate acquaintance of my father's. He had been apprised of circumstances which led him to believe that Mr. Homan was not acting fairly with me, and that he had had access to different people in my Lord Lieutenant's household, and that he had made communications tending to impress the Lord Lieutenant and his family, particularly his private secretary. He said, “that fellow has been at work again: the Lord Lieutenant has told me that he has been to Captain Webster, and declared to him, (without mentioning the night,) that on the night on which the mail brought over the debate on the orange

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No. 104.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
28th August 1823.

societies, you delayed the mails six-and-thirty hours." The recollection of Saturday immediately flashed on my mind; I said, "Sir Colin, it is a most infamous falsehood." I immediately went into my office and rung my bell. Very fortunately Mr. Leet was on duty. I desired Mr. Leet to be sent for, and I repeated to him, in the presence of Sir Colin Campbell, what Sir Colin Campbell had stated to me. Mr. Leet immediately exclaimed, "it is a most unfounded falsehood." I said, "Mr. Leet, have you preserved the order I sent into your office that night." He said, "I have;" and he brought up the original order, with which Sir Colin Campbell went off to the Lord Lieutenant to show it to his Excellency. I naturally felt considerable anxiety and uneasiness, and I immediately wrote to Lord Rosse, requesting him to hold a board the next day; and I wrote to Sir Colin Campbell, requesting that the Lord Lieutenant would permit Captain Webster to come down. Sir Colin Campbell wrote me a letter, stating that he would take care the Lord Lieutenant should know the facts, and that Captain Webster should attend; but Captain Webster did not attend.

Did it appear, in the investigation before Lord Rosse, that Homan had, after having reported to you, made his complaint to him?—I think it did; I think that Lord Rosse admitted himself that he had been informed by Mr. Homan of the delay of the mail, but he ascribed it to Mr. Leet. The impression made on the Lord Lieutenant's mind was, that I delayed that mail in order to prevent the circulation of that debate on the orange societies. Now what connection the orange societies and this delay had in Mr. Homan's mind I cannot state. The Lord Lieutenant's next communication by Sir Colin Campbell to me was, that he was so indignant at the conduct of Mr. Homan, that even if he believed I was capable of the charge he would at all events dismiss Homan.

Did Sir Colin Campbell make this communication to you as an authorized message from the Lord Lieutenant, which he was entrusted to deliver to you?—Certainly my impression was, that he came directly from the Lord Lieutenant to me.

Did he make a second communication to you?—He did.

What was the purport of that communication?—That the Lord Lieutenant was extremely indignant at the conduct of Mr. Homan; but that I apprehend was only from himself; that was on the Monday following. His words were, that he was indignant at the manner in which it was conveyed to him; that if he could believe Sir Edward Lees could be guilty of it, still Mr. Homan should be dismissed for the manner in which it was communicated.

The dismissal proceeds, first, upon his having gone to the Lord Lieutenant and made a complaint in an irregular way, which complaint he had communicated first to you and then to the Lord Lieutenant; that was not in itself irregular; he had not passed by the office; he had made his first representation to you, then his appeal to the postmasters-general, which was the regular way of communicating any complaint?—Certainly; if I did not immediately notice it, and make it the subject of inquiry, I should have taken very good care to have laid every paper before the postmasters-general.

Then so far as respects that part of the ground of suspension, it is removed by his having made a representation to Lord Rosse?—No; for Lord O'Neill considered that the representation ought to have been made to him; and being made to Lord Rosse, that his communication to the Lord Lieutenant was unnecessary, and made with improper motives.

Lord Rosse stated that Mr. Homan had made the complaint to him previous to any representation to the Lord Lieutenant?—I believe the feeling of Lord O'Neill is, that his conduct is aggravated by his having gone to Lord Rosse, and then passing by him and going to the Lord Lieutenant.

That would be an offence to Lord Rosse?—Yes, certainly; and equally so to his colleague.

Lord Rosse does not in his report state any displeasure at that, but gives to Mr. Homan considerable credit for the zeal he displayed?—He does; but not for going to the Lord Lieutenant.

He remained in the charge of his office for some days?—He did.

At the end of that time a letter was received from Lord O'Neill, giving you directions to suspend him, or actually suspending him for that transaction, which, if it was an offence at all, was an offence to Lord Rosse, and for which Lord Rosse had not thought it necessary to suspend him; that is the state of the fact, is it not?—No, not exactly; because the feeling of Lord O'Neill was, that Mr. Homan, at the very time he was making that communication to the Lord Lieutenant, was in direct correspondence with himself, and that he never even alluded to the subject; he was in correspondence with Lord O'Neill on the very night, and never hinted a syllable to him.

Was he not in correspondence with Lord O'Neill, in consequence of Lord O'Neill having directed a charge, or censured him for something which had occurred?—I do not recollect the nature of his communication; but Lord O'Neill stated that he was in communication with his lordship at that time.

What inquiry did Lord O'Neill institute previous to his coming to such a conclusion?—Lord O'Neill got over all the papers in that book, and a copy of Lord Rosse's minute.

Was he in possession of Lord Rosse's minute when he suspended him?—Certainly he was, for some days before.

Was Lord O'Neill apprised of his having made his first complaint to you, and then to Lord Rosse?—Every single paper he saw.

Was he apprised of that fact?—He must have been; for my report to Lord O'Neill contains that fact.

Do you know that he was apprised of the fact, that Mr. Homan had gone to Lord Rosse in the first instance; did you make any communication to him upon the subject?—I did; and I sent him Lord Rosse's letter to me, in which Lord Rosse admits that he had gone to him, but I cannot recollect the date of that. I remember well my first report to Lord O'Neill mentioned that fact.

You made two reports to Lord O'Neill, did you not?—There were several letters.

On your reporting the circumstances he directed you to send the documents, and you accompanied them by another report?—Yes.

Do you recollect whether in either of those you pointed his attention to the circumstance of Mr. Homan having complained in the first instance to you and then to Lord Rosse?—I particularly recollect it.

You have, no doubt, read with attention Lord O'Neill's minute?—I have.

Do you think that if Lord O'Neill had been in possession of that circumstance, it is possible he could have written that minute?—I do, from previous circumstances; Lord O'Neill stated to me, that if on any occasion he could discover that Mr. Homan had gone and made any communications of his officers to any person in the Lord Lieutenant's household, without first communicating with him, he would instantly dismiss him.

Lord O'Neill was at that time in England, and Mr. Homan had done that precisely which my Lord O'Neill exacted in that determination; which was, going to my Lord Rosse, the postmaster-general, who was within his reach in the first instance, had he not?—He went to my Lord Rosse; but it appeared that he had never, in going to my Lord Rosse, made the least allusion to me; then he went to the Lord Lieutenant and made a communication affecting me.

The complaint of his official conduct was, that he passed by the postmasters-general and went to the Lord Lieutenant; whereas, he ought to have made his complaint first to the postmasters-general; that is the ground on which Lord O'Neill's minute proceeds. It appears, on the examination of the case, that he did not so do; but that he went, as my Lord O'Neill would have expected from him and from all his officers, in the first instance, to the postmaster-general that was on the spot, and made his complaint?—My Lord O'Neill was perfectly apprised of that, for my first report states, that Lord Rosse on the day of the investigation declared that Mr. Homan had been with him, and that he never alluded to Sir Edward Lees' name.

How is that consistent with this passage in his minute; "I am further of opinion that the conduct of Mr. Homan in making a false charge against our secretary in a private manner, and not through the regular channel of the postmasters-general, is highly reprehensible, and such as calls for his immediate dismissal, as an act of justice towards the establishment at large, and of actual necessity towards its future good management." If it appears that he not only did not do it, but that he did go, as his duty was, in the first instance to the postmaster-general, how is that consistent?—I think Lord O'Neill is so far correct; he went to Lord Rosse in the first instance, and complained of another individual.

In another passage he says, "I cannot have a doubt on my mind that this matter was never intended to come to the ears of the postmaster-general;" the very person that he went to was the postmaster-general?—Just so; but still in the communication with Lord Rosse my name was never hinted at; then he went to the Lord Lieutenant, and did introduce my name with a view to injure me.

In what do you consider the falsehood of the charge to have consisted?—In my having substantively delayed the mails that night.

Do you consider the stating an opinion that your non-interference prevented the mails going off, was a charge in substance beyond an error of opinion, and that it was a direct falsehood, and intended to convey a direct falsehood?—My impression at this moment is, that Mr. Homan made that communication solely with a view to injure me. I certainly think that Mr. Homan knew perfectly well that I had no more power than this table to have done the thing that night.

Do you believe also that when he applied to you for assistance, he applied to you knowing that such an application must be unprofitable?—I am persuaded he knew perfectly well that I had no assistance to render to him at such an hour of the evening. He should have taken precautions early in the day, and applied for assistance; he left his office neglected and unattended.

Supposing it should appear that there was assistance which might have been afforded to him, should you then be of opinion that he had made the application knowing it could not be attended to?—No, if Mr. Homan was aware of it.

Then you would believe that he really made the application *bond fide*, wishing you to interfere and render him the assistance he desired?—If that was the case he should have told me so.

Then can you believe that his statement of your not having rendered him that assistance having been productive of the delay of the mails, can be fairly construed into malignant falsehood?—Indeed I think that no other motive than malignity influenced him.

You speak of other transactions respecting Mr. Homan, of which the Commissioners have no knowledge, which you intended to bring before Lord O'Neill; were those ever brought before Lord O'Neill?—Not officially; the opinions I formed respecting Mr. Homan were in consequence of communications from the Lord Lieutenant's private secretary, Mr. Johnson.

Examinations.

No. 104.

Sir

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28th August 1823.

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I perceived a change which I could not understand, and I thought it the most manful way to ask him, and he fairly told me that his mind was very strongly poisoned against the post-office, and he told different things, which he mentioned to me, but the authority of which he would not give me.

EDWARD S. LEES.

Appendix, No. 105.

3d September 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in, and examined.

No. 105.  
 Sir  
 Edward Smith Lees.  
 3d Sept. 1823.

A GREAT many letters have been habitually sent to go under your privilege?—Yes.

In cases of pressure did you ever authorize anybody to frank for you?—Yes, frequently, almost always, a clerk in the secretary's office; and I have often been obliged to direct letters from Government to receive free stamp, without being franked by any one.

Do they sign in full?—Either in full, or in most cases, only the initials.

Would they frank them as you would yourself?—I allude to the letters of the different societies. I would only probably put my own initials upon them.

You allow any of them to put your initials?—Yes; there are at this moment, I believe, 200 in my office.

They ought to come open?—Yes, and I believe they invariably do.

The Act of Parliament confines that privilege to charitable establishments; under what order or direction is it extended in Ireland to all religious societies?—By order of the Government; it is quite a distinct thing from that relating to charitable societies; there is a provision authorizing the printed papers of charitable societies to go at a reduced rate.

When was the order of Government with respect to the religious societies given?—At different times, all within these five years; whenever a society wanted permission, when they came to the post-office I referred them to the Government, and if Government directed it I let them pass.

Have you the orders in your office?—I dare say I have some of them; in most instances it was a verbal instruction from the chief secretary; I dare say I have several of the orders in writing.

There are some that are charitable in their nature; but many of them have great funds of their own, have they not?—There are some, I believe, whose funds are as large as the annual revenues of the post-office.

Are not the bible societies all very rich?—They are branches of the society in England, endeavouring to propagate the scriptures through Ireland; but it was a generally understood thing that all papers belonging to the different religious societies should go free if they came to us open.

Have you ever permitted any person to frank packets or letters for you?—No, I cannot charge my recollection that I ever have, except in those cases of charity or religion.

No representation has ever been made to you by the franking clerk of things not being in your hand-writing?—I cannot charge my memory with any such fact.

Has any representation been made to you of packets and letters coming to the post-office with a name purporting to be the name of an individual which did not appear to be written by that individual?—I do not remember it at this moment; I remember cases in the post-office where forging official franking has been detected.

Have representations come to you of packets coming to the post-office with the name of a particular individual written in two or three hands?—I do not recollect having my attention called to such a circumstance.

If that was observed by the inspector of franks, what would he do?—I presume he would communicate it; in case of forgery he would not hesitate, I think; the law is specific upon it, that it is treble postage.

The question refers to persons permitting others to use their name?—I have known the private secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, and frequently the quarter-master general and the adjutant general, in all cases give permission to frank for them when absent; I have never known it in the case of the chief secretary or the under secretary; they deputed a person, but then their own franking was stopped in the meantime.

The Act of Parliament on the subject of franking in Ireland is much more strict than it is in England, is it not?—I am not aware of any peculiarity in it; in some of the public offices in England there are officers allowed to frank, who are not, in Ireland.

In England the power is given generally, but in Ireland they are precluded receiving or sending letters not on the business of the respective offices or their own private concerns?—Yes, there is a clause in one of the Acts to that effect, but our Acts are not very clear; for one Act, I believe, allows the very thing which another of them prohibits, for there is an Act allowing all letters on private business of individuals to go free, and another prohibits them.

Of all the officers who have the privilege of franking, some have used it unlimitedly, have they not?—Certainly.

Has not your attention been called to the extent to which that has been carried in some of the offices, particularly by some of the individuals in the office of the secretary of the Government?—

Government?—It is upon my recollection there has been an instance within these two or three years.

Was not your attention drawn to it by a communication from the London post-office?—Mr. Freeling wrote to me; I was endeavouring to retrace the particular circumstance, but I cannot trace it in my books; it is strong upon my memory, that Mr. Freeling wrote to me, alluding particularly to one officer; I am pretty sure I spoke to that officer, and the explanation he gave was, (which I also, I think, wrote to Mr. Freeling,) that the number of letters he was in the habit of franking was for those charitable institutions; that I stated that to Mr. Freeling.

Was it ever called to your observation that the privilege of that particular officer had been applied not only to sending over letters, but to sending over very large packets of books?—I do not remember books; I do not remember any letter written by Mr. Freeling upon that subject but one within these two or three years; I think it must have been a private communication, for I cannot find a trace of it; I spoke to Mr. Mangin upon it immediately.

It is understood that Mr. Mangin and Mr. Connor have franked in a way otherwise than that prescribed by Act of Parliament; by what authority have those letters been permitted to go free?—I was not aware of the fact; the letters have not come before me; the thing was brought to my attention by the inspector of franks lately, and I have apprised them of it; what explanation they may give upon the subject I cannot say.

Coming franked in a manner contrary to the law, by what authority were they permitted to go without being charged?—I do not think upon that point the law is very clear, whether we have a right to charge them.

You have a right to charge them, or to stop them, have you not?—We cannot stop them, of course; the point of charging is a point we have never been clear upon. In the instructions of the Government the order is, that those individuals shall send back to the post-office every thing which has passed under their franks; every thing which is put in for the purpose of evading the postage. Mr. Mangin and Mr. Connor, and the Lord Lieutenant, have within the last two years frequently sent back letters to be charged.

The question refers to letters sent out, not the inland letters, with merely their name upon them, which they are not privileged to frank without dating?—That has been a sufferance to the whole of the castle.

How was that sufferance to the whole of the castle introduced?—An understanding with the whole of them; it has been permitted for years past; latterly it has been altered.

Do you date when you frank, or do you sign your name only?—I date them; I did not for some time.

In what manner do the clerks of the roads frank?—Just in the same manner.

Without dating?—Yes, without dating.

Your brother has been in the habit of acting for you, has he not?—He has.

When he has acted for you, has he franked in your name, or in his own?—That I am not sure of. I think by law he might have franked in his own name, if he had chosen; for I remember two years ago that very point was referred to counsel, and it was decided by counsel that he had a right to frank as pro-secretary. I think when I was over attending the Committee of the House of Commons, the season before last, it is in my recollection that there was a case referred to the present Judge Vandeleur, who was then the conducting counsel of the post-office; I heard of it when I came back from England, or saw it in the correspondence.\*

Do you know the manner in which the letters of the persons in the post-office pass through the post-office without being charged?—They ought to be all charged on the alphabet.

The officers of every description in the post-office are in the habit of receiving their letters free?—Not free, in the first instance; but they should go charged to the alphabet office, and be delivered to them free afterwards, if they are single.

Do you know whether that is the fact?—I do not know that it is not the fact; this very day I have allowed several so charged; I know that several years ago they were in the habit of taking their own letters out of the bags. The rule I made was with a view to preventing that which I detected, that they were in the habit of taking out not only their own letters, but their neighbours letters, and giving them free, taking them off the letter charges of the day; and in order to prevent that, there was a permission given by the postmasters-general that their single letters should go to the alphabet; but that being ascertained to be single, and for clerks, the postage should be struck off.

But if they are double, or heavier letters, then they were paid for?—Yes; then the postage was paid. That regulation was made to prevent a worse evil; and if they do that still, notwithstanding that indulgence, they are highly censurable; they have no need, for they are never refused a frank on their own private concerns.

The Commissioners understand that within these few days the clerks of the roads have ceased to exercise their privilege of franking?—I gave an order for that.

On what grounds did you give that order?—It was principally on the representations of the London inspector of franks to me that we were not regular, and that the law was departed from.

\* I find on inquiry that the information on which I gave this evidence is erroneous. In my absence my brother franked in *his own* name; and that although the post-office solicitor was consulted, he is of opinion, that in so franking it was more a necessary sufferance than according to law. Mr. Vandeleur was not consulted.

## Examinations.

No. 105.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
3d Sept. 1823.

You have never understood, by any thing that has occurred in the office, that Mr. Hume and Mr. Johnston were invested with any authority beyond that of merely observing what passed, and reporting to this Board?—Indeed I conceive that they have no authority to give any positive order; but I conceive, coming from this Board, that any suggestion should be regarded.

Did they communicate to you the instructions under which they came?—Yes, they did.

You must have seen that those instructions were only instructions to examine and report?—Yes; but still I thought myself bound, if not more from an anxiety to do that which should be wished.

You are aware that the Commissioners have no power themselves to give any order except for the attendance of witnesses, or the production of papers; that they are not invested with a power to direct any alterations; and that consequently no person acting under them can have such power?—My feeling is and was, that even if a hint came from this Board, it should be regarded immediately.

The Commissioners wish it to be understood that it has not been done under any power of dictation from this Board?—My feeling was, that every thing suggested by Mr. Hume and Mr. Johnston, who attended by desire of this Board, should be attended to immediately.

The Commissioners wish it to be understood that they have authority only to examine into the state of the office, and to call for witnesses and papers, and having collected the facts, to report them to the King and to Parliament; but they have no other power?—I have made three or four alterations since they have attended the office.

The Commissioners wish it to be understood that, if any alterations are made, it is only from a sense of the exigency of such alterations, and not from an expression of any wish by this Board; and that they have no power to direct any alterations, but only to report their opinions to the King and to the Government?—All which has been done has been from a view to meet the utmost wishes of the Commissioners.

A change of the practice in some instances might amount to an obstruction of the Commissioners, and render it impossible for them to know what had been done in the office?—That might be the case; I did not view it in that light at all.

If the office is changed in its nature and character, that may amount to an obstruction in the performance of the duties of the Commissioners; and there may be other cases where the Commissioners might recommend the change should be different in their mode or in their time; with respect, for instance, to the clerks of the roads, the Commissioners, though they may privately feel no doubt that the privilege is unsupported by Act of Parliament, have not entered sufficiently into the grounds on which the privilege has been exercised to form a decided opinion upon it?—I had no hesitation in putting an end to that immediately; it only imposes upon me the trouble of franking; that is the only regulation of importance that has been changed; I can most absolutely state that that was exclusively my own act, without the interference of any other person, immediately on the opinion of Mr. Hume and Mr. Johnston being expressed on the subject.

Is there any thing you wish to bring before the Commissioners upon the subject of Mr. Homan's case?—Nothing more but evidence to impress upon the Commissioners the motives of the individual in making use of my name so particularly.

EDWARD S. LEES.

## Appendix, No. 106.

9th September 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in and examined.

No. 106.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
9th Sept. 1823.

YOU have given the names of some persons whom you wish the Commissioners to examine; will you have the goodness to state to what points you desire their examination?—I wish Mr. Cullen to be examined as to the vindictive expressions made use of by Mr. Homan himself as to myself and my family, for several months before the transaction in question took place.

The Commissioners feel a difficulty in going into questions of expressions not followed up by acts; one party may consider himself aggrieved, and another may consider that party as vindictive; if it had any relation to the matter into which the Commissioners were inquiring, they would have no difficulty about going into it?—I would beg to leave the matter entirely to the Commissioners.

Have you been aware of these expressions any length of time?—Yes, some months.

If he was holding that sort of language in the post-office, why did not you report him to the postmasters-general?—I have heard it since March last.

Did none of those persons mention this hostility towards you until that time?—Yes, I think Mr. Coffey did.

Did not you feel that that language, implying a declared determination of revenge, if it was serious, such as ought to have been reported to the postmasters-general?—I immediately reported it to Lord O'Neill; he has been aware of it for the last eighteen months.

Did he take any step upon it?—I rather believe he did write to Mr. Homan upon it.

Did you report it officially?—I did; I think I have Lord O'Neill's answer to the very complaint; I think his answer was, that he had plenty of Mr. Homan already, without any thing

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Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
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thing further about him; that was in answer to a letter I wrote, stating that he had declared he had got an introduction to one of your own Board, and that he would give Sir Edward Lees a proper stick then.

Will you state what were the manner and the precise communication that was made by Sir Colin Campbell to you?—I was dressing for dinner when Sir Colin came in, and I immediately went down in my dressing-gown to him; I met him at the landing of my office door, and the first expression he made use of to me was, “that fellow has been at work again.” He came into the office; I shut the door, and we went over to the window, and he then repeated to me the substance of a message or a communication made by Captain Webster to the Lord Lieutenant, that Sir Edward Lees had detained the mail that brought over the debate on the Orange societies thirty-six hours. Sir Colin did not mention any particular day, but the circumstance of Saturday immediately occurred to myself, and under a good deal of agitation I immediately rung my office bell and inquired who was the vice-president on duty; the messenger brought me up word, Mr. Leet; I immediately sent for Mr. Leet, and I repeated to Mr. Leet before Sir Colin the very words Sir Colin had expressed to me as nearly as I could; Mr. Leet immediately answered, “It is a confounded falsehood,” or some strong word; I asked him whether he had preserved the order I sent him in on the Saturday evening; he said he had, and going down to the office for it, he brought it up, and I gave it to Sir Colin to take to the Lord Lieutenant, as the best proof of the incorrectness of the statement.

It appears in the minutes of the examinations, that Sir Colin Campbell brought a message from the Lord Lieutenant, and in several of the papers it is acknowledged as a message from the Lord Lieutenant; was it communicated to you by Sir Colin Campbell as a message from the Lord Lieutenant?—Certainly; my impression at that time was that he came from the Lord Lieutenant.

Did you ask him, or did he state to you that he came directed by the Lord Lieutenant?—My full impression was that he came down to bring the answer, or such explanation as I could give, to the Lord Lieutenant.

Did he state that the Lord Lieutenant had sent him to ask for an explanation?—I do not know that he said that the Lord Lieutenant had sent him, but that was the impression upon my mind; in the first place, coming at so unseasonable an hour showed some anxiety on the subject.

What reason have you to suppose that that was not the anxiety of friendship on his part?—From the very nature of his own words, “that fellow has been at work again; Captain Webster has told the Lord Lieutenant;” and repeating his statement, my impression was, that the Lord Lieutenant was waiting in the castle to get my answer, for he took up the memorandum from me himself.

What was the memorandum which you gave to him?—Mr. Homan’s second note, with my order, if at all practicable, to let the mail go out.

Did he carry it with him?—He did.

When did he return it?—The next day, with a letter, which I have in my possession.

You have that letter now in your possession?—Yes, I can procure it in three minutes. I believe I can state the terms of it.—“My dear sir, I send you back the accompanying memorandum, which of course you will want at your investigation to-day; I shall take care to explain to his Excellency what the fact is; it is a shocking thing that you should have such people undermining you in the office at the very time that you were making the necessary inquiries yourself.”

[The evidence of Sir Colin Campbell was read to the witness.]

In your letter to Lord O’Neill, and in Mr. Thomas Orde Lees’s letter to Mr. Gregory, it is stated as a message received from the Lord Lieutenant?—Yes.

The account of Sir Colin Campbell negatives that?—So far it does certainly, but I had conceived it was a regular message sent; I thought I was put upon my defence at the instant against a most solemn charge brought against me.

What gave rise to the correspondence between Mr. Thomas Orde Lees and Mr. Gregory?—I do not know. The day after the investigation Lord Rosse left town, and left me in a state, that I conceived, of extreme danger, to be near to a person in the post-office who would make such a representation to the Lord Lieutenant; for a person who had made such a representation I conceived would do any thing, and I would not remain under the same roof with him, the roof of the post-office; and I requested of the Lord Lieutenant leave to absent myself, which his Excellency immediately granted, and he sent for the two post-masters to come up immediately to Dublin.

What was the result of that direction?—Lord Rosse did not come up, and Lord O’Neill sent over a medical certificate, that he could not come. The unfortunate part of the business was, founding the whole on the circumstance of the debate on the Orange societies; it was that which made the frightful impression on my mind; for I was aware that there were strong prejudices created against me in consequence of my eldest brother having taken up, unfortunately, a very strong opinion upon that subject. I told Lord O’Neill I did not wish to injure the man, but only to take care of myself.

[The evidence of Captain Webster was read to the witness.]

Mr. Homan states, that he is almost certain from collecting his recollection that a letter was written by him to you on the 10th; do you know how that fact is?—From the nature of the

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the correspondence that is impossible; he not only did not write, but from the nature of the correspondence it could not be the case.

You are not aware what led to the correspondence between Mr. Gregory and Mr. Thomas Lees?—No, unless it was my request to be relieved from the responsibility of the office. I presume it must have been a letter from his Excellency, requiring to know the sort of communication Sir Colin Campbell brought to the post-office.

It appears by a paper you have delivered in, that you had at one time an intention of consolidating the alphabet and several other offices?—Yes I had.

What was the nature of the consolidation you proposed making?—It was to put the whole of those four branches under one active head, to put it as nearly as possible upon the footing on which it is in London. I found that the letter-carriers office, the British-mail office, and the inland and alphabet offices remained without any efficient control at all; and Lord Wellesley was considerably annoyed by the delay of dispatches on two nights, very near to each other. I wrote that report to Lord Rosse; the chief object of that was to get the whole force superannuated, the head of the inland office, the head of the letter-carriers office, and the head of the British-mail office, particularly Mr. Homan. I expressed a great anxiety for him to get out with the whole of his emoluments for life, and I accompanied that with a statement to Lord Rosse, that the whole might be arranged without costing the public one shilling; and I think it will be seen that that might be done, rendering the whole more efficient, for it was placing at the head of those offices men of considerable rank in the office.

Which of the men of rank could you have put that office under?—My idea was to place over the letter-carriers, alphabet, and British offices, the highest officers of rank in the inland office, except the president himself, and the office I proposed to restore back to Government.

Did you mean to put those four officers under Mr. Leet?—No; my intention was that the Lord Lieutenant should get the appointment into his own hands again, to appoint a proper person over the whole, and to raise as vice-presidents the three senior officers to superintend under him each night those four branches.

Do you happen to know what the practice in the office is with respect to the openers of bags, the taxing clerks, and the sorters; they all agree in stating to the Commissioners that their common practice has been, up to a very late period, to take any letters either for themselves or any other persons in the office; that they never are checked, and that the books are all falsified for the purpose of making them meet?—There can be no sort of excuse for that, but the contrary. I was told that on Saturday last; and if it is so, it is most unwarrantable in the officers themselves, and reflects no credit on the presidents and vice-presidents. The liberal arrangement made years ago, as to their postages, was with a view to prevent such a practice. I brought that before the board years ago, and thought it was extinguished by the liberal arrangement which had been made sending them to the alphabet, where they received their letters free.

Is there a person of the name of Harrison in the secretary's office?—There is.

He is also a taxing clerk?—He is nominally a taxing clerk.

Are you aware that his duty in the office is performed by a substitute, to whom he pays money?—Yes; he has been absent these six or eight months, and never will attend again.

Are you aware that that has been habitually done for years?—Yes, not only by him, but by others.

Is the person who acts as his substitute a person belonging to the establishment?—Yes; when the remittances come it is impossible for him to get through the business in my office before eight o'clock at night, and I have seen his brother, who is not on the establishment, assisting him. When the clock strikes the probationers are put on to act for those who are not in attendance; that is the only employment the probationers get.

In a letter you have sent to the Commissioners respecting the alphabet you mention, as the reason for making the alteration, the state of the office previously; you describe it as in a state completely open to every body; that every body seemed to have gone in and gone out; that the clerks appeared to have gone in and out when and where they pleased, and that the whole was in a state of the greatest anarchy?—That I collected from the trial of that unfortunate young man who was acquitted; but that statement in the evidence on which I founded that minute Mr. Donlevy has given a complete contradiction to; but I am not satisfied with that contradiction. I have repeatedly brought the state of this office before Lord Rosse. I have long since left in Lord Rosse's hands the responsibility of this office. In February 1822 I told Mr. Gregory that I would not be longer responsible for it, and at his suggestion I waited upon Lord Wellesley, and told his Excellency the same.

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## Appendix, No. 107.

Wednesday, 17th September 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in and examined.

DO you recollect at any time calling on Lord O'Neill officially for a decision upon the question of Homan?—All my letters must have had that view; I think I wrote two or three letters.

At what time were those letters?—I should think either in the month of March or April.

Upon what principle did you call upon him for a decision after the decision of Lord Rosse?—Because I did not view the decision of Lord Rosse as a just one.

Then you called upon him as appealing from my Lord Rosse?—Certainly.

The Commissioners understood you to state that the whole power was in the postmaster-general on the spot, whoever he might be, and that a decision of his was a decision of the board?—Lord Rosse would give no decision upon Homan at all; he peremptorily declared that he would leave Mr. Homan to the Lord Lieutenant.

His minute is a complete decision upon the question, is it not?—Not as relating to Mr. Homan's communication to the Lord Lieutenant. Lord Rosse stated that he considered *Mr. Homan's interference on the Saturday night to arise from his zeal to dispatch the mail, but he gave no opinion on his going to Captain Webster after his official report to me, and attributing the delay to me.*

The charge, as against Mr. Homan, contained two branches; the one, his making the communication at all; and the other, his making a false charge?—Lord Rosse's inquiry and his minute was upon the charge made against me, and he gave no opinion in his minute to the Lord Lieutenant as to the grievance I complained of, of Mr. Homan making that charge against me.

The foundation of the inquiry, as appears by the statement in the book, was a charge made against you to the Lord Lieutenant, and that charge being a false and malignant one?—Yes.

Lord Rosse appears to have decided upon that?—He decided against the charge as affecting me certainly, on the spot; but then when I urged Lord Rosse to give his opinion upon the misconduct of Mr. Homan, he said that he would leave Mr. Homan to the Lord Lieutenant, as it was an offence committed within his Excellency's knowledge; upon which I appealed to the Lord Lieutenant, and when his Excellency would not interfere, to Lord O'Neill.

Lord O'Neill does not appear to have given, according to his own statement, any order upon the subject at all?—Not till his minute.

Did you understand his minute, or any of his letters, to be an order for the dismissal of Mr. Homan?—Yes; the very words of his minute are so strong, as that it should be without a moment's delay.

When you dismissed Mr. Homan, did you do it as an act of your own authority, or in pursuance of the direction of my Lord O'Neill?—I did it under the fully declared opinion of my Lord O'Neill, and as acting in behalf of the postmasters-general; and if that had not happened at all, if the case of the 8th of March had not been in contemplation at that moment, I should have suspended Mr. Homan on the very discovery I had made the day before that. If I had not been down at Howth, but had been in the regular course in the post-office management, I should have put Mr. Homan out of the post-office, from what I had discovered that day, as an unfit person to have any thing to do with the post-office.

The Commissioners are not aware of the facts to which you refer. Lord O'Neill does not advert to them?—No; because Lord O'Neill's answer to that letter was, that he would have nothing more to do with Mr. Homan; he had enough of Mr. Homan already.

The appeal to Lord O'Neill appears to be a little extraordinary, after the statement made in your evidence of the footing on which Lord O'Neill was, that the principal duties of the postmaster-general were to be performed by Lord Rosse; if the efficient duties were to rest with Lord Rosse, it should seem that he was the proper person to have been called upon for a decision on the case of Mr. Homan. Will you explain why, having so stated, you appealed to Lord O'Neill?—I appealed to Lord O'Neill in my own defence, certainly.

On the principle on which you stated the office of postmasters-general to be conducted, on what ground did you appeal to Lord O'Neill as against Lord Rosse's decision?—I certainly would not, if I was to have begged my bread through the streets, have remained in the post-office until that business was cleared up.

Lord Rosse was perfectly aware, on the 13th, of the communication having been made to Captain Webster?—Yes, that is what I complain of; that Lord Rosse was in possession of that, and that he did not render me that justice which, as the first servant of the post-office, I was entitled to, and therefore I appealed to Lord O'Neill.

In Lord O'Neill's correspondence with you, he appears to think that the appeal having been once made, the decision rested with the Government?—Yes, that was so; and my impression was, that the Lord Lieutenant had given his decision very decidedly, that Mr. Homan should be not only suspended, but dismissed.

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Can you state from whom you collected that opinion?—From Sir Colin Campbell, the first time I saw him after the evening of the 12th. I sat down at the same instant, and wrote it to Lord O'Neill.

Where did that pass?—In my own room at my desk; I think it was on the Wednesday.

Do you remember having received a letter from Lord O'Neill, dated the 24th of March, containing this passage: "The course I advise you to pursue is, to apply first to Lord Rosse to find out what his intentions are with respect to Mr. Homan; if they are not to dismiss him, then go to Government, and request them to call for the opinion of the other postmaster-general; and if they do so, I will state plainly what I feel most strongly, that if conduct like this is passed over, it will be impossible for either you or me, or any person, to be accountable for the management and discipline of the post-office"?—I recollect that I had a letter to that effect.

Lord Rosse's minute was made on the night of the 13th?—Yes; he wrote it on the night of the inquiry.

Was Lord O'Neill in possession of that minute at the time he wrote this letter?—I can state when he was in possession of it by the date. I sent my report to Lord O'Neill two nights after the inquiry, and I think it was on the Saturday that my report went to Lord O'Neill; that was on the 15th or 16th; I have good reason to know that it was very soon, for I was scarcely in my bed for the two nights two hours.

In another letter Lord O'Neill says, "By your letter received this morning, it would seem as if you expected me to decide on Mr. Homan's case, which I could have no difficulty in doing from the documents before me; but the case having been investigated by my colleague, a report made by him, and the matter laid before the Lord Lieutenant, you will see the impossibility of my offering any opinion on it unless called on by the Government to do so." He never was called upon by the Government to do so?—No; the Government returned all the papers, and desired the postmasters-general to decide the case; and in an interview with Mr. Goulburn, Mr. Goulburn stated that it was a very singular thing to ask the Government to decide upon the matter; that if the postmasters-general would give up their patronage to the Government, they would have no difficulty in deciding upon the matter in a moment.

The papers have been sent by Government to this Board?—I have in my own drawer the papers returned by Government to the post-office.

What is the date of the communication of Mr. Goulburn returning the papers?—I cannot recollect the date.

You do not consider the suspension to have been made under Lord O'Neill's order?—He did not say positively dismiss him, but it was such an expression of his decided opinion that he thought a moment's delay should not take place in removing him.

In another letter of the 25th of March, Lord O'Neill says, "I should consider it a dereliction of my duty if I were to withhold my opinion upon it. I consider it indispensable that Mr. Homan should be forthwith dismissed, and the charge of the British-mail office given to another officer"?—I recollect that perfectly.

Lord O'Neill states, in a letter received a day or two ago from him, that the Commissioners, he conceives, are under a mistake, in supposing that Mr. Homan was suspended by an order from him; that Mr. Homan was suspended by the secretary on his own authority?—Lord O'Neill's minute certainly conveyed his decided opinion, that he ought not to continue, and that he thought no delay should take place. On so decided an opinion, I did suspend Mr. Homan.

Mr. Draper has been employed as a contractor for the conveyance of the mail?—Yes; he was for a considerable time before I was in the post-office.

Do you remember having received letters from Homan, reporting to you the failure of Draper in the conveyance of the mails from the Pigeon-house?—I do not at this moment; but I can easily find from the books of the office whether I received such letters.

He states a variety of cases in which Draper had failed, and in which he had stated that failure to you?—I do not remember the facts; if the dates are given, I shall be able to state the facts.

How was the money paid for occasional services to the post-office, in forwarding the mails, sending down clerks, and so on?—The way was, to lodge money in Mr. Homan's hands, and to disburse the money under his authority; and I am sorry to say, that there is a very large sum which he has not accounted for; it was issued in sums of from 200*l.* to 250*l.* at a time, and Mr. Homan disbursed this as he thought the service required it; and he should have produced vouchers for it to the accountant-general.

Was the expenditure of that money under his uncontrolled direction?—The accountant-general should have seen the vouchers before the second warrant was prepared, but a very large sum, I believe 1,500*l.*, stands out against Mr. Homan, which we have never been able to settle.

Do you mean that he has applied that money without being able to account for it?—He has not accounted for it certainly.

When did that deficiency appear?—Some years, when the accounts from the year 1817, came to be audited by the Imprest Commissioners.

Has nothing been done upon that?—Nothing whatever; Mr. Homan has been called upon to account for it, and he has stated that he had paid it away, and as to vouchers, that he had not them; that he had lost them; the only thing to account for that is Mr. Homan's affidavit.

Were not you, for different reasons, when the service required it, in the habit of giving him

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him an order to pay money from the British-mail office?—No; it was all under the postmaster general's own signature.

Do you mean that you never gave him an order to pay money for any services out of the receipts of the British-mail office?—No; I do not think I was ever asked; it was generally for the hire of vessels and wherries, or any thing that might be wanting at the minute, connected with the British mails, for which I gave orders.

Will you look at these papers, and see whether you do not consider those as orders given by you for the payment of money out of that office [*several papers being shewn to the witness*]?—Yes; those are the very things that I speak of; it is for want of that description of vouchers that those disallowances have been made; that is a proper voucher.

Those are the vouchers that would clear Mr. Homan?—Yes.

Those are orders given by you for the payment of money by Mr. Homan?—Yes.

In consequence of services being performed for which those payments were to be made?—This may be for vessels coming in from Holyhead; if Mr. Homan was not on the spot, his officers would bring up that document for me to sign.

Here are various orders of the same kind, and orders that appear, though small in amount, extraordinary in the principle: "sending down a person to order the Union packet to sail with the Bishop of Killaloe"?—Those are all regulated old charges of the post-office; whenever the Government wanted a special service, an officer was sent down.

Was a packet given to the use of the Bishop of Killaloe by the order of the Government?—Yes, certainly.

Will you state the form in which that is done?—The post-office got rid of that responsibility a great many years ago; first, to relieve myself of the disagreeable necessity of refusing a gentleman a packet, and next to pay a compliment to Government, whenever it was done, and whenever an application came to the post-office for a packet for any individual. We had at that time seven packets in the employ of the post-office; but, that a person should feel it as an obligation to the Government, I got rid of it, and an order came down from Government, with an understanding that the accommodation should be granted when it could, without infringing on the regularity of the service; then when an order came down, an officer was dispatched down to the Pigeon house, or wherever the packets were stationed.

Did you receive a regular order from the Government to provide a packet for such an individual; for instance, the Bishop of Killaloe?—Yes.

A written order?—Very often not written; sometimes a verbal order by the individual's servant, and I would go to the Castle and ask whether it was their wish or not.

There is another order for a payment, small in amount, but which appears extraordinary; "for attending on Count Novillara;" and this is directed to the window-man?—The window-man is the only person in whose hands there is money which can be available to the public exigency at the moment, except that Mr. Homan had money at that time for incidents; and my impression is, that Mr. Homan's disbursements were confined to the payment of wherries, and some few instances for mail guards.

You were understood to state that you never gave any order for the payment of money for any services to the post-office out of the receipts of the British-mail office?—The British-mail office had no receipts of its own beyond the sums lodged with Mr. Homan; any other small payments should be paid at the *alphabet* and checked by Mr. Homan, if for any service connected with his office.

It appears that the payments must have amounted to 1,500*l.* because you state that Mr. Homan has not accounted for that sum?—The sum disallowed exceeds 1,400*l.*, that must have been for several years; but I believe it will appear that there was not any extra expense incurred in consequence of those vessels being at any time given to accommodate individuals; if the dates are given to me, I have no doubt I shall be able to trace the facts.

Suppose the case of a packet going over with an individual and not returning in time, that would lead to a hiring?—Yes, if we had not another ready. I will show that never happened.

If you had so many packets, from what could your having no packets ready to send the mail by at any time arise?—Because our packets have been detained for a week together at Holyhead; our mails have gone in wherries four nights successively in consequence of that.

It appears that one of the surveyors, Mr. Bushe, avowedly does no duty at all; when he received his office, did you, or not, consider him as receiving an office with certain duties attached to it?—Certainly.

Did you ever call upon him to perform any duty?—Never; nor was he ever called upon to do duty from the hour of his appointment; long before I came into the post-office. I did indeed call upon him to do his duty once, and his answer was that he would never do any, for that he held his office during good behaviour, and was determined therefore to do nothing wrong.

Did you suggest to him that doing nothing at all was perfectly consistent with good behaviour?—Our excellent postmaster-general, Lord Clancarty, settled his case in 1807. I always did his duty, and it has been permanently fixed on me by Lord Clancarty and Lord O'Neill, under their report to Government in 1807, taking special care that the secretary is to get nothing for it. Mr. Bushe is to have his pay for life, and after his death the secretary is to be made resident surveyor.

The surveyors appear to be a most important feature in the post-office, and almost all the  
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regularity of the conduct of the deputy postmasters must depend upon the manner in which the duties of the surveyors are performed?—In a great measure.

It appears that there are four surveyors and two extra surveyors; but it has come out in evidence, that at periods when those surveyors are not employed, other persons in the office are employed to do the duty of surveyors?—I should hope not, unless the service required to be done happens to be in a particular position in the country, from whence the surveyor may be very remote at the time, and something expeditious wanted which I could not probably execute if I waited so long. Another case may be, where a surveyor may be very far off and the business may be very near Dublin, and the expense of bringing the surveyor from the further part of Ireland for a few days would be greater than the sending a person from Dublin; that case has lately occurred: but my rule is not to send a person from Dublin unless the surveyors are all employed, or unless I am obliged to do it in special cases; there are four or five officers in the post-office that I generally send to that, and one principle on which I do it is this, that if persons are employed on extra duty I give them the preference, where I think them deserving of it; in those cases I have sent officers of that description, and in other cases, where the postmasters-general themselves might feel inclined, as a reward to officers for good conduct.

Then you consider the employment of those officers from different departments of the office as a matter of favour and reward?—Indeed, in some cases I do; I do not think if I was to go the range of the office there have been above six.

How can they be competent?—From their general knowledge of the business.

It is a peculiar duty, and is a duty that is very unlike any of the duties to be performed in the office of Dublin?—With a printed book of instructions put into the hands of a man of common understanding, he ought to understand the general principle in an hour.

Then the deputy postmasters ought also to understand it?—So they ought if they were intelligent and proper people; but take our five hundred postmasters in the kingdom and I fear there will not be twenty that are not extremely dull and stupid.

How are the duties of the surveyors performed in the country divided into districts?—Into four districts. I change the surveyors from the one to the other occasionally, probably every five or six years; in fact I send them indiscriminately, according to circumstances; it is understood that each surveyor has a district, but that he is liable to be sent to another.

What is it that you would consider his regular duty within that district; has he any regular duty?—He has first of all a general correspondence with all the postmasters himself direct, which correspondence he keeps records of in books, and those books are occasionally inspected by myself; they are brought up to Dublin for the purpose of my seeing what they have been occupied in.

Is he resident in his district?—Yes; they have each some fixed residence.

When he is resident in his district is that considered as part of his duty, or has he an extra allowance for it?—His salary of 100*l.* a year is given as a reward for carrying on his correspondence with the postmasters under his charge, and generally as a surveyor; then if any thing of importance occurs to himself, I consider that he has authority to proceed upon a journey without waiting to communicate with me, rendering himself liable to have the sum disallowed if I should consider it an idle occupation.

Is the mere residence in the country considered a service for which he receives extra pay; or being resident in the country, does his extra pay apply to services which draw him from his residence to different parts of the district?—His residence in the country is more with a view that he should be near the scene of activity, and I believe they all have residences in their district.

Has he a power of determining for himself what services he shall perform, and how often he shall go from home?—No, unless a special case occurs within his knowledge; if a gentleman of the country makes a complaint to him of a very serious nature, and so serious that he would not have time to communicate with Dublin, I should approve of his going upon that duty, but I should require him to report it to me immediately; but I believe the cases of that nature are not many; they have instructions from time to time to go over and survey and inspect their offices, and make reports.

How often do they do that officially?—I do not think there has been a general survey for some years, for it was expensive.

If they do not make surveys regularly, of what service is their residence in the district?—My opinion has long been, that the surveyors might as well live in Dublin, and be ready for any emergency when they were wanted to go direct from the capital, and let them also make unexpected visits occasionally in the country districts. I am quite sure it is very important that unexpected visits should be made to the postmasters, but I think it is better it should be done with the knowledge of the authorities in Dublin, and with that view I have considered whether the surveyors might not be resident in Dublin, and for the 100*l.* a year perform active duty in Dublin whenever their services were not required in the country.

Are all the surveyors competent to the discharge of their own duty?—Perfectly so; there is no doubt of their competency; it is not near so severe a duty as it was when I came into the post-office; they were obliged then to ride; there was no means of conveyance but by riding on horseback through the country.

Would you propose to diminish the number?—If our postmasters were regular in their remittances we should not want so many.

Is it a part of the duty of a surveyor, if he should find a post-office out of order to take charge

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charge of it?—If he saw any thing wrong, no question of it; if he saw a man was not fit, he should do that, and give me notice of it.

Has any instance occurred of a man's taking charge of an office on that ground?—I do not recollect any instance of a man's having reported the insufficiency of a postmaster, and taking charge of the office in consequence.

Do you conceive, from what you know of the postmasters, that they are fit for their office?—I believe that a great proportion of our postmasters in the country can scarcely read.

Is not the appointment of persons who cannot read, deputy postmasters, a great abuse?—I dare say there are some villages in Ireland in which there can be scarcely found an intelligent person.

If they are in such a condition, how do they contrive to make up their day books?—Their wives and children, whoever they have, contrive to do it; and they are often done, I understand, imperfectly.

What is the result of the inquiries you have made as to the intercepting of certain letters from Kilkenny lately?—The letters were coming up from Colonel Lindsay at Kilkenny to the quartermaster-general in Dublin. Out of half a dozen letters, he stated that he had reason to suspect there were three intercepted; one of the letters related to a search for arms, and the delay of the letter prevented the effect of it; this underwent a very active investigation by myself. I went up to the Castle and consulted with Mr. Gregory and the attorney-general, and the steps I took were to send down immediately a confidential officer to Colonel Lindsay, who was unknown in the country; he remained with him eight or ten days; we concerted together a plan by which Colonel Lindsay was to write every day, or every second day, a letter directed precisely in the same handwriting, and confidentially marked, so that I could trace it; and all those letters came safe to hand, which considerably baffled my attempt at discovery, and made me very doubtful where I could at all attach blame or censure. I did not know much about the postmaster at Kilkenny myself; he was newly appointed, in consequence of the frauds which had been detected there some months before. I could not give any opinion whether it was done in his office or not; I was quite satisfied it did not occur in the post-office in Dublin. Those letters went through the alphabet; unless there was a disloyal man in the alphabet, I do not think it could have happened in the inland office, for want of time, even if they were disposed; but I remember on the investigation I was very anxious to find out who were the officers that were there, and my conclusion was that there was no ground for suspecting them.

Did you make out clearly that the letters had been put into the post-office?—Only from Colonel Lindsay's assertion; he did not put them in himself, but confided them to his serjeant-major, of whom he gave me the highest opinion.

Was the serjeant-major examined?—Yes; he made his affidavit that he put them in; that was the first step taken.

Was that man a Scotchman?—I think he was. Colonel Lindsay was quite satisfied of his correctness. Then there was the drum-major or serjeant-major who got the letters in Dublin; there was the same good opinion of him; but the result was, as far as I could judge, that the letters all came safe to Dublin, but from the circumstance of their being directed to the quartermaster-general, the assistant quartermaster-general, the commissary-general, and the assistant commissary-general, for the letters were not directed to Lord Greenock, but under cover to the head of the office, and then came in the mass of letters delivered at the Royal Hospital, liable to any accident.

Did it appear that the other letters which came from Kilkenny came safe?—Yes.

And that those peculiar letters were withdrawn?—Yes; the letters that were lost were inclosed to Lord Greenock and marked private, which added to the singularity of the circumstance; every thing has gone right since.

No communication was made immediately to the postmaster at Kilkenny?—No; he was not aware of the officer I had sent down being there; he did not know him.

Your impression is that they came safe to Dublin?—It is.

Who was there in Dublin who could be interested in preventing the communication of their contents?—I cannot conceive of any individual.

Was it a matter of interest to the Ribbonmen?—Yes; for the search for arms, I am informed, was entirely defeated; that the object Colonel Lindsay had in making the communication to Lord Greenock was entirely defeated.

Do you recollect when the first contract with Mr. Draper ceased?—I cannot recollect.

Is there any contract now?—None.

It has been stated to the Commissioners that there were representations made on the subject of the nonperformance of the contract by Mr. Draper, and that notwithstanding its having been brought under your notice, you renewed the contract with him for bringing the mails, agreeing to give him 290*l.* a year, several other persons having offered to do it for much less, and one so low as 60*l.*?—I shall be happy to state all my engagements with him from the time that I have been connected with the post-office; and I will have all the papers in my possession on the subject looked out, and I trust that the Commissioners will hear Mr. Draper's own account. I am satisfied that so far from its appearing that I have made arrangements for the purpose of serving him at the expense of the public, *four thousand pounds* would not repay him what he has lost by the arrangements I have recommended and made for the purpose of facilitating the communication between the two countries; that I have always passed by his advantage where it interfered with the benefit of the public.

EDWARD S. LEES.

## Examinations.

No. 108.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
25th Sept. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 108.

Thursday, 25th September 1823.

SIR EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in and examined.

A RETURN has been made, showing the employment of the different surveyors of the post-office, and also the persons acting as surveyors; from this it appears that a great proportion of the persons acting as surveyors are not in the situation of surveyors; will you have the goodness to state the principle upon which those persons are so employed?—They are generally sent from Dublin; in some cases, when particularly wanted, a deputy postmaster is sometimes sent from his neighbourhood; sometimes they are sent from the post-office here, in such cases where a surveyor may not be immediately at hand on the spot where his services are wanted; sometimes, where the expense would be greater by employing a regular surveyor, who might have occasion to be brought up to a certain point, than in sending a person from Dublin. There are cases where a person has been specially sent in preference to employing any surveyor at all, on some special confidential business, but that is a very rare case.

Is that never done but in the case of a person in whom peculiar confidence can be reposed?—That case has been very rare.

Is not the country divided into districts?—It is.

Do the surveyors reside in their districts?—I think mostly they do; it is not considered absolutely necessary; I do not think they all do. I have twice changed the districts since I have been in office, to make them generally acquainted with every part of the kingdom by degrees.

Is it ever the habit to employ one of those persons who are not surveyors in the district of another surveyor at the time that surveyor is not employed himself?—I have set my face against that, certainly.

When you say you set your face against that, who appoints those persons?—When it has occurred that they have been wanting, which has occurred within four or five months, I desire a memorandum to be made out for me of where the surveyors are, and what duties they are respectively engaged in; and upon that I send a person from Dublin, if I want one, to the particular spot, if the surveyor of the district is not immediately at hand, or on a particular survey under orders.

Are those persons ever employed to act as surveyors without previous reference to the person who is surveyor of the district?—Sometimes they are; in some few cases I believe that applications have been made to the individual surveyor of the district for his permission; I think I recollect hearing that.

Do you consider that his right to be employed, if he is unemployed, is of such a nature as to require his consent to the employment of any other person?—Most certainly I do.

Is it ever the practice to employ those persons acting as surveyors with reference to their own inconvenience, and without reference to the particular convenience of the public?—I should hope not. Does the question suppose the employing them for the mere purpose of emolument? If so, certainly not.

For the purpose of putting money into the pocket of an officer, who may be a meritorious officer, and who may wish to go into that part of the country?—Certainly not, unless the service requires some person to go; this person may be selected in preference to another individual, if he is so wanted.

The question refers to a case where the surveyor of the district was himself at the time unemployed?—I should certainly say not; I am not aware myself of any case of the kind having been done intentionally, and under any circumstances, very rarely.

Who is the person under whose direction those persons proceed on this service?—Under my own. The first thing I do when I want a surveyor is to ask of the clerks in the office where the surveyors are, and what they are about, and if a surveyor is not returned to me as on duty or under orders, I would not send another person in his room.

Whose duty is it to make that return to you?—One of the corresponding officers; Mr. Lyster, when he was in that office; either Mr. Crofton or Mr. Hartwell; he is a new officer.

Have you ever entertained any doubt of the correctness of those returns when they have made them to you?—No, I never have.

Do you recollect a person being employed in the course of the last year at Glenarm?—Yes, I do.

Do you recollect the circumstances under which he was sent?—I do; that was Mr. Harrison; his brother is the remittance clerk; he was sent down, I think, to Dungiven near Londonderry; and I think, while he was at Dungiven, the circumstance occurred of the vacancy in Glenarm, and he was ordered across from Dungiven to Glenarm; and, I think, in the return of Mr. Cupples he was then under orders for Donaghadee, if I remember right; at least that is the impression which was upon my mind at the time. Mr. Cupples had, I believe, left Donaghadee and was at Lisburne at his father's house; I think that appeared afterwards.

Had he performed the duty with which he was charged at Donaghadee at the time, and was he unemployed?—It was not performed; I believe it is not performed yet.

Glenarm is near Lisburne, is it not?—It is in the line; it branches to the left of the line to Donaghadee from Belfast.

Do you recollect what return was made to you, and by whom the return was made to you, of his employment at that time?—I think that was by Mr. Crofton.

Do you recollect whether any communication was made to Mr. Cupples at that time?—No, I do not.

Was Mr. Harrison sent there under the impression that Mr. Cupples was so employed that he could not perform the duty?—Certainly he was.

It appears that there is a considerable variety in the employment of the surveyors; that in one instance a person of the name of Webb, in the year 1822, was employed only 60 days, and that in the same year, 1822, Mr. Mills was employed 39 days; Mr. Devitt was employed 27 days, and Mr. Drought was employed 46 days: what is the reason that those persons were employed when this person, who is one of your extra surveyors, appears to have been employed only 60 days?—If I refer to the period I shall be able to state that: I remember hearing that Mr. Webb was married in that year; I know it was considered at one time that Mr. Webb did not wish to be much away from his home; I am making out an account of the employment of all the different surveyors for the information of the Board.

Those persons are sent on special services?—They are.

Are those services of long continuance?—Not in general; sometimes they have been.

The sending them on those services withdraws them from their duty in the office at the time?—Certainly; when it is on a special service it is generally short; when there is a vacancy of postmaster it is generally longer.

It appears that in the year 1817 a person of the name of Lyster was employed 101 days, and that in 1821 he was employed 42 days; it appears that in the year 1819 a person of the name of Thomas Parsons was employed 159 days, and that in the year 1821 that same Thomas Parsons was employed 217 days; a degree of employment equal to that of an established surveyor; can you explain upon what grounds those employments took place; particularly when it appears that in the same year, when this man was employed 217 days, Mr. Webb was employed only 90 days, Mr. Lang only 160 days, and Mr. Cupples, one of the regular established surveyors, only 146 days?—I must refer to the time in order to answer that fully; but it may occur that the surveyor might just happen to be employed at the moment when the occasion arose for the sending out a surveyor; with respect to Mr. Parsons he was mostly considered as an extra surveyor.

What means have those persons that are sent of being able to perform the duties; what instructions have they that enable them to perform the duty of surveyors?—The duty is very easily done; there is nothing complex in it; if we put into the hands of any person in the post-office the printed instructions of the deputy postmasters, they can easily learn it.

Did you never find any difficulty from sending persons who were themselves ignorant to instruct those who were ignorant?—I am not aware of it.

Do you remember a case of Mr. Drought being sent to instruct a postmaster, and that during the time Mr. Drought was instructing the postmaster the duty was so ill done that you were obliged to impose a fine?—I have no recollection of such a circumstance. I am quite sure no such thing could have occurred; Drought is a remarkably smart lad.

The Commissioners are not quite certain at the moment of the name of the individual?—I think it cannot refer to Mr. Drought; he is at this time doing duty in my own office, and I know that he is a clever man.

It appears, taking one instance, that in four years Mr. Lang, who is considered as one of the most efficient surveyors, received 981*l.*, and in those same four years, Mr. Parsons, a clerk, taken out of the office employed on surveys, received 743*l.*?—Mr. Parsons was considered as an extra surveyor for two or three years.

Who was Mr. Parsons?—He was son of Lord Rosse's brother; he was a clerk in the secretary's office, and he relinquished that and went to the West Indies, and after his return Lord Rosse wished him to be employed as a surveyor, and he was employed for a time as such.

Having been in the office, and relinquished, he was afterwards employed as a surveyor?—Yes; he was *bonâ fide* employed as a surveyor.

Mr. Devitt appears to have been employed a great number of days in every year, and also Mr. Mills?—They were both clerks in the accountant-general's office.

How is their duty in their offices provided for in their absence?—A substitute is employed for them, and they have to pay it out of their salary; I have myself frequently felt difficulty about it, and I have applied to the postmasters to appoint two additional extra surveyors, or to alter the plan.

Mr. Cupples appears not to have been employed above six months in each of the two last years, while the supernumeraries were employed?—That cannot be explained without a reference to the account, which is making up, of the duty performed by each, and the time they were employed; it will be found that the surveyors come very near in point of duty performed and of benefit arising from their employment.

The amount of Mr. Heron's receipts in those years was 2,343*l.*, and the amount of Mr. Cupples's was only 1,764*l.*?—That must have happened from some of the surveyors having travelled more than others, and some being in possession of offices longer than others.

When a surveyor has permission to reside out of his district, of course more time is occupied

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pieced and a greater expense is incurred than if he resided within his district; is the time considered as that for which he should receive; and does he charge the number of miles he has gone from his place of residence?—There is no distinction made.

Then the non-residence, to whatever extent it may be, is attended with so much additional charge to the public?—No distinction has been made.

Who pays the incidents?—The treasurer.

In what manner are they checked?—After the account is examined a minute is made in my office ordering the payment, and both the warrant and the duplicate are prepared in my office, and they go to the accountant-general.

Whose duty is it to examine the bill?—The accountant-general examines both the bill and the vouchers.

With whom do those vouchers remain?—With the accountant-general.

With whom does the tradesmen's bill remain?—With the receiver-general; the vouchers are, in most cases, first signed by the secretary.

The accountant-general forms the demand for which the warrant is made out from the accounts furnished to him?—He corrects the account if it is not correct.

What do you consider yourself as doing by annexing your initials to the account?—Merely as an authority to the accountant-general to go forward with his examination; it comes to me in the first instance with the vouchers themselves.

Do you consider yourself, when you put your name to the corner of the bill, to authenticate the bill as far as the propriety of the expense is incurred?—If the vouchers were with it.

If a bill were brought to you, you would initial it and send it to the accountant-general?—Yes.

Does that initial infer that that expense was proper to be incurred, and that it remained only for the accountant-general to ascertain whether the amount was right?—No; the accountant-general ought to have the account in his office with my initials to it. An account may come for which no vouchers would be necessary, from the peculiarity of the service; but in nine cases out of ten there would be an order for the thing.

There is an account, "Edward Carolan and Sons, carpenters, 530L." Supposing an account brought to you for work done at the office, you put your initials upon it?—Yes.

What do those initials imply?—An authority for the accountant-general; in that particular case, if there were no vouchers with it, if a general order came from the post-office, it must be vouched in that manner, that I am to initial it to go in to the accountant-general.

Does it mean that you have examined that account, and that the expense incurred has been incurred under your direction or any body else's direction?—If the voucher accompany it the accountant-general would probably presume that the account was correct, and add it up, ascertain the numerical accuracy of it, and return it again to my office.

Is there in fact any, and, if so, what check upon the account?—Every account must have the man's affidavit to it; he must have sworn in a particular form.

Then that which is to be relied upon is the affidavit of the person?—In some instances; coupled in some instances with the authority the individual must have possessed somewhere for the particular service.

When those expenses are incurred, under whose previous order are they incurred?—That would just depend upon what the circumstance is; if it is only for a quire of paper or a pane of glass, that individual pane of glass must have an order initialed by myself, coming from the housekeeper, for instance; if it is for stationery it goes through Mr. Harrison.

There would be a general account initialed by you; with that general account so initialed by you, would there be the orders for every particular thing he had done, given by you and authenticated by himself in some way or other?—Not exactly so; in all cases the head of every single office where any thing of the kind has been done, for instance, a lock requiring to be picked, or any thing of that kind, the head of the office certifies on the particular account, before it comes in to me, that such and such things were done; he is responsible for the things having been done; jobbing work is frequently going on.

Are those orders given by word of mouth or by writing?—They ought to be by writing, and I have given instructions to the tradesmen repeatedly that they are to obey no orders but in writing.

Are the Commissioners to understand that no expense has been incurred in the office for which, if they were to call, they should not find the order of the officers in the office for its having been done?—Certainly, they ought.

You consider that the heads of the departments are responsible for the expenses incurred in those departments?—In a great measure; and when the account comes before me to pass to the accountant-general, I frequently send to the heads of the departments to know why such and such things were done, where they have emanated in my own recollection from myself.

Before you initial a general account to be sent to the accountant-general, does any body in your office look over those orders that have been given by the different heads of departments under your direction, and see that the charges are for business that has been so ordered?—They come to me in that state, first signed by the different heads of each office.

Is there any body in your office who has checked those orders signed by the heads of the different departments with the accounts to which you put your initials, before you send them to the accountant-general?—In most cases they have done so; in some cases they have not; and I have disallowed them where I have not seen the order in the first instance.

Do you do that yourself?—I do mostly myself; for two or three years after we came into  
the



the post-office a good deal of jobbing work was going on, which came to a large sum of money in the course of the year, and I took it up and insisted that the orders should not be given without my knowledge.

To what extent is that discretionary power allowed to the heads of departments?—To a qualified extent; it depends entirely on the postmasters-general afterwards; if I sign a thing which is not correct, I must suffer for it; if even the head of an office brought me a thing to sign which I thought was not required, I would not sign it.

Would the head of the department bring the matter before you in the first instance?—It is my order that they should bring the matter in the first instance before me; that they should not even pick a lock without my being spoken to about it. I hold every tradesman responsible if he performs any service in the post-office without a proper order for so doing.

How long has that been?—I think within these three years.

In what situation did it stand before?—I found accounts presented to me, particularly by the carpenter, for jobbing work performed day after day, which at the end of the year came to a considerable amount, and I checked it, and told him that if it went on again I would not allow it; and the ironmonger's bill for picking locks and making new keys for locks, amounted, I dare say, to 50*l.* or 60*l.* a year.

EDWARD S. LEES.

Examinations.

No. 108.

Sir  
Edward Smith Lees.  
25th Sept. 1823.

### Appendix, No. 109.

Thursday, 2d October 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in and examined.

ON a former occasion you were requested to prepare yourself with some explanations with reference to several points that have been suggested by the Commissioners on Fees and Gratuities in their Ninth Report, are you now prepared with those explanations?—I am.

The intention of the Commissioners is to go regularly through the Report, taking those suggestions which are made, and requesting you to state your observations or your explanations upon those on each as they arise: the first is with respect to the money paid by the English post-office to the Irish, in lieu of advantage to be derived from packet postage; there are some observations in the second clause of that Report upon that subject; will you state whether the thing remains in the situation in which it did at the time when those observations were made; and whether any alteration has been carried into effect, or is now in contemplation?—In consequence of a representation from the post-office in Ireland to the Government in England, a Report was made by a Committee of the House of Commons, and an Act of Parliament was introduced, which increased the allowance from 4,000*l.* to 9,000*l.* some years back. By a communication from the Treasury in the course of this year, it was represented to be the intention of Government to introduce another Act to abolish the entire payment; that for the future each country should receive and separately account for its own receipts, and that all accounts between the two countries, as far as related to the postage, should hereafter cease. The Act of Parliament contemplated has not yet been passed, and this allowance still continues. If this suggestion was acted upon, it would have an important effect in simplifying the accounts of the department, and I think ultimately curtailing our expenses; it would also considerably facilitate the delivery of the letters, and more particularly still, at the two packet stations expedite the mails between the countries at Waterford and Donaghadee. At Donaghadee alone it requires now nearly two hours to make up those separate accounts, and a proportionate time at Waterford.

What is necessary to be done to make up those accounts; to ascertain the postage of each separate letter?—Not only that, but the postmaster at Donaghadee has to make up separate accounts with every place beyond Portpatrick connected with the line of Dumfries on the one side, and Glasgow and Edinburgh on the other; the same at Waterford as to all towns in South Wales.

With a view to separate the postage arising in England from that arising in this country?—Yes; and from that results a very tedious account kept by our postmaster, the docket of which is transmitted to Dublin, and forms another part of the accountant-general's account. It has always been considered as the most complex part of the system of the post-office accounts, endeavouring to separate the respective rates on the letters passing between the two countries.

In adjusting the account, no charge is now made for the packet?—None at all; the English post-office has a right to the postage by the packets for the sum stated.

Does the making that general payment simplify the account?—No; Ireland receives the amount of its own revenue, probably 20,000*l.* a year.

According to the most simple mode, if a letter was dispatched from London to Cork, the postage due for the whole line would be received at Cork, and carried to the account of Ireland; but at present you separate it, and pay to the English account that portion of the postage which arises for the letter between London and Dublin, and you make a separate and second account of that which arises in England?—Yes; and the balance goes to England.

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Edward Smith Lees.  
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Is not that account precisely inverted in case of a letter sent from Cork to London?—Precisely so; another circumstance which renders it complex, is, an individual paying the postage at Cork on a letter to Doncaster, for instance, we have to keep a separate account, for the English post-office owes us the Irish part of it from Cork to Dublin; and taking it the other way, we owe them the postage, for instance, on a letter from Doncaster to Dublin.

What delay does this produce at Waterford?—At Waterford we have a very expert post-master, and the delay is not so great as at Donaghadee. The letters *via* Waterford are much fewer too.

Are steam-packets established between Waterford and Milford?—Not at present, but they are preparing; but at Donaghadee a steam-packet would be a very material point, to expedite the mail.

There is considerable delay, is there not, in the transmission of letters from the north by Donaghadee?—There is; but I am quite satisfied that one steam-packet might do the business between Donaghadee and Portpatrick, and give us our whole correspondence for the province of Ulster twenty-four hours sooner each day; the average passage would not be more than two hours and a half or three hours. By our late arrangement with the Belfast coach, which took place six weeks back, the mail is in Donaghadee by half past eleven o'clock; the steam-packet, which might leave Portpatrick at six A.M., must be over in time to receive the Irish mail at Donaghadee for Scotland, and allowing three hours for the passage, the same packet would reach Portpatrick before four o'clock in the afternoon. Now, by ascertaining the distance between Portpatrick and Dumfries, it is evident that the mail which departs at seven in the morning need not depart till four in the afternoon, and would be in sufficient time to bring the mail for the packet, and there would be a considerable sum saved which is expended in expresses from Donaghadee to Belfast.

The next point adverted to in that Report relates to the penny-post department, on which some suggestions are made. Will you state any explanation you have to give upon that point?—At that period the penny-post was extended only four miles round Dublin by Act of Parliament. A subsequent Act has given the postmasters-general a power to extend the limits to six miles, but no extension has taken place.

Is there any reason for its not having taken place?—No, I am not aware of any; I do not think that as yet the correspondence is such as to authorize a general extension six miles round Dublin, but I think there may be two or three places to which it would be desirable to extend it.

You would have no difficulty in extending it to those places if within the distance of six miles, though you did not make a general extension?—Certainly not; we have also since that period, indeed lately, without increasing the expense of the department, increased the deliveries of the capital from two deliveries, which was the number at that time, to six. Lord Clancarty's arrangement extended it from two to four. It has been since augmented to six.

Do you feel that any great advantage has been derived from that?—None whatever to the revenue, but there can be no doubt it has been felt as a matter of great convenience. The revenue of the penny-post did not, previous to Lord Clancarty's arrangement, exceed 400*l.* a year, and it now amounts to between 3,000*l.* and 4,000*l.*

It does not as yet pay itself?—It does not, but I think it will. There have been some internal regulations made in the penny-post, which I think will have a very good effect, different from what existed when that Report was made.

What is your opinion of the establishment of the penny-post?—I think it is too large.

The next suggestion relates to the receipt and dispatch of the inland and British mails; have you any statement to make on that?—That formed a very important part of Lord Clancarty's plans. I think a great many circumstances existed then that do not exist now, which rendered a distinct establishment a great deal more necessary than at this period. In the first place, the comparative irregularity in the arrival of the mails previous to the establishment of the steam-packets. The outward mails are now uniformly prepared at the same time with the inland mails.

Will you state what is the arrangement you have had in contemplation, and which you recommended at one time to the postmasters-general?—My idea was, that the British mails should be superintended by the authorities in the inland office; the whole amalgamated, in fact, together.

There were four departments in the inland office you proposed to consolidate?—There were. I have always considered them, with the exception of the British-mail office, as consolidated; for though they have had separate chiefs, they are all parts of the same establishment; even under Lord Clancarty's arrangements, his lordship considered them as one office, and in his instructions to the chief of the inland office he is personally held responsible for the good management of both the alphabet and the letter-carriers office, but not of the British-mail office.

There is some dissimilarity between England and Ireland in that respect; the same inconveniences were supposed to arise from the sort of separation that was made, from the circumstance of their having separate chiefs; though they were nominally in the inland office they were in fact four departments?—Just so.

That you proposed to do away entirely both in name and appearance?—Yes, the alphabet in London has no chief at all; the letter-carriers has: with respect to the English part, it is much more easy now to be conducted under the controlling authority of the inland office than as a separate room, arising both from the hour of the dispatch of the mails from hence,

and the arrivals corresponding so nearly with the business of the inland department, with the exception of the mails, which come in after seven o'clock at night and before ten, and those are only opened for the purpose of delivering the letters to the state officers.

What observation have you to make on the remarks of the Commissioners respecting the letters from England for the interior of Ireland?—It occurred to me that the country part of the English mail, when separated from the Dublin part, might not be properly checked in the inland office, and I have made an observation to inquire of Mr. Donlevy and Mr. Mills how it is done. In the docket that comes from England the whole postage is charged against Ireland; this is another reason for the removal of the accounts, because if it is not done well Ireland must considerably lose. If the officers of the inland office are not in the habit of examining the postage on the letters for the interior, for we receive the whole under one charge from England, we ascertain exactly the amount of the letter-carriers part collected in Dublin; then if the country part is not equally checked in its passage through the inland office, we must make good the amount to England, and Ireland must lose it if the dockets are overcharged. There is another circumstance which shows the inutility of the system: Ireland pays the whole balance to great Britain, it is charged in English money; from England we collect it in Irish money, and we lose the difference; the same thing applies to England. We make up our account in Irish money, and the English postmasters charge the postage in English currency.

There is a suggestion in line 10 of page 5, of the books being sent occasionally; what is the observation you have to make upon that?—My observation is, that they ought to be sent every day to the accountant-general.

That would lead to no inconvenience?—I am not aware of any.

What do you think would be the advantage of sending them every day?—That if there are any returns connected with the accountant-general's office, he should be daily apprised of them as a check.

The next suggestion relates to the delivery of letters not after five o'clock in the evening?—The delivery of the English letters has been extended from five o'clock to seven o'clock in the evening.

If they are not delivered that night, how soon are they delivered in the morning?—The delivery begins as soon after six as possible.

The next suggestion is in page 6, at line 19, in respect of the payment of the extra probationary clerks in the inland office; what observation have you to make upon that?—That regulation I consider as bad, and I have already suggested to the postmasters-general to change it. They are paid at the rate of 52*l.* a year, and when they are absent, either from sickness or any other cause, they are mulcted at the rate of a guinea a week. The object of the regulation which Lord Clancarty made was to insure a regular attendance in the inland office, for it was found that many officers used to pretend to be indisposed when they really were not, or at least they were indisposed in so slight a manner, probably from a little intemperance the night before, that the mails were materially delayed; therefore, though I do not altogether object to the principle of making a small fine upon them when absent even when sick, I certainly would render their condition better, and would make another regulation by which they would be relieved, and at the same time the principle would not be altogether departed from. I think, where Lord Clancarty's arrangement was defective, was not so much in the principle as operating against those junior officers, as it was as it affects the senior officers of the inland office; he established that when any officer was away, no matter what his rank and salary, they should all pay out of their salaries the same sum; therefore a taxing clerk who has 200*l.* a year pays, if he is absent an evening (and here again I think is a wrong part of the system) he pays for his substitute, I believe, 2*s.* for the evening; if he is absent in the morning, he pays but 1*s.* 7½*d.* for his substitute; now I think it is much more important to insure regularity in the morning at six, and much more difficult to attain it, than in the evening at five; one part of my proposition was, therefore, that that should be reversed, and that the higher sum should be paid for the morning. I also suggested, and think it is right to establish the rule, that where the senior officers are away, they should contribute a greater sum out of their salaries than the officers who have smaller means to do it, and that out of that fund the allowance to the extra probationers should be somewhat increased.

A return has been made to this Board of the attendance of individuals in the post-office; in whose particular department is it to superintend the attendance of individuals; does it rest with you or with the heads of departments?—Each head keeps an account, and there is a daily return comes in, made and specially signed by the porter who returns it the instant each officer makes his appearance; the book is returned at eleven o'clock, and the heads of the departments are responsible for all the persons in their respective offices being engaged in the performance of their duty.

Do you receive a daily report from every department of the office showing what the attendance of the clerks is?—From every department.

The attendance or non-attendance of particular persons is daily brought under your notice?—Certainly, it is the very first paper I look at.

The attendance of different individuals appears to be very different; in the case of Joseph Ferguson, for instance, it appears that he has paid 26*l.* out of his salary of 70*l.*, but the number of days absence is not stated?—I do not think the return will give full information, for I find that some of those gentlemen have made arrangements among themselves, and do not pay the full sum.

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Sir

Edward Smith Lees.

2d Oct. 1823.

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No. 109.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
2d Oct. 1823.

Did you ever, in looking over the accounts, observe his continued absence, and inquire the reason of it?—Yes; I think there are some special circumstances respecting Ferguson; I think his brother did his duty in part.

Is he a son of the superintendent of mail-coaches?—Yes; they are both sons; one is reading divinity lectures in the University.

Is there any periodical return besides the daily return made to you of the attendances?—No, there is not; but I think it would be very desirable.

Is it only the porter of the office who certifies when they come in?—I detected the porter in inaccuracy, and I took it out of his hands about a twelvemonth ago, and it is now in the hands of two messengers.

There would be no difficulty in an appearance-book being kept in each office?—None at all.

The account of the attendance in Mr. Donlevy's office comes before you?—Yes, daily, signed by the presidents.

The absence of Thomas Harrison has been 279 days during the last year?—Yes; I do not think he will ever be able to attend at all; the whole family of them are invalids from infirmity, and often ill.

Is there not a great objection to persons being advanced in the office while they are not attending it, and their interfering with the prospects of those who are doing the business of the office?—That is very true; but, on the other hand, supposing Mr. Harrison, for instance, or the officer above him, Mr. Harvey; he is one step, and only one step, from the clerkship of a road, which may probably be vacant in a fortnight or three weeks; but if Mr. Harvey was in the case of Mr. Harrison, for instance, so infirm that he could not attend the duty in the morning, he succeeds to the office; but if he should be absent a certain number of days in a year or two years, he loses the road.

Mr. Harrison is also remittance clerk in your office?—Yes, he is.

Is it possible for him to perform the duties of both offices?—No, not for a constancy; it would not be in the power of any man to do it; he is fully occupied as remittance clerk from ten to four.

Would it not be preferable to pay him a full salary as remittance clerk, than that he should also have an office the duties of which he cannot discharge?—I think it is desirable, certainly, that they should perform the duties of the office which they hold, and that they should be properly paid for so doing; it has arisen, I have no doubt, from this feeling; the rewarding good officers in the inland office, where it was thought practicable that they should do other duty, that they should have it; but the principle is certainly bad in its effects.

William Heron, a taxing clerk, appears to have been absent 291 days; does he hold any other situation?—He does, in the custom-house.

Then a man holding a situation in the custom-house holds a situation also in the post-office of 200*l.* a year, and for doing the whole duties in the post-office he pays a man fifty-two guineas a year?—That is the fact.

The confidential duty of that person therefore is performed by another, whose situation does not entitle him to that confidence; the regulation stating that that duty shall be performed by a man who is entitled to 200*l.* a year?—It is, as I said, that the gradation of salary for length of service is an encouragement to the officers of the inland office after a certain time to be absent from their duty, if they are not mulcted in proportion.

Would there be any objection, in your opinion, to a regulation that a certain number of days absence, without a certificate of ill health, or the express permission of the postmasters-general given in writing, should subject them to dismissal?—If the payment to the extra probationers was made larger out of their income, that, I have no doubt, would check it.

That, in case of a long illness, would be attended with serious inconvenience to a man who could but ill sustain it?—It would be subject to that objection, certainly.

Is the pay of the probationers a matter of arrangement between the individual and the substitute?—In some cases I find it is; it ought not to be.

It appears that Mr. Moulds, who is an attorney, has 170*l.* a year, and pays the sum of 20*l.* to a substitute, and is absent 134 mornings and 87 evenings; another clerk, David Thompson, pays 17*l.*, and is absent 113 mornings and 80 evenings; another, Mr. Garrett Wall, who is clerk of the money-book, and has, in the return made to this Board, specific duties to perform, has 125*l.* a year, out of which he pays 59*l.*, and he is absent 313 days, which is the whole of the year?—Yes; he has been recommended three years for superannuation, on account of the state of his health, and we have had no answer to it; I consider him as out of the office.

Mr. Stoker, a senior sorter, pays 50*l.* to a substitute, and is absent 274 days, which is substantially the same; has he any other office?—No.

Has he been sick during the whole of that time?—He has been on the sick list the whole time.

Mr. Kennedy, who is now returned as dead, has paid 53*l.* for a substitute; Robert Harrison, a junior sorter, appears to have been absent 285 mornings and 290 evenings?—Neither of them will ever do any good in the office, from their state of health.

Mr. Henry Parsons, a junior sorter, has been absent 250 mornings and 254 evenings?—Henry Parsons ought to go out altogether; he has a very good office under his father, a commissioner of the insolvent debtors court.

His attendance in that office is stated to be uncertain, and of course incompatible with his regular attendance in the inland office?—Certainly, I think that situation is quite incompatible

patible with any situation in the post-office; he is half the year going through the kingdom with his father in executing the duties of his other office.

In the British-mail office there is only one person who appears to have had a substitute during the year, which was in case of mental derangement?—Just so.

In the bye and dead-letter office there is a person of the name of Lewry, a first junior clerk, receives but 70*l.* a year, and he has paid for substitutes 57*l.*; that must have been for nearly the whole year?—Very nearly.

If that man happens to have but 70*l.* a year, and to be really on the sick list, that must have created great distress?—He is not distressed; I think he is reading for the University; he is very well connected.

The office held by Mr. Lewry appears, by the return made to this Board, to have important duties, and duties requiring great confidence attached to it, with which his attendance at the University must be utterly incompatible; does it not appear to you to be a very great evil to have an officer of this description performing his duties by substitute?—Certainly; in this particular instance the inconvenience may not be great, because the substitute, Mr. Riddle, is an old officer of the department, very well fitted for it, but there certainly is great objection to the principle.

EDWARD S. LEES.

Examinations.

No: 109:

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
2d Oct. 1823.

### Appendix, No. 110.

3d October 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES, again called in, and made the following statement.

I HAVE brought with me a copy of the English account, which will show of how very complex a nature it is [*the witness produced the same*]; if any person were to be taken who is not in either the accountant-general's office or the British-mail office, I do not believe they would be able to state at once how it is to be managed, or explain the principle of it.

The next point adverted to in the Ninth Report of the Commissioners on Fees and Gratuities, is the mode of charging the deputy postmasters. It is said, "notwithstanding the improvements made in the inland department, there still does not appear to be all the correctness that is desirable in charging the deputy postmasters with the unpaid postage on general-post letters dispatched from Dublin to the country, as we observe that differences, which when taken together are considerable, frequently occur between the office charge stated in the letter bill and that which is admitted by them." After adverting to particular instances they proceed to say, "at the same time it must be admitted, that from the celerity with which the operation of taxing and telling the charges on the letters is necessarily conducted, errors may arise without blame being fairly attachable to the office, and possibly the want of sufficient room for doing the business of the inland department with ease, convenience, and regularity, may have contributed to render these inaccuracies more numerous than they might have otherwise been; the existence of them, however, to so great an extent, will, we trust, induce such regulations as that in a point of so much importance the utmost possible accuracy and correctness may be attained; and in order that the postmasters-general may have a distinct view of the manner in which this duty is performed, we recommend that a report of the docket charges, and of those actually entered against each deputy postmaster, should be made to them monthly by the letter-bill office:" was that attended to?—Yes; that was established and continued in force till the last year, and there was an extra officer employed in the letter-bill office, and that was one of the reductions which was recommended and acted upon; that has ceased.

Will you state whether the accuracy that was contemplated by this recommendation through the means of that additional officer, was effected?—It did not appear to me to be a matter of sufficient importance to be carried on at that expense. I think it is effected by the head of the letter-bill office coming to me and reporting any particular instances of irregularity which he observes; and they are not very numerous.

The next observation applies to the post-paid letters. It is stated, "that the letters received at the general post-office are delivered to the window-man, whose duty it is to stamp the letter with the amount of postage, and the words "post paid," and to enter the name, &c., together with the postage, in a book; that these receipts do not appear to be subject to any official check, and that the window-man therefore may either destroy the letter, the postage of which has been paid, or omit to stamp it post-paid; that a great proportion of this branch of the revenue is derived from the postage paid on the official letters belonging to certain public offices, with most of which the window-man keeps accounts, and receives from them, at stated times, the amount of the postage charged against them for such letters; but (the Commissioners say), though by keeping such an account some check may be maintained on the charge brought by the window-man against any such department for post-paid letters, the post-office has certainly none upon his receipts:" has any thing been done with a view to remedy that?—There has been a considerable alteration in the check itself on the letters; but there has been no check, such as is directly alluded to there,

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upon the honesty of the clerk in the office; as to the suppression of postage, the check recommended, I think, by the Commissioners of 1810, was, that so soon as a letter was post-paid, in place of being deposited at the post-paid window, it should be withdrawn from thence, and deposited in a separate box or receiver; a check of that description we have not made; it would be quite possible to make it, and it would be no inconvenience; but how far it would not open a door to a greater fraud is very well worthy of consideration; for, supposing that the letters so post-paid and withdrawn, were by the party bringing them to the post-office absolutely taken away altogether, and not deposited in a separate box, but pocketed, as by a servant for instance, all check then ceases on the post-paid window clerk; whereas now he enters the letter, and he is obliged to produce that letter to the inland office, and compare it with the entry of postage itself at night; therefore I fear it might open a door for greater fraud by the messenger who might bring the letter to the post-office; and again, supposing the messenger did deposit this letter in the second receiver, it is found by the clerk in the inland office at night, all responsibility is then taken away from the window-clerk, and if the second person chooses to steal it, there is no check upon him at all, so that I am afraid that the evil might be greater; it would take off a great responsibility which is now firmly established, and rests both upon the post-paid window and the inland office together.

There is an officer in the inland office who counts the letters and checks the postage?—Yes; and he signs his name in the book for them.

It will be seen that it is possible, if this person is always the same, that if he and the other were in collusion they might commit fraud; but in London a clerk is indifferently called and put to that duty: is it always done by the same person here?—It is.

Does it not strike you, that it would be desirable to adopt the principle which is adopted in London, to call a clerk from the inland office indifferently to count the letters?—It certainly does. It is a business which cannot require any one five minutes. If it was done by the president or vice-president himself I think it would be an improvement.

In an antecedent part of the Report it is stated, that “in the years 1805, 1806, and 1807, the Bank of Ireland is represented to have paid, on the application of 3,260 persons, a sum of 74,550*l.* on account of the miscarriage of bank notes and bank post bills that had been sent by the post;” and it is stated, that it is probable this was far short of the actual value of bank notes and bank post bills lost within those years, but that in the year 1808 it appears to have been diminished?—The complaints of the loss of letters then were frightful.

Do you know what has been the amount of the payments in later years?—Yes; I have sent a memorandum of that which I obtained from the Bank within the last month; I think it is 8,000*l.* for the last year; that embraces every thing supposed ever to have been put into the post, and I have the particulars of every complaint, and of the steps taken in the investigation, and by far the greater part is ascertained now never to have come near the post-office. There was an instance next door to myself, a merchant sending 10,000*l.*; he came to the post-office and made an affidavit that he had sent it himself, and he kept duplicate in his ledger; the circumstance appeared so extraordinary and so frightful, that I sent down an officer to every part where it was possible to trace it; it cost the office seventy or eighty pounds, and before the investigation was finished the letter came to hand directed to London instead of being sent to Cork. I sent to him, he said he was very sorry; I told him I hoped that it would make him very cautious in future; he had misdirected his own letter. Messrs. Paget and Bainbridge sent 2,000*l.* in a letter, and after two months it was found in the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s private-letter box; he had forgotten to direct it.

Are letters frequently lost through the letter-carriers?—Indeed, whenever they are embezzled, my impression is, that they are in almost all instances through the carriers.

Is there any check upon a letter-carrier but the amount of the postage?—Nothing, whatever, beyond the comparison and the new check established in the course of this year, of registry; nothing whatever on his dishonesty; he has every part of the public property in his possession after it leaves the office.

If he chose to pay the postage on a letter, you have no means of preventing his suppressing it?—It is almost impossible; I wish I could find means for preventing it.

In page 8 there is a suggestion as to the frauds by deputy postmasters on bye letters; what is the nature of those frauds?—The postmasters conniving together in under-charging each other in the amount of postage on letters passing from one office to the other not coming through the capital; they have the power of doing that in the unpaid letters, or in the post-paid letters, and it is one of those defects in the post-office system which I wish I could provide for.

Have you reason to believe that frauds to a great extent have been committed in that way?—Several have been detected; there are some under consideration at this moment.

Has any thing suggested itself to you as a means of preventing those frauds?—I have bestowed every consideration in my power upon that matter, and do not think any thing can operate as a perfect check upon them.

What is the case in England?—It is equally vulnerable there; the only possible thing which has occurred to me, though not as a perfect check, might operate upon them, is to oblige every postmaster to send up immediately all his bye-letter dockets to Dublin, and though they were not even examined, they might suppose they would be examined; that is the step which is actually taken, when the officers of the bye-letter department in Dublin have reason to suspect any of the deputies conniving together, they immediately send down for the dockets, and they undergo the necessary examination; as for the affidavits they are obliged to make, persons who would commit a fraud would not mind the violation

of their oaths. The Commissioners suggest in page 8, that a return should be made out of all variations between the corresponding vouchers of the postmasters; that is done, and it is from the result of these, where there is any particular variation discovered, the postmasters are directed to send up the bye-letter docket; and the only thing which has suggested itself to me is, that they should in all cases send them up as if for examination.

Would not that add very much to the trouble of the postmaster?—Not at all to that of the postmasters, it would add very much to the trouble of the office if they were constantly examined; in the cases we have detected of the late frauds, we have always discovered that it was by the transmitting of those very dockets from one postmaster to the other that they were enabled to carry it on, by secret marks on the corner of the dockets, known only to those individuals; they then sent back the docket to the postmaster of the other place the next day; if it had not been that the surveyor got possession of those dockets, we should never have been able to trace the frauds at all.

In page 9 it is stated that the remittance clerk's cash book is brought to a total once a quarter, and compared and checked with the treasurer's receipts, with which, if correct, it must agree, as likewise with the credits given to each deputy postmaster by the accountant-general; it is stated, that at the end of each quarter he likewise closes his bill-book, bringing forward to the account of the succeeding quarter such bills as have not fallen due in the current quarter; by making a clerk in the secretary's office the channel through which the deputy postmaster's remittances are to pass to the treasurer, they state it was probably intended to form a check upon this branch of that officer's receipts, but that it does not seem to have been considered that the remittance clerk, who gives security only to the amount of 2,000*l.*, while that given by the treasurer amounts to 15,000*l.*, is not subject to any check himself, and may therefore retain the cash so remitted instead of paying it over to the treasurer; besides, the weekly return which he sends to the accountant-general, they state, can be of no avail as a check upon the treasurer, so far as relates to bills that have been paid during the week, such return being actually in that respect made up from that officer's own account; therefore, from the amount of the security given by the treasurer, and the greater responsibility of his situation, the Commissioners state that they consider him as the most proper person to whom the deputy postmasters should make their remittances, and to enable the accountant-general to check this branch of receipt, that each deputy should at the time of remitting be required to transmit to him, as well as to the treasurer, an account of the particulars of such remittance, and for that purpose should be furnished with the printed form of a letter, with the blanks to be filled up according as the remittance is composed of bills, cash, money, or orders; has this regulation been carried into effect?—No; but I do not think the observations of the Commissioners in 1810, conformable at all to the present practice; for the remittance clerk brings in to the treasurer every day the money received, and the account is settled between them every day; the money lodged in the bank every day, and the bank book brought to the accountant-general to see that the money is actually lodged. But with respect to the check suggested of making the treasurer the officer of receipt, that certainly would be quite practicable, and I know no reason whatever against it; because a counter-check, if necessary, could be introduced, by letting the officer in the secretary's office, or the secretary himself, be made acquainted, by letter from the postmaster, of the amount of the remittance sent up to the receiver-general on a particular day; but after all, I do not see the great utility that would arise out of it.

The remittance clerk appears to be a mere channel of transmission; why should not the money go immediately to the treasurer?—I see no objection whatever to it; the placing this third person between the receiver-general and the accountant-general certainly was intended as a sort of counter-check on the receiver-general himself.

Supposing the remittance clerk was to receive a remittance one day, and not to take it to the receiver-general; that the postmaster were to say he sent the remittance, and the clerk were to say he never received it, what would be done?—He has the power; but if he were to do that in a second instance he would be very soon disposed of.

The Commissioners in 1810 remark that the receiver-general gives a larger security?—The security of the remittance-clerk is abundantly sufficient for the money passing through his hands in the day; it precisely conforms to the practice in London.

Some complaints have come to this Board, of the manner of acknowledging the remittances received by the remittance clerk; that when he receives half notes he does not return the sum received?—Yes, that is merely sent to authorize the postmaster to send up the other halves to let him know that they were safe.

Might he not then acknowledge less than the whole amount?—He has always that power if he chooses to do it, but the postmaster would take care of that when he got his account.

How far might such a fraud as this be committed: suppose the postmaster of Belfast or any other place was to remit 200*l.*, and the remittance clerk was to acknowledge the receipt regularly, credit 100*l.* to the public, and put the other 100*l.* into his pocket; that when the monthly account comes from the letter-bill office for the signature of the secretary, previous to its going to the accountant-general, the sum therein stated as the charge against the postmaster at Belfast should be by the remittance clerk altered and reduced to 100*l.*; in what way could this error or fraud be discovered?—With respect to the power of the remittance clerk of suppressing 100*l.* out of the money, that he could do, but he would certainly be detected as soon as the account went down to the postmaster. If a clerk in the accountant-general's office, or a clerk in the letter-bill office, undercharges a deputy postmaster or  
a clerk

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a clerk in the sorting office, there is no power of discovering it, unless, on suspicion, it were traced.

Is there no document that comes before you from any of the offices which, by being authenticated by your signature, would form a check; the monthly sheet, for instance?—That comes before me; and there I frequently myself alter the entries with the view of ascertaining the vigilance of the officer in the accountant-general's office as operating on the letter-bill clerks, and I am glad to say that I never yet made an alteration that the return did not come back to me with a detection of it; but still I am not satisfied. I think it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to form a complete check; the only thing which occurred to me was what I mentioned when I was here before, and I am of that opinion still.

A complaint has been made of the hardship that is occasioned to postmasters, who are, under Act of Parliament, obliged to make certain payments out of their receipts, and upon their sending up their claim, though it may be substantially correct, and a *bonâ fide* claim, yet on some little irregularity in the form of it the sum is disallowed?—Yes, there are very large disallowances under consideration now, to a great portion of our postmasters.

The effect of that is to make a false balance?—Yes; that point I have brought to this bearing at present, that the Lord Lieutenant has authorized the Commissioners of Military Accounts to go through the examination of those vouchers, with a view to authorize the postmasters-general to give them credit, though they may not have observed the strict forms that the parties should subscribe to in getting the amount, and I have reason to hope that will be soon settled. I believe that is the only instance in which the postmasters are labouring under those disallowances; the sum amounts to nearly 5,000*l*.

In England the practice is different?—I do not believe there is any such law in England.

In page 10 there is a suggestion as to the treasurer being required to lodge in the Bank of Ireland his cash receipts; have you any observation to make upon that?—At that time the whole revenue of the post-office, under an order of 1806, was lodged to the credit of the teller of the exchequer, and the postmasters-general could not draw any part of that out without an order signed, I think, by three Commissioners of the Treasury; and the Commissioners of Fees and Gratuities observed on the power which the receiver-general of that period had of withdrawing the whole of the amount, and keeping it in the Bank to his private credit; that has been changed.

What change has been made?—The postmasters-general pay in all the money they possibly can to the credit of the Government in the Bank of Ireland, instead of allowing the receiver-general to keep it, and they withhold only so much as they conceive to be necessary for the paying the establishment; the receiver-general has no power of receiving any part of that, except under the sign manual of the two postmasters-general.

It appears from what you state, that no money can be withdrawn from the Bank when once paid in, but by orders from the postmasters-general. It is the practice that orders are given for payments out of the department of the post-office previous to its going to the Bank, is it not?—Very small sums, from the alphabet office merely.

Has any person a right to give an order for money to be paid out?—Certainly not; if it was required, I would do it myself, but no other has authority.

Does the alphabet keeper give an order for the payment of money out?—Certainly not; and I believe he could not.

Do you know whether he has assumed the power of paying out money?—Certainly not, except for the last few months, by way of rebates on overcharged letters. I had directed that those letters should be inspected by a clerk in the secretary's office; persons complained of being obliged to walk up stairs, and I have restored it to its former state; that the officer in the alphabet shall make those rebates; but that is checked at night, the officer is obliged to produce the very covers of the letters if they can be obtained from the party; if not, the receipt of the party for the money.

He receiving an order from you, or he having a payment that he thought ought to be made to a small extent, might not he pay that out of his receipt?—Yes, if signed by me; or if for a return of postage, though not signed by me.

The amount of the sum is not to the purpose; if he receives 20*l*. which would be a charge against him, upon which all the checks might operate; but if by any order from any person, or still more, if he has an opportunity in his own discretion of paying one or two pounds, that would destroy every check upon him?—He has no such power, and I believe he would not attempt any such thing, except in the case of the rebates on letters, and there would be no possibility of his committing a fraud except by a forged receipt for the sixpence, or whatever it might be.

Was there not a considerable fraud some years ago between the alphabet keeper and a person at the custom-house?—There was a fraud to a considerable extent, that was in the postage accounts between the post-office and the customs; the extent was never completely ascertained.

The next recommendation contained in the Report of the Commissioners is, that no payment should be made by the treasurer on account of any branch of the expenditure of the department, without a warrant from the postmasters-general, a sanction which, they state, has not hitherto been considered as essential; and that the treasurer, whose drafts on the Bank, when any payment has been allowed by the postmasters-general, they consider to be sufficient, without their having any other signature attached to them, should specify in each the subject for which it is drawn, that the receipt and payment should consist of actual receipts and payments only; that the cash pass-book kept by the treasurer with the Bank should



should be produced to the accountant-general, to satisfy him, previous to his signing such abstract, that the balance at the foot thereof is in bank, and that the abstract so signed, together with the bank-book, should be then laid before the postmasters-general?—That has all been acted upon.

The Commissioners further stated, that with respect to the treasurer's payments, the check on them in the accountant-general's office had hitherto been extremely defective; that for many years previous to the year 1808 the same person conducted the business of the accountant-general's department and that of the treasurer, the principal in neither doing any duty, and consequently the benefit that might be derived from the check the former was intended to maintain upon the latter was entirely lost; but that though the duties of those offices were at that time executed by distinct persons, the accountant-general had no actual check on the credits claimed by the treasurer, who it appears cannot produce to them, at the time he submits to his examination the weekly abstracts of receipts, any vouchers for the latter, as for the most part he had not then received them himself; and though the accountant-general makes up every quarter an account of the treasurer's receipts and payments during the quarter, the vouchers for the payments are never produced to him, and no other use is made of this account than to compare it with the treasurer's accounts for the like period. The Commissioners then suggest, that to obviate so glaring a defect, the accountant-general should, at the close of every quarter, make up an account debiting the treasurer with all sums brought to charge within the quarter against the letter-carriers, the alphabet keeper, and window-man, with the remittances made by deputy-postmasters within the quarter, and with the receipts on account of penny-post revenue, and so on. Has the regulation there suggested, with a view to remedy that defect, been carried into execution?—I am not aware of that; I do not understand that the observation of the Commissioners is correct: as far as my recollection goes, the check upon the receiver-general is as complete as it can be; it is now perfect; but even at that time I cannot bring to my recollection that it was so imperfect as it is there described.

Does not the voucher go with the warrant?—Yes.

There is a voucher for every payment?—Yes; and he countersigns the warrant; the Bank would not pay it without his signature; the account goes back, it is true, to the treasurer; that is part of his office-proceeding.

The Commissioners further stated, that they had been informed that, previous to the year 1808, credit was always given to the deputy postmasters for their remittances, by bills, as soon as made; but that after that period they appeared to be brought to their credit only when paid, which they stated produces a false balance, and is therefore objectionable. Is that practice continued?—Yes; our practice is strictly conformed to the English; and I cannot agree in the suggestion of the Commissioners there; we give no credit for any thing, unless it is in cash.

If that were permitted, a person might send up a bad bill?—Yes, certainly; and that has been done; if they got credit for bills, on their being sent up the revenue might be materially prejudiced.

In the following page it is stated, "from the annexed account will also be seen the cash balance due by each deputy postmaster on the 5th of January 1808 and 1809 respectively; the long neglect of this most important part of the post-office management is highly reprehensible, and cannot be justified by the necessity of leaving money in the hands of the postmasters to answer the payment of their respective offices, which, from their being so trivial, would be amply provided for out of their current receipts." Has any thing been done upon that subject?—Yes; the object of that recommendation was, that the postmaster's accounts should be made up monthly, — that was the recommendation; and I believe the view the Commissioners took of it was to expedite the transmitting of the revenue to Dublin; so far it has been completely acted upon, and indeed exceeded, because they have been since obliged to remit their balances in all cases once a month, and in all the large post-offices once a fortnight; but as to the making them make up their accounts once a month, that has not been acted upon, and I do not think it would be right, even if it were possible to act upon it, for it would so multiply the documents in the country; and in Dublin I do not think it could be done under 1,000*l.* a year further expense; the object has been attained by making them remit their revenue monthly, and that I believe was the view; at that time they remitted only once a quarter.

They make up their accounts now only once a quarter?—Only once a quarter.

How are those accounts made up? are they made up upon that on which they charge themselves, or that with which the office charges them?—That with which they charge themselves.

For the accuracy of that have you any thing to depend upon but their own affidavit?—Certainly; the observation of the letter-bill clerks, whose duty it is to report to me if a postmaster is in the habit of making frequent demands for undercharges in his accounts; that is the only check, exclusive of the affidavit; but we are obliged to take the word of the postmaster for the actual amount we are to bring to charge against him; we are constantly watching them in that respect, and there are checks every night on their bills; we let two or three officers charge their letters, and sometimes we undercharge them for the purpose of seeing whether they will take advantage of it, and, I am sorry to say, we sometimes do detect them.

In page 13 the Commissioners state, that in conducting the investigation of the accounts, a gentleman, whom they name, had discovered great ability, and that the general post-office was indebted to him for forming a system of book-keeping, from the adoption of which, in

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Sir

*Edward Smith Lees.*

3d Oct. 1823.

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their opinion, much advantage might be derived; but that the old form of accounts, after correcting the errors discovered in the mode of making it up, had been continued in use; and if intended as a statement of the Irish post-office revenue, and of the payments and deductions thereout, was still incorrect. Has that form of account been continued or discontinued?—There have been new forms from all the offices for every portion of the revenue; there are distinct and certified returns from all the offices.

You conceive that the accounts now give a complete and fair view of the whole receipt and expenditure?—Yes; and not only that, but render the principle of auditing our accounts through the accountant-general's office quite simple.

There are some suggestions in this report respecting the penny post?—That has been completely remodelled since that time.

It does not appear that in the Act constituting the penny post there is any exception with regard to payment in respect of any letters passing through the penny post?—I do not believe there is any law allowing of franking in favour of any one.

In London it is practised in two instances, by the secretary and the comptroller of the penny post, and those are the only two; but it turns out on examination of the comptroller here, that all the clerks who have any thing to do with the penny post both send and receive their letters free, and that various things are circulated free through the penny post; that all the correspondence of the clerks of the roads, all the correspondence of the express clerks, all the publications that they have to disperse in Dublin, and all their newspapers, are circulated free through the penny post?—Indeed, I believe they are.

Can you conceive a greater abuse than that?—It has been always sanctioned and permitted, I believe, for want of being observed on; the express clerks and the clerks of the roads have always thought themselves entitled; with respect to the newspapers the profit on them goes to Government.

It is stated, that in case of any clerk finding a letter directed to himself or another, he takes it the same as has been done in the general post-office?—That ought not to be, certainly.

The office of resident surveyor was recommended by the Commissioners to be abolished; that still continues in the same person?—Yes; his salary and his franking privilege still continue; that is a patent office.

It is stated that the conduct in the country of the contractors for mail-coaches, and of the guards and drivers, might, when necessary, be controlled by the riding surveyors, whose time, they state, they cannot conceive to be so fully occupied with the inspection of the post-offices of their respective districts, as that they should not be able to discharge any duty relative to this department, upon which it should be found requisite to send an officer from Dublin; do they now exercise any control?—Yes, if they see any incorrectness, they certainly do.

Have you any officer similar to that described to exist in the London office, whose sole business it is to see how things are going on, and to be sent sometimes travelling in one direction and sometimes in another, to make reports on the coaches, the horses, and guards, his person being quite unknown?—We have a mail-coach superintendent and two assistants; he is frequently through the country; in England that is more necessary than it is here, for their contracts are so subdivided and so numerous; if any part goes astray here, we know where to refer and to whom; at the same time the superintendent of mail-coaches frequently has to go into the country, and his assistants also.

In page 17 there are various detailed recommendations with respect to minor subjects; can you say whether they have been attended to?—There is an observation there on the superintendent of mail-coaches; the Commissioners of that day stated his salary to be 200*l.* a year; it is now 400*l.*; but though his salary has been increased the public expense has not, for the additional 200*l.* a year is given to him in lieu of all travelling expenses, of all mileage, and he is obliged to travel at his own expense.

It is stated that "his duty in Dublin appears to be confined to the examination and control of the general and cross-road way-bills, which might, it would seem, be as effectually performed by a clerk in the secretary's office, who might also superintend and report upon the state of the mail-coaches on their arrival and dispatch?"—I would not myself recommend that; the English practice is, that the riding surveyors in their districts should have the care of all the cross-road way-bills.

How is the care of the arms now provided for?—By a fixed salary to the armourer; he is obliged to provide every thing for 100*l.* a year, the ammunition and all, and he gives daily attendance. There was a supply of arms got a few years ago, and he is obliged to keep them in repair; but formerly each guard was allowed a certain sum for providing his own ammunition, and the consequence was, he did not provide any; now they are always ready for them, and ammunition provided. We have two bell blunderbusses carrying five balls, two double barrelled guns, and four pistols and swords, to each mail.

There is a recommendation that the particulars of all incidents should be laid before the Treasury quarterly?—There is a statement every week of the gross amount, but it is not the practice to send them in detail; but I see no objection to sending them in detail.

There is an observation on the office of inspector of surveys?—That is abolished.

There are some observations also on the law expenses; how are they regulated?—The solicitor is paid 100*l.* a year salary, for which he is obliged to attend at the post-office whenever the postmaster-general or myself require it; all the rest of his profits depend upon his bills of costs.

The 100*l.* a year is his retaining fee?—Precisely so; but in the amended return which has been called for he has returned his emoluments as uncertain, and I have made him

some time ago, for my own satisfaction, and that of this Board, separate, under particular heads, the law expenses and his bills of costs for one year. I took a large year, 1821, for that purpose, and I think it will give a very clear view of the nature of his profits as well as the amount of them. I have classed them under the five heads of fees to counsel; travelling expenses, witnesses, and other incidental expenses; crown summonses, services, clerks of the crown's bills, searches, crier and court-keeper's expenses; the taxing of costs, reading papers, drawing drafts of cases, briefs, informations, indictments, writing letters, fair copies and engrossing; attending counsel, and assize fees, rules, motions, appearances; and expenses attending the tracing of post bills robbed out of the mails; under each of these heads is classed the amount which has been paid to him. I think the two last columns appear to comprise in a great measure his profits.

At what is the whole stated?—The four bills come to about 2,100*l*.

Are those accounts for one year?—Yes.

What is the principal duty he has to perform for the post-office?—All prosecutions, preparing contracts, &c.

Prosecutions for what?—For mail robberies; they come under the post-office. By way of example I will take the largest of those bills, which amounts to 717*l*. 7*s*. 8*d*.; there was out of that, "paid fees to counsel, 88*l*. 14*s*. 6*d*.; travelling expenses, witnesses, &c., 194*l*. 19*s*. 4*d*.; under the third head, crown summonses, &c., 28*l*. 18*s*.; reading papers and drawing drafts of cases, &c., 124*l*.; attending counsel and assizes, writing letters, &c., 285*l*. 13*s*. 4*d*.;" so that the last two columns constitute the great profit. I conceive his office is worth about 1,000*l*. per annum.

His bills, of course, are taxed?—Yes, his bills of costs, I believe, undergo two taxations; they are first taxed by the clerk of the crown, and then taxed by the solicitor of the commissioners of impost.

They are both attorneys?—Yes; there are a great many reductions made.

Is there any person in the office whose duty it is to examine the account?—He never proceeds on a service on which he is not specially directed. I think the Commissioners recommended that he should be paid in the place of every thing a fixed salary; but his engagements for the office are very uncertain; it is a very arduous office; he is frequently sent off into the country at a moment's warning. I think the only chance of success we have in such prosecutions is by his being paid for his personal attention.

EDWARD S. LEES.

### Appendix, No. 111.

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Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in and examined.

THE Commissioners were desirous of seeing you upon the subject of the book relative to the Suspension Fund, which has been furnished to them. Mr. Burrowes has been before them, and he appears to have no cognizance of the sums of money paid, further than recording them. Mr. Thomas Lees appears to be the principal party managing it?—Yes; it has always been left in the hands of the chief clerk in the secretary's office.

The balances are left in his hands?—Yes.

As he is absent, can you state in what manner those accounts are controlled; whether they are ever audited, for what amount orders are issued by the secretary, and what is the sum which requires an order from the postmaster-general?—Yes; with respect to the authority for the sum, there is no particular sum at all, unless the case is pressing, such as a funeral of an individual, a mail guard, or something of that kind; it has been usual for the postmasters-general to authorize the grants themselves, (some of them are annual grants,) according to the state of the fund at the moment; and other expenses have been taken out at different times.

Orders are granted by yourself?—Yes.

Are any by Mr. Thomas Lees?—No; I do not think he has done that unless he has been acting as secretary.

There appears to be an order issued by yourself for a sum of 20*l*., payable to a person of the name of Middleton, in the year 1820?—I believe Middleton was an officer in the sorting office, and having been for a very long period confined by fever, he was fined more than his salary, and he received a donation from the fund, by order of the postmasters-general.

Is there any regulation in the office requiring that for sums above a certain amount there should be orders of the postmasters-general?—No, there is not; the sums put into it under the present regulations are merely transfers to repay officers doing duty during the absence of others; the sums may appear to be large, though being paid out of the salaries; on the morning of the 5th there is paid probably the very same day nineteen twentieths of that amount to the officers of the inland office for doing duty as substitutes; except in the case of fines, those sums paid in from the inland office should never belong to it at all; they are

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signed by me on the day previous to the quarter day, for the receiver-general to hand over to that fund; it was more for the convenience of the officers who are paid those respective sums that I charged that fund with it, for the officers were not regularly paid their little paltry allowances, and this mode was established in order to ensure the payments to them on the days on which they were due.

The accounts in the book furnished to the Commissioners are so involved and confused that it is impossible to explain them without further information; there appear to be large sums of money paid back to mail-coach contractors without apparently any such sums of money having been received from them; there cannot be any cases in which there have been those payments to them, without the money having been paid by them, can there?—Of course not; probably they may be fines that had been imposed upon them years before.

It is impossible for the Commissioners to form any judgment on an account so made up; they cannot ascertain whether there is any thing in hand, and whether more may not have been paid in the disbursement side than is stated to have been received?—Of course.

By whose orders are those sums issued?—By the orders of the postmasters-general themselves.

Are they taken to the receiver-general?—No.

Do you periodically audit that account?—Never; I never look at it.

It being put down on one side of the account that so much has been paid to a mail-coach contractor as a rebate, how are the Commissioners to find out when the original fine has been paid?—The vouchers must show that.

Have you ever looked at the account?—I never have in my life.

Does it appear to you that that is the way to conduct a public account?—I do not regard that as a public account by any means.

What account do you call it?—It always went by the name of the Suspension Fund.

Is it not an account relating to individuals employed by the public?—So far it is, but I do not call it a public account, for I do not consider the money as public money.

A penalty being levied in the customs, a part goes to the King and part to the informer. These are fines taken from mail-coach contractors; for whose benefit are they paid; are they not paid for the benefit of the public?—No; it is a mulct from the individuals, as a minor punishment to any thing more severe.

Do you happen to know what is done by the post-office in England, and by other departments?—I believe it is conducted in the same way in the post-office in London.

Do you know that it is used for the purpose of superannuating old officers?—No, I do not.

Here are payments to old officers?—Yes; some of them are paid certain sums.

There is an entry, "Paid to the Derry Contractor, 20*l.*," but no sum appears on the opposite side of the account, nor does it appear on what account this rebate was made?—It must have been a return of a fine imposed.

In the first page there is a charge for an entertainment, 3*l.* 17*s.* 2*d.* on the 24th of August in the year 1814; can you explain that?—That was upon the laying the first stone of the post-office.

Was that by order of the postmasters-general?—No; that I ordered myself, for their lordships were not pleased to make an order for it.

What constitutes the largest portion of the suspension fund; is it the payments of officers deriving salaries from the post-office?—That has been public money; but the moment it comes into that fund I do not consider it public money.

To whom do you consider the chief clerk responsible in respect of that account?—To the postmasters-general.

Why do you consider him responsible to the postmasters-general if it is not a public account?—Because the postmasters-general have been pleased to commit the account to him.

Would you permit the chief clerk, if he was leaving the department, to quit the office without auditing that account?—If he was retiring from the department it should be looked into, no doubt.

How can the correctness of the ultimate balance be ascertained without going through the whole account in that case?—It has always been kept by the first clerk; my brother has kept it ever since he has been in that office, and can no doubt explain any thing which is desired on the subject of it.

Does he derive any advantage from it?—He does not; according to the old regulations of the office he would be entitled to a remuneration, but I have advised him not to take it, and he has not taken it.

It is a gratuitous trouble taken by your brother?—Yes.

There is a certain balance in his hands?—Yes; for that he is accountable.

But he is accountable at the end of five or five and twenty years?—Yes; or five and fifty.

Has it never struck you that it would be very desirable to have that account audited quarterly, as all other accounts are?—There would be no difficulty in that, certainly.

It arises from sources which must be looked at with considerable jealousy in the office, from fines and suspensions, and so on. Who originated the fund?—I do not know that.

Did the postmasters-general?—I presume so, originally; Lord Rosse was the last who looked

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looked at it; he looked at it in the year 1816, and he looked at it a very short time ago; and he has it before him at this moment.

It is considered partly, from some of the disbursements, a charitable fund?—Yes.

There is a charge for a band of music, which the Commissioners have been told was probably attending the Duke Michel?—On every procession of mail-coaches there is always a charge for the band.

Was there any charge for attending the Grand Duke Michel?—There was a procession of mail-coaches for his Royal Highness.

There are sums paid for secret-service money; what is the nature of that secret service?—Will you mention the particulars of any of them.

In 1816, on the 31st of January, “paid Secret-service Money to John Pollock esquire, 20*l.* ;” what was the occasion of that?—It was about information respecting a mail robbery; he was a confidential person who got the information, and it was paid to him; that ought to be returned from the post-office revenue to the fund.

Does not that very point respecting the payment of Mr. Pollock, which ought to be from the general post-office revenue, and which has taken place seven years ago, prove at once the necessity of settling this account quarterly, so as to see that that amount was returned from the revenue?—We should call upon the revenue for the repayment of that sum, no doubt.

Mr. Burrowes receives out of the revenue a per-centage for the portion of fines arising in the inland office; does not that render it a public account?—What I would do would be to abolish it *in toto*, hand over the fines to the public account, and have all the payments made out of the public account. I suppose this must have been a very small fund in the first instance.

You do not recollect when it arose?—No; it has been many years; it probably was not above 20*l.* a year at first, and existed long before I was born.

Until the charge for managing it has arisen to seventy or eighty pounds?—Yes; I should recommend the abolition of it altogether. I am sure my brother would be much obliged to you for recommending its abolition.

The vouchers for that account are probably very extensive?—Yes; I dare say there is a press full of them. I would not take the charge of that book for the value of it; it is an invidious sort of account to have the management of.

Is it not an account which, above all others, ought to be most publicly checked and settled, on account of the way in which it arises; the secretary imposes a fine, which the Commissioners take for granted is imposed for very good reason; but suppose such a fine to be imposed in haste and afterwards to be rebated, the man who keeps the account gets a per-centage of five per cent?—Yes.

Suppose the secretary be inclined to put money into the hands of the clerk who manages that fund, he may levy in the first instance enormous fines upon the officers, which would give a large per-centage to the clerk who managed them, the loss to the individual would be nothing at all, for if it is in the inland office, the public pays the per-centage; so that it would be a means of putting money into the hands of the clerk who manages the fund, without the individual upon whom the fine is levied suffering at all by it?—I think the best way would be to abolish it at once, and transfer the money in hand to the public account.

This before the Commissioners is a transcript of the book Mr. Thomas Lees keeps?—Yes, it is.

Do you suppose the original book kept is in the brief way stated here, “Amount of Fees received from the officers of the Inland Office, the Mail-coach Contractors, and the Deputy-Postmasters”?—No; that is the reason I suggested a reference to the vouchers.

Would it not appear a very extraordinary account, if, upon calculating on the credit side all the sums of money that have ever been paid by mail-coach contractors, and calculating on the debit side all which has been subsequently allowed them in the way of rebates, the sums they shall have been repaid appear to exceed the sums they have actually paid?—Most certainly; if, on examination of the account from its commencement, it should appear that such sum had never been at any period levied.

That appears on the first view to be the result of this book; this account begins on the 18th of June 1814, beginning with a balance of 532*l.*; what necessity can there have been for such a balance being left in the hands of the chief clerk, when it is considered that the receiver-general and other officers of the establishment are not allowed to have any balance?—There is no necessity whatever for such balance.

As the payments are made to the officers who attend for the absent persons, the stoppages from the salaries of the persons who are absent always come in to pay those who attend for them, so that there can be no necessity for a balance remaining in hand?—No; there is no necessity for any remaining.

Here is a floating balance of upwards of 500*l.*, and sometimes amounting to much more, in the hands of an officer whose accounts are never audited, and who can have no necessity for having that balance in his hands; it appears, that on a balance being struck, there is a balance in one instance of 911*l.*, but that at some periods, in the course of the year, it has amounted to much more?—There can be no necessity for its remaining in any one’s hands, and my brother will be much obliged to you for taking it out of his hands.

If a fine is inflicted in the gross of 1,000*l.*, the per-centage upon that to Mr. Burrowes would be 50*l.*; if that fine is subsequently rebated to 25*l.* there is a decided loss?—Yes. I should at once state that there is no occasion for any such fund to exist in any one’s

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hands; it has crept from a trifle into a matter of great importance, in point of amount; I believe he considers it a very irksome thing to have it in his hands, and he would be delighted with its being put an end to, and the balance paid over to Mr. Swan; there never should be any money of the kind vested in any individual's hands; if there was a necessity for any part of it remaining it need not be more than 50*l.*; it may happen that neither of the postmasters being present there may be a sum of 10*l.* or 20*l.* called for on an occasion. I should recommend the entire abolition of it, and immediately too, not because I have any suspicion of its being misconducted, but on principle.

In the year 1816, it appears, on advertising to the book, that there is not a single shilling paid from January the 6th down to October, for monies received from mail-coach contractors, and then in the disbursement side, which is not the first by several, there is a payment of 119*l.* 11*s.* 9*d.* entered to the Derry contractor?—There was a payment made to the Derry contractor when we renewed his contract. In 1808 the Belfast mail-coach ceased to run, and he undertook to convey all the mails as far as Drogheda; when we were making his present contract with him, he represented, as a great grievance, that he had received no recompence for this duty, and Lord Rosse consented that he should receive at the same rate of mileage that would have been paid by the Belfast coach; and in place of its being charged the public, it was charged to that fund.

Does not that open a door to irregular, improper, and unjustifiable payments; for if the postmasters-general had ordered that payment out of the incidents, that payment would have come under the notice of the public accountants and auditors, but being paid out of that fund it never came under their notice at all?—I should think the imprest office when they examined our accounts called for that fund too, and had that fund regularly examined; on recollection, I am sure that they made observations somewhat similar to those now made.

In what year?—1817 and 1818; I think the Commissioners of Imprest had a view, but not to the full extent, similar to that now stated, that it was a public account.

You are not certain that they had it under their view?—I am not; but I think it was by them that that view was taken of it. My impression is, that they did not examine it.

In that year there was a payment made to the Derry contractors of 244*l.* without any payment being made by them?—There were very large sums deducted from the contractors by Lord Clancarty in the years 1807 and 1808; there was such a system laid down at that time, that no matter what the cause, whether a good or bad cause, the contractors were fined a shilling for every minute delay to the extreme point, and back again, no matter whether by breaking down or in what way, and it produced an immense sum to that fund; then occasionally for years afterwards they came and got parts of those sums repaid.

Is not that an additional proof of the excessive viciousness of the principles on which this fund has been conducted, that there should be fines levied some years ago, and no examination of the transaction so as to ascertain whether there were just grounds for inflicting them, and thus, after the time prescribed by the statute of limitations had expired, part of those fines should be remitted?—I only feel it proper to state the truth.

Can you account for the payment to the Derry contractor for the carrying the mails to Drogheda not being charged to incidents?—I think it was given to him as a portion of the very fines I have alluded to in 1807 and 1808.

It was a portion of the fines given back to him for doing another duty?—Yes, that was made a ground; they were the more induced to grant it to him.

In the year 1817 there is a sum paid to the solicitor, for specific purposes, of 90*l.*?—I know there was one sum paid to him which ought to be paid back; it was paid for very important matters connected with the prosecution of Mr. Roger O'Connor.

Are you still of opinion that this is only a private account, and not a public account?—I must advert to the original explanation I gave. I conceive it so far a public account, as that the money of which it is formed was public money, but that when it is put to that account it is not public money; but with a view to the origin of the money itself there is no doubt it is a public fund, because it has been public money; but in the management of it it has never been considered a public account, though always liable to examination by the postmasters-general, or any persons examining the post-office accounts.

Do you think that if it was not a public account either the postmasters-general or yourself, as secretary, could have any right to take cognizance of it?—I think we should have a right to take cognizance of it as long as the person keeping it is in the post-office. If the postmasters-general found any incorrectness in the officer who takes upon himself the charge of that account, they would no doubt visit it upon the officer. I believe it is managed precisely in the same way as the same fund is in the post-office in England.

If you were, instead of fining the officers, to suspend them, you must pay others for doing their duty out of it?—Yes; it has always been called the Suspension Fund, but I agree it would be desirable that it should in every way be considered a public account.

There is a payment to Mrs. Boxwell; is that an annuity?—Yes; we discovered that she had a pension; her husband was a high officer in the post-office.

Here is an entry, "Amount received from treasurer, being fines from officers, including dead-letter office and mail-coach contractors, for quarter ended 5th January 1819, 206*l.*;" it is impossible to distinguish from this entry what arises from each source?—That must appear from the vouchers.

Is the payment to the contractors by the warrant or order of the postmasters-general?—Mostly by order of the postmasters-general; I send down the application to either of them; it is generally to Lord Rosse, and he sends back the paper. I put the question, Does his

lordship approve of so much being paid out of the suspension fund, and he says, Yes, or No.

And there is no warrant for that, and it does not appear in the post-office accounts?—No, never.

Are you aware of a payment having been ever received for fines against the Gas Light Company of 47*l.* in January 1821, which has been carried into that account?—I do not remember it.

Can you form any estimate of the general amount of profit or salary which Mr. Burrowes receives from you for the transaction of your business as clerk of the Leinster road?—I think for him and all the clerks it is 40*l.* odd per quarter.

Is it fixed, or does it vary according to the amount of the circulation of newspapers?—It is fixed. I do not remember any variations these five or six years.

You are allowed a clerk; does he get a permanent salary?—If the account allows of its being reduced, it is reduced.

What are you allowed for a clerk?—There is no fixed allowance; whatever the amount of the management may require; it is decreasing.

Do you certify that such have been the expenses of the management?—Yes; every quarter he swears to it as acting.

You will always want one clerk?—Yes; there are three.

Do not you give Mr. Burrowes, as first clerk, a salary?—There was a fixed sum which the establishment required, and when the establishment was reduced so much was taken off.

Do not you know what you pay Mr. Burrowes as your clerk?—That depends on what the expenses are, for I think it has not changed these last four or five years; the last quarter it was 45*l.*

Do you give him so much as salary?—For managing the whole concern; if he is enabled to reduce the whole expense, I reduce the amount to him, and have done so.

If the business is considerable he may want two or three clerks?—Just so.

But he himself must be there always?—Yes.

What do you give him for his whole time and attendance?—It is all mixed up together; there is 45*l.* a quarter; out of that he pays the persons who fold up and direct the newspapers.

The profit arising from the roads is now carried to the account of the public?—Yes.

The public allow 45*l.* a quarter for the expenses of management?—Just so.

If there are very few papers sent on a certain road it is no loss to the clerk, because that is fixed, and the establishment will be smaller; so that it is the interest of Mr. Burrowes, not that it is to be supposed he will avail himself of it, that there should be very few papers sent; but it is the interest of the public, who pay a compensation to the clerk of the road, that the circulation should be considerable?—Very true.

So that Mr. Burrowes's interest is directly opposite to the interest of the public with respect to the amount of circulation?—So far as the trouble of conducting it is concerned.

How many assistants does Mr. Burrowes employ?—I cannot say.

You leave it entirely to him?—Entirely; and he makes his affidavit once a quarter.

The expenses are a fixed sum?—45*l.* a quarter.

Then he swears to the circulation of the newspapers, not the expenses of management?—He swears generally to the whole.

Is the 45*l.* a quarter the whole which is allowed to you?—Yes.

And that is transferred to Mr. Burrowes, who manages it with more or less people; but all he undertakes is to manage it completely for that sum?—Yes.

You transfer your allowance to Mr. Burrowes?—Yes.

It makes no difference to you whether the circulation is greater or smaller?—No; I object to the principle of paying the secretary in such a mode; it is very objectionable in my mind.

It has been stated, that where a clerk in the inland office has been meritorious, and has deserved well for his attention and zeal, one mode of remunerating him for his good conduct is by sending him on a survey; is that the fact?—Indeed I do not know that it is solely for that reason; if an officer has been a very good officer, that is one reason for his being employed when we want an officer to do surveyor's duty.

Are you to be understood that officers are sent from the secretary's office or the inland office on the duty of surveyors, wholly and solely from its being thought that they are wanted to be so employed?—Most certainly.

And not with a view to remunerating them for good conduct elsewhere?—Certainly not; we have occasionally sent officers who have done extra duty and have not been paid for it at all; for instance, in my own office, on a sudden press of business, where a surveyor was not at leisure, another has been sent.

But that only where a surveyor was not at hand?—Certainly; there never ought to be without that.

Has that never been the case when a surveyor was at leisure?—Indeed I cannot fix on an instance where it has been intentionally; there have been, I suppose, half a dozen different people sent to different parts of Ireland; perhaps a dozen in the course of ten years.

A question has been put to Mr. Burrowes whether, as minute clerk, it is any part of his duty to record the directions sent to the solicitor for prosecutions?—No, I do not think it is.

When a prosecution is directed, no minute is made of it?—No; it goes in a letter; it is usually

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usually referred to Mr. Crofton, our conducting counsel, and he decides upon the propriety of the prosecution; then upon his report a prosecution is ordered.

His report you consider as the ground-work?—I do not suppose I ever differed in opinion three times in my life with him, that I did not order a prosecution where it was considered proper by him.

Of course his answer is recorded somewhere?—His answer ought to be recorded on the case itself.

That is supposing it to be proceeded on?—Yes; the solicitor usually makes a statement of the case, and that on consultation with Mr. Crofton is either decided to be proceeded on or withdrawn.

In what part of the records or minutes of your office does it appear that this direction has taken place?—Only on the case; if there is an instance of a mail robbery, the information comes to us from the country, that is referred to the solicitor for inquiry, and if he considers it a fit case for prosecution, we first direct it to be sent to Mr. Crofton, and if he is of opinion the prosecution ought to take place, he proceeds; it will most probably appear in the letter book.

EDWD. S. LEES.

## Appendix, No. 112.

Saturday, 25th October 1823.

No. 112.

Sir

*Edward Smith Lees.*  
25th Oct. 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in, and examined.

DO the mail-coaches in Ireland pay the full toll to which similar carriages are liable by the different Acts of Parliament?—They do

Have you ever had any means of knowing whether the stage-coaches pay the full toll to which they are liable at each gate, or whether the proprietors of them are in the habit of contracting for the tolls?—I am disposed to think that in many cases they pay less considerably than they are strictly liable to by law; there is a case even in the post-office, I remember, where even the proprietors of a mail-coach, with whom the agreement was made to pay their own tolls, paid less than by subsequent contracts the post-office was liable to pay; and there is one case where by the Toll Act itself the post-office is specially exempt.

Which Act is that?—That Act was passed in the year 1821, establishing tolls on the road from Cork to Skibbereen; the contractor was himself the principal person in obtaining the Act, and it was specially provided that the post-office should not at that time or afterwards be subject to any toll.

If the mail is carried on horseback in Ireland, does a toll attach to the horse on which it is carried?—No; nor do I believe it extends even to two-wheeled carriages.

Can you state what Act contains the exemption?—The first Act subjecting the post-office to tolls is in 1789; I think, previous to that Act, the post-office by the then existing laws was not liable to toll-duties even for mail-coaches; but on a memorial presented, I think, in that year, introduced into the Irish House of Commons by the present Lord Limerick, then Mr. Pery, a memorial from two of the mail-coach contractors, the one to Belfast, and the other to the south, the post-office was at that period for the first time made subject to pay toll-duties; that memorial, I think, stated that the contractors could not execute their engagements with the post-office from the then state of the roads; the period at which they were bound to commence their contracts was consequently postponed, and they were suffered not to be bound by their contracts until the operation of that Act put the roads in a sufficient state of repair to allow them to commence; there was a circular letter also, in addition to the measures then taken, written by the Lord Lieutenant to all the high sheriffs and foremen of grand juries in the country, calling upon them in the name of the Government to make proper exertions to put the roads into repair; that was so long ago as the year 1789.

In what way were the mails conveyed during the time that those contractors were absolved from their contracts?—On horseback and two-wheeled mail-carts from Dublin.

When was the imposition on mail-coaches made general?—At that period, in the year 1789.

You think it is confined to coaches carrying passengers, and would not apply to a two-wheeled mail-cart carrying the mails only?—Yes.

Would it apply to a two-wheeled mail-cart carrying two guards besides the driver?—I think not.

Has it ever been in contemplation to establish such carriages for the conveyance of the mails in any parts of Ireland?—I have frequently thought of it, and have suggested it even so late as the instance of the mail to Limerick; it occurred to me it would be a very good opportunity for commencing such an experiment to Limerick, especially because I thought that a two-wheeled cart might be so constructed as to give such increased expedition to the mails as to convey a mail of 94 miles much quicker than a mail-coach could have done, and from the circumstance of the distance it would have been a very desirable object; on that road too, the charge of tolls is so great, that it occurred to me, that for considerably less than



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than the combined expense the public was subject to for tolls, the mileage by that conveyance could be provided at a considerably less expense.

On roads on which stage-coaches are established, would the public sustain any material inconvenience from that mode of conveyance of the letters being established?—I think, in no case; but especially on that line I should suppose there are great facilities for a day establishment.

On the Limerick road are the tolls vested in an individual of the name of Bourne?—They are.

Is he bound to lay out on the road the amount he receives for toll?—No, I do not apprehend he is; I believe by the Act of Parliament that vested those tolls in Bourne, which was passed I believe in the year 1789, he was bound to lay out a considerable sum of money, and he was also bound under penalties to keep the surface of the road in repair, but nothing further; that Act was first for 31 years, from, I think, 1789; in 1798 it was extended to 50 years from that period; a final clause of another Act of Parliament was specially added for that purpose.

Is there any other road over which the mail-coaches travel in which the tolls are vested in an individual?—Yes; some part of the road to Limerick, and also part of the road to Cork from Dublin to Kilcullen, three mail-coaches travel as far as Kilcullen, through the Kilcullen trust, and each pays toll-duty.

In whom is the Kilcullen trust vested?—In Captain George Taylor.

Under what conditions?—I presume similar conditions in principle to those that were incorporated in the Act to Mr. Bourne.

And for a similar time?—I am not very sure; I rather think the Kilcullen Act is quite separate.

What length of road is vested in Captain Taylor?—I think, 22 miles.

Is the road kept in sufficiently good order?—I believe it is; I have heard complaints of it occasionally, but, generally speaking, I believe the road is kept in good condition.

Has Captain Taylor an interest in any of the mail-coaches?—None whatever, I believe.

Is not a large portion of the roads over which the mail-coaches travel free from toll altogether, and kept in repair by county presentments?—A very great portion; I should think very nearly half.

Have you any calculation of the number of miles of road in Ireland over which the mail-coaches travel?—I think there are about 1,450 at present.

Do you know what proportion of them are repaired by presentment, and what proportion by tolls?—I think it is about 570 toll roads, and about 870 presentment.

Would it be possible for the post-office to contract for the tolls in a manner similar to that which is practised by the proprietors of stage-coaches?—The trustees of the road would not do it; it might happen in a particular case, where the existence of the mail-coach would depend upon the amount of the tolls; in fact there is one case which has been referred to this Board, of a mail-coach from Limerick to Cork; the expense of the tolls has prevented the revival of the mail between those two cities; a proposal came in lately which offered to revive that mail, the parties being answerable for the tolls, or commuting them with the trustees; I believe, generally speaking, the stage-coaches do not pay any thing like what the mail-coaches pay in this country.

In what way do you purchase the mail-coaches?—Hitherto our principle has been to contract for the whole establishment for the conveyance of the mails, the contractors providing the coaches, horses, lights, and every thing.

What control does the post-office exercise over the coaches, with a view to see that they are of a proper construction?—It has been entirely at the option of the contractor to make his coach of whatever construction he pleased, he being bound to convey no more than a certain number of passengers; it has been a subject of anxiety with the postmasters-general for several years past, to enforce at least similarity of construction and uniformity of principle, and for that purpose we have advertised at different times in the public prints for contracts for the supply of mail-coaches; after failing in that, we found a builder in England, in Birmingham, who has built several mail-coaches for us on one plan, and has provided contractors in different parts of the country with coaches upon that principle, and at a very moderate expense; more recently still, and within a short time, a proposal has come in to us from two of our own contractors, to supply the whole kingdom with mail-coaches on any principle the postmasters shall deem most expedient; and on a consultation with the post-office of England as to the terms of that proposal, we have ascertained that it is less than is usually paid in England, and is even less by the difference of currency than the post-office in London pays for mail-coaches.

Are accidents frequent from breakage?—I do not know that they are from breakage; but lately we have had some very unpleasant upsets; one where a gentleman was killed, which I understand was entirely owing to the improper projection of a turnpike-gate upon the road; but generally speaking, I think the accidents are much fewer in this country than they are in England; the roads are wider here, and there are very few ditches left unfilled.

Are there not two mail-coaches which run to Cork?—There are.

And there are also two to Belfast?—There are.

What number of years has the contract for the second mail to Cork still to run?—I think eight, from January next.

Have any proposals been lately made to those contractors to compound for their contract?—I have had a conversation very lately with one of them upon the subject.

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Are they willing on any terms to abandon it?—Nothing has yet become at all tangible, nor do I think it would be wise to make any direct proposal to them, for they might conceive we were anxious; but I think, it is not impossible, if it is managed with caution, to dispose them. I do not think myself the intercourse with Cork is any thing like what it was at the period of that second coach being established.

Is it possible there can be any necessity for two mail-coaches to Cork?—Not by any means at present.

Does the alteration which has taken place in the arrival of the mails from England affect the question?—Totally; it completely reverses the case; at that period scarcely a mail went by the usual mail-coach, and now almost every mail. The post-office besides obtained great increase of postage by this coach on the southern correspondence coming via Dublin.

When steam-packets are established for the conveyance of the mails from Milford to Waterford, will the south of England correspondence with Cork pass in that direction, or will it come by Holyhead and Dublin?—I think it will depend very much on the obtaining a night mail-coach from Waterford to Cork, and that I think is at present out of the question.

On what account?—On account of the state of the country; no person will travel by night; we must either send the mails by night in some other manner, or the increased expedition expected by the steam-packets at the Waterford station will be lost. I have great doubts whether that establishment will ever do; it will be at an enormous expense; I am sure that station will not be maintained under 20,000*l.* a year.

Is there an establishment of sailing packets between Milford and Waterford now?—There is; there are seven packets.

Are they charged on the post-office?—Yes, and very heavily. I think the salaries of those captains are, to each, 700*l.* a year, for which they maintain all their own establishment.

Is that a charge on the Irish establishment?—No, on the English.

What number of persons have been employed by the post-office in executing the surveys of roads, which the postmasters-general are authorized to direct, under the power of the Acts of 45th and 46th of the late King?—One principal engineer, with six engineers under him.

In what way are those persons remunerated for their labour?—So much per mile for survey, at the rate of four guineas a mile, including the expense of the surveys; when attending grand juries they are paid, I think, a guinea a day.

Have they any salary?—No; none but the principal engineer had a salary, which has ceased since 1822.

In what way were they paid for the estimates they made?—Every thing is included in the four guineas a mile, with the exception of their attendance on grand juries.

Is the whole of the charge for those surveys carried to the account of the post-office incidents?—Yes, they have been.

And paid out of the post-office revenue?—Yes.

Can you state what the total amount of the different charges which have been paid for that service have been?—The surveys and re-surveys have amounted to 40,410*l.* 13*s.* 5*d.*; the salary to the engineer, 9,100*l.*, that was at 500 guineas a year.

In what way were the charges for the surveys examined and checked?—All examined and certified by the principal engineer, Major Taylor, to whom the entire direction of the management of the roads was left; after his examination and certificate, all the accounts underwent the usual examination of the chief officers of the post-office, as to their numerical correctness.

Had the imprest commissioners any charge over them?—Yes, they all underwent their examination.

When was the last survey or re-survey directed to be made?—I do not remember any one particular at this moment, since the year 1818; if any have been made it was very trifling.

Have all the direct mail-coach roads from Dublin been surveyed and planned?—They have.

What superintendence have the engineers had in the execution of the work upon those roads, any, or none?—Very little; I should think there have been cases where the engineer himself has been appointed by the grand jury, the contractor for the making the road.

Is it optional with the grand jury whether they appoint the engineer or not?—Perfectly.

In what manner is the money which is furnished from the consolidated fund for the construction of roads, presented under the authority of those Acts, drawn for and issued by the direction of the postmasters-general?—The postmasters-general have no concern with either applying for the money to the Treasury or the expenditure of it; the application is made on the part of the county to the Commissioners of the Treasury, and that application should be accompanied by a certificate, that all demands or damages to individuals have been presented for by the county, and paid, before the Treasury are authorized to make the advance; the advance is made upon that application to the treasurer of the county, and beyond that I am not aware that the Government or the postmasters-general have any control, or have even been in the habit of making any inquiry.

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What description of damages to individuals do you mean?—Damages for the loss of ground surrendered.

Must the county have paid those damages before the money can be applied for or issued?—They must, or the parties express their consent to surrender the property without payment, which often happens of course.

Is the money issued before the work is commenced?—Certainly, not the entire, because the law authorizes the treasury to pay it by instalments, six equal instalments, until the work is completed, and the law obliges the county to present at each ensuing assizes a portion of the six years; the Treasury may advance it all at once, or as the county makes the application.

If in any case there has been a mistake in the estimate, and it has been found to fall short of the real expense of constructing a road, in what way is the deficiency supplied?—By a re-assessment; there have been several instances where a county has re-presented beyond the estimate furnished by the post-office; but I am not prepared to say that the post-office estimate was really insufficient, if it had been judiciously expended.

In those cases has an additional sum of money been levied upon the county or issued out of the consolidated fund?—Both issued by the consolidated fund, and subsequently levied upon the county.

But in the first instance issued from the consolidated fund, in the same manner as if it had been originally certified and estimated for?—Yes.

What security is provided by the Acts that the roads shall be laid out strictly according to the survey, and constructed according to the plan laid down by the engineer?—No security whatever; the county may dispose of the money in whatever way they think proper.

In point of fact do you believe that in every instance the roads have been laid out according to the plan, and the road constructed in the manner recommended?—I am quite sure they have not.

In many instances?—In several.

What reason have you for knowing that?—From the observations made to me by several of our own engineers; from different representations having been made to Government, where additional advances were called for beyond what the post-office stated to be necessary; from the result of different investigations, which at the instance of Government were made; those investigations were made by Sir Charles Coote.

Do you remember by what engineer the road from Cork to Skibbereen was surveyed?—I think, by the late Mr. Larkin.

Is there any living engineer who has cognizance of it?—Yes, Sir Charles Coote was selected; and Sir Charles Coote and Major Taylor were ordered to make a joint re-survey and report, which was made to the Lord Lieutenant.

In the cases where deviations have been made from the line laid down by the engineer has there been any apparent or assignable reason for making them?—Not that I am aware of; it is entirely optional with the county, and the interests in the county who have the direction of it.

Have those deviations gone so far as to produce an improvement on a road on which ultimately the mail did not travel?—No, I am not aware of that.

Have they in any instance failed, and produced an imperfect road?—I am not aware of that; my information upon that point is entirely from the casual observations the engineers have made to me, more in conversation than any other way.

It appears that the original estimate for the roads for the county of Antrim, amounted to 82,384*l.*, and the amount presented only to 10,146*l.*; is it possible that the whole extent of the plans submitted by the post-office engineers to the grand juries of that county can have been carried into execution?—No, a very important part of that survey has not been executed at all, on the road from Belfast to Londonderry, through the county of Antrim; the county of Antrim rejected it; Lord O'Neill has been very anxious about it himself, but he has not been able to carry it.

If the post-office surveyed and planned a road from Dublin to the county of Antrim, which would of course pass through various counties, and if the grand jury of one county chose to make presentments, and to execute the road as planned and laid out through that county, and in a neighbouring county the grand jury were to pursue the contrary course, and to refuse to present for the money, or to execute the road, in what way would the post-office proceed; would they withhold the money, or make a part and leave the other incomplete?—Each county would present its own share, and the road would be made through that county which presents; but the very question now put, I am sorry to say, will apply to several counties, where the great objects of the Act have been defeated by some counties presenting the whole and others not, or even the same counties presenting part and refusing the remainder through that county.

In what lines of road has this happened?—There is one which strikes me at this moment for the mails to Waterford passing through the counties of Wicklow, Carlow, and Wexford, the two extreme points of the road have been presented for, and the centre has remained unprovided for; so that the county of Wicklow has been at an enormous expense, I think 20,000*l.*, for that portion of the line, uselessly to this moment.

Is there any power in the Act to compel a county to execute a road under such circumstances?—None. In the first Act of Parliament, the 45th of the King, though it was not compulsory upon the county to present, they were prohibited until they did present that road, from presenting any other line of road the expense of which should exceed that planned

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planned by the post-office; that was repealed in the succeeding year by the administration who came in. The repealing Act was brought in by Sir John Newport.

It appears that the total amount in the original estimates is 1,934,732*l.* of which 559,560*l.* only have been hitherto expended; is it at present in the power of the grand juries to present for the difference; and is it possible that so large an advance from the consolidated fund should be called for as may amount to a million and a half?—It is possible.

Is it within your knowledge that any steps are taking by the counties to proceed to execute any of those roads?—Not of late; I am not aware of any.

Then the remainder of the surveys are at present useless?—Yes, at present they are; the whole plan has been suspended for the last eighteen months from finding the expense so heavy upon our own funds, and finding the difficulties we had to encounter from the obstinacy of the grand juries, our surveys became so much waste paper.

Did not the Act provide for the survey of all roads along which mails travelled?—Yes.

Was that applied to those only which the coaches travelled, or those where the horses travelled with mails?—It was general.

Could there be any object in improving at the public expense the roads over which the horse-mails only travel?—I think it would be very improvident.

Has not the Act provided that the roads should be 45 feet wide, and that there should be only 1 foot rise in 35 surface?—Yes.

Has not that occasioned a very expensive mode of operation?—It has very much increased the expense, and by the increase of expense very probably deterred grand juries from presenting to the extent they otherwise would have done.

In what manner has the money been accounted for which has been advanced from the consolidated fund?—The post-office has no knowledge at all of that; it is left entirely to the will and disposal of the grand juries, nor do I know any instance, except those that I allude to, where the Government have made any inquiry at all upon the subject; they possess no knowledge of it; the money is advanced without interest, but the county may either expend it, or may not expend it, as they think proper; or they may expend it in any manner they think proper; even the most important part of the survey is not provided for, which is the foundation, that will be known under the name of 'lock-spitting the road,' which is marking it out; that should be always done by the engineer himself, it should be left marked through the country, that every peasant and the farmers should see what the line proposed is, and be aware if there is any deviation afterwards.

Have you any means of knowing what portion of the money has been levied, and what portion of it remains due?—No, I have not.

Have you any means of knowing from what counties any remains due?—No; the post-office have no means of knowing that.

What provision is made for keeping roads in repair that have been constructed by those means?—None whatever; none beyond the ordinary resources of the Presentment Acts of the country.

Has the post-office any means of calling on the counties to present the roads along which the mails travel for the maintenance of them?—No, no power at all.

In point of fact, do they go very much out of repair?—Certainly.

So as to occasion a difficulty and delay in the travelling of the mail-coaches?—Probably not so much the delaying them in their present rate of travelling as in the preventing our accelerating them; we should have the means of accelerating the mail to Cork an hour, but the contractor says he cannot do it in the present state of the road.

In what counties does that occur?—I think Carlow and Kilkenny are the principal; a part of that turnpike.

Is there any officer called a supervisor of roads recognized by the Irish Road Laws?—None; there is an Act of Parliament under which the counties appoint an officer; I think he is called a supervisor, and there is a certain expense allowed at the discretion of that supervisor; but I do not apprehend it is generally acted upon throughout the country; it is in some cases, and with success.

Is there any power of enforcing the employment of such an officer on the mail-coach roads?—No, it is not compulsory; the grand jury may appoint him if they think fit; but where I know it to be practically good, is in the instances where the mail-coach contractor has been made the supervisor by the counties, and there it answers extremely well; the road is well repaired, and at the moderate expense which the law allows.

What is the expense which the law allows?—I believe it is not more than a shilling a perch.

What is the length of an Irish perch?—Twenty-one feet.

Upon the whole, are the roads which are maintained by presentment in better or in worse condition than those which are maintained by tolls?—Generally speaking, through the country the toll-roads are better repaired, but some of them are a great deal worse than the others.

Do the counties ever present for any roads on which there is a toll?—No; they are to be supported by the tolls.

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## Appendix, No. 113.

Friday, 31st October 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in and examined.

THERE is an officer in the department of the name of Kellett; can you call to mind the period at which he was appointed?—He was appointed in the summer of 1821.

Can you remember at whose recommendation he was appointed?—I think he had been on Lord O'Neill's books for some time under recommendation to his lordship; his father was a considerable banker in the south of Ireland, and had experienced considerable misfortunes; his rank in life is that of a baronet; and I think Lord O'Neill spoke to me respecting him.

Who actually made the appointment; was he put upon the list by yourself?—No, not by any means; he was appointed by Lord Rosse.

Will you state in what manner his actual appointment to the situation he now holds took place?—I was myself at the time attending a Committee of the House of Commons; it was in June 1821, and my brother of course was acting, and he received instructions in a letter from Lord Rosse to appoint Mr. Kellett in the room of Mr. Henry Parsons, who was in that office.

What office was that?—He had two offices; in the dead-letter office, and also in the inland office.

Does he retain his situation in the inland office?—He does.

Did he in June 1821 give up his situation in the dead-letter office?—He did.

And Kellett was appointed to the vacancy occasioned by his resignation or removal?—He was.

Is the letter written by Lord Rosse directing the appointment of Kellett in existence?—It is.

Have any circumstances at any time come to your knowledge respecting that appointment, which have at all attracted your attention?—Yes, there have, but very lately; I always had conceived that he had been appointed really by Lord O'Neill.

Were not you aware at the time that he had been appointed by Lord Rosse?—No; I was not aware of his having been appointed by Lord Rosse until the last vacancy happened in my own office; that was in the course of the last spring, when Mr. Lyster was appointed to the alphabet; there was a vacancy in my own office, and I inquired of the minute-clerk, Mr. Burrows, whose turn it was to appoint, and he told me that it was Lord O'Neill's turn, for that Lord Rosse had appointed to the last vacancy, and it was then that I found that Kellett was not appointed by Lord O'Neill, but by Lord Rosse.

Did that excite your surprize?—No, indeed, it did not at that time; for I was myself extremely anxious to get young Mr. Kellett into the post-office, from the circumstance of his father's misfortunes; and I remember perfectly well that I would have been very glad if I could have got him into my own office, from his future rank in life, as he must arrive at the rank of a baronet; from what I have seen of him, I should have been very glad to have got him into my own office when he was qualified; it struck me that Lord Rosse probably had the same feelings.

Have you had any opportunity of knowing who recommended Mr. Kellett to the attention of Lord Rosse?—Never, till very lately.

Have the goodness to state what you know upon the subject?—I heard it mentioned, and for the first time within these few days, about ten days ago, that Mr. Kellett did not get his office in a proper manner. Upon hearing it, I sent for a gentleman of considerable confidence in the office, Mr. Harrison, who is the remittance clerk, and also is in the inland office, and asked him whether he had ever heard any report of Mr. Kellett having so got into the office, and he said he had. I asked him how he had known of it, and how long: he said he had heard it reported through the office, but he did not know it at all as a fact. I begged of him to inquire further into it if he could, and let me know the circumstances. This was a week ago yesterday, I think.

Have you been since able to ascertain what the circumstances were?—Upon that I sent for Mr. Kellett himself, and I asked him the question directly, whether he had ever given any money to any person to get him into the post-office, or whether he knew of any money being given to any body, or had reason to suspect it, and he solemnly assured me that he never did, that he never knew of it, and that he never even heard of it, except as a report through the post-office; I was satisfied with that, and took no further notice of it.

Are you of opinion, in consequence of that assurance, that no money was given for his appointment; or do you only believe that money was given, and he not privy to it?—From what I have since heard, I am afraid that money was given.

Have you reason to know the individual to whom the money was given?—Yes; it was given to the gentleman whose office was vacated.

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To the gentleman whose retirement from the dead-letter office occasioned the appointment to which Kellett was appointed?—Yes, so I understand.

Are you acquainted with any other circumstances connected with the transaction?—I have no personal knowledge of any part of it; I have heard all the circumstances of it within these three days.

As far as you are acquainted with them, will you have the goodness to state them?—I understand that Mr. Parsons applied to several people before he retired, and had mentioned the necessity he was under of leaving one of his offices, and that if he could get 200*l.* for it he would resign it in favour of any one; that he could get no person in the post office to do it, and that he applied elsewhere; he went to Captain Johnston, and it was through that quarter he was brought into communication with Sir Richard Kellett.

Have you reason to think it was in the first instance an application of Mr. Parsons to find a purchaser for the office, or that there was in the first instance an application made to him?—It is very likely the application might be made to himself; but my information is, that the application proceeded from Mr. Parsons.

In point of fact you believe he received the money he sought for, the 200*l.*, and that in consequence of that he did succeed in prevailing upon the postmaster-general, Lord Rosse, to make the appointment of Kellett?—I do suppose that he must have given up his office whether he got any thing for it or not, for I do not think it possible that the postmasters-general could have suffered him to retain those situations.

The question is, whether you believe that he exerted his influence to obtain the appointment of Kellett in consequence of the valuable consideration he received? Have you any doubt that that appointment took place in consequence of a valuable consideration received by Mr. Parsons?—I have no doubt at all that Mr. Parsons gave up his office in consequence of it; it would be hard to say that he used his influence with Lord Rosse, but I have no doubt whatever that he gave up the office in consequence of it; I did hear that he went to Lord Rosse, having first applied to Mr. Johnston.

You never heard Lord Rosse say, that it was in consequence of Mr. Parsons's recommendation that he made the appointment of Kellett?—No, never.

Was Mr. Kellett on the list of extra probationers before this appointment?—No, I do not think he was.

He was not in the post-office in any way?—No, I think not.

Was he put over the heads of the other probationers?—It is in another department, where that rank of probationers is not established.

If the payment of money had not been coupled with this transaction, would there have been nothing unusual in it?—I have always looked at resignations with extreme jealousy; and whenever it has occurred, and it has occurred in some instances, I have always thought it necessary to say so; there would have been nothing to surprize, certainly, in that respect, if money had not been coupled with it.

Have any other resignations occurred which have attracted your attention, and induced you to imagine that a proceeding similar to this had taken place?—Yes, there have.

Of late years?—I know of one about that very period.

Whose resignation was that?—It was the resignation of Mr. Daly of the ship-letter office.

Who was appointed in his room?—A gentleman of the name of Clarke.

Had Clarke been an extra probationer?—No, he was not; he was not in the post-office at all.

Was his appointment in the regular course?—He went down with Mr. Daly to Lord Rosse; Lord Rosse knew Mr. Clarke's family in the King's County very well, and Mr. Daly tendered his resignation, and Lord Rosse wrote to me to carry it into effect.

When did this occur?—It was in the month of March, in the same year, just before I went over to the Committee of the House of Commons; I then communicated to his Lordship, as I had done on other occasions, that I always looked at resignations with great jealousy and suspicion.

Had Clarke stood on Lord Rosse's list before that time?—No, I believe not.

Was Daly a person so situated that Lord Rosse was likely to attend to any recommendation of his?—No, Daly was not; he had been recommended, I think, by Mr. Gregory; he was a young gentleman of the county of Galway; he was practising surgery, and I believe he found it likely to be more beneficial to him than the other, and his health was the plea of his resignation; but I reported to Lord Rosse, that I thought it would be right, before any thing of the kind was done, that there should be a solemn investigation into the whole circumstances, to ascertain what the real facts were.

Did any such investigation take place?—Yes, there did.

Have you any reason to believe that in this case any consideration was given for the recommendation?—Yes; there was an anonymous letter written to myself that there was some pecuniary understanding.

Were you ever able to trace it?—Never; I framed, myself, a particular arrangement of questions to meet the case, from which I thought nothing whatever could escape if there was any thing in it, and told Lord Rosse that I would do so; and I sent it officially to the solicitor, and I desired the solicitor to institute a most rigorous investigation, which he did do, and made his report; upon that report it was perfectly satisfactory, and he was appointed.

Are

Are you satisfied that in that case no pecuniary consideration passed?—I am not satisfied; I was speaking to my brother the other day, and he told me he had heard it reported through the office the last week, that there was a pecuniary consideration given in that instance.

Have you any means of tracing the transaction, or verifying it in any way?—No, I have not; nothing could be more solemn than the questions that were put on oath to the party; the questions and the answers are on record, and if there was any thing of the kind there must have been the grossest perjury; if Mr. Clarke was aware of it, it was a most ridiculous case, because the office was not a permanent one; it was an office that was abolished the next year at my own recommendation.

Does Clarke now remain in the office?—No, he does not; the office was abolished, and he is no longer in the post-office; if there was a vacancy in the office, by Lord Rosse's arrangement Clarke would again come in, as having been reduced and not yet provided for.

Besides this, has any other instance of resignation attracted your attention?—I do not believe there was any case where a resignation actually took place; there were two or three cases where resignation was sought, and where the same recommendation was made, and the transaction did not go on.

Was there any particular circumstance prevented the appointment, or any objection raised?—One was a case very interesting to myself; it was a case in 1814 or 1815; Lord Rosse wrote to me that an application was made to his lordship by Mrs. Kearney, widow of the late Bishop of Ossory, for an exchange of offices between my brother William and Mr. Pratt, who, I believe, is her son in-law, and Lord Rosse wrote to me for my sentiments upon it; I made exactly the same report upon that.

That you looked at all such exchanges and arrangements with jealousy?—Those were precisely my very words, and that I was the more surprized, because my brother was at the time living in my house, indisposed, and had never communicated the circumstance; that I thought his lordship should well weigh it before he gave his sanction to it, for that I saw it objectionable in two points of view.

What were those points of view?—First, as it would affect the interests of the junior surveyors.

By putting Pratt over the heads of the others?—Yes; of the extra surveyors particularly; that those officers were without salary, that they looked up to the succession, and it was a kind of reward to them for their good conduct; and that I thought, under the circumstances, should a senior surveyor resign to any one, there should be no person appointed in his room but as an extra; but that at all events I would recommend to his lordship not to give any countenance to the measure at all, unless it was clearly ascertained that there was no understanding about money matters.

Was the other point of view, that there was likely to be an understanding on money matters?—Yes.

Was the letter you received from Lord Rosse merely an inquiry whether such an arrangement would be desirable or beneficial to the public, or a direction to carry into effect such an arrangement?—It was for my opinion to know what I thought of it.

Upon your answer there was an end of it?—Yes.

On what other occasion was your attention drawn to a case of the sort?—The only other case that I remember was a case of Lord Courtown, who interested himself for a change of postmasters between one town and another, in which his lordship had some interest; and I made just the very same report there.

Was it attended with the same consequences?—No measure was consequent upon it.

Have you known any instance in the post-office in which an individual has retired on the consideration of a part of the salary paid to his successor being paid to him?—No, I have not.

Was there a gentleman of the name of Hamilton at the head of the alphabet office?—Yes, there was.

By whom was he succeeded?—By Mr. Lyster, of my own office. Mr. Lyster, for a considerable period after the frauds that were detected in the alphabet, against the Customs, had superintended that office, on an understanding that if Mr. Hamilton should die, he being then in a very bad state of health, he should succeed to the office; Mr. Hamilton, though he did not recover, was enabled subsequently occasionally to do his duty in the alphabet office, and it became a question how Mr. Lyster should be remunerated for his past services, and I saw it was impossible to give him any remuneration at the public expense, and advised him to remain patient; some time in the course of 1822, a recommendation for Mr. Hamilton's superannuation went to the Treasury, and pending that, Mr. Lyster went into the alphabet as superintendent, paying to Mr. Hamilton, I think, out of the emoluments the amount he would be entitled to under the superannuation Act, and for which he was recommended; I think that was done.

That was with the cognizance of the office?—Yes.

A transaction publicly recognised?—Yes.

(107.)

Examinations.

No. 113.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.

31st Oct. 1823.

Did

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Did it continue long?—I forget how many months.

It does not continue now?—No; Mr. Hamilton has been superannuated since.

Had Mr. Hamilton grown up in the office, or was he appointed at once at the head of the office?—He was appointed at once to the head of the office, in 1810.

Had he been long enough in it to be entitled regularly to superannuation?—He was about eleven years in it.

Was he at a more advanced age when he was admitted than is desirable?—He was a very old man; previous to 1808, I believe the alphabet was not a distinct office, but was made one under the arrangement of 1808.

Have you ever had any reason to believe that Mr. Parsons's influence with his relation Lord Rosse has been such as frequently to obtain appointments in the post-office?—Not the least.

Have you entertained any doubt that this particular appointment was made at his recommendation and intercession with Lord Rosse?—I have no doubt of it.

Have you any reason to think that any other has taken place by his intercession?—No.

Are you aware of any one who is likely to give information on the subject of the resignation of Mr. Daly, and the appointment of Mr. Clarke?—No; I have heard nothing more than the statement by my brother a day or two ago, that it was reported in the office that something of a similar nature had passed; I was the more anxious about Mr. Clarke, because he was by marriage connected with myself.

Have any other irregularities in the appointments in the post-office at any time attracted your attention?—I am not quite prepared to answer that question; I have not the smallest suspicion that in any appointment in the post-office has there been any thing incorrect, of the same description with that just alluded to.

You mean that you have not reason to believe that any appointments in the post-office have taken place in consequence of any pecuniary consideration?—Yes.

Does your answer go so far as to say, that no appointment has taken place from any interested or improper motives?—Yes; so far as the patronage of the post-office is concerned, I am not aware of any instances whatever, except those three, where resignations have taken place upon an understanding between parties, either with or without the knowledge of any persons in the post-office, or where any money whatever was paid, except one. I have heard the post-office of *Galway was sold*.

Have any other irregularities in the appointments in the post-office at any time attracted your attention?—I think some have been very injudicious; and I think I may state, generally, that I lament very much the principle upon which some appointments have been made, and I think the principle is a bad one, particularly with some of our deputy postmasters; I think that, probably with very few exceptions, the nomination of the deputy postmasters should be confined to the principal proprietors, or people principally interested in the correspondence of the place.

Will you explain the manner in which the appointments of deputy postmasters have taken place, and what it is that you think is objectionable in the mode?—I think, sending strangers from one particular part of the kingdom to small towns that have no connection with the places at all; the salaries are very low, and to go there they must go there with some other motive than the mere emoluments of the appointment; it is impossible that a man for 10*l.* or 20*l.* a year will be transferred to a situation where he will have to pay for house-rent and other charges; and I have often lamented that the patronage of the post-office has been disposed of in that manner.

Have you ever had occasion to suspect or to believe that any appointment in the post-office has taken place in consequence of any loan of money, or promise, or hope of pecuniary aid?—No, I have not indeed.

Nor for any pecuniary accommodation?—No, certainly not.

Will you proceed to state what it is which you consider objectionable in the appointment of the deputy-postmasters in the country?—Principally sending people of no means themselves, to supply the places of vacant postmasters.

Would, in that case, the salary be a sufficient inducement to individuals to go to distant places where they have no connections?—I should think not.

Does that afford strong reason for suspecting there must be emoluments derived in an improper manner?—The individuals themselves may consider it is a very fine thing to get a postmaster's place, but the small emolument must incur the risk of fraud, or create arrear of postage.

Are they a class of people that apparently benefit themselves in their circumstances, by holding an office of which the emoluments are apparently so small?—Indeed, I do not know that they do.

You have said, that you have frequently made representations as to the impropriety of the practice of resignations, and connecting those resignations with the appointment of a successor; were those representations made equally to both postmasters?—I am not aware that



that Lord O'Neill ever made a reference to me upon such a subject, it was only to the postmaster who wrote to me.

Have you made any representations of a similar kind on the appointment of a postmaster in the country by Lord O'Neill?—Yes, I have; I have mentioned it to both postmasters-general.

On many occasions?—I have.

Have they been in writing, on occasion of the recommendations, or generally in communications on post-office management?—Probably, generally in conversations, sometimes in letters.

Have any instances particularly attracted your attention in the appointment of those country postmasters; any which you thought particularly objectionable or suspicious?—There have been some few.

Will you state the cases to which you refer?—I think, that in some few cases not any pecuniary consideration has been the motive; but I think that political interest has had an influence in appointing some and retaining others.

Have any of those persons been permitted to remain longer in arrear for their balances than others?—Yes, they have, I do conceive.

Do you couple that at all in any way with their appointments?—Yes, I do; I think it would be better if the old principle of the post-office which I remember was strictly adhered to, and that no parliamentary purposes, or any other, should lead to a deviation from it; I think that postmasters are appointed in many cases to serve political purposes.

Is it a Government appointment?—No; Government know nothing of it; the old practice of the post-office was, upon any postmaster becoming vacant, the secretary wrote in the name of the postmaster-general in whose patronage the office was at the time, and in his lordship's name, the principal person interested in the place was called upon to nominate the postmaster.

What has been the practice since that system has been departed from?—The postmasters-general appoint in a great many cases, as they themselves think proper, strangers to the places, and that leads to great irregularity and great arrear, and does not give satisfaction to the principal proprietors.

What is the rule with respect to the arrears?—There is no fixed rule.

Ought there not to be a fixed rule?—I think there ought; I have recommended it more than once.

Should not the rule be, that if any postmaster is in arrear more than a certain sum, he should be suspended or superseded?—I conceive that to be the only way to keep the revenue safe, or the securities either, whose interest we ought to watch over as well as that of the public.

Does the amount of arrear of the individuals differ very much?—It does; Lord O'Neill is of the same opinion with myself, and he gave his directions to that effect, that every postmaster who is in arrear three instalments should be removed.

Are there any other irregularities besides those which take place in the appointment of the country postmasters, which you think objectionable?—No, not generally speaking; I consider some to have been very injudicious, and bad in example, though perhaps not made from improper motives.

In what manner is the rotation of appointment arranged between the postmasters-general?—At present they take the vacancies alternately; that is, all clerks alternately, and the heads of offices alternately; and as to the deputy-postmasters, instead of taking alternate months, the kingdom is divided from Dublin across to Galway, and all to the north belongs to the one postmaster-general, and all in the south to the other.

Are you furnished with any list previously to the appointments taking place, or are the individuals then first named?—They send in names occasionally, but they mostly keep their own lists; and sometimes when there was a list they did not always abide by it.

Were you ever acquainted with any other instance but that of Mr. Kellett, in which an individual on the list of one postmaster was appointed by the other?—No, I was not.

Have you any other mode of accounting for that particular circumstance, except that it took place at Mr. Parsons's recommendation, and by his influence with Lord Rosse?—No, certainly not.

Notwithstanding the information you have lately received as to the circumstances under which Kellett's appointment took place, do you still believe that young man's assertion, that he knew nothing of the money being given as mentioned?—From his candid manner, I really do; he was very young at the time; he appears to be a remarkably fine young man; he will, I think, be a great acquisition by and by to the post-office.

You state that the kingdom is divided into two parts, as to the appointment of deputy-postmasters; do the objections you make to the appointments, and what you have stated as to the alternate mode of their taking place, apply equally to both halves of the island?—Appointments have been made by both in the same way; but I consider myself bound to add, that I have not known any instance where Lord O'Neill has made an appointment subservient to his parliamentary interest; or that he has retained any postmaster in office appointed by him, whose dismissal I recommended for arrear.

EDWARD S. LEES.

Examinations.  
No. 113.  
Sir  
Edward Smith Lees.  
31st Oct. 1823.

## Examinations.

No. 113.  
Sir  
Edward Smith Lees.  
31st Oct. 1823.

My Dear Sir,

I BEG to send you, in case you think the Commissioners would feel desirous of seeing them, copies of my communications to the postmasters-general, which applied to my evidence of this day; and also a copy of the examination which had been adjudged necessary previous to the appointment to which it referred, of Mr. Clarke, being confirmed. A circumstance which totally escaped my recollection I have been this evening reminded of, which makes me feel anxious for an opportunity of correcting my evidence. If it were possible, I should feel very much obliged if I could see it while I remain quietly here, to-morrow and Sunday; as from my recollection of the nature of the questions put to me, I think it right to revise a great many documents I have brought down here for the purpose. If, however, from what I *now* say, you conceive I should *not* again see my evidence, pray have no hesitation in saying so, and in that case I shall merely solicit from the Board permission to wait on them, and either add to or explain my evidence according as my recollection and the obligation I am under may enable and require me.

I am, my dear Sir, very faithfully,

EDWARD S. LEES.

Howth, 31st October,  
Friday-night.  
(Address.)

(Private.)

My Lord,

General Post-office, 17th October 1814.

I HAVE had the honour of your lordship's note of yesterday, mentioning that an application had been made to your lordship by Mrs. Kearney, to permit my brother William to resign his surveyorship in favour of Mr. Pratt. I am a good deal surprised, because my brother has been for the last ten days in my house, under medical assistance, and never told me of his having authorized any such application.

Your lordship having directed me to state my opinion fully on the proposal, both as it might affect individuals and the public, I beg to state, without reserve, that I consider it by no means exempt from objections; where a right of succession has once been established, and officers have conducted themselves correctly, in the expectation, while in a state of probation, of ultimate advancement, I think they possess a right to the appointment on a vacancy; and I do not think that any superior officer can for his own advantage or convenience surrender his situation to a stranger to their prejudice. One of my reasons for recommending the appointment of extra surveyors was, by establishing this very right of succession to insure at all times against casualties that very important branch of our department efficient; and I lament that your lordship and Lord O'Neill did not think it right to follow up the remainder of my recommendation, by appointing an extra officer (without salary) to every other office under your direction.

A resignation of office in favour of another should at all times be regarded with circumspection and jealousy, and though even your lordship might feel disposed to receive Mr. William Lees's resignation, and appoint Mr. Pratt to the *vacant extra* surveyorship, I should still consider it my duty to inquire whether any and what particular circumstances may have led to such an arrangement. But on no account can I recommend Mr. Pratt or any other person to be put in my brother's room without the express consent of both extra surveyors; and in the event of such being obtained, I think the transaction should be recorded in our minutes to prevent any precedent hereafter, when your lordship and myself may have ceased to be in office.

I beg to protect myself, under your permission to write my sentiments at all times freely to you on official matters, in addressing you so particularly on the present occasion.

Very faithfully and respectfully,

The Earl of Rosse, &c., &c.

(Signed) E. S. LEES.

(A true Copy.)

J. BURROWES.

Questions put to Mr. JAMES CLARKE, by the Solicitor, in pursuance of Instructions from the Postmasters-General, and his respective Answers thereto.

1st. Are you acquainted with Mr. Daly, who has lately resigned his situation in the ship-letter office, and how long?—Mr. Daly is a near relative of mine, and I have known him all my life.

2d. How long since were you apprised of his intention to resign that office?—I think about a month before he sent in his resignation.

3d. Who apprised you of his intention to do so?—Mr. Daly did so himself.

4th. Was Mr. Daly induced to do so by any offer made by you for that purpose?—Certainly not.

5th. Have you directly or indirectly made Mr. Daly any offer, or held out to him any expectation of any sort, of being in any way remunerated for so doing?—I have not.

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6th. Has Mr. Daly directly or indirectly made any such proposal to you?—He never did.

7th. Has he suggested or hinted to you, that he was either to receive or expected to receive any consideration for so doing?—He has not.

8th. Did you know or believe, or have you any reason to suspect, that he ever made any such proposition to any other person, or that any other person has made such proposition to him?—Not to my knowledge.

9th. Do you know or believe, or have you any reason to suspect Mr. Daly is to receive, or any person on his behalf to receive, now or hereafter, from or through any person, any consideration whatever for resigning his office?—I do not know; and I have no reason to believe that Mr. Daly will receive any compensation for resigning his office.

10th. Do you know or believe, or have you any reason to suspect that any other person is now or hereafter to receive any consideration, or in any manner to benefit by his resignation, except his successor?—I do not know any person that will derive any advantage from Mr. Daly's resignation, except myself; and that only by succeeding him.

11th. Do you firmly believe that Mr. Daly's only motive in resigning his situation is, as he alleges it to be, the ill state of his health?—I am persuaded that Mr. Daly's sole motive in resigning was the ill state of his health, having heard him say for some time past that his health would not permit him to live in Dublin.

11th March 1821.

(Signed) JAMES CLARKE.

(A true Copy.)

J. BURROWES.

My Lord,

General Post-office, 14th December 1820.

I CAN see no possible objections to Lord Courtown's wishes being complied with, provided the person wishing to make the exchange is not induced to do so under any arrangement that can be construed into a sale of his interest; and I would recommend, previous to your lordship affording your sanction to it, that this should be understood.

The Earl of Rosse, &c. &c.  
 Parsonstown.

Most faithfully and respectfully,

(Signed) E. S. LEES.

(A true Copy.)

J. BURROWES.

My Lord,

General Post-office, 9th February 1821.

I HAVE received your lordship's note from the hands of Mr. Clarke. The conversation which the delivery of that note gave rise to was the first I had entertained with Mr. C. on the subject. Some time ago a near relation of his mentioned to me the intention of Mr. Daly to retire from the ship-letter office, and asked me if I thought an application to your lordship for the appointment in his favour had any chance of being successful. My reply was confined to two points: first, that I was not certain that the appointment was, if vacant, in your lordship's gift; and that if even it were, it would, under circumstances, have to be clearly understood previously, that there was no agreement between the parties by which a resignation was to be paid for, either *directly* or *indirectly*. If Mr. Daly, who is, I believe, an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Clarke, is inclined to resign, your lordship can confer the appointment on whom you please. But before it is signed I would recommend, as I always do in similar cases, and as your lordship may remember in a case where Lord Courtown was lately concerned, that we should be certain that the person seeking to retire should not impose on your patronage, or his own *successor*, by his trafficking with his office. That point being clearly settled, my opinion is, Mr. Clarke is fully as efficient as Mr. Daly.

Very faithfully and respectfully,

The Earl of Rosse, &c. &c.

(Signed) E. S. LEES.

(A true Copy.)

J. BURROWES.

## Examinations.

No. 114.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.

3d Nov. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 114.

3d November 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in and examined.

ON Friday last you stated that you were not aware of any instances, except those three or four which were then referred to, where resignations have taken place upon an understanding between the parties, either with or without the knowledge of any persons in the post-office, or where any money whatever was paid. On the revision of your evidence you have inserted a statement, that you have heard the post-office of Galway was sold. Will you communicate what you know of that transaction?—I know nothing: it was my brother mentioned to me the instance of the postmaster of Galway. Mr. Eyre had been appointed postmaster, I think, in 1814; and after holding the office a very few months, he resigned it in 1815, and a Mr. Egar was appointed his successor.

Who was Mr. Egar?—I do not know exactly who he was. Mr. Egar died since; but it was stated to me that that office was surrendered on a pecuniary consideration.

How soon after the transaction did you know it?—I heard it only the other day. I believe my brother was informed of it by Mr. Fetherston, the surveyor.

An appointment took place immediately on the resignation?—Yes, on the office being vacated by the resignation of Mr. Eyre. Mr. Eyre was the brother of the celebrated Mr. Giles Eyre, a man possessed of one of the largest properties in Ireland.

Do you know any thing of the appointment of the successor?—The appointment was made by Lord Rosse; it was in his gift.

Did the recommendations pass through your hands at the time?—No; I do not think they did. There is a regular appointment of Mr. Egar; but what circumstances led to it I do not know.

You never have heard what consideration was given for it?—No; I never heard the amount, or how it was arranged at all. Mr. Eyre was afterwards a bankrupt; indeed I believe he was at the time a bankrupt. Eyre died, and Egar resigned the office in 1815: there were three appointments took place to Galway in the course of a short time.

You do not recollect at what period Eyre died?—No, I do not; I think Egar was succeeded by a man of the name of Cahill: Mr. Egar is alive. I am not sure whether Cahill did not die; he was succeeded by the present postmaster, Mr. Purse, in January 1818.

Do you know when Mr. Fetherston first obtained knowledge of this fact?—No, I do not; nor do I know that Mr. Fetherston knew it; he might have heard it as a report.

Do you conceive it would have been the duty of Mr. Fetherston to have communicated this to yourself, or the persons at the head of the office, if he had been aware of the sale taking place?—Certainly.

Is there any other circumstance you wish to communicate?—Mr. Burrowes mentioned to me this morning a matter which appears at present quite unintelligible, but which, as the question is put to me, I think it proper to state. It is that of 100*l.* being sent by some person from some post-office in the county of Limerick, and being offered for some office. He seems to think that it was investigated by the solicitor; but I have not the most distant recollection of it.

Was that at a late period?—No, it must have been several years ago, or I should have some recollection of it. He thinks, whatever it was, Mr. Thompson investigated it.

Has any person in the post-office been suspended since you were last here?—Yes; Lord Rosse wrote to me a letter, which I received this morning, desiring me to suspend Mr. Parsons, in consequence of rumours having reached his lordship that he had received a sum of money for a situation in the dead-letter office.

Do you know in what way this has been communicated to Lord Rosse?—I do not: his lordship directed that Mr. Parsons should be suspended, and a most rigorous inquiry instituted.

Have you taken any steps in consequence?—I have taken no immediate steps to this moment; there does not appear to me any necessity for an inquiry; there is, I fear, no doubt at all of the facts. I have written a letter to Lord Rosse, informing him that I have no doubt, from the circumstances communicated to me, that Mr. Parsons had received the money.

EDW. S. LEES.

THE circumstances alluded to in page 544, I find on inquiry to be as follows:—The postmaster of Rathkeal was dismissed in 1817; the nomination was given by Lord Rosse to Colonel Maunsell. Before the appointment was complete the dismissed man gave information that his successor (who is still in office) gave 100*l.* to a Mr. Morgan for his interest with Colonel Maunsell in getting him the appointment. I ordered a special investigation by the surveyor, who reported that the newly-appointed postmaster acknowledged having paid the money to Morgan in a single bank note of 100*l.* At the same period a note of that amount was passed in the Bank, endorsed by Morgan. A re-investigation by Lord Rosse was instituted by Colonel Maunsell, and it was decided there was not evidence sufficient to prove the fact.

Another case of the same kind occurred at Arklow, and the sale of the office was proved satisfactorily, and the parties ordered by Lord Rosse to be prosecuted.

E. S. L.

Examinations.

No. 114.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
3d Nov. 1823.

### Appendix, No. 115.

10th December 1823.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in and examined.

THE Commissioners were desirous of communicating to you that they have had various communications, of which this is one. “At the time that the mid-day Cork coach contract was entered into Sir Edward Lees went with Mr. Anderson, the contractor, to Lord O’Neill to Shane’s Castle, to sign the contract; Lord O’Neill received a sum of money on the occasion from Mr. Anderson, the contractor, and Mr. Sealy Townshend, the lawyer, was the person who drew the paper with respect to the money, he being Mr. Anderson’s lawyer?”—I never heard of such a thing in my life. I am confident Mr. Anderson was never at Shane’s Castle. I never went there myself with any contracts to have signed, and of the contracts in question I know Mr. Townshend had no knowledge.

No. 115.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
10th Dec. 1823.

What could Mr. Sealy Townshend have had to do with it?—He is the confidential lawyer at the Castle. I never heard he was consulted by Mr. Anderson. I can give every paper and document connected with the negociation of those contracts, from the commencement to the end of them.

You state that it is wholly without foundation?—Completely so. I wish the Commissioners would read over a short statement of that transaction, which was minutely investigated at my solicitation by Government in 1815. I solemnly swear the assertions in the letter produced are false and malicious.

A deputation, consisting of the recorder and some of the principal merchants of Waterford, have waited upon this Board, stating that they were put to great inconvenience from their being no mail-coach direct to that town; will you have the goodness to explain the circumstances?—The contract for the Waterford mail expired on the 5th of July last, and, by Lord Rosse’s directions, advertisements were put into the papers for a new contract for the mail from Dublin. The proposals were opened on the day appointed. The late contractors were the only persons who proposed. They proposed to renew the contract upon the terms of the former one, requiring a small addition for the conveyance of the mails on the 7th day; the proceedings, as detailed in the minutes, were sent to my Lord Rosse, and then it occurred to his lordship that it would be better to have no mail-coach to Waterford at all; he entered into communication with Government himself, touching the expediency of a contract which had not terminated on the 5th of July. I was then, in the absence of the postmasters-general, necessitated to make a temporary arrangement with the contractors until the question should be decided by Government; matters remained so until three weeks back, when considerable delays in the conveyance from Waterford having taken place, Lord Rosse thought that the best opportunity to get rid of the Waterford mail-coach direct from Dublin, and his lordship issued orders that the Cork mail-coach, which passes through Kilkenny, should convey the Waterford mails as far as that city, and should from thence branch and be conveyed in post-chaises to Waterford, in which manner they are still conveyed; his lordship left town, and on Lord O’Neill’s arrival in a few days subsequent, several remonstrances were received by his lordship from Lord George Beresford and others, on which his lordship addressed a letter to Mr. Goulburn expressive of his sentiments on the matter. The question resolves itself into one of expense; and his lordship made on that occasion comparative statements upon that subject, which are now before Mr. Goulburn for his decision. The matter has certainly created a great deal of remonstrance, arising from personal inconvenience from the delay of the mails to Waterford, the delay of the mails to Cork, and the derangement in the intercourse between the two cities of Waterford and Cork.

## Examinations.

No. 115.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
10th Dec. 1823.

How can there be a delay of the mails to Cork?—Because, previously, we dispatched the Cork mail as soon after seven o'clock as it could be got ready, reserving for the second Cork mail all the correspondence of the towns beyond Cork, about 46 in number, sending the bags for the intermediate towns between Dublin and Kilkenny by the Waterford coach; now they are obliged to be sent by the Cork mail; the mail-coach still goes to Waterford without a mail; the Cork contractor is under an impression, in which I think he is erroneous, that he has no right to carry the Waterford mail at all.

The Commissioners have also had an application from the principal bankers of the town of Carrick-on-Suir, who agreed with the deputation from Waterford; they stated that those towns were under great difficulty from the want of frequent communication, inasmuch as there were no country bank notes, and they were obliged to have a continual supply of bank notes from Dublin, and therefore direct communication with Dublin was of great importance; and they wished to know whether any proposition would be acceded to for allowing them to transmit parcels of bank notes by the mail as far as the mail went?—The mail used to be taken to a small place near Carrick-on-Suir; I rather think, by a still more recent arrangement, the Carrick-on-Suir bag was conveyed to Waterford, and then sent by the coach communicating between Waterford and Limerick; but if a direct communication with Carrick-on-Suir is desired, that is preposterous. With respect to the conveyance of parcels of bank notes, it is a subject on which I wish to consult the Commissioners; since the failure of so many of the country banks, the supply of national paper from Dublin has been rendered frequently necessary, daily so; my impression is, that it would be very desirable to render the post-office subservient to the conveyance of property of that description, the circulation of which is totally stopped, unless at enormous charges, which the commercial transactions of the country would not bear. From the remonstrances which had been made, as a temporary measure, with the approbation of Mr. Grant, I used to frank for the merchants one portion of their bank notes, on condition that they would pay postage for the other, and they were quite content with that. The post-office of course could not guarantee them; but I think to a certain weight it would be desirable to convey them, to give them the advantage of the protection of the post-office against the depredations of dishonest people; we could never guarantee beyond the operation of our checks, which I think would give sufficient protection; but the difficulty would be to establish a proper standard of charge; for if the present scale of increased rate according to weight, was pursued, it would be total exclusion. Whether it would be better to regulate it by a percentage or a fixed rate of postage according to distance, would be a question for consideration. This accommodation might be limited to packets containing notes of single pounds value: 35 notes weigh an ounce.

Do you think that a maximum of weight could be fixed for the parcels, and that their being sealed up in the post-office, before a person appointed to see it done, would be a sufficient check?—I certainly do. An office might be established. The notes folded in presence of the party, and sealed with his own seal; and there is another thing I think well worth considering, namely, the charge the public is liable to, being obliged to cut their notes, and then being liable to the charge for transmitting each part.

Mr. Thompson has been asked whether you are proceeding against Mitchell; has he pressed for an investigation of his conduct?—When he was in town the other day, there was a Board held on the business; Mr. Thompson was out of town; Mr. Crofton attended. Mr. Mitchell was a protégé of Lord O'Neill's; but such a scene came out of his conduct and of his habits, that it was not thought necessary to inquire into the subject which had required the solicitor's attendance; we did not wish to carry it further, such a scene of drinking with mail-guards and all sort of people was disclosed; there were half a dozen evidences against him, all confirming his misconduct; the half note which then passed is in the post-office, and counsellor Crofton advised that if we went into that, it might be necessary to send him to prison, and Lord O'Neill stopped with the inquiry he had made; we had no decisive evidence of that note having come into the post-office, and therefore whatever impropriety there was connected with the transaction, as far as we know, the post-office has not a right to take it up as a post-office case; all we know is from his tailor to whom he passed the note, and the man who received it also from him; their depositions are in the office, and the tailor swears that he was obliged to arrest Mitchell, and that on his arrest he gave him this half note, charging him on no account to negotiate it; that was upwards of a year ago, and from that time to this he has never given him the other half. It is an English note.

How many clerks of roads are there?—Four, and two officers, who have the privilege of supplying lottery slips and newspaper express; the whole are now, I may say, amalgamated together.

In addition to the circulation of English newspapers and lottery slips, the express clerks have circulated monthly and other publications postage free?—They have.

Do the profits arising from that branch go into the general fund?—Yes, for the profit of the six individuals.

In the year 1802 application was made by the clerk of the roads, stating that their profits had been reduced in consequence of the Union, from the diminished circulation of Irish

Irish newspapers, and in consequence of that a compensation was assigned to them upon a return of their then profits?—There was.

Do you recollect what the sums were that were then assigned in the shape of compensation?—The Leinster road amounted to 849*l.* 1*s.* 4*d.*; the Connaught road 523*l.* 6*s.*; the Ulster road 408*l.* 10*s.*; and the Munster road 378*l.* 0*s.* 6*d.*

In 1809 it was ascertained that that return was a very incorrect one, was it not?—It was.

In 1810 another arrangement was then made?—There was.

What was the arrangement then made?—The circumstance in 1809 that led to the appointment of the clerks of roads, who were in office in 1810, extinguished the principle of compensation; then the new clerks of roads, from the operation of the Act of Parliament that passed that year, found that their emoluments were decreased.

The Act of Parliament which led to the arrangement in 1810 was passed subsequent to the discovery in 1809?—Yes.

Was there any arrangement made in the interval?—None between 1809 and 1810.

Did they remain without any allowance at all, under the head of the clerkships of roads?—The compensation to the three new clerks ceased altogether in 1810. I had an impression upon my mind that, under the circumstances that were disclosed, my father and I could not with any delicacy make application for our compensation; in the first place, my father refunded all the sums which had been paid to him from the year 1802 to the year 1809, and he also offered to Government to pay, out of his own pocket, the entire amount of the compensation which the other clerks had received; thinking, I suppose, that there was not sufficient vigilance on his part. In submitting the arrangement of 1802, the Government were kind enough not to avail themselves of that offer, but they received from him all sums which had been paid on his own road. For some years the Leinster road was returned in excess beyond the settled average of 849*l.*, and the amount of the stated surplus paid over to the fund.

In what state did it remain, did three of the clerks of the roads remain without any allowance at all?—No; they had their profits, whatever they were, but no security from Government; after this discovery the profits of the new clerks of the roads were very handsome indeed, far beyond the average of 1802, that is, until the operation of the Act of 1810 began to be felt by them, then they threw themselves upon the postmasters-general and the Government.

Then from the discovery in 1809, until the Act in 1810, the clerks of the roads all received the real profits upon their respective roads?—Certainly; and their incomes were going on most certainly to the full amount, according to the principle of my report to the postmasters-general on the discoveries of 1809.

In 1810 was not an Act passed which extended the time, by adding one hour to that at which the newspaper editors had been enabled to send in their newspapers?—Yes.

It was upon that the clerks of roads made a representation to the postmasters-general that their profits were affected?—It was.

In what degree were their profits affected by that?—It was of course gradual.

How long had they to try the effect of the measure?—I suppose three months would have effected the object; for all subscriptions for newspapers are for three months, six months, and twelve months, but by far the greatest number for three months; therefore in the course of one month they could ascertain a certain loss, and every day that loss was increasing; but I remember at the time that the memorials were presented, I think my father's road fell a great deal more than a half at once, but visibly daily going down, so that there was not a hope left, as will be seen in its gradual decline, from that period to the present day.

What arrangement was made in 1810, and on what authority?—The memorials of the clerks of the roads were transmitted to Government, under a recommendation from the postmasters-general, stating that their incomes were reduced from a very large amount to the sum that was respectively stated in each memorial, and the postmasters-general solicited government, by way of remuneration, to fix on each clerk of the road a permanent salary, equal to the sum that was guaranteed under the arrangement of 1802; and in addition to that, they asked, as compensation for the losses sustained by that Act of Parliament, that they should be allowed to make any thing further that their exertions might enable them in the sale of newspapers; that they were to have salaries; for instance, the clerk of the Leinster road to have a salary of 849*l.*; and in addition to that, in consequence of the operation of that Act reducing his income from 2,000*l.* a year, which he was making, that the Government should not be bound to guarantee any thing further, but that the clerk of that road, as well as the others, should have the permission of making by the remainder of his privilege whatever he could.

(107.)

What

Examinations.

No. 115.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
10th Dec. 1823.

## Examinations.

What remainder of the privilege?—By whatever newspapers he could sell afterwards.

No. 115.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
10th Dec. 1823.

You do not refer to English newspapers?—No; they never formed any part of the consideration.

Was not the view of the postmasters-general, that the clerks of the road should carry whatever they received to the account of the public?—Yes, on Irish papers; but on them only.

And that the clerk of the Leinster road, for instance, should receive 849*l.* in lieu of any thing he might have received?—Yes, on Irish papers.

If he carried all the profits of the road to the public account, what remaining advantage do you speak of?—The Government was asked to fix a salary of 849*l.* a year, not to go beyond that, as a guarantee; but that in consequence of the difference between the 849*l.* and the 2,000*l.*, which the road was making from the discovery of the transactions in 1809, till the Act in 1810, he should be permitted to make what he could in addition.

That if that exceeded 849*l.* he should have the excess?—Yes.

That the Government should guarantee the 849*l.* to him, but that if he continued to make 2,000*l.* he was to have the 2,000*l.*?—Yes, upon that principle; but no one conceived it possible. I conceived that the whole income must be annihilated, as is proved to be the case.

Did the Government sanction that proposition of the postmasters-general?—No; they have guaranteed the income of 1802, but no further; and all the profits received on the sale of newspapers go in favour of the public, to diminish that amount.

Were not the salaries of the clerks of the roads increased between 1802 and 1810?—All, except the clerk of the Leinster road; the whole establishment was increased, save that and the first clerk in the secretary's office.

Then this increase of salary was not taken into account in 1810, in regard to those three clerks of the roads?—No, it was not, further than this; that it was arranged that all future clerks of the roads, except the secretary, should surrender to Government one third of the increase then given between their salaries at the time, and that went on until within these four or five years, when the Government relieved them from that: as to those clerks who came in in 1809, and their successors, one third of the increased salaries fixed then by the Government was on their accession to the clerkship of a road to be surrendered.

Was there authority from Government for this?—Yes, there was.

The resorting to the standard of 1802 was the act of the postmasters-general, without reference to Government, was it not?—There was a long correspondence on the subject, and various communications between Lord Rosse and the present Lord Maryborough, who was then chief secretary and chancellor of the Exchequer.

Did he come to any decision?—Not further than the letter of 1810; that the postmasters-general have always since considered to be a decisive proof of the sanction of the Lord Lieutenant.

That was signed by Sir Charles Saxton?—Yes.

Did that specify the incomes?—It did; and stated the reason why the Lord Lieutenant objected to the proposition of the postmasters-general, recommending the clerks of the roads to have the power of making any thing they could beyond that fixed salary.

There is a letter from Government relating to the surrender of one third of their salaries?—Yes, there is.

Is that the same letter?—No; the letter upon that subject was several years afterwards; I think within these four years. The arrangement that they should make that surrender was in 1807, under Lord Clancarty's plan of reform, and it was revised within these three or four years.

Are the accounts of the clerks of roads kept in the same way now as they were when it was a private concern?—No, they are not at all; ever since the discoveries in 1809, whenever the accounts for compensation have been presented, the clerks have been obliged to make a return upon oath, and they are obliged to give the public credit for every paper they have ordered from the editors of the papers; the account is made up individually; each quarter's account contains the specific number of papers supplied by the editors, together with the charges of management, and the profit struck. Upon the principle of 1802 all the clerks of the roads make a joint return only once a year, that was at the last quarter of the year. A general account, in a return which appears to me not to have been very distinct in the form, I will beg to produce, without stating any thing of the precise charges or expenses.

[Sir



Examinations.

No. 110.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
23d Dec. 1823.

[Sir Edward Lees produced the Account, which was read as follows:]

RETURN of the Deficit of the Profits on Newspapers, in the Four Roads, of the General Post Office, Dublin, for the Year ended 5th January 1807.

LEINSTER ROAD:			Quires.	Papers.	£	s.	d.
Standard average taken 5th January 1801	-	47	19	-	849	1	4
Year ended 5th January 1807	-	47	0	-	836	3	4
Deficit	-	0	19	-	12	18	0
WILLIAM ARMIT.							
CONNAUGHT ROAD:					£	s.	d.
Standard average	-	29	6	-	523	6	0
Year ended 5th January 1807	-	21	7	-	380	5	0
Deficit	-	7	24	-	143	1	0
HENRY HARRISON.							
NORTHERN ROAD:					£	s.	d.
Standard average	-	24	3	-	408	10	0
Year ended 5th January 1807	-	13	22	-	232	13	9
Deficit	-	10	5	-	175	16	3
JAMES TWIGG.							
MUNSTER ROAD:					£	s.	d.
Standard average	-	21	10	-	378	0	6
Year ended 5th January 1807	-	12	6	-	216	3	0
Deficit	-	9	4	-	161	17	6
Total Deficit 5th January 1807					-	-	493 12 9
W. MATURIN.							
					£	s.	d.
Standard average of the four roads, 5th January 1801	-	-	-	-	2,158	17	10
Produce of ditto 5th January 1807	-	-	-	-	1,665	5	1
Deficit, as above stated	-	-	-	-	493	12	9

Sir Edward S. Lees.—This is the last account which has been passed.

[The same was read as follows:]

Examinations.

No. 115.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
10th Dec. 1823.

## THE MUNSTER ROAD COMPENSATION ACCOUNT

1823 :	Correspondent.	Correspondent of Editor's Subscribers.		Freeman's Journal.		Morning Post.		Patriot.		Dublin Journal.		Evening Mail.		
		q.	s.	q.	s.	q.	s.	q.	s.	q.	s.	q.	s.	
July - -	6	19	7	16	3	9	4	8	23	10	6	4	40	16
August - -	6	23	7	1	3	1	4	8	19	21	5	5	44	14
September - -	7	6	6	14	2	4	4	8	18	2	5	22	41	11
<b>TOTAL - -</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>17</b>

	Quires.	Sheets.
Correspondent - - - -	-	-
Ditto of Editor's Subscribers - - - -	-	-
Freeman's Journal - - - -	8	14
Morning Post - - - -	13	0
Patriot - - - -	61	19
Dublin Journal - - - -	17	7
Evening Mail - - - -	126	17
Evening Herald - - - -	8	20
True Patriot - - - -	0	16
Evening Post - - - -	-	-
Farmer's Journal - - - -	-	-
Weekly Freeman's Journal - - - -	-	-
Weekly Register - - - -	9	1
Warder - - - -	5	5
Mercantile Advertiser - - - -	1	18
Antidote - - - -	10	3
Saunders - - - -	-	-
Standard Average	£94	10 1½
Net Profit -	34	12 3¼
Deficit -	£59	17 10¼

Fifty-nine pounds seventeen shillings and ten-pence farthing.

I swear, that the above Account is just and true,

Examinations.

No. 115.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.

10th Dec. 1823.

for Three Months, to the 1st October 1823.

Evening Herald.	True Patriot.	Evening Post.	Farmer's Journal.	Weekly Freeman's Journal.	Weekly Register.	Warder.	Antidote.	Mercantile Advertiser.	Saunders.
g. s.	g. s.	g. s.	g. s.	g. s.	g. s.	g. s.	g. s.	g. s.	g. s.
3 17	- -	40 18	0 12	0 11	2 13	1 15	3 13	0 10	0 16
2 17	0 12	31 11	0 16	0 15	3 12	1 21	3 23	0 12	1 2
2 10	0 4	27 7	0 12	0 10	3 0	1 17	2 15	0 20	1 2
8 20	0 16	99 12	1 16	1 12	9 1	5 5	10 3	1 18	2 20

Quires. Sheets.		AMOUNT.	
		£	s. d.
21	0 at 3/9 $\frac{3}{4}$ per quire of 24 sheets	4	0 0 $\frac{3}{4}$
21	7 at 2/	2	2 7
236	21 at 2/6	29	12 2 $\frac{1}{4}$
99	12 at 2/7 $\frac{3}{4}$	13	3 3
1	16 at 3/10	0	6 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
1	12 at 2/10	0	4 3
26	3 at 1/10	2	7 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
2	20 at 2/2	0	5 8
		£	52 2 3 $\frac{1}{4}$
	Management	£	17 10 0
	Net Profit	£	34 12 3 $\frac{1}{4}$

E. S. LEES.

and if there is any error in it, it is unknown to deponent.

(Signed) T. O. LEES.

Sworn before me this 27th day of October 1823.

(Signed) H. WHITE.

Examinations.

No. 115.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
10th Dec. 1823.

*Sir Edward S. Lees.*—The clerks of roads are now obliged to return the profit on the whole they purchase. In my opinion, the arrangement with government was very liberal; of course, it could never in 1802 have been intended to permit them to exclude from the return of profit any paper they might send without receiving subscriptions. If I order a paper, and choose to make a present, and do not choose to collect the value, I do not feel myself authorized to ask Government to allow for it; and that is the difference between the principle now and what appears to have been the principle of the returns given in 1802, there was a supply of papers which should produce, in my idea, a gross profit of 2,000*l.* a year to the Leinster road for instance nearly.

In 1817 the clerks of roads and the express clerks came to an understanding with respect to the circulation of British newspapers?—They did.

A division of the profits upon that head, and upon the magazines and other periodical publications took place?—There did.

How did the clerks of roads come to that arrangement without carrying it to the account of the public?—The English publications never formed any part of the arrangement with the public, either under the bargain of 1802 or 1810.

Was not this the ground of the collision of interests between the express clerks and the clerks of roads, in regard to British newspapers, that formerly the circulation of English newspapers through Ireland was part of the perquisites of the clerks of roads?—So it was. The clerks of roads maintained that the express clerks could not supply any thing out of Dublin.

Was not the ground for the compensation allowed in 1802, fixing the sum to be paid to the clerks of roads for the injury they had sustained?—In Irish papers all the then clerks of roads had compensation for the loss of their English papers, which continued to them till the clerks of roads in 1809 came into office, and resumed their privilege in circulating English newspapers.

What was the amount, for example, of the clerk of the Leinster road, of separate compensation for the circulation of the English newspapers?—£400 a year was my father's compensation for the loss of the English newspapers; 84*l.* a year to the clerk of the Connaught road; 27*l.* the clerk of the Munster road; and 21*l.* the clerk of the Ulster road.

Did those compensations for the circulation of English newspapers cease and determine in 1810?—To the three clerks of roads it ceased. It was continued to my father to his death, and then it ceased. I retained my privilege, which has never produced half the compensation fixed in 1784.

But though the compensation ceased, you consider the privilege remained?—Certainly, I think in fairness it should continue.

What is the amount to yourself of the profits from English newspapers?—I think last year it was from 170*l.* to 180*l.*

What was the expense of managing the Leinster road last year?—For the Irish papers, I think about 180*l.*

What has been the profit of it without the compensation?—I think the compensation exceeded 700*l.*

Then the expense and the profit are about the same?—They are.

In your opinion, what would be the best mode of disposing of that part of the arrangement, considering that the expense of management is scarcely paid by the net profits on the papers?—As long as there is any thing received by government, upon the principle of economy it would be better to let the thing go on, even incorrect in principle, as I have ever considered the privilege to be; but whether it would be better to let the present arrangement continue, or to make an entirely new arrangement with the editors under the sanction of Government, is very well worth consideration. I believe it will be better to go back to the origin of the Act of Parliament in 1810, when the editors found, from the discoveries of December 1809, the profits the clerks of roads derived, they very naturally looked to the possession of those emoluments themselves, and, I think, with great justice; they sent a deputation over to Mr. Pole in London, and in a remonstrance with him they impressed him with the same belief; urging as an argument that the postage that they would pay on their correspondence through the country, which the clerks of the roads did not pay, would exceed several thousand pounds a year; the memorial was referred to the postmasters-general for their report, and the postmasters-general of course could give no opposition, further than they merely apprised Government that if such a thing was done they would look to Government for a suitable establishment to prevent an abuse which they foresaw, making newspapers an engine of conveyance of letters, for previously to that no paper went through Ireland but open; being made up by the clerks of roads there was no abuse against the stamp-office, or the post-office. Mr. Pole brought in the bill, and the consequence has been this large demand, which never would have been necessary, but for that measure; subsequent to that period, seeing the effect upon the revenue, when Mr. Fitzgerald was Chancellor of the Exchequer, I took over to London this proposition, which received the approbation of the editors of papers, that a tax of a penny should be paid on all newspapers as postage, and that for that tax the clerks of roads they should be charged with the entire management for the editors of the circulation of papers; that postage I estimated at 5,000*l.* a year, which would have amply covered every thing that was necessary, both as remuneration to the clerks of the roads for their trouble, and also for the postage which ought to have been received under the application and assurance of the editors, but which from that moment to this has never been paid; they valued their correspondence to Government at 4,000*l.* or 5,000*l.* a year, and the editors have been paying scarcely any postage, and they

take care to limit their correspondence by informing their correspondents, that whenever they see a blue cover they are to understand their subscription is at an end; that blue envelope saves the postage of three letters, the postage of a letter going down from the editor, and two letters coming back containing the two half notes, so that the Government has been completely led into error; that proposition I took over with the consent of the editors, it was received very favourably, but the Evening Post took the alarm, it engrossed at that time the principal part of the circulation of the kingdom, and was a violent opposition paper; they made it, I understand, the ground of the objection, that the post-office, with the understanding of Government, would substitute a Government paper in lieu of that one, and send them through the country, and they made such an outcry that Mr. Fitzgerald thought it best to abandon it, and the thing was given up. But to show that the principle is not a bad one for the interest of the editors, within these three years the very identical plan itself has proceeded from one of the principal editors of the country, the editor of the Correspondent; he had an immense circulation of the paper; he made a proposition to the post-office, which I immediately took advantage of, that if in our roads we would receive his newspapers and fold them up for him, he would allow a penny upon each, which he has since allowed, and which considerably reduces the amount of the compensation allowed; we fold up the papers for him, he receives his own remittances, and pays whatever postage there may be, but we receive the penny for folding them. I should say either let the whole thing be abolished, and the whole go back to the editors, and take proper measures for making them carry on their correspondence (for I think those notices are illegal), either do that, or by way of making some reduction in the expense of compensation, instead of permitting the clerks of roads each to manage his own business, let the whole be managed under the superintendence of one person, and let it all be done within the walls of the post-office, and then the charges of the management will not be so great as they are even at present.

Does it not appear to you that with the trifling return there is to government, consisting of the balance between the profits of the roads and the expense of management, it would be a better thing to give it up?—I would say that candidly at once, but that I am a party interested; I would be delighted with that proposition being acceded to, and I would give up part of my income sooner than not have it done; but as long as there is a fraction received by Government we cannot interfere.

The clerks of roads have of course no interest in increasing the profits from the sale of newspapers?—Not the least; it may be said to be a premium on indolence.

You have a clerk allowed you of course for the management of it?—Yes; that is included in the expense of the management; I wish individually that it was all at an end, particularly that of English publications; I see strong official objections to their privileges.

With respect to the privileges exercised by the express clerks of sending monthly publications and reviews according to the list in the almanack, do you consider that these publications are strictly covered by the original expressions of *votes*, *English newspapers*, and *lottery slips*; can those terms cover monthly publications of every description?—No, I do not think they can; but like other things they have gone on from old usage; it was in the beginning a mere nothing; my father, I have heard, had a privilege, which he gave up, from finding it burdensome to the mails; he had the privilege of a first copy of every publication which appeared from the press in England and Ireland, and it was allowed to come postage free; and there was another advantage the secretary of that day had, which he has not now nor ever since that time, which was a per-centage of two and a half on the passing of the post-office accounts; that has not been these five and twenty years.

A per-centage on the expenditure?—Yes; the amount was small, but the principle was highly objectionable. I agree with the Commissioners from beginning to end, with respect to those publications which have been referred to; they ought not to go by post.

In what year was the apartments of the new post-office finished?—We took possession in 1818.

That was five years ago?—It will be six in January.

In looking through the incidents, the Commissioners have observed frequent charges for papering rooms?—I know there has been painting, I am not aware of there having been papering; the contract for painting did not terminate, I think, till last year, or the year before last; that was the last coat the contractor was bound to give it; the walls were not ready to receive it, indeed the last was given only within these three months; the rails are painted every year to preserve them.

In March 1822 there is a charge of nine dozen and a half of paper, blue and drab, on chambers?—I do not know that what can be, unless it was the rooms we gave to Mr. Homan.

There appear to be other charges for paper, oak pattern, and so on; in 1821 there is a charge "secretary's apartment eleven yards Turkey pattern floor-cloth"?—The secretary's dining rooms have never been papered yet; they were done originally with cartridge paper distempred over; that was the only thing which could be put on at the time; the walls have not been painted or papered yet.

The comptroller's of the penny post rooms appear to have been painted again in 1822; paper is supposed to last for a certain time, and the Commissioners have been struck with seeing paper-hangers and painters work done so early as 1822, the post-office having been occupied only from 1818?—With respect to some of the offices, the papering was not put on till some time after, and the last coat of paint under the contract has been finished only within the last three months.

Examinations.

No. 115.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.

10th Dec. 1823.

## Examinations.

No. 115.

Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
10th Dec. 1823.

Was the papering included in the contract?—No, that was to be paid for.

There appears to be a carpenter's bill in 1822; that bill appears to amount to 273*l.*; who determines on the carpenter's works?—If it is any thing important, we get Mr. Johnstone to report upon it; there was a large work in the rear of the post-office to keep the public free from the draft in receiving their letters at the alphabet; I believe that was 200*l.* or 300*l.*

The charge for that appears to have been 137*l.*; are the Commissioners to understand that in trifling matters it is entrusted with the persons who have the offices, and any thing important is referred to Mr. Johnstone the architect of the post-office?—They mostly come to myself, and if it is small I submit the matter to the postmasters-general, and get their approbation; but any thing important is referred to Mr. Johnstone.

Is it the same with regard to the hatter's account?—No; that is by contract; he supplies so many each year.

Is it one fixed sum?—The last year we made an alteration in it.

The 5th of July 1823 there is a bill of 43*l.* for hats, and a bill of 106*l.* for hats?—They are supplied by contract.

Is it a contract per hat, or for the whole?—Each man gets one hat; the amount should be the same each year, unless there are half a dozen hats kept in store for any extra guards; last year there was a new arrangement made; the hats were brought from London from the person who supplied the English post-office, and our hatter was allowed a percentage, twenty per cent, and the expense is a great deal less than it was under the former arrangement, for the Irish hats were of a different material and a different price; we purchase them now at the wholesale price of hatters in London.

In the upholsterer's account there is a charge for repairing a piano-forte; that is a trifling sum, but the Commissioners have felt it proper to advert to it, for the purpose of inquiring whether there is any distinct check or distinction drawn between private work and work done upon the public furniture?—I have several articles of furniture in my apartments belonging to myself, and I think very likely any trifling repair of articles of that kind would be charged.

What line was drawn as to the furnishing apartments?—At the time the furniture was to be supplied, I entered into a correspondence with the postmasters-general upon the subject; the cabinet maker was fixed by Lord Rosse himself; he went down to Parsonstown and brought up his lordship's order; by his lordship's desire the cabinet maker was directed to make plans and give in estimates for the various apartments of all the people who were to have apartments and sleep in the building; he did so, and the architect, with myself, carefully revised and went over every item, which was stated; the result, if my impressions are correct, was, that the estimates Mr. Morgan gave in were three times the amount of what Mr. Johnstone and myself finally fixed and sent to the postmasters-general for approbation. I am disposed to think that the original estimates, with Mr. Johnstone's and my own observations, are in Mr. Johnstone's possession. In my report to Lord Rosse I expressed the anxiety I felt in regard to the furnishing; I am quite convinced our accounts when they went before the Commissioners would undergo a most rigorous investigation, and Mr. Johnstone and myself curtailed every thing which could be reasonably left out, not only in the articles themselves, but as much as we possibly could in the expense of them.

Was the secretary's house furnished as other dwelling houses would be?—No, indeed it was not.

Upon the original plan as to the quantity of furniture, the subsequent keeping it up will in some measure depend?—A considerable part of my own furniture from the old post-office, I took out all my chairs and tables, bed and bedding, were merely painted; before we finally gave up the old post-office, the premises, under the direction of Government, were ordered to be advertised for sale, and after the advertisement had continued a considerable period, and different offers were made to Government, the highest offer that was received, and which the Government authorized the postmasters-general to accept, for the old post-office, was 5,000*l.*, the Government remaining subject to a very large rent for one half of the premises in Suffolk-street, above 200*l.* a year rent. I was in London at the time the authority came down to the postmasters-general to receive that sum, and I considered it very low, though the highest that could be obtained, though a year trying to sell it. When I came over from London it struck me that the premises would form a very good bazaar, upon the principle of the one I saw in Piccadilly, and a man ultimately became the purchaser. I communicated with him and told him to go to London; he was in treaty for the post-office; I said look at such and such a one; and he came back, and in less than six weeks he agreed to give, and did give on stepping into the concern, 11,000*l.*, and took the whole rent upon himself; he received whatever furniture remained behind, and among the rest the carpets and drawing-room curtains, &c., which remained behind, which amounted to very little; and of course in new-furnishing my drawing-room I got my window-curtains and my carpets, and in another drawing-room, chairs and two sofas, and all the rest were the old chairs painted and covered.

Were they public property?—Yes, of course; my bed-rooms I may say are scarcely furnished yet; my dressing-room has not even a curtain to the window.

Is it the understanding that the secretary's house is furnished from the kitchen to the garret?—It always has been.

Is that the case with the other persons who have apartments in the post-office?—It always has been, I believe; I suppose there are forty people who are accommodated in the building.

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Sir

*Edward Smith Lees.*

10th Dec. 1823.

When persons who have apartments there take it into their heads to have their locks mended, or new locks put on, how is that arranged?—That is a charge I have often animadverted upon; it is a great expense, and so much so that I have set my face against it, and will not give an order to mend a lock or replace one again.

Is there any person in the post-office whose business it is periodically to inspect those apartments which are furnished by the public, to see the degree of care that the persons take of the public furniture?—No, there is not.

Is not there a person called an inspector of surveys?—Yes, for the road surveys. Our architect, Mr. Johnstone, is the architect of the Board of Works; and my opinion is, that the whole of the furniture of the post-office should have been done under the inspection of the Board of Works at that time, and have remained so since.

Who checks the incidental expenses in the housekeeper's accounts?—They all come before me, and then to the postmasters-general.

Upon what principle is washing charged for in the housekeeper's accounts; 153 pair of sheets?—I should suppose to avoid the expense of more servants to do it at home.

Is it understood that besides having apartments in the house, the persons who have apartments there have their washing done too?—Yes; all their sheets are under the care of the housekeeper.

This does not refer to the secretary of course?—No; only the clerks in the offices. I suppose the housekeeper herself has her own washing done.

In the year 1820 there is an expenditure of 2,000*l.* for furniture?—I should think the furniture, including the officers beds, came to between 3,000*l.* and 4,000*l.*

Including the secretary's furniture?—Yes; I think the whole was within 4,000*l.* I mean the furniture for the entire building.

There is a charge made by Mr. Johnstone for examining the accounts; there was a very considerable illumination at the post-office?—There was.

Can you state why that was referred to the architect, who, of course, charges a percentage upon it, as he would do on a building; the amount appears to have been 823*l.*, and his charge for looking over it 20*l.*?—I am aware that he looked over it, and I think there was a deduction most probably.

Is it the practice to refer all bills of all sorts and kinds to Mr. Johnstone?—Every bill of magnitude.

Do you think that bill ought to have been referred to him?—I remember I thought it necessary to refer it to him; but certainly if I had thought there would be that charge made, I might not have done so, for perhaps the amount saved on that examination did not come to so much. The bill was a very heavy one.

Has any check ever suggested itself to you in regard to protecting the public property and furniture in the different apartments, that it should not be unnecessarily damaged, or persons from fancy have repairs made when they are not required?—The only check which has yet been established is, to have an inventory supplied, signed by the cabinet maker, of the value of each article, and that has been lodged as a counter-check with the housekeeper of the establishment, so that any person who had in his private apartments any furniture, in case of a change, should be answerable for it; it would be very easy to impose a check on the state of it, certainly.

Those apartments are not furnished on the principle of barracks, but with a view to rendering them comfortable; and of course it is desirable to see that the furniture is not injured?—I think it is certainly desirable that there should be an occasional inspection; whether that should be done by any person above the rank of the housekeeper, I will not say; but I think the architect of the Board of Works should, as architect of that establishment, and for the salary he receives as such, be called upon by Government to inspect occasionally, and look it over with the inventories.

What was the principle on which apartments were furnished to the officers at the post-office; there is the minute clerk for instance?—He had the rooms given on condition of his furnishing them himself.

The comptroller of the penny post-office has no night work?—No; he has from six to six. I remember the Commissioners on Fees and Gratuities, in 1810, recommended a small salary to each person in lieu of it; and when we came to make the calculations, I should be very glad to be responsible for all the furniture at 40*l.* a year for the secretary's office.

In supplying the guards of mail-coaches with clothing, is there any plan established?—Yes, it is all by contract per suit.

The bills are not the same annually?—Different things have been supplied at different periods, so that the bills will not correspond; some articles are supplied at one time of the year, and other articles at another; the great coats are supplied about this period. The suits were supplied in June; now they are supplied in April.

There is a large charge for lighting the post-office with gas; has there been any change in the mode of lighting?—Yes, there has; we have changed lighting the interior from coal to oil gas, which was attended with some expense in the fitting up; but I do not know that the gross expense much exceeds the gas from coal in the way in which it was done originally.

Who gives the orders for stamps and seals?—That is by contract too, now, and has been for some years, unless there are some new materials wanting; for all the stamps for the office, and the supply of the postmasters in the country, that is within the contract of 300*l.* a year; then there is a salary of 12*l.* 10*s.* per quarter for attending the office and setting those stamps every day.

When was the contract made?—It was made within these five or six years.

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In August 1823 he was paid 314*l.*; in May 1823, 25*l.*; August last (1823), one quarter's salary for setting the office stamps for quarter ending 5th July, 12*l.* 10*s.*?—Yes, that is for the quarter.

There is now a contract for the supply?—Yes; his bills used to be a good deal higher; he was paid as a tradesman.

Is the saddlery work done by contract?—All by contract; that is, for the bags and cross-post portmanteaus, and the supply of the Dublin bags, as we call them; that is all by fixed prices, and under public advertisement.

How often are those contracts renewed?—I think there was one within these three years; I believe it is out this very year; then we shall advertise again.

Is the stationery supplied by Sir Abraham Bradley King?—Yes.

Under what regulations is it supplied?—In the last account that was paid, the charges were made in amount upon the principle that Alderman Exshaw was paid when he supplied the stationery, and these prices were fixed after public advertisement; but Sir Abraham Bradley King some years ago set up his right to supply the post-office, with other boards, and under the instruction of Government we gave him the supply, but regulating the prices according to Alderman Exshaw's prices; there has been no account paid to him this year. There has been a sum of 500*l.* paid in advance for the last twelvemonth, waiting a decision from Government as to those prices. There is a new arrangement making with all the offices he supplies; the principle of that I understand is not yet decided on by Government.

As it has been hitherto paid, it is according to the rate paid to Alderman Exshaw?—Yes.

When was that fixed by public advertisement?—It was since the year 1818.

Without bearing any reference to the annual price of paper in the market?—Certainly.

The natural mode of settling it seems to be the market price for the year, the patentee agreeing to supply at the market price?—Certainly.

When were the accounts of the post-office last audited?—They were audited up to the 5th of January 1817.

Why have they not been audited since?—We have waited till Government shall decide upon a question which has been before them, which considerably involves the balance of the account as struck at that period by the commissioners, in respect of large disallowances which were made against the postmasters-general in their expenses on the mail-coach roads; that question has not been decided, whether the Government will authorize the commissioners to give credit to the postmasters-general for that sum.

What was the nature of those disallowances?—For various disbursements under the post road acts, principally on the ground of re-surveys having been made, which the commissioners were of opinion the Act of Parliament did not oblige the postmasters-general to make. There was also a disallowance, I think, amounting to between 500*l.* and 600*l.* for a special service performed, which the commissioners were of opinion did not at all belong to the postmasters-general to execute, and which they conceived should have been performed by the servants of the grand juries; that was marking out the lines of road as a line of direction; it is what is called the lock-spitting, marking it out to guide the engineers; that the commissioners were of opinion under the Act the grand juries should have paid for; that came to 500*l.* or 600*l.*; the whole matter was referred to the postmasters-general by the Lord Lieutenant for their report, and they made a very long report to Government, which induced them to hope that even if they had exceeded the power they possessed, it would, under the circumstances, be allowed; they represented to Government the principle of it to be such, as that though it was not provided for, it was necessary to the proper execution of the whole; that has been brought before Government, but I believe no decision has been obtained. I have had a communication with Mr. Goulburn some time ago; and within these few days I transmitted a copy of that Report, which had been lost in England, and I believe the want of that is the reason why so much delay has taken place. I am in expectation of a decision; at all events, we are preparing now all our accounts to be sent in for audit.

Have the accounts of the furnishing of the post-office yet been audited?—No.

Has there been any considerable increase of the establishment of the post-office between 1810 and 1823?—Yes, certainly, there have been some additions in Dublin, and considerable additions to the establishment in the country, by the extension of the mail-coaches; there was an addition of extra probationary clerks in the inland office since 1818; there were thirteen or fourteen of them.

Has that increase in the establishment been accompanied by an increase of the business?—It was upon the ground of effecting a more minute examination of the letters, by restricting the attention of the taxing clerks solely to that duty, and requiring more time to be taken in the examination of the letters. There has been a daily account kept of the result of that examination, and it appears that it not only pays its expense, but increases the revenue several thousand pounds a year.

What is the difference in the gross receipt of the post-office between 1810 and 1823?—I conceive it to be about 6,000*l.* a year increase, but a decrease of 30,000*l.* since 1814 and 1815.

To what do you attribute the decrease since 1815?—To the general decline in business; our correspondence has fallen off certainly; it has been looking up these last two years.

You think there is less business than there was?—No doubt of it, a great deal less.



When did the increase of the probationary clerks take place?—I think in 1810 or 1811.

Does not the existence of those probationary clerks enable the senior officers of the inland office to absent themselves; supposing a man receives 150*l.* from his standing in the office, and he thinks proper not to attend while he can get his business done at 50*l.* by one of those probationary clerks?—Yes; and that is too often done.

Would it not be desirable to diminish the number of those probationary clerks, and to enforce the attendance of the senior clerks who may have more knowledge of the business?—Undoubtedly; I have frequently urged it on the postmaster-general.

What answer did you receive?—None; it goes on, and it is complained of continually. I have repeated it three times since this Board have been sitting here.

Have you received any satisfactory reply to your suggestion?—No, I have not; I think the whole establishment is too large a great deal.

Have you any other suggestions to make on the general establishment of the post-office?—There was a matter the Commissioners were anxious about, that respecting the want of sufficient check on the remittance clerk in the secretary's office; Mr. Johnstone and Mr. Hume and I had a conversation on the subject; they have suggested two or three things, neither of which appeared to be quite efficient; but it has since occurred to me that a very simple and salutary check could be established, by making the country postmasters enter upon their post bill, which comes up in the morning, the fact of their remittance, together with the amount of their remittance, and that the letter-bill office on the same day should send in a return to the accountant-general of the names of the postmasters whose remittances appeared to be on the bills, together with the amount, then there would be a proper officer, who would know at once the amount of each day's remittance in the hands of the remittance clerk, and by comparing that with the receiver-general's account of the same day, he would see whether that was handed over to the treasurer; that I could carry into effect at any time.

Have you any observations to offer on the letter-bill office?—I think the letter-bill books might with good effect be brought at least once a month, and undergo a revision in the presence of the secretary, the accountant-general, the president of the inland office, and the receiver-general; there is not a substantial check at all upon them at present; if any officer in the letter-bill office chose to connive with the inland office and postmasters, they might plunder to any amount; and even supposing nothing wrong to exist in the inland office, it might exist in the letter-bill office; and it strikes me, that if those books were accidentally and unexpectedly submitted to a board, consisting of those persons I have referred to, it might have an effect in preventing the possibility of any thing wrong: it would be impossible at any time to go through the various dockets on which those are founded, they consist of 900 a day; but the taking up a book at uncertain times, and going through parts of that book, I think, would furnish an important check; and I think it would have a good effect if the slip which goes out from the inland office, containing charges against the deputy postmasters, was not kept by the letter-bill clerk, but sent back to be made use of in this investigation, it would be an improvement.

What is the salary in that office?—They begin at 70*l.* and go up to 200*l.* If the letter-bill clerk and a clerk in the inland office were to combine with twenty or thirty postmasters in the country, they might realize a large sum. I think the whole of the inland office should be revised; it is at too great an expense, not arising altogether from so large an establishment, but also on the principle of the establishment, as laid down by Lord Clancarty; he found that the principle of that office was alternate, attending only every second day; he put the whole together, and did not take sufficient time to ascertain what establishment would be necessary for the entire class of officers he had created; for instance, he fixed ten of them at once under the class of taxing clerks, and the salaries of the taxing clerks, of which one half would be sufficient, he fixed according to the length of the service of each in the class, from 70*l.* up to 200*l.*, so that at one moment the taxing clerks might come to 2,000*l.* a year; whereas, if there was only a sufficient number of taxing clerks it might not be necessary they should cost above 1,000*l.* I am of opinion that, with the keeping a small establishment to meet the arrival of the English mail, after a certain hour, four taxing clerks should tax all the letters which pass through the post-office, in the place of ten; certainly five ought to do the business. Then the same principle goes on in different grades, from the senior sorters; my idea is, that if any new modelling of that office took place, we should ascertain by practical experiment what number of officers is sufficient to do each part of the business, what number to tax the letters, what number to sort them and throw them forward, and so on; not to give a man an amount of salary for a service which the public service does not require; all that can be ascertained only by experience, by having a man in the first place understanding the business, and in the next, having zeal and resolution to go about it. When an opportunity offers I would certainly unite the inland, British-mail, letter-carriers, and alphabet office under one effective control. I would restore the appointment to the Crown, and render it valuable by adding the fees of the alphabet to it. I would raise some of the taxing clerks to superintend the British-mail and letter-carriers office. The junior clerks salaries, I think, might be made 70*l.* a year; and no letter-carriers ought to have less than 16*s.* a week; no letter-carrier ought to be appointed who is not a resident housekeeper in Dublin; no postmaster should be appointed who is not a resident of the town; and for all, the parties recommending should be security.

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Sir

Edward Smith Lees.

10th Dec. 1823.

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Sir

*Edward Smith Lees.*  
10th Dec. 1823.

On incidents, any sum exceeding 10*l.*, not in the regular expenditure of the office, I would require a treasury authority for; and a detailed account of all expences I would submit each quarter to the treasury.

I would make the accountant-general a more efficient officer of check, by requiring him to exercise greater control over the more subordinate offices, on whose returns he now depends.

The penny-post and mail-coach offices may at a proper time be looked at, with a view to reduction; and some of the business now performed in the latter be then transferred to the riding surveyors.

EDW. S. LEES.

## Appendix, No. 116.

2d September 1823.

THOMAS ORDE LEES Esq. called in and enquired.

No. 116.  
*Thomas Orde Lees,*  
Esq.  
2d Sept. 1823.

YOU are stated, in a book which has been returned to the Commissioners of the establishment of the office, as chief clerk in the secretary's office?—Yes.

Will you state the duties that you actually perform in that capacity?—The duties that I actually perform are these: I attend the office at ten each morning, and remain there till four, and as much earlier and as much later as the nature of the service may require; I assist the secretary in carrying on the general correspondence of the kingdom; I assist him in writing the letters to the Government, and to all particular persons; I also assist him in the general management of the business; I keep the account of private expresses; those I think are what my duty requires me to do, and the duties that I actually perform.

How long have you held that situation?—I have held the situation of chief clerk ever since the year 1814, the month of June, I think.

Your appointment is by the postmasters-general?—It is.

You are a clerk of one of the roads?—I am.

Of which?—The Munster.

As a clerk of the Munster road you exercise the power of franking?—I did exercise the power of franking.

Under what order or Act of Parliament is that?—Under the permission of the postmasters-general, from time immemorial; there is no Act of Parliament to authorize it.

Do you refer to the establishment of the post-office in the year 1784?—Long previous to 1784; that was the period when the post-office was separated from that in England; but there was a post-office in Ireland previous to that, and that privilege was then exercised.

Is it given by any order of the postmasters-general?—It was long before my time.

Was it under any written order?—Nothing more than the general sanction of every postmaster-general that I recollect; there is no order for giving it to the officers.

Nor any limitation?—Nor any limitation.

In what way do you frank?—I generally used to put my name at the corner of letters.

And that was all?—Yes, that was all.

And under that permission they went free?—Yes.

Is that the way in which the other clerks of the roads frank?—I do suppose so; I have no immediate knowledge of the circumstance.

You state that you did do so; when has any alteration taken place?—Since the English gentlemen came from the London office, and said it was not done so in the London office, and in consequence of that, all the clerks of the roads have ceased to frank; they have confined it to Acts of Parliament.

Was this practice of franking on the part of the clerks of the roads suspended by any order?—The postmasters-general never suspended it; it was from ourselves, in consequence of the Commissioners.

You state that it was in consequence of the Commissioners?—Yes; Mr. Hume on account of the Commissioners came to our office, armed with a sufficient power from this Board, and we in consequence discontinued it.

The Commissioners are aware that the two gentlemen who have attended from the office in London have no power to give directions; they attended to observe the practice in the office and to report upon it?—They have done a great deal.

Do you mean that Mr. Johnson and Mr. Hume have assumed the authority of putting an end to that or any practice in the post-office?—Nothing further than their coming down from this Board and saying that such and such thing will not be allowed, and consequently that they will be disapproved of by this Board, and they have ceased in consequence.

How does it appear that there ever was an authority from the postmasters-general upon the subject?—From the oldest records in the books for fifty-two years back; all the authority I derive is from the old officers of the post-office.

Does it appear how that privilege was derived, under what authority it was enjoyed?—I cannot say.

For

For what purposes was it given?—To carry on their correspondence relating to the newspaper business.

Their privilege as clerks of the roads being the transmission of newspapers free to different parts of the country?—Precisely so.

Is it confined to Irish newspapers?—We circulate also English newspapers.

The original privilege granted to the clerks of the roads was the circulation of Irish newspapers, was it not?—Ever since I have enjoyed it, I have circulated Irish and English newspapers, and franked and received letters free, containing remittances for them.

Do you consider the privilege as having been exclusively confined to the business of the newspapers, and the receiving of remittances in consequence?—I can only look at it in the same light that other public officers enjoyed the privilege under Act of Parliament. I have franked and received letters in the same way as other public officers have done.

Then it is a general privilege?—Yes.

Are you aware how the Acts of Parliament in Ireland give the privilege?—The Acts vary.

They are much more strict than those in England, are they not?—I never had an opportunity of comparing the Acts, but I believe the Irish Acts vary very much.

Is not the right more limited under the Irish Acts?—I believe it is not so general, I conceive that we have it in the same way as the treasurer of the post-office.

With respect to "private concerns," what is the construction put upon those words; and is it or can it be understood that "private concerns" means any thing from which an emolument is derived?—Emolument! if I am not taking a great liberty, may I beg to know what is meant by the term?

An emolument derived from the circulation of the newspapers?—Precisely so.

An emolument is not derived from the mere sending or receiving the immediate letters of a man's family: the question proposed is, whether the construction put upon it was considered to include the carrying on any business, or assisting in any transactions from which emolument was derived?—Certainly; if I understand the question right, it is whether I carry on any private trade by which I would derive an emolument from circulating the letters free; I do not.

The question is, what is the usual construction put upon those words, "private concerns;" those words would seem to refer to the private affairs of a family?—Precisely so.

Though those words in the Act might cover the private correspondence of a family, the question is whether they were intended to cover a correspondence relating to any business in which the persons might be engaged; have any letters franked by you been in the habit of passing free in England?—No, never; they would be charged.

In your superintendance of the post-office, are you aware of any other persons who frank by the permission of the postmasters-general?—No; only the clerks of the roads generally.

No other officers either in or out of the post-office?—Not that I am aware of, save and except those that frank under Act of Parliament.

Do you know of none who frank but under Act of Parliament?—None but the clerks of the roads.

The deputy adjutant-general for instance?—I conceive the question to allude to the post-office; the Lord Lieutenant has permitted the deputy adjutant-general and the deputy quartermaster-general to frank.

How long has that been?—Since the quartermaster-general and the adjutant-general were done away with in this country.

In what way was that permission conveyed?—By order of the Lord Lieutenant, by letter of the secretary for the time.

Is that letter in the office?—It is.

Did you consider yourself entitled to frank in any other capacity than that of clerk of the roads?—I can hardly answer that question; when I act as secretary I should think myself justified in franking for the officers of the office.

Under what authority do you act as secretary?—Under the authority of the postmasters-general.

Is there any written authority for that?—No; it is the general custom of the office for the chief clerk, who is supposed to be the next officer to the secretary, to act for him in his absence.

In that capacity you have thought yourself entitled to frank to any extent?—I would think myself entitled, not to any extent, but the *bond fide* letters of the clerks.

You have been in the habit of exercising that privilege?—As clerk of a road.

What additional privilege did you think yourself entitled to exercise in your capacity of pro-secretary, in acting for the secretary under the authority of the postmasters-general?—I should consider myself entitled to act; but I conceive that some person should frank the private letters of the officers, that the secretary was in the habit always of doing so, does do so, and that if he were absent to-morrow, I think, without having any authority, I ought to frank the letters of the officers.

Without having any authority?—Yes, I think I ought to do it while acting for the secretary.

When you franked in that capacity, did you frank in your own name or in the name of Sir Edward Lees?—In my own name.

Did you never frank in your own name at all when Sir Edward Lees was in the office?—Always in my own name.

Did you frank the letters of the officers in your own name when he was in the office?—Frequently.

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You

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You must be aware that as clerk of the roads you had no power to do that?—I conceived I had the same privilege as clerk of roads, as the receiver-general, the resident surveyor, or any other officer in the post-office who was entitled to frank under Act of Parliament, with this difference, that one is sanctioned by Act of Parliament, and the other by the authority of the postmasters-general.

Did you apprehend that the verbal permission of the postmasters-general would be sufficient to entitle any person to frank?—No.

When you franked (Sir Edward Lees being absent, or he being present) in your own name, did you add 'pro-secretary,' or any designation?—No.

Did your franks go in Ireland or in England, or both?—In Ireland only.

Have you ever, as representing your brother, been in the habit of franking in his name?—Never in England.

In Ireland?—Not for a number of years; not since the year 1814, when I got the clerkship of the roads; I then considered myself as entitled to frank.

Did you act before that time as pro-secretary?—I did.

And you did not consider yourself up to that time entitled to frank except in his name?—No, except in his name, with *T. O. L.* under it, to show what it was, and merely the officers letters, very few.

Does any clerk now frank in the name of Sir Edward Lees?—None, except those that frank what we call charity letters.

That was under the special direction of Mr. Grant?—It was.

None of those letters franked by either you or Sir Edward Lees are supposed to be even upon the business of the office?—No, private letters of the officers; I speak of such.

To what extent does that go, does it go to the franking every letter of every officer who brings it?—The officer is expected, and indeed is enjoined not to bring a letter to the secretary that is not on his own private business, or of his family.

Were any precautions ever used to ascertain whether those letters were for the families of the officers?—It is a very nice thing to do that.

But it may be a very necessary thing to prevent its being grossly abused?—It has not been grossly abused certainly; there are letters of the clerks, letter-carriers, and guards; there is an order that they shall be dismissed if they get letters for other people under their covers, or if they bring the letters of other persons; they get their single letters which come to them; if a double letter comes which is for one of them, the postage is allowed, but he must first pay for it, and must get it again under the signature of my brother or myself.

Do not the sorters, when they are taking the letters out, put aside the letters that are intended for the office, or put them into their pockets?—There is an order to dismiss any one that does.

Is it not the usual practice?—No, I take it not.

Do you mean that all the letters that come for officers are charged and carried to the general account of the post-office, and then the postage returned to them?—As well as my memory serves me, the order issued to the president directed that all single letters which appeared to him to be the *bonâ fide* letters of the officers, he should have the power of giving to them free, striking off the tax; that any letter that was not single should go into the proper office and be charged, and the officer pay for it, and be allowed or not allowed for it afterwards.

Can you say with certainty that that order, such as you have stated it, is obeyed?—I should sincerely hope so.

Have you any knowledge of the fact of obedience being paid to it?—Not further than I have said. I think it is, but I will not swear positively that it is.

As clerk of the roads, have you been in the habit of dispersing any thing besides the newspapers through the country?—Periodical publications, magazines.

How long has that been the practice?—From time immemorial.

Including all periodical publications?—All periodical publications.

Anything besides those?—Army lists, navy lists. I do not recollect having forwarded anything more.

Has any representation ever been made upon that subject by the booksellers in the country?—There was, by a Mr. Milliken.

When was that?—I think it was nearly two years back.

What was the result of that?—He wrote to us, or rather wrote to my brother, remonstrating against Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt sending other works besides periodical works; I made some inquiry at the time, and was assured that it was not the case, and I answered the letter accordingly.

Did you ever happen to see that advertisement which is prefixed to the almanack?—[*The same being shown to the witness.*] I have seen this book before, but I cannot take upon myself to say that I looked minutely into it.

The question refers to the advertisement, not the book?—Yes, I have.

Has it come under your notice officially, as pro-secretary, and having seen it, did you think it necessary to bring it under the notice of Sir Edward Lees, or the postmasters-general?—I cannot take upon myself to say that this came under my notice at that particular period, or any particular period.

In looking over that advertisement, are you of opinion that that comes under what could be understood as the fair privileges of the persons whose names are at the bottom of it?—As far as my judgment leads me to give an opinion, I certainly do.

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Do you think that was in the intention of the Legislature?—I do not know as to the Legislature; it was an allowance made by the postmasters-general; I do not know that there is any Act of Parliament for it.

Is there any allowance of it in the report of Lord Clancarty?—I do not think Lord Clancarty alludes to periodicals.

He does to newspapers?—Yes.

Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt are the clerks of express newspapers?—Yes.

Can you state when the privilege of circulating periodical publications was given to them?—I cannot take upon myself to say whether they did circulate periodical publications by express in Dublin previous to sixteen or seventeen months ago; they are distinct officers from myself as clerk of the road.

This extends out of Dublin?—It was an extension sanctioned by Lord Rosse sixteen or eighteen months ago, in writing, joining the other clerks of the roads in the circulation in all parts of the country.

You have, as a clerk of the roads, been in the habit of circulating those publications?—Certainly I have.

All of them?—I cannot state as to every one of them; I would circulate any one of them.

What do you conceive to be a periodical publication?—The Quarterly Review, the Edinburgh Review, the Monthly Magazine.

Do you conceive any book which is published periodically, in parts, to be included?—Yes.

Is that permission of my Lord Rosse's in the office?—It is.

It is the privilege of Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt to circulate newspapers in Dublin, is it not?—It is an allowance to Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt to circulate newspapers by express through the country, and under that minute they took advantage of the privilege enjoyed by the clerks of roads, of periodical publications.

Does the privilege of the clerks of the roads, with respect to those publications, stand on as good a foundation?—Yes, just the same; the clerks of the roads have always enjoyed it.

Is it the fact, that the privilege of the clerks of roads is expressly confined to newspapers, but that under newspapers they have circulated those publications?—They enjoyed the permission to circulate newspapers by permission of the postmasters-general, and with them they have circulated periodicals.

Under that construction they have circulated every sort of periodical publication?—I cannot state what their construction was, but I have felt that it was a privilege I possessed, to circulate them as an appendage to my office.

Have you been in the habit of seeing the papers or packets that arrive from England, or are sent from any offices in this country to be conveyed by the post?—No, if any business calls me into the offices I may see them, but I have not noticed them.

Has your observation ever been called to those which came from England, or those that were about to be distributed into the interior?—No, I do not recollect that it has.

As clerk of the roads, do you feel that you have authority to send parcels or packages of any kind by the post free?—All, I do.

That it is quite immaterial what they contain?—I should certainly feel that I could forward them, if I chose.

Are the clerks of the roads in the habit of forwarding parcels other than newspapers and those periodicals, under their privilege?—No, I do not know that they are in the habit of doing that. I have franked a parcel, and would do it an hundred times if I had the privilege.

Do those periodical publications you circulate through Ireland come free from London?—I understand that they come down by the mail-coach to Holyhead, and are sent over then under cover to my brother, as secretary.

Who pays the carriage of them to Holyhead?—The persons sending them down, the bookseller that sends them down pays that, as I understand; I cannot speak to a certainty.

Do they come down in bags from the post-office?—From London? no, I apprehend not; they come down by the mail-coach or a stage coach to Holyhead.

Are they put in to bags there?—No; they come down in a distinct bag from London, and are brought over in the same way by packets, but form no part of the mail.

You never were present at their arrival?—Never, to my recollection; I may have been in the office, but I do not recollect being present.

Whose business is it in the office to inspect those bags when they arrive?—The president of that office, the superintendent of the British-mail office.

Do you know whether any account is taken in that or any other part of the office, of the packages of various kinds that arrive under cover to Sir Edward Lees?—No, I think not; it was not the practice, it must have been within these few days if it is now; but I do not think it is, in fact I am sure it is not.

You do not know whether the carriage is paid by the bookseller, or by any arrangement at the post-office, down to Holyhead?—I have always heard it was by the bookseller; I cannot speak with certainty, because I do not interfere in the business.

Are not those publications circulated at the London prices?—They are delivered at the London prices.

Could that be if the bookseller paid the carriage to Holyhead?—I presume so; I have been told so.

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The carriage in the packet is not paid for?—No.

Nor the carriage from Howth to Dublin?—No, certainly not; they would, I understand, be landed at the post-office door without charge being made to us.

Has it not happened that this privilege upon some occasions has been questioned?—I am aware that Mr. Milliken questioned it.

By the Custom-house?—Yes; there was a parcel as I was told, I am not speaking to my own knowledge, there was a parcel seized, and on an explanation to the Custom-house it was given up.

Will you state under what circumstances it was seized, and under what circumstances it was given up?—I cannot state the reasons; I can only state from my own presumption, that it might have been a package containing smuggled goods for what the Custom-house knew.

It was released under a letter from yourself, was it not?—Upon my word I have so much to do in the office that there are fifty things I do that I cannot recollect, but whatever information I can give I will give straight forward; I will conceal nothing.

Those are understood to have been seized for the Custom-house duties, and that you wrote claiming a release under the privilege of your brother?—I make no doubt that it was so; I would have done it for any officer bringing it before me, but I have no recollection of it; having a good deal to do in the writing way, I cannot bring it to my mind. I would certainly have done it if I had been called upon to do so.

Do you understand those bags to be so far covered by privilege as to be exempt from all search?—I should certainly think not; if the Custom-house had reason to apprehend there was any thing improper conveying in the mail, they would no doubt search them; they come up in the mail-coach, as I apprehend.

But in a different bag?—But still the bags are so much alike that they might not know one from the other.

Can you state whether that bag is sealed?—No, I cannot, for I never saw one of them.

At what time was the contract between the parties joining the privileges of the express clerks and the clerks of roads entered into?—I should think from sixteen to eighteen months ago.

The circumstance referred to is since that?—No doubt.

No part of the active duties in the office fall to your superintendence, do they?—I generally have a very anxious share in the duties.

The question refers to the conduct of the different departments in the office, whether you personally interfere or have occasion to do so with your own eye, to see that the business is done, or how the different duties are performed?—Personally, I have had occasion to attend the inland office; it was under circumstances of a particular nature; I have not done so since; Lord Rosse begged me to do so.

What were the circumstances you refer to?—It was for the purpose of endeavouring to make such arrangements in the sorting office, that I could forward the Irish mails at a certain hour; there were complaints made by the proprietors of the coaches that the coaches were frequently delayed.

To what hour was that delay?—They used to be delayed fifteen to twenty-five and even to thirty-five minutes; that is the latest within my recollection.

Delayed by what?—Press of business.

Do you mean that that is not the case now?—No, I do not think they are delayed now. I had the mails so dispatched that I found it necessary to delay the mail-coaches five minutes in the post-office yard, that they might all go out at a given second, it was so necessary, in my opinion, to preserve regularity.

It appears by the office book that they do not go regularly at eight o'clock now?—I can only say, that I believe they are not now delayed; but I have no means of knowing; it is not my duty to see them go.

When those delays have taken place have you known the reason of it?—When I have been acting as secretary, always.

Do you know that it has arisen or been connected at all with the privilege enjoyed by the clerks of the roads?—I should think on a Saturday night, that the mails would be delayed generally, on account of the newspapers particularly.

The question refers not to the newspapers generally, but the particular newspapers circulated under the privilege of the clerks of the roads?—It may so happen that the papers are sent to us at a late hour from the editors, and, as I am given to understand, it has so happened that a delay of five or six or seven minutes has frequently occurred; on the other hand, as a clerk of the roads, instances have occurred where the clerks of roads newspapers have been refused, to prevent the delay of the mails.

Is it not a common reason for the delays when they do take place?—Upon my word I cannot take upon myself to say that; I have heard it said so, when the mails have been delayed.

What is the reason that the papers of the clerks of roads cannot be in the office as early as those of the editors?—Because the editors take right good care to have their own papers in first, then they supply the clerks of the roads second.

It is always the case that the editors papers are in the office before the papers of the clerks of roads?—Generally; I should say always.

It is owing to that special privilege of the clerks of roads that those delays do take place?—If I was a dishonest man I should much rather the papers did not come in; it is nothing to me; I get my full compensation from the Government; it is with a view to benefit the revenue.

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Do you mean that you derive no advantage at all from the circulation of the newspapers?—Only trouble; there is a certain allowance made to me which the Government are obliged to make to me; if the paper does not come, I do not get any thing by it; if it comes I get trouble.

Is that the case with the clerks of all the roads?—The four clerks of the Irish roads; we circulate the Irish papers; there is a settled allowance made.

The express clerks are not comprehended within that?—No.

Was that arranged during Mr. Pole's administration?—The last order was in Mr. Pole's time.

Your privilege is now merged in the express clerks privilege?—As to English papers, not as to Irish papers; they have nothing to do with the Irish; that is quite distinct.

The express clerks papers are the English papers which they circulate?—Yes.

The Irish papers are the papers which you circulate?—Yes, but having an interest in the English papers also.

That is an interest which you have acquired very lately, is it not?—No, not at all; it is from time immemorial. The express clerks got permission to circulate their papers throughout the country; before that their right was considered as confined to Dublin.

The interests of the two were united by an arrangement?—Yes.

Have not you a fraction of the privilege of the express clerks?—Yes.

What is the proportion?—Mine is about 115*l.* to 120*l.* a year.

How many people divide it?—There are six, two express clerks and four clerks of roads.

Have they any interest in your papers?—No, none in the Irish.

What is the proportion that the clerks of roads have in the circulation of those papers circulated by the express clerks?—I cannot state the proportion exactly; but it may be had on calling for; there was a calculation made upon which this was founded.

There is a fraction of a fraction?—Yes, there is; but I forget exactly what that is.

Under whose inspection in the office do the packets that are brought into the office daily, either to be sent to England or to be sent into the interior of the country, and that are franked, come?—The inspector of franks.

Do you consider all packages as letters, speaking officially?—Yes, I do, as to franking.

There would be no alteration in the counting of the letters, whether it was a single letter franked, or a packet twice as big as that box before you?—They would be all counted.

There would be no mark by which you could afterwards distinguish what were single letters and what were packets?—It is only lately that we have taken an account of the number of letters and the number of packages.

How long has that account been taken?—Only since the two Englishmen came over from the English post-office.

They would each count as one letter?—One packet or one letter.

Each would be one in the number?—Yes.

A packet, though containing five hundred letters, would be counted as one if it was one packet?—Yes.

Have you had reason to believe that much correspondence was carried on in that way, in sending letters in packages to some persons in the country to be dispersed afterwards?—Upon my word I cannot take upon myself to say so; it is a thing that might be done.

If a person was disposed to do that, is there any check upon it, or any means of preventing it?—The inspector of franks would report the circumstance if he observed a public officer in the habit of sending a number of letters under one cover, in the shape of a packet. I do not know that a circumstance of the kind ever came before me.

Does the inspector of franks minutely report his observations, either to the secretary or the postmasters, on the franks that pass through his hands?—Never.

He never reports any observations at all?—No.

Nor on those that go out?—No, not to my knowledge.

What reason have you then to think that if he did observe this he would report it?—If it was the practice, he would mention the circumstance to myself or my brother; I am confident it would be too glaring for him not to do so.

Have you ever had any observation of the kind on that or any other subject from the inspector of franks?—No.

Have not you made at different times representations to some of the officers upon the number of franks sent by them?—Yes, I have.

To what offices have you represented that?—I have written to Mr. Mangin, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Connor of the war office, and Mr. Johnston; when I say I wrote, I should say my brother wrote, the secretary; I write the letters for my brother.

On what occasion was that done?—It was on the occasion of Mr. Hume, the inspector of franks, from the London office, coming through and observing that those gentlemen got letters with sealed inclosures in them; he said that would be contrary to the Act of Parliament, and he suggested our writing; I rather think the suggestion was complied with.

How along ago is that?—About ten days or a fortnight ago.

If that was the fact, and so obviously that Mr. Hume observed it, it probably was the fact before?—No doubt.

Could it then have passed under the eyes of the inspector of franks constantly without calling his attention to it?—Undoubtedly he would not have taken notice of it.

Has anything taken place in consequence of that; have you received any answer?—Mr. Connor waited upon my brother and objected to it, stating that he would suffer great

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inconvenience by being obliged to conform to the Act of Parliament, so far as directing in his own hand-writing the entire superscription of the letter or packet; as to any alteration that has taken place in the receipt of letters on his part, all I can say generally on that subject is, that the number of sealed inclosures certainly is not so great as they were when the order was first issued.

Was his answer in writing?—No, verbally to my brother.

He stated that a compliance with the Act of Parliament would be very inconvenient to him?—As to the directing of letters and packets from his office.

Mr. Goulburn interfered about the franking about eighteen months ago, did he not?—He did.

What was the nature of his interference?—The end of it was to restrict franking.

What was the nature of the interference; in what way did he do it?—He wrote to the post-office; and I rather think, but I believe I am correct, he sent down a written instruction to the effect that persons privileged to receive letters were to receive them for themselves and their friends or families; I cannot take upon myself exactly to say which.

Was the effect of that to reduce the number of franks considerably?—I cannot take upon myself to say to what extent it did reduce them, but it was for that purpose.

Was it confined to the receiving or to the franking?—I rather think to both, if my memory serves me; but the document is in the office, and will speak for itself.

You do not know what was the effect of it?—Not to a certainty; I made a calculation at the moment, by comparing the months previous to the receipt of the order, the month the order was in full action, and the month afterwards, and by a return I got, certainly the number of letters did not increase; they decreased, and the postage decreased, both postage and letters decreased.

Did you take an opportunity of comparing the number of free letters that went within those two months?—I cannot say whether free were included; I did not find from the return submitted to me that the letters generally increased; on the contrary, they decreased.

Could you judge whether that decrease was not rather in the free letters than in the post-paid letters?—I did not take that into account; I gave directions that a general account should be made out of the number of letters inwards and outwards.

The Commissioners have before them an account of the number of letters before and afterwards in the month of December 1821 up to the 5th of January 1822; the number of free letters, not post-paid, that passed through the inland office, is stated to have been 20,973; in the month of February of the same year 1822, up to the 5th of March, the number was only 9,102, a diminution of a full half?—I should have very much doubted those numbers. I had an account furnished to me, from which it appears, that in the month of February 1821 the number of letters passing through the inland office of the general post-office, Ireland, amounted to 323,924; that in the corresponding month for the year 1822 the number was 284,081, showing a diminution in the latter year in the number of letters of 39,843 for one month, or at the rate of 517,959 letters per year, of thirteen lunar months; the amount of postage on the letters for February 1821 appears to be 11,291*l.* 18*s.* 1*d.*; and the same for the month of February 1822, 11,280*l.* 3*s.* 10*d.*, showing a diminution for one month in the year 1822 of 11*l.* 14*s.* 3*d.*; or at the rate of 152*l.* 5*s.* 3*d.* per year, of thirteen lunar months. From this it would appear that the limiting the franking was attended with a decrease of revenue: in my view the contracting franking confines the correspondence. I think that franking, under proper restrictions, increases the revenue; it is not for me to consider the advantages or disadvantages, but if I can circulate three thousand letters in the kingdom, I should say that I do good; there may be the trouble of the mail-coach conveying them, but that is all.

You stated that part of your duty was to keep an account of the private expresses; what is the nature of them?—The private expresses which arrive from and go to and pass through the country.

Are they numerous?—No, very few to or from Dublin.

Have you in the office a copy of the representation made from your office to Mr. Mangin and Mr. Connor?—Certainly.

Had you any answer from Mr. Mangin?—No.

Had the use Mr. Mangin made of his privilege called your attention to that matter?—Yes, I think it had.

Did it ever attract the attention of the post-office in England in a way that led to communication with the post-office in Ireland?—I cannot say; there is something floating in my mind, but I cannot recollect the particulars.

Do you think there would be a record of it in the post-office if there is?—Undoubtedly.

Have you seen the instructions which have been given by this Board to Mr. Hume and Mr. Johnson?—I have.

You are aware that they have no power to give any directions?—They may have no power to give directions, but they may have given them in an extra private way, which I would act upon, certainly; things may be pointed out by them which may have escaped observation on our part. Mr. Mangin and Mr. Connor may have received letters with sealed inclosures, and no objection may have been made to it; but the moment that it was observed that it was contrary to the Act of Parliament, and the Act of Parliament is pointed out, of course it was stopped.

Have the orders for the change been made by your brother or yourself?—I do not know whether there was any thing more given but a verbal order. I should also mention that



we wrote to the Audit Office, and to the barrackmaster-general to the same effect, to say that they were not entitled to receive their letters free, and that we should charge them, and we did; and to say that the clerk of roads letters would be charged, and the resident surveyor's letters containing sealed inclosures, and the riding surveyor.

What letters are those that are stopped?—The Audit Office and the barrackmasters.

By what authority have they acted?—The Audit Office exercised the privilege under legal advice. It was a misconception of the Act; it was only giving an extension of the privilege of the barrackmaster-general in England to Ireland, that was conceived to extend to the barrackmaster in this country.

In what way are the letters that go to the two revenue departments, the Excise and Customs, paid for?—They are paid for weekly by the respective boards.

How is the account kept, and how is the payment made?—The account is kept by the alphabet-keeper; the postmasters-general, though they sanction it, still hold him responsible for the amount, and he settles it every week.

Do you know any thing of the receipt of letters under that privilege which has been granted at the intimation of the Government to the adjutant-general, and the manner in which they are disposed of when they come to the post-office?—They are delivered from the alphabet.

The whole or a part of them?—I think the whole of them.

Is it not the case that only those which bear a distinctive mark are delivered from the alphabet?—I am not aware of any distinction.

Is there no distinction as to those bearing the word "commissariat"?—I am aware that some of them bear the word "commissariat."

Are they not delivered to Mr. Luscombe, the deputy commissary?—I am not aware of that fact; I will inquire into it.

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### Appendix, No. 117.

10th September 1823.

THOMAS ORDE LEES Esq. again called in and examined.

IT appears that, among the papers that have been returned to this Board upon the subject of the dismissal of Mr. Homan, there is a letter from you, stating the communication between Sir Colin Campbell and Sir Edward Lees; it is a letter dated the 15th of March 1823, written to Mr. Gregory; you stated that you made the communication by his directions; what led to his giving you any direction to make that communication to him?—I perfectly remember, on my going into the office on a particular day, but I cannot say what day, it was in consequence of Lord Rosse's minute coming to the post-office, that my brother wrote, I think, to Mr. Gregory, to say, that until such time as Lord O'Neill's reply came to him (my brother) he would beg of Mr. Gregory respectfully to solicit the Lord Lieutenant for permission for him to withdraw himself. I received a communication from my brother, or got notice that my brother had gone down to Howth not in a good state of health, and on reading Lord Rosse's minute I felt certainly, I must admit, as far as an humble individual like myself could feel, highly mortified; the charge that had been brought against my brother affected his character and his fame, and, in affecting him, I felt it applied equally forcibly to myself; and I therefore waited on Mr. Gregory, as the secretaryship had devolved upon me, and apprised Mr. Gregory that the same feelings which influenced my brother to request the permission of the Lord Lieutenant to withdraw from the secretaryship operated as strongly with me, and that, under those circumstances, I could not think myself justified in taking the reins of the post-office into my hands, and that therefore I could not act as secretary. Mr. Gregory told me very kindly that act I must; I took the advice as it was intended; I respectfully requested to get direct orders to act from the Lord Lieutenant, and that I would sacrifice my feelings to my duty. Mr. Gregory, in two or three hours afterwards, came down to the post-office, and told me that the circumstances had escaped the recollection of the Lord Lieutenant, and requested that I would put them into writing for his Excellency's information; and I take for granted the letter just stated, and which I have no doubt I wrote, was the consequence of that communication with Mr. Gregory.

Do you happen to know whether this letter was laid before the Lord Lieutenant?—I cannot take upon myself to say so; but I should think it was, for Mr. Gregory got it from me for that purpose.

Had you ever any communication upon the subject with Mr. Gregory afterwards?—Not officially, I think; I dare say I might have had a conversation with him upon the subject, but not officially; there were communications, I am pretty confident, either in answer to that, or certainly when Lord O'Neill's answer came over; the moment my Lord O'Neill's minute came over, my brother resumed his duty.

(107.)

7 D

You

No. 117.  
Thomas Orde Lees,  
Esq.  
10th Sept. 1823.

## Examinations.

No. 117.  
 Thomas Orde Lees,  
 Esq.  
 10th Sept. 1823.

You were not present at the communication between Sir Colin Campbell and your brother?—I was not.

Have you ever had communication on the subject yourself with Sir Colin Campbell?—I have, frequently.

Did Sir Colin Campbell, by accident, ever see this letter, or did you ever state the exact purport of the letter to him?—Decidedly not; I may have asked questions of Sir Colin Campbell, but I never showed that letter to him, nor stated the object of it; I may have said to Sir Colin Campbell that it was extraordinary that his Excellency should have made use of the expression, “why are these things buzzed into my ears against Sir Edward Lees, the motive cannot be a good one?”

Sir Colin Campbell has stated to this Board that he had no direction from the Lord Lieutenant to make the communication; but that he came as a matter of pure friendship to get an explanation, that he might clear the matter up?—I have understood from Sir Colin Campbell, that though he did not come from the Lord Lieutenant with a command, he apprised Lord Wellesley that he knew Sir Edward Lees, and that he would go to head quarters and mention the thing; and though the Lord Lieutenant did not give a command, still it was communicated in that demi-official form which authorized him to come down, that he came down with a half sanction, or at all events with the knowledge of the Lord Lieutenant.

When were the extra-surveyors first appointed?—I should think (without being positive) about 1811 or 1812.

Were you in the office at that time?—I have been in the office from 1805.

Do you recollect the reasons which led to the appointment?—In consequence of the increasing business we had frequently been obliged to employ postmasters to do their duty, and we found that many of them were very improper persons. I could give one instance where a postmaster expressed very great surprize on going to take charge of an office, that the man was ready to pay off his arrears, for he expected that he should be in charge for a month.

You have been in the habit of employing other persons than the surveyors occasionally?—We have.

What was that owing to?—Many circumstances; I may say one, that we wanted actual surveyors; another was that if a man was in an ill state of health, and he was a deserving officer, we would give him an opportunity of getting the benefit of the country, and at the same time of making a little money, and that he might pay his expenses.

In short, that if the employment was open, it was a favour done to a meritorious officer?—I will not say a favour; it was an official indulgence, and where there was no additional expense incurred, that we would grant that indulgence; or if there was an office vacant near which the family of an officer of the post-office resided, and no surveyor was disengaged, with the permission of the surveyor of the district, we would allow an officer to go under those circumstances.

Are the surveyors divided into particular districts?—There are north, south, east, and west, and then the two extra-surveyors are to go wherever they are sent.

They are not detached for special service to other parts, but each man detached into his own division?—If one was disengaged we would send him north or south; but they are confined to a particular district in other cases.

Have you employed those officers who are neither surveyors nor extra-surveyors at times when the surveyors of the districts themselves have been unemployed?—Where the surveyors were not employed, with their permission to the officers to go into their district, it has been done.

Was not that a loss to the surveyor?—Of course he lost his twenty-six shillings a day; but that was between him and the officer.

What do you conceive to be the duties of a surveyor when he goes upon a survey?—He must first get orders for any particular duty it would have in view; to correct the riding-posts in the country; if he found any irregularity he would report the circumstance to the secretary, and the secretary would give him orders, if he conceived it essential for the service; he would instruct the postmasters, in case of new postmasters being appointed, in the duties of their office; he would go to an office to collect an arrear.

When an inspector is sent to a district, is it competent to that inspector to look and to have his eyes about him with a view to the general conduct of the deputies and other persons employed under the post-office in the general execution of their duties?—Certainly; if a surveyor discovered any irregularity in any of the officers in his district, if it was of a flagrant nature, he would not wait for an order, but he would report the circumstance and go there.

Is it his business when upon duty to see whether there are any of those abuses or not?—When he is employed on a survey, no matter whether he is going into the town to take possession of it or not, he would immediately correct it.

Would he not consider it part of his duty if he was going to a town where there was a post-office to see whether the duty was properly conducted, or whether there were any instructions to be given to the postmaster?—I certainly say he ought to do so; in fact he would get reprimanded if any irregularity had occurred while he was on the survey, and he had omitted to correct it.

What sort of reports do they make to you?—If we get an application to make a post-town, a surveyor goes down and inquires into the state of the neighbourhood—the probable postage we might expect.

On what sort of subjects generally do they make reports?—The subject of the cross posts; complaints preferred by individuals in the country against postmasters or post-offices.

When they are sent, are they never detached but for one of two or three purposes; first, a question arising about the establishment of a post; secondly, some irregularity having taken place, into which they are to inquire; and thirdly, the purpose of instructing new deputies?—Or going to offices to collect the arrears; those generally form their duty.

Those duties are directed to a special object?—Yes.

Combined with that special object, is there a general power of inspection incident to their office?—I should say generally, no, because we were always afraid of the expense incident to that power.

What expense?—The expense of 26s. a day when they were out on duty; that it might give them an opportunity of acting for themselves, without our having any power of controlling them.

Do you consider it a duty incident to your office to have a general inspection over the execution of the duties within the post-office?—Under special circumstances, I certainly would feel that I would, particularly if I was acting secretary; but I would hold the head of each department responsible for the conduct of that particular office.

Should not you hold yourself responsible for holding the heads of the departments responsible?—Certainly; if any egregious error took place on the part of the head of any department, I would feel myself in a very awkward situation.

Do you recollect the trial of a Mr. Blake?—I do.

Do you recollect the evidence of Mr. O'Neill upon that trial?—I never read it.

Sir Edward Lees states that evidence thus, speaking of the office, "These officers appear not only to be in the habit of going in and out of the office when they please, but frequently of never attending at all, and getting others to sign for them as if they did attend; the office is also represented to be open to the indiscriminate admission of strangers." Sir Edward Lees desires a report from the vice-presidents as to the truth of this statement, but no report has ever been produced upon the subject; this is the ground on which Sir Edward Lees founds the alteration that he suggested in the alphabet office; have you any reason to know whether any report was made upon that subject, and how far the report did confirm the representation of Mr. O'Neill?—I do not think it is above five or six months ago; I do remember at the time my brother having occasion to write to the head officer of the inland office, in consequence of the evidence of Mr. O'Neill, that strangers were not to be admitted; what I conceive by strangers, officers belonging to other offices.

It goes so far as to say, the indiscriminate admission of strangers?—I think there was a report certainly from the head of the office.

Will you permit the Commissioners to ask you how far the secretary or the first clerk have not been wanting in their duty in permitting the head of any office to let his office be in such a situation as that stated?—The only answer I can give to that is to refer the Commissioners to my brother's reports to the postmasters-general on the subject of the inland office altogether; that if there was a proper person in that office, that state of things could never have taken place.

Is it not necessarily incident to the situation of secretary, or the next in office, to have that kind of personal inspection on the general conduct of the office, that if they had performed it the office could not have got into that situation which is here represented?—I, for myself, decidedly say, no; that I would not feel it my duty to enter the inland office, unless specially urged to it by the postmasters-general; but I have occasionally done so.

Supposing you to be responsible for the general performance of the duties in the office, how can you possibly know that the heads of the departments do perform their duties if you never inspect the offices?—Because some irregularity would take place; and on that irregularity, I would send for the officer at the head of the office, and if I found the thing repeated I would then report him to the postmasters-general; if I found the thing again repeated I would again report him, and I would not hold myself responsible for the office.

Is it necessary or proper that the person who is at the head of the department should wait till some irregularities actually arise; was it not proper to ascertain, by personal inspection, whether there was such a state of office, and, if there was, to lay it before the postmasters-general, and call for a reform?—And so my brother did do so; the fault does not rest with my brother or myself. I do not think it becomes the dignity of the secretary, I will not say my own situation, to go meddling into any offices where the head of that office should be responsible for its own immediate duties. I do not mean to say that my brother has not been into the offices; I know that he has done so; but at the same time I do not think that he was called upon by his situation to do so. In the inland office there is an officer who has been in it before we were born; he is a most excellent man, but not fit to control such an office as the sorting office.

T. ORDE LEES.

Examinations.

No. 117.

Thomas Orde Lees,

Esq.

10th Sept. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 118.

10th December 1823.

THOMAS ORDE LEES Esquire again called in and examined.

Examinations.  
 No. 118.  
 Thomas Orde Lees,  
 Esq.  
 10th Dec. 1823.

HAVE you not the management of the Suspension Fund in the capacity of Chief Clerk?—I have.

From what sources does that fund arise?—Fines levied on mail-coach contractors; also on deputy postmasters and officers of the post-office.

Under whose control and to what purposes are the disbursements from that fund applied?—Under the control of the postmasters-general; and they are applied to the purpose of paying extra probationary officers in the room of absent officers, fines returned to mail-coach contractors, rewards to officers, payments to widows of mail-coach guards and letter-carriers, and, in fact, any disbursement whatever; it is a general fund.

By whom is the account audited and checked?—I never recollect the account to have been audited but by Lord Rosse in the year 1816 or 1817, when he called for the account; and lately he called for the average amount of the accounts for seven years.

The balance remains always in your hands?—It does.

You receive no salary for managing it?—No, not now; I did; a per-centage.

When did that cease?—I think in 1818 or 1819, I am not sure which year.

On what ground did that per-centage cease?—The request of my brother, the secretary; he said he thought I should not take a per-centage upon that account, and I immediately acceded to his recommendation.

There is no advantage whatever from the having the charge of the fund?—I cannot call it an advantage; I might, to make use of the money; I must have, however, every quarter to advance for the payment of the extra probationers and others, nearly to the amount of the fund.

To whom do you render your account of the fund?—To no one, unless the postmasters-general call for it.

There is no annual or quarterly return of it?—No; the postmasters-general may call for it every week or every day.

All your payments are made on vouchers?—Yes.

Do you keep those vouchers with each year's account?—Yes; I have them generally all together.

If the accounts of any one year should be wanted, you could bring each year's account, with proper vouchers?—I could support the account with vouchers, or satisfactory explanations; the account runs on from year to year. There are quarterly payments to widows; the amount of those pensions may be from 100*l.* to 120*l.*, in payments as small as 1*l.* and 1*l.* 5*s.*, more or less.

There is an item of an entertainment, 30*l.*?—There were two payments of 30*l.*; that was by verbal order of my brother, the secretary; that was on laying the first stone of the post-office.

Are there many of the payments made on those verbal orders?—No; very few.

You have not yourself even kept for your own satisfaction an annual account?—Yes, there is an annual account.

Have not you attached the vouchers to that?—I have vouchers; but I conceived the question to be, whether I had an account, and the vouchers attached to that account. I have the accounts all in a press, year after year, divided into years.

The corresponding vouchers of every item of expenditure will be found?—Yes, or fully explained.

Except the 60*l.*, which was a verbal order?—I do not mean to say that I have vouchers for every one of those; but I will give satisfactory proof by written voucher, or a receipt of the party under a previous order, or satisfactory explanation of each, as you or the postmasters require.

Those accounts will show the debit and credit side of it?—Yes.

The Commissioners have observed that the payments made to coach contractors, in some years, considerably exceed the receipts of that year?—I dare say they do, because in Lord Clancarty's time, when he was postmaster-general, those fines were very heavy; and when Lord Rosse came in, they were subsequently, after two or three years, repaid.

Do you send the accounts of the suspension fund in with the public accounts of the post-office?—Never.

Have they ever been sent in for audit to the auditor of public accounts?—Never; they have never been called for.

Are there a great variety of payments out of that account?—Yes; they are subject to every thing. There is a large payment to the solicitor; there is for police purposes connected with the post-office. I remember one payment to Mr. Pollock, a magistrate, of 10*l.* or 20*l.*

It is applied almost as a secret service money?—In that way, certainly; we gave 100*l.* to the solicitor, I think.

Why

Why was not that brought forward as a regular charge on the public accounts; why was not that introduced in the solicitor's bills?—I do not know; it ought to have been done, certainly.

Are you aware of any circumstance connected with the disbursements of the suspension fund, which prevents their being brought forward regularly as the other expenditures of the post-office?—Not the least.

The floating balances in your hands must be very uncertain in their amount?—No; I think the money paid in is about equal to that paid out to the extra probationers, and so on.

What is the balance now in your hands?—I suppose from 300*l.* to 320*l.*

In looking back it appears that the balance has been much greater?—It has.

Has it not amounted to 800*l.*?—I believe above 900*l.* at one time.

In what way do you keep the balance that is in your hands; do you leave it with your banker?—With a view towards security I have a certain sum of money in the Bank of Ireland, which I put out of my own power in case of any accident, by having it in the names of two gentlemen whom I leave executors in case of my death; they are my two brothers, and the amount is greater; so that, in case of any accident happening to me, the fund cannot lose.

Are those accounts very voluminous; would it be inconvenient to send them to this Board?—Not the least.

How is Mr. Burrowes paid for keeping the account?—He keeps the accounts of the postmasters, and he gets a per-centage for it out of the fund, but not out of the revenue.

He is paid, upon the head of incidents, for keeping the officers accounts?—Yes.

What is he paid upon the fund?—He is paid five per cent. for keeping the postmasters accounts, and, I believe, the mail-coach contractors; but I really am not quite certain. I wish the suspension fund were taken from me, for I am quite tired of it.

Did not you receive a sum under the head of arrears of fees on expresses?—I did in 1819.

How did that arrear occur, and on what ground did you apply for the payment of it?—I discovered there had been a great number of expresses passing between Dunmore and Waterford, which I was not aware of till long after I came into the situation I now hold.

Then that previously would belong to Mr. Thompson?—Yes; but he never applied for it. I applied to the postmasters-general, stating that I conceived the case could not bear upon me if my predecessor neglected or did not think proper to apply for his fees on those expresses.

Are the Commissioners to understand that those arrears occurred during the time Mr. Thompson was chief clerk?—No; I did not claim it till 1819 or 1820; they were arrears from 1814 till then.

What is the nature of that fee?—It is a fee of 5*d.* on all expresses, either mails forwarded by expresses or foreign mails forwarded by expresses, from time immemorial; I claim it under the opinion of counsel, and grounded on the same fee being allowed me for mails in every other part of the country, particularly from Donaghadee to Belfast; and I took the opinion to satisfy the postmasters-general that I had a right to them, and the counsel gave it as their opinion that I had, and I have regularly received them since.

In what way are you officially connected with the sending of expresses?—Not the least; it is a mere fee which has been in existence ever since the post-office was established, as far as I know; certainly many years before I was born.

Have you never been able to trace that the chief clerk was connected with the sending of those expresses?—No; I have never examined into it; but from time immemorial the fee has been allowed. I have a fee, also, on every express between Holyhead and Dublin, and during the time of war it amounted to a very considerable sum, from 200*l.* to 300*l.* a year, a fee of 13*s.* 6*d.*; and I have a fee of 13*s.* 6*d.* on an individual taking a packet, that is considered as an express.

Who pays that fee; the individual going?—No, the public; the Lord Lieutenant. It may be right to state that I have got those fees in lieu of salary. Lord Clancarty stated that the chief clerk should have 300*l.* a year if he surrendered his fees; my predecessor had 600*l.* per annum; I did not, of course, choose to give up the fees for the salary; I got them, but lost them when they ceased, with the war.

You are clerk of the Munster road?—I am.

What is the net return from that road?—I suppose I make by the newspapers themselves from 120*l.* to 130*l.* a year, but I never looked into the account particularly.

Do you make that in excess of the management?—That is the amount which I get from the newspapers, from 120*l.* to 130*l.* a year; the post-office make up the deficiency.

What is the expense?—70*l.* a year.

That leaves an excess of about 120*l.*?—Yes.

Who manages the road for you?—Mr. Urquhart now.

Did Mr. Burrowes manage the road for you formerly?—Yes.

What was the reason of your transferring it to Mr. Urquhart?—Because Mr. Burrowes had too much to do; he told me he could not afford the time for it; I gave it, therefore, to Mr. Urquhart, the nephew of my predecessor, a very excellent confidential officer.

The Commissioners have had a person of the name of Irvine, a clerk in the writing office, before them; it appears that there was a transaction took place between him and a man of the name of Mitchell, the subject of which was the resignation of an office by Mitchell in favour of Irvine?—I should think not; I certainly think the Commissioners must have had erroneous information.

## Examinations.

No. 118.

Thomas Orde Lees,  
Esq.  
10th Dec. 1823.

The Commissioners wish to know what you know of the transaction?—I really know nothing about the resignation of Mr. Mitchell in favour of Mr. Irvine; decidedly not.

You know that Irvine had applied for Mitchell's situation in case he should resign, do you not?—There is Mr. Shiell will get the situation when Mr. Mitchell goes out.

Did not you see a letter of application from Mr. Irvine to Lord O'Neill upon the subject?—Upon my honour as a gentleman I do not recollect it; but I will state this, that a few days ago I told Mr. Irvine, for he is a most deserving officer, that I would recommend him to write to Lord O'Neill to get a son of his appointed as an extra officer; I have not the most distant recollection of any thing relating to himself.

The statement is, that Mr. Irvine did apply to Lord O'Neill to be appointed in the room of Mr. Mitchell on his resignation, and that that letter was submitted to you?—Not at all; on the contrary, he is yet to submit a letter to me about his son; I am myself anxious and have spoken to Lord Rosse about Mr. Shiell, who was and is to succeed Mitchell, and Lord Rosse sanctioned it, that as soon as Mitchell is dismissed (for dismissed he must be), Mr. Shiell, who has done the duty for years before, should be appointed; owing to some little irregularity, he was not promoted; there was not sufficient to prevent his promotion, but my brother thought he ought not to succeed; I explained the facts to Lord Rosse, and my brother to Lord O'Neill. Mr. Shiell is to succeed him, and it is only this day that orders have been given to the solicitor to take Mr. Clare and another officer to swear to their statements, with a view to Mitchell's dismissal; I may have seen the letter referred to, but I really have not the most distant recollection of it.

Did you ever hear of any letter from Mitchell to Irvine upon the subject?—Never; I am most anxious to get Mitchell dismissed, and to get Shiell back into that office.

If any thing in the nature of a proposal for compensation to Mitchell for resigning had taken place, you must have recollected it?—I must have recollected it so far that I would have had him prosecuted.

You are sure you never heard of it?—Never; if I had I would have prosecuted him for it. I certainly have an immensity to do, and am busy from morning to night, and therefore a thing might have escaped my memory; but I am sure I never heard of any proposal for compensation.

Your recollection is complete as to your never having before heard of a proposition made by Mr. Irvine to Mr. Mitchell to resign on a consideration?—Upon my honour I never did; and if I did, I ought to be dismissed, and not noticed. It is a thing of all others that both myself and my brother have been the most guarded against.

As to a letter to Lord O'Neill, applying for the succession, your recollection is not so certain; you may have seen it?—I may have, but I do not recollect it. I never would have made myself a party to a transaction connected with a consideration; if there is any thing wrong in the post-office I am sure to hear it; they may have shown me a letter, and got me to approve of it, to lay a trap for me, but I don't recollect it.

You do not mean to say that any person can have submitted to you a letter, proposing to Mr. Mitchell the granting a part of his salary, and you have passed that?—That is impossible; but any fellow that would come to act in that kind of manner, and to buy that situation, I think would be guilty of any thing.

You are quite clear that no such letter as that referred to was ever shown you?—No; I would not permit a man to remain in the office after he had shown me such a letter; I would go out of the office myself first.

Have you apartments in the post-office?—I have not.

From your situation of chief clerk, you know whether there is an arrangement made, that all persons receiving situations in the post-office should take an oath that they have not given any pecuniary consideration for them?—There is not; but I think there ought to be. There is an oath taken, but not of that nature; but I think that ought to be added, certainly.

T. ORDE LEES.

## Appendix, No. 119.

25th September 1823.

Mr. THOMAS GEORGE HARRISON called in and examined.

No. 119.

Mr.

T. G. Harrison.  
25th Sept. 1823.

HOW long have you been in the situation of Remittance Clerk in the post-office?—Ever since the year 1804.

What is your duty as remittance clerk?—To receive the remittances from the different postmasters in the country.

In what manner are those remittances made?—They are made in cash, bills, post bills, pension bills, money orders, drafts, in fact every species of thing that can be turned into cash in Dublin.

Do you mean that you receive from them any bills that they choose to send you?—Any bills payable within twenty-one days; and provided they are due within the quarter in which they are remitted.

Examinations.

No. 119.

Mr.

T. G. Harrison.  
25th Sept. 1823.

In what way are the bills you receive acknowledged?—They are acknowledged by a receipt from myself; the remittances come in letters directed to the secretary; when they are sending up cash they send up generally the first halves of the bank notes, which are acknowledged as such.

They are acknowledged as what?—As the first halves of bank notes.

Are they acknowledged as halves of bank notes, or half the amount?—They are acknowledged as halves of bank notes.

Are they acknowledged immediately?—On receipt.

Is there an additional acknowledgment for the other halves?—Always; they get an acknowledgment describing all they have sent up.

Written by yourself?—The description is printed, whether bank notes, bills, post bills, or pension bills, and the receipt is signed by me, as having got it.

Are you aware of any complaints having been made upon the subject of the manner in which the remittances are acknowledged; that they are frequently not acknowledged to the amount of what is received?—No, I never was aware of any such circumstance; if there is any informality in the remittance, when it is sent up, it is customary to send it back to the postmaster that he may correct the error, and be aware of it himself.

You are not aware of any such complaints having been made?—No; it could not appear so from that circumstance.

You are not aware of any instances in which the remittance of the first halves of bank notes has been acknowledged, and the acknowledgment of the remittance of the second halves has been omitted?—I am aware that a postmaster has written for an acknowledgment for a second half, and on his doing so he has had a duplicate receipt; the receipts are all written from the book in which the entry is made.

Will you take upon yourself to say, that in every instance in which such an application has been made, it has been answered by sending a duplicate receipt?—I will, as far as has come within my knowledge.

Must it not necessarily have come within your knowledge if it was the case?—The letters do not come to me; they come to the secretary.

Do not you see the letters?—I do not see any letters but what concern myself; if they are handed to me I immediately account for the informality.

When you receive half notes does your acknowledgment state the amount for which the notes are?—No, it does not.

Is it dated?—It is dated.

When you receive the second half notes, does it then state the amount?—It then describes the remittance, and states the amount in full.

Upon the receipt of the second half notes, the amount of the notes that compose the first remittance not having been acknowledged, is it not practicable to send the acknowledgment on the receipt of the second half notes, for a smaller sum than the notes themselves convey?—I should imagine that if such a thing was done, the postmaster in the country would immediately send back the receipt, stating that the sum was incorrect, because it is at his risk if he gets a receipt for a lesser sum than he sent up.

Do you know, in point of fact, that this complaint has not been made?—I never heard that such a complaint had been made; I have known on the second half coming up, when a comparison has taken place with the postmaster's letter and the money stated to be in it, and it has differed in the amount, the whole remittance to be made up and sent back to the deputy for his correction.

Do you mean that you send the whole of the remittance back?—Yes, the whole remittance is sent back to the deputy postmaster, in order that he may be able to discover where the error lies, and that he may satisfy his own mind with respect to the circumstance; it might happen that a postmaster had over-rated what he was sending; he might add it up wrong, and say I send so and so, and on looking into and comparing it, it would not amount to what he had made it.

Why do you not in the first acknowledgment state the value of the first half notes which are remitted to you?—It would be next to an impossibility to do that; there should be at least two or three clerks more to do so; I do not examine them at all in that state; the deputy states, "I enclose you half notes, amounting to so and so, when you acknowledge the receipt of these I will send you the other halves;" then he receives a letter saying, "I have received your letter containing half notes."

Without describing the amount of the half notes?—Yes; that has been the constant practice.

In the first acknowledgment to the postmaster you acknowledge neither the amount nor the number of the half notes?—No; no doubt it could be done; "I received yours covering the amount of half notes," stating them so and so, acknowledging what he stated in his letter.

Do you keep an account of the arrears of the deputies?—The account is kept in the accountant-general's office.

Is it not a part of your business to obtain payment of those arrears; do not you carry on the correspondence with those persons?—Not at all; I make a return of such as appear to be in arrear from my books, that I am enabled to do; their revenue is averaged, and the averaged amount is entered in what is called monthly instalments, and the balance due the preceding quarter forms an instalment from the deputy; some of them remit once a fortnight, and others the twenty-fourth of every month; and when I find any who do not remit, I immediately report them. I have circular letters for this occasion, which the secretary

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signs, and they are sent forward to them; I also send a return of the defaulters to the solicitor; the solicitor writes to them and their securities, acquainting them with the state of their office; and I make a similar return for the postmasters general.

After all this form is gone through, the secretary signs the printed letters, calling upon them to pay their arrears?—Yes.

Are they not filled up by you?—Yes; this is only what they appear to be in arrear, for what they are actually in arrear can be ascertained only from the accountant-general; it is only from the averaged instalments of their office I am enabled to make out what comes pretty near their arrear. I may be in error, and I am liable to be called to a serious account if I make a wrong return, or exaggerate the arrear.

If a man who had money to pay on the 24th of the month did not send you any money at all, what should you do?—I would report him.

Would it be your duty to send him a circular letter, requiring him to send it?—When I report him for not sending it, I hand that letter to the secretary, and he signs it; it is my business to send him that circular letter through the secretary.

After you have got the secretary's signature do you transmit the letter?—Yes.

The secretary can know of the nonpayment only through you; it is your duty to report to the secretary, and at the same time you have a circular letter ready for the secretary to sign?—Just so.

Have you any thing to do with the recovery of those arrears?—Nothing in the world.

Do you make a report, as a matter of course, if the person does not pay; or do you receive any orders on the subject of the report you are to make?—I do not receive any orders; I report them as a matter of course.

You have nothing to do with the proceedings to recover the money?—Nothing in the world.

When you receive the remittances from the country what do you do with them?—When I receive a letter containing the first parcel I answer it, and I then lock them up in an alphabet; on receiving the second halves I join those remittances together, I enter them in my cash book for that purpose, and I pay them in to the receiver-general.

Immediately?—Yes.

You are merely the channel of receiving them?—Merely so.

You keep an account, of course?—No account, except that which I enter in the cash book; I get a receipt for each remittance as it comes up, and it is entered in the cash book; I describe the remittance in the book, every note they send up, every bill they send up, every pension bill when they fall due; every thing is described, and the number of the notes of each description.

How often and in what manner is that book examined?—It is examined by the accountant-general once a week now.

How long has that been the case?—I suppose these fourteen years back it has been examined every week; it used to be once a quarter until the year 1808.

You take the money to the receiver-general?—Yes, or to his first clerk.

Since 1808 this account has been examined once a week by the accountant-general?—It has.

What sort of examination does the accountant-general make?—He takes an account of all the bills as they fall due, the post bills as they fall due, and the cash as entered in my book, and he checks the receiver-general in all, and sees that he has lodged what I have paid him in the Bank of Ireland; he has also a check upon him from the bank books.

What receipt does the receiver-general give to you?—The receiver-general signs the initials of his name on the book for every identical remittance; each remittance is there described from every postmaster.

That is your discharge?—It is.

Then the accountant-general has nothing to do but to see that it is receipted?—Yes, and to see that the money is accounted for; the accountant-general tots those up in his book, and sees that the money there entered is accounted for by the receiver-general; he is the check upon the receiver-general.

Your book is a check upon the receiver-general too; your book shows that you have received so much from the country and paid it over to the receiver-general?—Yes; but without the accountant-general it would not be made to appear that the receiver-general had lodged the money in the Bank.

What is the title of your situation in the secretary's office?—I am entitled remittance clerk.

Have you other duties in the secretary's office besides the receiving of remittances?—Yes; I am what is called storekeeper, I give out the stationery to the office, and check the other officers receiving stationery, and sign all the orders going to the stationer for any stationery they may require.

Do you demand the stationery in bulk, and distribute it to the offices?—No, I do not keep any supply, but I send for it as it is required; the officers on the establishment are very limited, as the accounts will show. I send a certain proportion of stationery to the captains of the packets; I send a certain proportion of stationery to the surveyors and extra surveyors, and those are the only persons that have a certain proportion of stationery.

When they require stationery, do they sign a paper?—They write an order, "Send for the use of this office half a ream of paper and half a hundred of pens;" when I see this I put my name as a mere matter of form.

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When you receive that order, do you ever take it upon you to consider whether it is an office that requires a supply of stationery for the public service or not?—I have done so.

Do you do so habitually?—I do do so, and I have made considerable savings by doing so.

Do you ever receive those little orders you describe from Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—The British newspaper office have a certain allowance; half a ream of letter paper and half a ream of propatria paper, also pens, &c.; I could show by my book.

Daily or weekly?—Quarterly.

That is for their business in relation to express newspapers?—It is.

Under whose orders do you receive those applications and issue orders for stationery upon them for those several persons?—Under the authority, I presume, of the postmasters-general, for it has been a thing time immemorial; my two predecessors did the same thing; it is under the same authority.

Suppose one of the notes were to come for a greater quantity than you have been used to supply, what should you do?—I should immediately question it.

Have you ever done so?—I have.

In what instance?—Really I would be at a loss almost to name the instance; I do not at this moment recollect.

Do you recollect any instance in which you have done so?—I am positive I have done so.

Do you issue stationery to all the departments of your office?—All the departments that are entitled to it.

To the secretary's office?—The secretary's office get it as they require it; perhaps three or four quire; the corresponding clerks, under the secretary, get a quire of paper or more when they require it.

Do you issue it to the clerks of the roads?—No, I do not.

Where do they get their stationery?—I presume they have an allowance for stationery; I am not aware of it; I never see their accounts; but they have some allowance for management, and it may be included in that; they get no stationery from me.

Is there any body else in the office that gives an order for stationery?—No.

Is not the business of the clerks of the roads carried on in the office?—The clerk of the roads business is carried on about Dublin. Mr. Donlevy's, as clerk of the Connaught road, is carried on, I believe, in Fleet-street; and I believe Mr. Johnson's, as clerk of another road, is carried on in another place; whether they do any part of it in the office I cannot say. The business of the secretary is carried on in the office.

Is not the business of the Munster road carried on in the office?—That is carried on in the same room, I believe.

Do you carry on any of the correspondence for any of those roads?—Not any; indeed I never assisted in any of them; indeed I never was asked.

Have you issued stationery to the writer's office?—I have.

Have you ever issued orders for paper to a greater extent than that which you conceived to be used in the office?—Never, to my knowledge.

Did you ever take any trouble to know?—I have done my best to ascertain whether the paper was used or not; perhaps I was thought very inquisitive for so doing, but I have done so.

Did you do it from having any suspicions that it was not so?—No; perhaps it was more from curiosity than any thing else, to see whether they were making use of the paper. It was for that reason I suggested the propriety of getting in the stationery merely as it was required, to prevent the possibility of waste by having a store in the office.

The clerks of roads are not among the offices to which you issue any stationery?—I do not issue it either to Mr. Donlevy or Mr. Johnson, or as clerk of a road to Mr. Thomas Lees; he is in the secretary's office; as a corresponding officer of course he gets stationery there, but it is a kind of stationery that would not answer for his road purposes.

What kind of stationery does that require?—The stationery he writes on is a peculiar kind of letter paper, a thin letter paper; if it was given for any other purpose it would very soon make its appearance; but I suppose there is an allowance for those things, for he does not do any part of the road business himself; it is done by an officer for him.

It is done by Mr. Burrowes for them?—No, it is not done by Mr. Burrowes now, but by Mr. Urquhart.

What department is Mr. Urquhart in?—In the mail-coach department.

Have you issued no stationery to Mr. Urquhart?—I have issued stationery to Mr. Ferguson, who is at the head of that department.

Do you mean to represent that when there is stationery in the office, and stationery is required for those purposes, it is not done by the stationery of the office?—Really I cannot answer for that; the stationery used by the clerks of the roads I suppose they have an allowance under the head of management for; but as to getting stationery from the office for the purpose of making use of it for their road they could not do it.

What do you mean by an allowance under the head of management?—Every road is supposed to be worth so much to the clerk of the road; and the expense of the management of the road is deducted from the profits of the road, and the deficiency is made up afterwards.

The road is to produce to the clerk a certain sum?—Yes.

When the calculation is made, the expense of all the management of the road is deducted, and the public makes up to him, after deducting for the management, the full sum at which it was taken?—Yes; just so.

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Of course the stationery, or whatever is required for the management, is included in the expenses of the management?—Just so.

Are not you a sorter in the office?—That is my designation in the sorting office.

Have you any duties to perform in that capacity?—I have duties to perform there, and I performed the duty, when I was able to attend there, of charge deliverer.

As it appears, from your statement of your other duties, that your duties in the sorting office are not consistent with them, how are they performed?—The duties in the sorting office have latterly been performed by one of the probationers; my state of health rendered it impossible for me to attend; I was obliged to get a certificate to that effect from our surgeon.

You have been generally absent?—Latterly; for the first three and twenty years of my life there was not a better attendant in the office; I was never absent, and I lost my health by it. I found that my situation in the secretary's office would not enable me to live, and have a common sufficiency; after twenty-seven years service I have 200*l.* a year.

Is that probationer who does your duty paid by you, or by the public?—He is paid by me; there is a guinea a week stopped out of my salary to pay him.

What do you receive as a sorter?—I receive 200*l.* a year from the inland office for my length of service; I have been upwards of twenty-seven years in that office, and out of which I pay a guinea per week to the man who performs my duty for being absent on a sick certificate.

What do you receive from the secretary's office for the performance of your duty there?—I receive 20*l.* a year as storekeeper; I have 200*l.* a year, which is the highest I can rise to in my present situation, and I have perquisites to the amount of 27*l.* 11*s.*

What is your salary as a remittance clerk?—200*l.* a year.

You have also 200*l.* a year in the inland office?—Yes.

And also the 20*l.* and the 27*l.*?—Yes; that is the whole of my emoluments.

THOMAS G. HARRISON.

Appendix, No. 120.

Friday, 29th August 1823.

Mr. ANTHONY LYSER called in and examined.

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Mr.

Anthony Lyster.  
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WHAT situation do you hold in the post-office?—I am Superintendent of the Alphabet department.

It is stated by Sir Edward Lees that you have some communication to make to this Board with regard to the transaction of the 8th of March last; if you have any such communication the Commissioners will be happy to receive it?—I was not on duty on that evening; I should suppose he alludes to a previous conversation perhaps eight or ten months previous.

What was that conversation?—It was with regard to a suggestion I made to Lord Rosse, when his Lordship was in town. I suggested the propriety of our performing the same duty when the packet arrived every day, as we performed when the packet arrived between six and seven.

What is the duty you perform in that case?—On the evenings that the mail arrives between six and seven it has been customary that we go into the British-mail office and select our own letters; being more conversant in that branch of the business than others, I suggested to Lord Rosse the propriety of our doing so every day, as it would give facility to the public correspondence; a few days after my Lord Rosse had approved of this, and there was an order issued upon the subject to that effect, Mr. Homan came in to me, and mentioned to me that he had some objections to that, he being the president of the British-mail office; I said to him, "Would it not be better, if you have any, to state them in writing, and let them go before the secretary;" he then told me he wished to have some private conversation with me; I went into his own room; he there stated to me that he conceived and was always under the impression that he had a right to share the emoluments of that office; I said that was very extraordinary, for that from time immemorial I never knew of two distinct deliveries to the merchants, one Irish and another English; that it would be better for him to state it officially. I do not recollect the words, but I then understood perfectly from him, that if I gave him a consideration he could have no objection; the precise words I cannot take upon myself to answer; he stated that he had some objections, but that those objections could be removed by my giving him a consideration; that conversation passed between Mr. Homan and me at his instance.

How does that bear upon the transactions of the 8th of March?—I do not know in the least; I was not on duty on the 8th of March.

Has not an alteration within a certain time taken place in the mode of conducting the business of the alphabet office?—There has.

Will you state what the alteration is?—The alteration has reference to the previous conversation I had with Lord Rosse, and which I have had the honour of mentioning; that practice was preserved for about twelve months.

What was the consequence of that practice while it was going on?—I believe a general satisfaction to the mercantile body.

Did they get their letters sooner?—They did; but that practice has been abolished.

During the period of its continuance did any losses occur?—I am not in possession of any; there was one letter missing; a complaint was made, and I waited upon the bankers, Messrs. Ball and company, and found that one of the partners had duly received the letter, and that he found it in his desk; that was the only instance of a supposed loss that I ever heard of.

Are you aware that it produced any official inconvenience at all?—On the contrary, I myself should say that it produced efficiency and dispatch.

That being the case, will you now state the reasons that were given for the alteration?—The reasons that were given to me by Sir Edward Lees were, that it placed one merchant above another, and consequently it was a kind of favour to one, rather to the richest one; for there is a fee of about two or three guineas from each merchant who receives his letters through the alphabet, that it placed one man consequently above another.

Did he state that any complaint had been made to him?—No.

Did he state that any representation of any kind had been made to him, which occasioned his making this alteration?—He did not state that to me.

Was that the whole reason he gave to you for the alteration?—There was another; he said, that if we were permitted to go in and select our own letters, we had the power of injuring the revenue if we had the will.

Did he state how?—Only in general terms; but I beg to remark that in our selection of the letters we might take taxed letters for the purpose of obtaining the postage, as we ultimately became chargeable with the postage; there is no postage of course on free letters; but that we might surreptitiously take taxed letters out of the office; certainly if we had the will we could.

Paying the postage or not?—Not paying the postage; that we might take ten shillings worth of letters, for instance, out of the office without accounting for them, not putting them amongst those that were to be counted against us.

That is, that your access to the office gave you a possibility of stealing those letters?—Yes, that was as I understood it.

Had you ever any reason to suspect in any of your clerks or persons assisting you, that any thing of the kind had been done?—Quite the contrary; I should think, if any thing, at least, the chief clerk is more respectable than I am myself.

Did he state to you that he had received complaint from any parties?—No, I am certain that he did not state that to me.

Did he state to you that it would interfere with the interests of any parties in the office?—No, I am certain he did not state that to me.

Have you any reason to believe, from any other communication you had, that it had any reference to the interests of the express clerks?—From the rumours which took place, the express clerks had some influence I should be inclined to think on the subject.

Do you apply that to one or the other?—I may say generally the express clerks.

It had a tendency to affect their interests?—I do not think it could affect their interests, for they have half an hour's advance of any thing which can come to the public; the express papers are immediately dispatched from the arrival of the mail; five minutes covers the dispatch from the post-office.

In what manner are they dispatched?—They are dispatched by messengers of their own.

Do they arrive sorted?—They arrive pretty nearly sorted; so much so that the delay does not exceed five minutes.

The delivery from the alphabet gave almost an equality of intelligence with their express papers, did it not?—I do not think it could.

That you understood to be their impression?—Yes.

If they have any interest in it, that is their interest?—Yes; the alphabet can never by any possibility open within half an hour, even allowing us to sort our letters; we must go over the country letters as well as the Dublin letters.

Who do duty in your office?—Two individuals and myself.

Was any application made to your knowledge to Mr. Homan in the course of the evening of the 8th of March, on the part of the alphabet office, on any subject?—I should think there was; I am not prepared to answer the question for I was not on duty that evening; but I am inclined to think from general practice that it was so.

What sort of application, or with what view?—When the mail arrives at seven, or rather after seven, suppose it be ever so short, the letters for the Dublin delivery are not disposed of that evening. I rather conclude that when it came to so nice a point as I am informed it did come to, an application was made from the alphabet to know whether a delivery would take place that night or not; but of my own knowledge I cannot answer.

If the delivery did not take place that night, the letters in that case would not have been sent to the alphabet?—No.

If the mails had been forwarded, the letters would have been sent to the alphabet?—That is latterly the general practice.

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Would that have been the case at that time?—I conclude so; I have every reason to think it.

The application you apprehend to have been made was to ascertain whether they were to be delivered, or not?—It was to ascertain the simple fact whether the mail arrived at or after seven; the hour governs the alphabet.

Would not the fact of the sending forward of the letters govern the alphabet?—I think so.

Then if they had arrived at seven, and been sent forward, they would have been distributed through the alphabet to Dublin?—I think they ought.

Upon whom would that have devolved?—I think it would have devolved on Mr. Homan; the alphabet officer on duty ought to have taken his charge if it went to so nice a point as any doubt of the mails having arrived a minute before or a minute after seven; my own impression is, that every facility should be given to the public, and that a minute or two ought not, or perhaps more than a minute or two, to interfere with it, if it can be by possibility so arranged.

What number of letters are distributed through the alphabet daily?—Irish and English, I should say a third.

About how many in number?—About one thousand three or four hundred, I should think; but I never calculated that.

Are you quite satisfied, upon reflection, that this alteration in the mode of conducting the alphabet is inconvenient to the public, without offering any better security to the revenue?—Certainly, I conceive it is injurious to the public interest.

It turned upon you and your chief clerk coming into the office to assist in sorting the letters; that was the reason given by Sir Edward Lees?—Yes; that was the only thing that can affect the revenue.

In consequence of that alteration, have two young men of a very inferior class been brought out of some other part of the office to assist in performing that duty which he thought it unfit and unsafe you and your clerks should do?—I am aware that is the fact.

Who are they who have so come in?—They are both junior letter-sorters in the inland office.

Do you know what security they give?—The ordinary security for clerks of that description is 200*l*.

What security do you give?—2,000*l*.

What security does your first clerk give?—500*l*., I think.

How long has your first clerk been in the office?—I suppose he has been fourteen years in it.

How long have those sorters that were sent in been in the office?—Much more recently; I cannot state exactly the date of their appointments.

ANTHONY LYSTER.

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Mr. ANTHONY LYSTER again called in and examined.

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YOU have the charge of the alphabet office, in the post-office?—I have.

How are the letters addressed to the clerk of the war department, which come to the office, disposed of, and what separation is made?—Letters addressed to the first and principal clerk of the War Office are sent direct to the Castle; letters addressed to the first and principal clerk of the War Office, with the words on the left corner "commissary-general," are separated from those addressed merely, "first and principal clerk," without any word at the corner, and are sent to the alphabet, and he sends his own messenger for them.

To whom do they go afterwards?—They go direct to the commissary-general from the alphabet.

Who sends for them?—The commissary-general; Mr. Luscombe is his name.

Then they never pass under the eye of Mr. Connor, the principal clerk in the War Office?—No; the separation alluded to takes place in the inland office.

Mr. Luscombe, as deputy commissary-general, has no privilege?—He has no privilege whatever of any description.

Are those letters which have come in that way numerous?—Indeed they are.

You must be aware that having no privilege, and those letters not passing under the eye of the person to whom they are addressed, there is no check whatever upon them?—No, certainly there is not; that practice, however, is of very old date, previous to my going into that office; there certainly is no check in that way; the commissary-general has of course a contingent postage account, perhaps to the amount of 800*l*.

With the alphabet?—Yes.

What

What forms that account?—Letters addressed to the commissary-general; they, of course, are all charged with the postage in his individual capacity as commissary-general.

Does his contingent account for that amount to 800*l.*?—Yes, both inwards and outwards; there is a very heavy outward postage in the department; the letters he dispatches from his office he post-pays, in place of the postage being paid in the country.

Then he receives his letters free, but he post-pays the letters he dispatches under an account kept with him in the alphabet?—Yes.

In what other situations in the office were you before you were at the head of the alphabet?—I was a senior clerk in the secretary's office, which I gave up on condition of my getting this situation that I at present hold; I had been a considerable time in the office.

Did you hold any other situation in the office previous to your being in the secretary's office?—No; I was appointed to the secretary's office in the first instance.

You never were in the situation of a sorter?—No; I officiated in the alphabet when the illness of the head of the office prevented his attendance; I was in the secretary's office twelve or thirteen years.

An alteration has recently taken place in the alphabet office?—Yes; on the 3d or the 4th of July.

That is one that has given a good deal of dissatisfaction, has it not?—To the mercantile public it has; the delivery from the alphabet gave a great stimulus to the delivery through the carriers, inasmuch as it put them on the alert, and made them, I think, more active in their duty. I have forwarded a return to Lord Rosse, showing that the general and common delivery through the town was expedited by our getting our letters direct; in fact, we took a portion of the business off the carriers hands, consequently they could get through the remainder with more rapidity.

How much does the alphabet accelerate the delivery to the merchants?—I think, alluding to the old practice, an hour and a half.

How much sooner did the merchants get the letters when the alphabet was conducted in the manner in which it was conducted by you, than they get them now under the alteration?—We generally take about an hour now, we used to do it within half an hour or five and thirty minutes; again, we got them more perfectly, being more conversant in assorting them.

Do not a great number of letters of various kinds come to Sir Edward Lees, to be franked and sent forward under his privilege?—Yes, indeed, a good number.

Do they come from the Castle sometimes as well as from individuals?—Yes; with reference to the Castle, they were official or public, being generally green wax processes or such things.

Has he been in the habit of franking them?—He has been generally in the habit of franking the officers letters, or, in fact, any letters that the officers would present to him; but I have frequently heard him catechize the officer, and ask him whether it was really the officer's own letter, or the letter of any one of his own family.

His franking was not confined to officers letters?—No; I should certainly say not.

When there was a great pressure of business of that kind, did he always frank himself, or has any body authority to assist him?—No one properly speaking has authority to assist him, because no one can make use of the name of another; but his brother, Mr. Thomas Lees, franks Irish letters in his own name as clerk of a road.

What is the fact as to English letters?—No one could ever use his name; I have directed letters, that is, the superscription of the letter for his signature frequently, but no one could ever use his name.

In point of fact, do you know that no one ever did?—I never knew an instance of it, unless it be letters from charitable societies; but where there was no artifice in making use of his name, the person did it in any manner he pleased; but I never knew an instance of an individual making use of his name to frank a letter; those of the charitable societies are franked by the clerks indiscriminately.

Are they not authenticated by Sir Edward Lees?—No, I should say not; they bear his signature, but if that was put on by himself, he never could get through them; they are very numerous.

What is the use of putting his name upon them if he is not the person to put it?—They come into his office, and under the presumption that they all bear privileged covers, and that no other individual can have a cover of that description, generally speaking, they come there without wafers or seals; I have seen them come sealed, and I have remonstrated with the bearer of them upon the subject; and in some cases, where I said I would not do them for him, he said they actually contained bank note remittances to the country. There are, I believe, remittances from those charitable societies into the country; in other instances, I have detected private letters; in those cases I have taken off the covers which bore no seal, and thrown them into the office myself to be charged.

It appears that the Act of Parliament that permits such letters to go, confines it to charitable societies, does it not?—I think it applies merely to charitable societies.

In the list of the associations who enjoy that privilege, there is every religious society of every description in the kingdom, is there not?—I believe so.

Under what orders has that privilege, granted in a limited manner by the Act of Parliament, been extended to all those?—I speak in this instance of my own knowledge; I always objected indiscriminately to that kind of thing. I never did, of my own accord, frank one

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of them, without the authority of the secretary; that authority, certainly, was not in writing, but I always received his sanction for it, objecting to it, as I did, in several instances.

Do you know under what authority he himself gave you directions to frank them, and authorize their going free?—I am not aware of any authority he possessed.

Did he receive any directions from any person?—Not that I am aware of.

Was it of his own authority that he extended the operation of the Act of Parliament to every religious society?—I am not aware of any authority in existence beyond what the Act of Parliament includes.

Did you ever call his attention to the doubt as to the legality of that?—No; I cannot take upon myself to say that I ever presumed to do that; I objected personally to it.

On what ground did you object to it?—First, on the score of conceiving it highly improper.

Why did you conceive it highly improper?—Because I thought it could not be in the contemplation of Government to let every society send their letters through that medium; but I generally made this distinction, that societies which had funds of their own should certainly pay their postage.

Were you aware, when you suggested that, or took that principle yourself, that that was exactly the principle which had been adopted in England?—No; I was never in the London post-office but once, to my recollection. Another objection I had was, perhaps, a selfish one, that it kept me late frequently; for, of course, I turned my attention to that the very last thing after I had closed up the correspondence and disposed of the business of the office.

How are your accounts in the alphabet kept?—They are kept monthly. We make up the books of all the merchants and public offices, with very few exceptions, on the last day of each month, unless it falls on a Sunday, we retain the book that evening.

When do they make repayments to you?—They make repayments to us, generally speaking, in the first fortnight of the second month. If I suppose this to be January, they pay their January accounts between the 1st of February and the 14th. I never could get them to pay all in one, or all in two or three days.

Had you ever any difficulty in recovering the money from them?—In some instances; that, however, cannot injure the revenue, it is my own private concern; there are some debts that we never can recover.

How often do you make your payments into the post-office?—I pay into the post-office once a week. The accounts close every Friday, and we pay them in on Monday, but that does not clear off what I am charged with.

Do you mean that you pay for the past week on the Monday, or do you pay one week when another is due?—We are charged with every thing that comes into the office. The accounts as applying to us, close on every Friday in the receiver-general's office; we pay in then a week's charge on the Monday following, the Saturday and Sunday intervening, and previous to two o'clock on Monday we pay a week's revenue into the receiver-general's office.

What revenue do you pay in on the Monday morning?—I should say the last week's revenue.

The account then made up on the Friday is not the account of the current week, but the account of the week before, is it not?—I think so; we are always a week's revenue in arrear.

You have one week's revenue in hand, have you not?—I am one week's revenue due to the office, but I am not one week's revenue in hand. I am charged with it, and it is due to me.

Is that the whole balance that you have in your hand?—The whole balance; I am never in arrear hardly so much as a week's revenue. I have sometimes applied my own private money on a Monday to keep down the balance, not to have it too large.

You have no balance outstanding on any other account?—No, none in the world.

About what is your balance weekly?—From 700*l.* to 750*l.*, that is about our charge; one week is heavier than another, of course, putting the inward with the outward postage; we pay in half what the entire carriers of Dublin pay in.

Do you know enough to be able to say, what proportion of the letters, in point of number as compared with the whole quantity that arrive for delivery in Dublin at the post-office, go through the alphabet?—About one third.

How many subscribers have you?—Upwards of one hundred accounts.

Is the subscription alike to each person?—No; the public offices pay more than the merchants; the merchants pay three guineas.

What do the Government pay?—The public offices, generally speaking, from five to ten guineas, according to the extent of their correspondence.

What is the highest that is paid by any public office?—With one exception, the Excise Board, I think, pay twenty guineas, none more than ten.

Do all the letters of the Excise and Customs go through the alphabet?—All.

How are they paid for?—They are paid for once a week; the last week is paid for in this.

You charge the whole that go to each department?—Yes.

You charge to the department every letter that is directed to any person, either at the Customs or Excise?—Yes.

Do you receive from the Excise or from the Customs the amount of what you charge for every letter so sent?—We do; as a public concern, the clerk of the postage at the Custom-house frequently returns a number of letters, with an account of postage to be deducted from the gross sum, being letters, I presume, of a private nature. We will say the account goes

in to-day, with 30*l.*, perhaps he will send back 18*s.* or 20*s.* worth of letters; they have been charged originally on me, and if he did not send them back to me, that would deprive me of so much.

When he sends them back to you, how do you recover the money?—We send them by the penny-post, and recover it by that channel.

All the clerks in the department do not receive their letters free at the expense of the department?—No, I apprehend not, or they would be much more numerous.

Are those sent back to you belonging to the officers of the department that are suspected to be of a private nature, and therefore sent back?—I conclude so; and I know they are to officers; I presume the clerk of the postage at the Custom-house does not choose to receive them as being private letters.

How long has that been the case?—That has been the case ever since I recollect it, more or less.

How long have you been in your present situation?—I have been acting in it twelve months; I acted at different times previously for twelve months.

Was that the case when you acted in that capacity previously?—It was; I think they send back more now.

You stated to Lord Rosse, that in consequence of the alphabet there was no delay of the public delivery of letters?—I showed to his lordship that the delivery was expedited.

Did you keep a copy of your letter to Lord Rosse?—I did not; in consequence of my being pressed to a moment; it would have taken me an hour to take a copy, and I must have lost the post. It was a comparative statement of the dispatch from the letter-carriers office for the three months previous to and subsequent to my appointment, showing therefore an expedition in the ordinary delivery through town.

In what manner are the letters sorted in the inland office for the alphabet?—The Irish letters are sorted in the inland office in the morning by the different persons at the different roads; they have a list of the alphabet, and are quite conversant with the names from long habit; they throw them aside, and they are made up by a senior officer, what is called a clerk of a road, into various parcels of one pound, two pounds, and three pounds, and given to us at a window, which opens into the inland office, and the officer sees that what he has sent out to the alphabet is at once reckoned, and agrees or disagrees with the charge-deliverer's account.

How were they sorted and sent from the British-mail office under the plan under which you have been acting?—We went into the British-mail office and selected the letters applying to our delivery.

Who went in?—Myself and senior clerk.

No other person?—Yes, on a Sunday; in order to give the clerks every second Sunday, the second clerk went in.

Not without yourself?—No; generally speaking I was there, unless I was ill.

How is it conducted since this alteration?—The Irish letters continue as they were: we are not suffered to go into the British-mail office, and the letters are all given to the carriers in parcels of one, two, three, four, and five pounds, the carriers letters and alphabet letters; we then go in and intermix ourselves with the carriers, and take our own out.

In the British-mail office they have called in the assistance of two junior clerks, in consequence of yourself and your clerk not being permitted to go in?—I believe three, but I am not positive.

Are they sorted now in the British-mail office in the same way as you and your clerk used to sort them?—No; they are now charged on the carriers; they are sent out in parcels of a certain amount, without any distinction.

Then you go and mix yourselves with the carriers?—We separate our portion, and dispose of them by throwing them into the different boxes.

If the alteration was intended with a view to any security, do you conceive that by the mode of conducting it, there is greater security than there was before?—I think the present mode, as far as my opinion goes, is highly improper, inasmuch as we have found it invariably the case, that when a letter has been lost and property embezzled, the individual who has done so never takes it from that portion which would really apply to his own delivery, what is called upon his own walk; he will take it off a brother carrier's walk, or he will take it in preference off the alphabet, for we stand in the light of a carrier only; in one instance it is sent out to the public; in another they come for it.

Previously when you yourself assisted in sorting the letters in the British-mail office, and conveyed them at once to the alphabet, you conceive that the letters were less subject to that species of depredation than they are now, when they go at first to the carriers?—Most assuredly.

Can you state any facts that show that to be the case?—I do not know whether this may be considered a fact, that for twelve months there has not been a solitary instance of a loss, nor a solitary instance of complaint, but one, which I believe has been mentioned, and which was found in the desk of a partner in the house.

Since the change has there been any loss?—No, I have heard of none; it has been very recent.

When you were in the habit of selecting your own letters, others were sent out in the same way as they are now to the letter-carriers?—They were.

Do you recollect that it was at that time a common thing for letters to be lost or purloined?—I cannot put my hand on any individual case, but I recollect perfectly well various complaints of missing letters and lost letters from time to time, as can be of course

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proved by the books in the secretary's office, where a note is taken of them; if a letter is lost or miscarries, the complaint does not come to my office, but to the secretary's office. I believe there were several complaints and inquiries made, the result of which was not favourable. The description of person in the one office is so very different, I have a great objection to the going in and mixing personally with the carriers.

Have you had any complaints since the alteration, of the loss of any letters that belonged to your office?—No; that alteration is very recent.

ANTHONY LYSTER.

## Appendix, No. 122.

12th December 1823.

Mr. ANTHONY LYSTER again called in and examined.

No. 122.

Mr.

*Anthony Lyster.*  
12th Dec. 1823.

WHAT knowledge have you of an application made by Mr. Irvine, respecting his succession to Mr. Mitchell in the British-mail office?—I will state it precisely: Mr. Irvine was a clerk in the post-office, in the writing office; he was remarkably anxious to better himself; the writing office not being on the establishment, he frequently spoke to me on the subject of trying to get himself permanently situated, when I was in the office at various times. In the course of time, Mr Mitchell was in the prospect of getting some property, I believe, from an uncle of his, and it was expected he would not return to his office; Mr. Irvine said, "Is there any possibility of my getting into any permanent office?" I said, "there is no likelihood of a vacancy in the post-office, I do not contemplate any; besides, have you interest enough to get one if it should become vacant?" "Why," says he, "if I do not get something permanent, it is not worth my while to remain in this country;" I said, "take care how you give up what you have, unless you get something better;" he said, "I think Mr. Mitchell is not likely to return, and I will write to him upon the subject;" further than this I never heard till yesterday, when I heard that he had given my name and that of Mr. Thomas Lees as securities for him; at this moment I do not know the nature of any proposition he made to Mr. Mitchell on the subject: in endeavouring to refresh my memory on those subjects, I recollect that I met Mr. Irvine one day once in the yard; he showed me a letter which he had addressed to Lord O'Neill, he said, "Be so kind to read this letter for me;" I did read it, it was an application of quite a different nature; to appoint his son to a probationary situation in the post-office; in the last few lines I read this, "I am authorized by Mr. Thomas Lees and Mr. Lyster to refer to them for the capability of my son;" said I, "Do not make use of my name, and before you make use of Mr. Thomas Lees's name go to him and ask him whether he permits you to do so; 'authorized' of course pre-supposes you have the approbation of those persons, therefore do not make use of his name without apprising him of it: in any case do not use mine, I will give you the reason why; if Lord O'Neill is disposed to serve your son, the mention of my name is unnecessary; if he is not disposed to serve you, I am sure the mention of my name can be of no use to you;" so far from wishing or suffering my name to be coupled with any transaction, I am perfectly aware, and have been for years, of the penal consequences of selling government situations, and what materially impressed it upon my recollection was, a circumstance which took place when I was quite a boy; I was perfectly sensible it was penal to both the parties.

Do you mean that that is the only letter you have ever seen of Mr. Irvine's?—I never read a line on the subject.

Did Mr. Irvine never mention to you that he intended to make a proposition to Mr. Mitchell to retire, giving him 50*l.* a-year?—Never, upon my oath; so far from it, that I was not till this moment aware of the nature of the proposition Mr. Irvine was to make, and to my surprise and astonishment I yesterday learned he had made use of my name.

How did you hear that?—I heard it from Mr. Lees and Mr. Irvine himself; and he told me that in making use of my name he had not my authority for so doing; he told me that information had been given here that he had mentioned both Mr. Lees's name and mine in a letter; I said, "Mr. Irvine, how could you do that; did you ask my permission to do it?" and he said, "No, I acknowledge I did not, I did it without;" I am perfectly sensible that if I had mentioned any thing of the kind to Mr. Thomas Lees, he would have been very much displeased; I certainly got Mr. Irvine extra employment in the post-office, from a wish to serve him, he being a good clerk.

Mr. Irvine was asked whether he recollected having mentioned the proposition to you, and he said he did?—I do not recollect any thing of the kind; I could be in no way interested in it.

The proposition is stated by Mr. Irvine in his evidence to be, the giving him 50*l.* a year for the remainder of his uncle's life; he is then asked whether he proposed any persons as securities, and he says he is not sure that he did, but that if he named them at all, he should name Mr. Lyster for one, and Mr. Thomas Lees; he is then asked, "Do you remember mentioning the proposal to Mr. Lyster," and he says, "I do"?—I certainly have no recollection of any thing of the sort.

You



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You stated just now you were quite certain you did not recollect any thing of the kind?—I am quite certain those were his words, “I shall write to Mr. Mitchell in the country, to induce him to remain there;” I said, “It would be very well if you could get yourself into that or any other permanent situation.”

Did you ever see a return of fees that was prepared by Mr. John Hamilton?—I did.

Was any alteration made in it at your suggestion?—There was.

What alteration?—The fees for the last year I was in office, I think, I made a difference in the return of about 14*l.* or 15*l.* which was omitted in the first return.

When was this made?—The last return? a very short time since.

Are the same fees received up to this time?—Yes, they are.

Has any conversation on this subject lately taken place before the postmasters-general?—There has, before my Lord Rosse; the junior clerk made an application to Lord Rosse; he conceived he ought to have a proportion; Lord Rosse wrote to me, and I sent a statement to Lord Rosse, and afterwards had a conversation with his lordship, in which he said, he thought the senior clerk had more than a fair proportion, but he seemed to think the right was entirely vested in me as the superintendent; that the proportion the chief clerk had was excessive, and he would have preferred that the junior clerk had something off that; Mr. Thomas Lees was present at the conversation.

You succeeded Mr. Hamilton?—I did.

What compensation was given Mr. Hamilton for his retirement?—I think he retired on a proportion of 532*l.* or 533*l.*, under the conditions of a recent Act of Parliament.

Was he to retain any share in the profits of the alphabet?—He was, during the year pending the decision of the treasury, on his memorial for retirement; I was to give him 50*l.*; I have not given it yet; Lord Rosse was aware of that circumstance.

You were not permanently appointed to the office, but acted for him?—I acted for him by the sanction of the postmasters-general; it was by a minute of the postmasters-general, he being, from ill-health, incapable, and having memorialled to retire.

When you were in the secretary's office have you ever received applications from persons to get them sent down on surveyors duty?—I have, very often.

For their own convenience and advantage?—Certainly, for their advantage, because the salaries were so small in the various offices, that, generally speaking, they solicited to get an occasional trip to the country; some got permission to go for ill-health, but I never could use any influence in getting them sent; the secretary's authority alone could send them, or the postmasters-general, who frequently caused them to be sent.

Did you never know that a letter had been written by Irvine to Mitchell?—Certainly, I knew there was a letter, but I never saw it; he said he would write to Mr. Mitchell, to induce him to remain in the country.

By what means would he induce him?—He never specified the terms, but I presume he meant something; certainly, I could not be so blind as to suppose but that there might not have been some consideration, but that I did any act or deed, or had any thing to say to it, or authorized the use of my name, I most positively deny.

You most positively deny that you were in any way to be a security?—I positively deny it.

And you positively deny your knowledge of Mr. Irvine ever having proposed to Mr. Mitchell to retire, on consideration of his continuing to receive from him a proportion of his salary?—Never, further than his saying that he would write a letter to induce him. I certainly did suppose from that he would have given him a consideration, but it never weighed upon my mind after that moment.

You were aware at the time that it was an irregular thing for him to give him a consideration?—I do not know actually that I did consider that. If Mr. Mitchell had staid away, and Mr. Irvine had been put into his situation, the public would have been materially served; but that is another consideration.

What was the difference between the sale of a situation and giving a consideration for it?—It was merely temporary; we understood he was about to retire in consequence of his uncle's death being expected.

He states that the proposition intended was, that he should give up the larger part of the salary?—I never heard that before; he said he would write to him to induce him to remain in the country, and I said, “If you can get any permanent employment it will certainly be desirable.”

You appear to know more about the matter than you professed; at first you stated that the only letter you knew of was a letter to Lord O'Neill?—I never knew of his having mentioned my name as security, but I now understand that he wrote a letter, giving my name and Mr. Thomas Lees's as securities.

Are you quite sure Mr. Irvine did not say to you that he intended to induce Mr. Mitchell not to come up, by giving him a portion of the salary?—He never added those words, “by giving him a portion of the salary;” to induce him to remain in the country, he certainly did.

What did you understand by the words “induce him?”—I at the time never gave the thing a moment's thought; I walked into his office and out again in the space of ten minutes, nor did I enter into the thing in the slightest degree; it was just as if I was standing at that fire-place, and he came up to me and said, “What do you think would be my chance of getting in if Mitchell did not return?” “Really,” said I, “I do not know; the postmasters-general have so many persons looking to them for patronage, that it is impossible to say whether you will or not get it.” “Well,” says he, “I will write to Mr. Mitchell

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to induce him to remain in the country." I said, "I do not see any probability of any clerkship being about to become vacant, nor any chance of it." I do not suppose I recollected the conversation by the time I got to my own office. I am positive I never authorized him to give my name as security; I am perfectly sensible that if that came to the knowledge of Sir Edward Lees or his brother I should not have been in the office two months, if I had done it; and I am certain if I had mentioned it to either of the Messrs. Lees, they would have been very much displeased with me on the subject.

ANTHONY LYSTER.

## Appendix, No. 123.

Tuesday, 2d September 1823.

Mr. JOHN BURROWES called in and examined.

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*Mr. John Burrowes.*  
2d Sept. 1823.

WHAT is the situation you hold in the post-office?—It is designated that of Minute Clerk in the post-office.

Your business is of course to draw up and to copy the minutes of the official proceedings in the post-office?—Yes.

Do you attend the boards?—When they do assemble.

Do you recollect having attended any board?—The last which may be denominated a board the postmaster-general did not attend, but Mr. Crofton, the counsel for the post-office, attended for his lordship; that was a transaction connected with the Limerick contract.

A board held in form by the postmasters-general you do not recollect?—Very very seldom indeed.

What are the sort of minutes that you draw up?—The minutes generally consist of the substance of all the official letters of any consequence addressed either to the postmasters-general, or which come officially into the secretary's office, together with the particulars of all the payments of the revenue; and the particulars of any orders issued either by the postmasters or the secretary, either of appointment or suspension, every thing in fact which is conceived necessary for the correct management of the department.

Are those communicated to Sir Edward Lees by yourself?—They are all kept; at the conclusion of each day they are sent to one or other of the postmasters-general, and if his lordship approves of them he subscribes his signature; when returned by him, they are transmitted to the other postmaster-general, and signed by him, and then I keep them as official documents.

They are habitually returned?—Some cases occur where they are not so returned.

Are the minutes of orders made, or merely the proceedings in the post-office; if Sir Edward Lees was to make any order for the conduct of any department of the post-office, would that appear in your minutes?—It ought to appear; I should consider that it would.

The franking comes particularly under your cognizance in some part of the duties you perform in the post-office, does it not?—Not immediately; the only way is in exercising the official privilege which I do myself; I frank the official letters.

Do you frank all the official letters in the post-office?—Yes, with the exception of the cases in which the officer at the head of the mail-coach department and the officer of the dead-letter office frank; but if they should be out on duty or indisposed (as the latter is at the present moment) the whole of the official letters are brought in to be franked by me.

With the exception of those which they frank, you frank habitually all the official letters at the post-office?—Yes.

What do you mean by all official letters?—All letters addressed officially to the secretary or postmasters, and answered by the former.

That is, all the letters containing the official business of the post-office?—Yes.

What number of letters do they amount to daily?—They vary very much; they average probably thirty or forty a day.

Do you conceive that under this power you have the privilege of franking any letters which are not official?—Certainly not.

Does Mr. Crofton officially frank any official letters?—No he does not. At one time he used to frank in Mr. Lyster's name, but never in his own.

The letters not franked by you are not considered as the official letters of the post-office?—Certainly not.

What officer is it through whose hands they go, and that can state to the Board the number on an average not franked by you that go free from the post-office?—The inspector of franks. I have no doubt the return can be made only for a very late period; since this Board has been sitting here the inspector of franks has kept the account only for the last ten days or a fortnight.

That return will not present any thing like a statement of what the thing has been?—I am satisfied it will not.

Has your situation led you to observe the franking which went through the post-office?—

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Very much, and I have in fact always considered that there was an extensive abuse of the privilege.

Will you state what is the sort of franking that is particularly appropriated to the secretary?—Nothing whatsoever, except private letters.

The pro-secretary is understood to have franked largely?—Yes, very; he is the brother of the secretary.

Do you know how it happened that letters franked by any individual not named in the Act of Parliament are permitted to go free?—Most undoubtedly, by a dereliction of duty on the part of the officers.

Have any officers beyond those mentioned in the Act of Parliament franked to your knowledge?—With the exception of the clerks of the roads, I do not know of any who have; Mr. Thomas Lees franked as a clerk of the roads.

Is that privilege granted under Act of Parliament?—I believe not, it is a privilege which has been granted by the postmasters-general; they have no legal right, I conceive.

Is not the greatest proportion of the franking which goes through the post-office by those persons?—Distinctly so, I should suppose.

You have never, as matter of curiosity made a rough calculation of the number of letters sent free through the post-office?—Unless I should go down to the inland office, where the letters are sorted, I could have no idea.

What is the mode in which the business of the post-office, as a board, is practically conducted?—Literally speaking, there is no such thing as a board held at the post-office; all the communications of any importance are minuted by me, and sent off to the postmasters-general by that night's post.

Are reports received daily by the secretary from the several departments of the office?—From the British-mail and the inland offices there is a regular report every morning; and reports from the superintendent of mail-coaches, accounting for the nonarrival in time of the mails, or for bags which may be missing, are always made.

Does the secretary make, through you, minutes upon those reports?—Very frequently; if he sees any irregularity, he makes a minute upon the subject of that irregularity, and I copy it into the minute of the day.

Do you know whether the minutes he makes are acted upon at once, without the postmaster-general's interference?—In general they are; in the instances of irregularity of officers, in which it would be very inconvenient to wait for the return of the minute from London, in case Lord O'Neill and Lord Rosse happened to be there at the time of their occurrence.

It is a part of your duty to enter all warrants for payments?—Yes; they are included in the daily minute.

Both the regular payments and the incidental ones?—Of course, every payment, with the exception of trifling payments the postmasters may make in the country, for which they take credit in their incidental accounts afterwards.

In what shape do they come to you to be entered?—The usual routine is this; the account, in the first instance, is presented to the secretary, and receives his signature; it is then sent to the accountant-general's office to be examined as to the accuracy of its amount; then it is certified by him; it is then brought to me, and upon that I prepare a warrant and send it to both the postmasters-general, (for every warrant for the payment of money requires the signatures of both postmasters-general).

Is that a warrant upon the Bank or the receiver-general?—It is a double document; for the warrant of the postmasters-general is in fact directed to the receiver-general, and there is a further draft or warrant at the end of it that is directed to the Bank of Ireland.

Every demand for money that comes from every part of the office is sent in the first instance to the secretary, and it is examined or ought to be by him?—Yes, and initialed by him; then it goes to the accountant-general to be certified as to its accuracy; then it is brought to me.

It is entered by you for the information of the postmasters-general?—Yes, the particular of every payment, and the amount.

And the subjects of the payment?—Yes; all entered in the minute of the day.

The approval of the secretary appears on each?—Yes; I could not send it forward unless it had the approval of the secretary; the postmasters-general would return it if it had not all those authentications.

What becomes of the original vouchers?—They remain in the receiver-general's office. There are two warrants made out, a duplicate and an original; the duplicate remains with the original documents themselves in the receiver-general's office, together with the receipt of the party receiving the money, and the original warrant goes forward and remains in the Bank of Ireland; that is the document on which the payment is ultimately made. A post-office warrant is a long sheet of paper divided in the centre; on the left hand side of it is a warrant to Mr. Swan to pay such a person such a sum of money; at the opposite side of that there is a further authority, which Mr. Swan fills up and signs his name to, directed to the cashiers of the Bank of Ireland, directing them to pay the amount of the warrant on the left hand side.

Do those warrants undergo any examination by the receiver-general?—Yes, there is this additional check, that originally every account, before it comes to me to have a warrant prepared, must be signed by the accountant-general. I send all warrants into the receiver-general's office when signed by the postmasters-general; they must be countersigned by the accountant-general, to show that they exactly tally with the records in his office. When

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the secretary has initialed an account, the particulars of it are entered in the books in the accountant-general's office: when the warrants are prepared and signed by the postmasters-general, I send them into the receiver-general's office.

Is every account, whatever its amount, sent to both postmasters-general?—Yes, they are sent forward to the one and then to the other, if they are in different parts of Ireland; for every payment, except one into the Treasury, there must be the signatures of both postmasters-general; for the purpose of preventing delay in the payment of money to the Treasury such payment would be made on one signature at the close of the quarter, without waiting for the signatures of both postmasters-general.

It is stated in the return to this Board to be your duty to enter all representations in the letters of the postmasters-general, or the secretary to the Government?—I do that.

Do you enter the purport of them?—In detail.

You enter also all communications from the Government to the postmasters-general?—Yes; the particulars of those are included in the daily minutes.

All private and official communications passing from the secretary to the postmasters-general are stated to be entered by you; what can be the nature of private communications from the secretary to the postmasters-general?—The nonresidence of the postmasters-general on the spot renders that necessary, and the quantity of official business which requires to be communicated to them.

You are stated also to keep the accounts of all fines charged upon every officer in the service and the mail-coach contractors, and to stop the amount from each, and pay it over?—I do not stop it myself, but I make out a return of the amount to be stopped from each officer, and the secretary signs the order to have it deducted from the quarterly salary of the individual.

In what manner are those fines inflicted?—The heaviest fines, those on officers, consist of deductions from their salaries.

Those are for absence or misconduct?—Yes.

In what way is that done?—There is a regular detailed account kept by me of each individual's account; they may amount, I dare say, to sixty or seventy separate accounts; they are taken from the daily reports as furnished from the inland office; whenever any officer is absent he is charged at 3s. 9½d. a day for his absence.

He must be absent to incur that fine?—Of course.

Suppose a fine is incurred for any other reason, in what way is that inflicted?—They all emanate from the secretary.

And he has the power, without question of any kind, of issuing an order for the inflicting of a fine?—That is a power which has been exercised.

Mr. Thomas Lees exercises all the powers of the secretary in his absence, does he not?—He does.

Does Mr. Thomas Lees act during the time that Sir Edward Lees is in attendance?—Occasionally they act jointly.

It is not strictly confined to the time of the absence of Sir Edward Lees?—Certainly not.

There are then virtually two secretaries?—Yes.

Is one of them always present?—Yes, always; that joint exercise of authority might, I think, be attributed to their close connection, which would not take place probably if they were strangers.

What are calculated as the emoluments of a clerk of the roads, if you know?—They vary from 300*l.* to 900*l.* a year.

Has Mr. Thomas Lees an official residence?—No, he has not.

Fines are in fact stopped in consequence of this order you have referred to, and paid to the suspension fund?—They are.

Can you state the annual amount of fines?—They might average, from the officers, from 200*l.* to 210*l.* a quarter, including stoppages of every kind; the largest and heaviest consist of stoppages in case of absence, for the purpose of paying their substitutes; that was an arrangement which I introduced some years ago myself; there was great complaint by the extras that they were not paid punctually by the absent men.

It is a part of your duty to prepare the quarterly returns from which the deputy postmasters throughout the kingdom are credited for salary, &c.?—Yes.

From what documents is that account prepared?—The return is, literally speaking, a transcript of the preceding quarter for general salary, riding duty, night salary, and so on. Any alterations in these is done under the superintendence and direction of the riding surveyors, who make a return quarterly to me of such alterations as may have taken place from time to time, and from that return I include, in the return to the accountant-general, what effect that will have on the postmaster's credits. The increase or the decrease of every kind is regularly accounted for, and how it took place.

What checks the accuracy of those returns?—The accountant-general goes over them all himself.

The accountant-general goes over the returns which you make?—Yes.

That does not prove the accuracy of the vouchers on which you make them?—There can be very little inaccuracy in it, for this reason, that it is almost in every case only a transfer of the credit from one postmaster to another. If there is an alteration in the riding duty, it is a transfer merely from one to another, in consequence of some fresh arrangement; *A.* will be to be credited in consequence, and *B.* will not be to be credited for it.

What

What do you mean by "general salary"?—Official salary.

You have to minute those accounts under the several heads of general salary, bye-salary, riding-duty, night-salary, and arrears?—General salary is the official salary as postmasters.

What have they as postmasters?—Generally, with a very few exceptions, it is 20*l.* a year; the riding duty is the allowance the postmasters get for the conveyance of the cross-posts; the bye-salary they get under a regulation, that every postmaster in the country is obliged to correspond with four post-towns gratuitously; and if the service require him to keep accounts with other towns than these, he is allowed at the rate of 40*s.* a town for each.

What is the night-salary?—That is another arrangement: when a postmaster has duty (which many of them must have) to perform during the night, it is divided into two divisions; the first division consists of from eight till twelve at night, and the next from twelve to five in the morning; the postmaster performing the duty for the first part gets 5*l.* a year, and for the latter period 5*l.* more; if he performs it for both those periods, he gets 10*l.* a year.

What is meant by "arrears for the same"?—If, through inadvertency, any credit was omitted, by not allowing the postmaster a proper credit, that would be included under the head of "arrears" in the next quarter.

Those accounts are kept in the office?—Certainly.

What is contained in the books under the head of "Dublin Post-office Establishment," "the Pensioners," and "General Receiving-house"?—The establishment of the Dublin post-office contains the name of every individual officer in the post-office in Dublin, his rank and services, and the salary he is to receive. This document is not only prepared by me, but there is a record of it kept in the office, for the original establishment is obliged to be lodged in the imprest office as a voucher for the disbursement.

What is the account of the pensioners?—The pensioners establishment comprises the particulars of every individual who receives a pension on the post-office establishment, his name, and the amount.

What is meant by the general receiving-house?—It contains the names of the individuals keeping general receiving-houses through the city of Dublin, which were established for the accommodation of the public. Individuals residing at a distance from the post-office were inconvenienced by these being established; each person holding them receives 10*l.* a year, and the messenger going for the letters has 7*l.* a year, I think.

Do all those duties refer to Dublin?—Yes, all those to which I am now referring.

You have also to prepare the warrants for the payments to the several postmasters?—Yes; there are some post-offices, the revenue of which is not equal to the payment of their salary, consequently the deputy must be something out of pocket. There is a detailed list of the balances due to those postmasters made out each quarter in the office of the accountant-general, and I make out a warrant to pay to those individuals the balance due to each.

Who claims and receives the balance from the postmaster if it is against him?—That is in another return; the accountant-general furnishes an account of the balances due by deputy postmasters, and the balances due to them. The account of the balances due by them is submitted to the postmasters-general, and it is upon that that they are dismissed or suspended in case of the balance appearing to be more than it ought.

What is the account of the several quarterly establishments?—The quarterly establishments is that of the Dublin office, the particulars and detail of each individual office.

"And the balance due to the London office at the foot of the account," for what is the balance due to the London office?—There is a regular account kept between the London and the Dublin post-office, in which Ireland is debited with the amount of British postage on letters coming into Ireland, and the amount of British postage on post-paid letters in Ireland for England; and on the other side credited for the amount of Irish postage on letters going into Great Britain, and also letters post-paid in England. There is besides a sum of 9,000*l.* allowed by Great Britain to Ireland in lieu of her portion of the packet charge.

To what amount does that account between the two offices go?—It is very considerable; it may average about 6,000*l.* a quarter in favour of Great Britain; it was something greater before the allowance in lieu of packet postage was increased; previously it might average 7,000*l.* or 8,000*l.* a quarter.

Of what do the documents consist on which they make out this account?—The different dockets coming by way of Holyhead, going through Donaghadee and Waterford; those for under and over charges, and for state letters improperly taxed, &c. &c. We send our account perfect over to Great Britain, and they return it to us.

Do you strike the balance?—No; I merely make out a warrant for the payment of the balance; it would be incorrect for me to strike the balance; I could not know whether it was correct or not.

You preserve an account of all the appointments, and the names of the securities, and the amount of the bonds?—I do.

Your attendance is daily?—It is very constant.

For the greatest part of the day is it not?—I am generally in my office from nine, or a little before it, sometimes a little after it, until five or six o'clock in the evening.

Are you there constantly during those hours?—My attendance is constant; for weeks and weeks I am never outside the doors.

Examinations.

No. 123.

Mr. John Burrowes.  
2d Sept. 1823.

Examinations.

No. 124.

Mr. John Burrowes.  
4th Sept. 1823

## Appendix, No. 124.

4th September 1823.

Mr. JOHN BURROWES again called in and examined.

YOU have returned a minute of the appointment of Mr. Thomas Lees, as clerk of the Munster road, on the 16th of June 1814, will you produce the minute in your book?—This is it [*turning to it*]; it is in the hand-writing of Lord Rosse; it came up from his Lordship from Parsonstown, I think.

The copy returned has the heading “Present, the Earls”?—They all have that at the head, but his lordship not having any official paper with him, returned it on a plain sheet.

It professes to be a minute at a board held?—It does.

It appears that there was no board held?—No.

Was there a letter written upon that by the secretary to Mr. Thomas Lees, appointing him clerk of the road?—No; because it was considered a matter of course.

He was not put over any body's head?—No; there was an individual in the office whose services are rated at a much higher number of years than Mr. Thomas Lees; but the fact is, that that gentleman was transferred from the treasurer's office some years subsequent to Mr. Lees's appointment, and according to Lord Clancarty's arrangement every individual got rank according to the time they had been in the office. Mr. Harrison got his rank in the secretary's office the same as if he had been in the treasurer's office. The establishment is an authenticated document vouched by the signature of the postmaster-general, and all the officers on the post establishment are paid their quarterly salaries upon that; he never would be paid his salary upon the minute alone.

Is there any particular rule as to the appointment to the Munster road?—With the exception of the clerkship of the Munster road, the other roads follow in succession; the situation of clerk of the Leinster road is permanently attached to the secretaryship; the Connaught and Ulster road are held by the two senior officers in rank in the inland office; when a vacancy occurs the next in rank steps up and gets possession; but the clerkship of the Munster road the postmasters-general have in their discretion to give to whom they please.

The office derives no advantage from the dispatch of the papers circulated by the clerks of the roads?—None in the world.

By whom is the sending of those papers, and the preparation for their dispatch made; is it by clerks on the establishment, or is it by clerks and persons paid by the individuals themselves?—They are prepared by individuals in no way connected with the establishment at all; in fact, they are little boys paid at a small income to fold and cover the papers. I am alluding to newspapers published in Dublin; the London papers are folded and prepared in London.

It appears on inquiry into the transactions of the 8th of March last, that the clerks in the newspaper office were unemployed part of the evening waiting for the newspapers of the clerks of the roads, which did not come till a certain hour; they therefore could not have been sorted in the newspaper office, and were sent unsorted into the inland office?—That is very likely to be so.

Were those clerks who were so waiting to sort them, if they had come in time, or those who sorted them when they went into the inland office, in consequence of their not having come in time, persons upon the establishment, or not?—Of course they were upon the establishment, but their coming in did not depend upon the clerks of the roads at all; it is very difficult often to get them from the editors in time.

In what state are the newspapers when they come into the newspaper office?—Regularly folded and covered and directed.

Then what have the clerks to do with them?—Nothing but the sorting them into the divisions and the towns.

What certificates of good conduct are required when clerks are promoted?—In case of a vacancy in a higher situation, it follows as a matter of course throughout the establishment that the next in rank succeeds, except in the case of heads of departments.

Is the promotion of the officers in each office confined to that office, or is it generally the seniority in the office at large?—Each office is confined to itself, without reference to the office at large.

For instance, a sorter does not rise to be a taxing clerk?—No; he first commences as an extra, then a probationary, then a junior, and then a senior sorter, and then becomes a taxing clerk.

What is the age for admission?—The regulated age is above sixteen and under twenty.

What report is made on the capacity of individuals before they are permanently appointed?—It has never been the custom to require any; they are taken in as extra probationers, and on the present system they must continue a very long time before they can rise; they are invariably recommended by one or other of the postmasters-general.

How long will it be before a man can be put permanently on the establishment?—It must be a very long time indeed; he comes at the foot of twenty-four extras and fourteen probationaries, who must vacate before he can rise to be on the establishment.

You keep the account of the fines?—I do.

By whom are those fines imposed?—The fines on postmasters are, the greater part of them, directed to be levied by the superintendent of the bye-letter department and the superintendent of the mail coach department; the one is for not returning to the dead-letter office particular vouchers, which it is necessary to return at particular periods to keep the office accounts accurate, and in the other case they are directed to be levied by the superintendent of the mail-coaches, in consequence of irregularity in the riding duty, and in consequence of irregularity in transmitting the bills from the country. Another species of fine is against mail coach contractors, for irregularity in the arrival of the mails, either in their arrival at their destinations or at Dublin, and for conveying a greater number of outside passengers than their contracts allow.

In what way are they imposed?—It is generally a letter to the secretary, stating that the Cork or the Waterford mail was late in its arrival at Cork or Waterford so many minutes, and the established rule of the office is, that every delay of that kind is punished by a fine, at the rate of 1s. a minute; so that if the Cork mail arrived twenty or thirty minutes too late, it would be fined 20s. or 30s.

Is that a matter of course, without any inquiry into the causes which may have produced it?—As a matter of course. I should also state, that at the same time as this communication is made to the secretary's office, there is a similar communication made to the contractor, that he is fined so and so for such and such an act, and then it rests with him, if he is aggrieved, to appeal.

Is there a power reserved in the contracts to impose those fines?—I do not know that there is.

Do you know the authority on which they rest?—The authority rests on the regulations of Lord Clancarty; whether there is authority in the contract I do not know.

Who imposes fines in the office, and by what authority are they imposed?—Generally by the secretary.

Sir Edward Lees imposes them, as the delegate of the postmasters-general?—As the *locum tenens* of the postmasters-general.

By what authority does Mr. Thomas Orde Lees impose fines?—It must be as a representative of higher authority; some authority, real or assumed.

Does any other person, except the secretary or Mr. Thomas Lees, impose fines?—No.

If they were both absent what would be done?—It is an instance I never knew occur.

Did any body who was fined by Mr. Thomas Orde Lees ever question the authority under which it was done?—I never knew it done.

If he did question his authority what would be the consequence; immediate dismissal?—If the authority was questioned, I apprehend, the application must be made to the postmasters-general themselves. If the individual disputed the authority under which Mr. T. O. Lees inflicted the fine, and it was referred to the postmasters-general, that never could be visited with dismissal.

Have there been many instances of dismissals?—Very few indeed.

How have they been conducted when that has been the case?—They have regularly been by minutes of the postmasters-general.

Have there been suspensions?—They have frequently taken place; they are generally included in the daily minute of the day; but there may have been instances where that was not done.

Then suspension takes place under the authority of the secretary, or of Mr. Thomas Lees, in his absence?—Undoubtedly.

Can you state under what instrument Mr. Thomas Orde Lees assumes the appellation and exercises the power of pro-secretary?—Except in the absence of his brother, I do not know, but when he is (literally speaking) *bonâ fide* acting as secretary; but I know of no authority for his doing so.

What invests him with the power of secretary?—Nothing in the world but the absence of his brother; I know of no authority for his assuming the title.

Are you sure that he never writes letters, and suspends or fines persons when his brother is in Dublin?—If he does so it is not under his own signature; I am quite satisfied if he wrote a letter of that kind his brother would sign it; if it was necessary to inflict a fine on any person in the inland office, for instance, his brother would sign it if he was in Dublin.

It appears that Mr. Purse was suspended by Mr. Thomas Lees?—In the particular case, when Mr. Purse was suspended, it was recognized by a special minute, afterwards signed by both the postmasters.

You are aware probably by what authority the postmasters-general themselves inflict fines?—If their patent does not give them the authority, I am not aware of any other authority.

Will you state by what authority the suspension of Mr. Purse, which appears directed by a letter of the 24th of April 1822, was made?—It rests on Mr. Thomas Lees's own authority.

Examinations.

No. 124.

Mr. John Burrowes.  
4th Sept. 1823.

Was Mr. Purse permanently suspended?—No, he was restored; he is a very wild young man, and was very irregular.

When a person is suspended or fined, does any inquiry take place, or is the fine levied as a matter of course?—The fine is levied, unless the individual appeals; and in the majority of instances the fine is not ultimately inflicted.

To whom does he appeal?—He appeals to the secretary.

The person who has inflicted it?—Yes.

If he cannot persuade him to take it off it is inflicted?—It is inflicted certainly, unless he appeals, and it is then taken off.

Did you ever hear of any appeals being made to the superior authority of the postmasters-general?—I cannot recollect that I have.

Is it a small proportion of the fines that are inflicted that are levied?—I should apprehend, generally speaking, that the greater part of those which are inflicted are levied.

Do you keep an account of the fines for nonattendance?—Yes, regularly.

It is a part of your official duty to keep that account?—Yes; I have kept it principally since the year 1810 or 1811.

Is it a part of the duty of your office, or do you receive a per-centage for so doing?—It is not a part of my duty, and I receive a per-centage for so doing; previously to 1811 there was great inaccuracy in keeping those accounts, and they were in consequence put upon me.

How are they to be appropriated?—The fines are handed over to the officer who keeps the suspension fund.

By what authority is that done?—By authority of the secretary, directing in the first instance the fine to be levied, and then to be paid over to the suspension fund.

What is the suspension fund?—It exclusively consists of fines.

What is done with the money?—It remains in the possession of the chief clerk, who is the person who all along had the possession and management of it.

What chief clerk?—Mr. Thomas Lees.

What appropriation of that fund is made; to what purpose is it applied?—Some years ago the heaviest contribution to that fund was brought about in consequence of an arrangement instituted by myself; previous to that period the officer at the head of the inland office always levied the fines himself on the absent officers, but he was not quite so punctual in paying the extras for their duty; and there were complaints made to the postmasters-general of the hardship of their being employed and not paid, and I volunteered the keeping a regular account of the stoppages from the absent officers, and the amount due to the individuals doing the duty, and that I would make a return to the receiver-general of the amount to be paid over to the suspension fund, and a return of the other to the person who kept the suspension fund. I did not succeed at the time; I was very young in office.

How is this suspension fund practically applied?—A very large contribution out of it must go, under this arrangement, to the extra officers who perform the duty.

Supposing there is a surplus, what becomes of that?—Of course it remains with the chief clerk if there is any surplus. There may be a small sum probably at the end of every quarter, and it remains in the possession of the chief clerk.

If he wishes to apply it to any other purpose, what check is there?—As he is responsible for it, he may make ducks and drakes of it if he pleases.

He does not account for it in any way?—I am not aware that he does in any way.

Does he give security for it?—I believe not.

What is the annual amount of all the fines?—The annual amount of the fines from the absent officers might, I suppose, be 800*l.* a year.

Are the mail-coach fines appropriated in the same way?—Exactly in the same way, every description of fines of whatever nature.

How much does that fund amount to annually?—Upon my word I cannot tell; I keep an account of the stoppages from the officers, which average 200*l.* a quarter; but the mail-coach fines vary very much; they may be 150*l.* one quarter and not 20*l.* another.

About what do they amount to on an average?—From the absent officers between 800*l.* and 900*l.* a year, and from postmasters it might be probably about 100*l.* a year, and say 200*l.* a year from mail-coaches.

About how much of that is necessarily paid to the extra clerks?—About 200*l.* a quarter, or 1,000*l.* a year, varying from 190*l.* to 210*l.*; 200*l.* may be the fair average for a quarter.

What becomes of the balance?—It remains in his hands.

How long has that fund existed?—Very long; many years before I came into office.

Then there ought to be an accumulation of it?—There are very heavy payments out of it; the heaviest species of fines are those against mail-coach contractors, and there are very heavy payments made back to them out of that fund.

You



You mean that 200*l.* a year is actually paid by them?—No; that is the gross sum supposed to be stopped from the contractors and paid over to the suspension fund; but very frequently those fines are repaid to them out of the suspension fund afterwards.

Does that frequently happen?—Indeed it very frequently happens.

Did Mr. Thomas Orde Lees receive a balance from his predecessor?—Yes, he did.

Is Mr. Thomas Lees's office an office of gradation and seniority?—Of gradation.

What rank do you hold in that office?—I am at present third in the office.

Are you next to him?—No; there is a gentleman of six and twenty years service above me.

If there was a vacancy in consequence of Mr. Lees being removed, should you be the successor?—No; Mr. Harrison ranks one step above me in the office, and next in the office.

Was he the person who had been senior in the office to Mr. Lees?—Yes.

Then why did not he succeed?—Because it was a transfer of Mr. Harrison from another office; as far as the office was concerned, Mr. Lees was the senior.

Would the senior in the particular office succeed, according to Lord Clancarty's regulations?—Yes.

Do the postmasters-general ever direct the payment of money in the country?—Never, that I am aware of.

What is your present salary in the office?—200*l.*

Was it 200*l.* a year at the time you were appointed?—No; it was 100*l.* a year at that time.

What office did you hold before that?—I held no situation in the post-office previous to my being appointed to my present situation; I was in a private banking-house at that time, Mr. Beresford's, and now Ball & Company's.

You were clerk in that office?—I was in a very responsible situation, and I resigned in consequence of not wishing to be in so responsible a situation. I had at all times a balance of not less than 20,000*l.* in my hands, and I did not wish to continue so great a responsibility.

What do all your emoluments in this office amount to?—Besides the 200*l.* a year, I have an emolument from the King's printer for forwarding the Acts of Parliament to the magistrates of 50*l.* a year, and the per-centage on the fines may average from 40*l.* to 50*l.* a year; I suppose it may amount altogether to 350*l.* a year.

You made a great sacrifice in leaving the banking-house, did you not?—No; I had but 200*l.* a year, and I was obliged to repose a great responsibility in others; I was in fact liable to be plundered; and as they would not take any part of the responsibility off my hands I resigned.

What part of the business of Sir Edward Lees do you do?—The only business which can be considered as his is copying his private letters to the postmasters-general.

What does Sir Edward Lees do in the office, and what does Mr. Orde Lees do?—Sir Edward Lees has rather a general superintendence of the office in the absence of the postmasters-general, to whom access can be had at all times.

He takes no part in the business of the office?—None, except signing the official correspondence.

Do you mean to state, that the whole of the duties of the office are performed by Mr. Thomas Lees?—His part of the duty is the writing of official letters, occasionally assisted by me; in writing such Government letters as may be necessary; in fact, writing any letters. I never confine myself strictly to my duty, if I conceive I can be of use.

Do the secretary or Mr. Thomas Lees ever go into the offices to exercise personal inspection?—Not very frequently.

Do you recollect either of them going in?—Yes; Sir Edward Lees is a man easily excited; he takes up a thing very warmly, and, as in the instances of accelerating the intercourse between the two countries, he was very sanguine, and gave a personal attendance at the office for the purpose of expediting it.

Does Mr. Orde Lees ever go into the offices?—He sometimes does; I have known some instances, but not many.

In case of a difference of opinion between two of the officers of the department, would not that be an occasion on which the secretary, or whoever was acting as secretary, ought to go down and interfere?—I think so, certainly.

Does Sir Edward Lees go into the office at ten o'clock in the morning, as is stated in the book returned to the Commissioners?—He is very constant in his attendance.

Examinations.  
 —  
 No. 124.  
 Mr. John Burrowes.  
 4th Sept. 1823.

Does the attendance of Sir Edward Lees last all the year round?—Invariably, unless he is in England on leave of absence. I have known him a day or two absent, going to Howth on the Saturday and remaining till the Monday; in other cases he is invariably in his office.

Do the accounts come under your inspection in any way?—No; with the exception of that part of the accounts which I alluded to the other day.

How is the business of the secretary's office conducted?—Residing in the building, I am generally there the first in the morning. The first thing I do is to open all the official letters of every kind, in fact, every letter addressed to the secretary, except those that may be marked "private;" I select and dispose of them; some may relate to the dead-letter office, some to the mail-coach office. I send them by the messenger, according as they may require; and those that may require a note, I give the substance of them in the daily minutes.

You open the letters, and enter in your minute the purport of the principal ones?—Yes.

Do you give the letters themselves, or those minutes which you have so made, to Mr. Lees?—The letters themselves.

What does he do with them?—He commences answering such as require answers, and afterwards they are copied by the junior clerks into the letter books of the office, and forwarded in the course of the day.

Do you ever send them to Sir Edward?—Never; if a letter came down, which was important, from the Castle or the Treasury, I should send it to Sir Edward.

Does Mr. Thomas Lees answer those, without reference to any body?—Without reference to any body else; he may have sometimes reference to his brother to answer particular letters.

When you talk of letters, do you mean all those directed to Sir Edward Lees, the secretary, or those that may come also directed to the postmasters-general?—Both; I may have at particular periods a large portion of warrants to make out, then I leave the junior officer to open the letters and minute them, while I am proceeding with that duty.

Are any orders ever given for money but by the postmasters-general?—Never; it could not be got.

The Bank would not pay it?—No.

In the receipt before it passes to the Bank, is there any stage in which the order of the secretary would produce payment?—None, except the case I have alluded to, of overcharged letters.

On the 11th and 12th of March last there are certain letters, written by Sir Edward Lees to Mr. Donlevy, desiring explanations upon the subject of the delay of the mail-coach, and also to Mr. Homan; how are they brought upon the minutes?—They are not brought on the minutes at all; the regular routine correspondence of the office is not on the minutes; the letters themselves are recorded in the letter books of the office.

In whose handwriting is the copy of the minutes on that inquiry which has been referred to?—[*It was shown to the witness.*]—It is an extra clerk, employed by Sir Edward Lees, not one of the regular clerks; his name is Lee.

Do you know who drew up that statement which he copied?—There were two copies taken of that, the one by me; I acted as minute clerk on the day.

Were those minutes corrected and altered after they were taken?—They were.

By whom?—They were not corrected, but transcribed fairly; I am not aware of their being altered.

You were present during the whole of that investigation?—I was; I regretted it very much.

The principal part appears to have been taken by Mr. Lees, not Sir Edward Lees?—He took a very active part.

Was Sir Edward Lees present?—Yes, he was; it was the most unpleasant duty I was ever on; there was so much anger and animosity, I was most uncomfortable about it.

Had those animosities been prevailing in the office a considerable time?—They had with that individual; there has not been that unanimity I could have wished, certainly.

J. BURROWES.

## Appendix, No. 125.

Examinations.

No. 125.

Mr. John Burrowes.  
17th Oct. 1823.

Friday, 17th October 1823.

Mr. JOHN BURROWES again called in and examined.

HAVE you brought with you the original account of the suspension fund?—I have not; it is always kept in the custody of Mr. Thomas Lees, and he is on leave of absence for a few days; it is locked up in his desk.

Does the money pass through your hands?—Never. Mr. Thomas Lees receives the money and makes the disbursements.

In point of fact, you do not keep the account?—I never have been in possession of the account for one moment; it has been the custom for the account to be exclusively in the possession of the chief clerk, and was in the possession of the predecessor of Mr. Thomas Lees.

You stated on your former examination, that you keep an account of the fines?—I keep an account of the days the officers are absent, and charge them with it, and I hand that at the end of the quarter to the treasurer for the purpose of the money being stopped.

It is then an account of the absences you keep?—Yes.

And of the amount of fines to be stopped?—Yes.

You are the accountant of the fund, are you not?—No, I have nothing to do with the fund; there may be a very large sum chargeable this quarter against the mail-coach contractors; on their making an application to the postmasters-general or the secretary the whole might be struck off; whereas by my book it would appear as if a very large sum was chargeable.

There is in the account furnished to this Board the amount of the charges and the rebates, and in some instances it appears that the rebates exceed the charge?—That disbursement must have been an accumulation of charges.

Have you seen this account which has been furnished to this Board?—No; I saw the order of this Board directing the account, but I have never looked over it.

You have never seen this account?—No, only the outside of it; but I may be able to explain that which the Commissioners may wish.

On the 13th of August 1814, there appears to be a sum of 1*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.* paid to the Gloucester regimental band, and to one corporal and six men of the Lancashire 1*l.* on the same date; can you explain that?—I am not certain whether that was the period at which the foundation of the post-office was laid; it might be that; there was some procession, and those men attended and were remunerated for their attendance.

What procession?—Probably the Lord Lieutenant attending at the laying of the foundation stone, but I am not certain that it is so.

On the 24th of the same month there is a charge of 31*l.* 17*s.* 2*d.* for an entertainment?—That must have been connected with it; there were a number of noblemen and gentlemen attended, and the sum paid to the corporal and men, I apprehend, was for their attendance to keep off the mob, and to the band for the music.

Should you apprehend there was a postmaster-general's warrant for that?—No, by no means.

By whose authority was it disbursed?—I cannot tell; there is a voucher for it, no doubt.

By whom was the entertainment ordered?—By the secretary, I should suppose.

Are you aware of any authority for giving such an order?—No, I am not.

In your intimate intercourse with Sir Edward Lees and Mr. Thomas Lees, have you not any knowledge how the money of this suspension fund is employed?—No; it never comes before me; I have no possible means of knowing how it is disposed of after it is paid to Mr. Thomas Lees; there may be some individual instances where the postmasters-general direct a small pension to be paid to the widow of a mail-guard.

On the 14th of September in the same year there is the sum of 10*l.* paid to the house-keeper per order; do you know by whose order?—I do not.

On the 5th of September, in the same year, on the other side, there is entered, "To cash received of Mr. Swan, 133*l.* 17*s.* 9½*d.*"?—That, I should suppose, must have been the stoppages from the absent officers for the quarter. Mr. Swan has an accurate account of the returns made by me every quarter of the stoppages.

Do you keep a debtor and creditor account for each office?—There are two species of accounts, one a debit the other a credit account.

Is there a separate debit account against each officer?—Yes, that is the account I keep.

From that account of yours, those sums are computed?—Yes; each individual's account is totted up at the end of the quarter, and the whole returned to Mr. Swan.

Here is another sum of a large amount, "To cash received from Mr. Swan, 143*l.*" and between brackets there is put [Snow-money]?—It was at the period when the public roads were obstructed by snow, and to remove the obstacle instantly, without getting a regular warrant, there was a direction to appropriate the funds of the suspension fund to that immediate purpose; and after all was complete and the actual expense was ascertained, a warrant was prepared for the amount, and it was repaid to the suspension fund again.

(107.)

The

## Examinations.

No. 125.  
Mr. John Burroues.  
17th Oct. 1823.

The fines set upon the deputy-postmasters vary very much in their amount in different quarters; has that always been the case?—Yes. It may be satisfactory to the Commissioners to see the form in which these fines are levied; that is the form in which it comes to me [producing a paper, which was read as follows]:

General Post-office, 8th October 1823.

You will charge upon the post bills of the different towns, written underneath, the fines marked opposite to each.

J. URQUHART,  
Pro.-Insp<sup>r</sup> of Mail-coaches.

	£	s.	d.		
Ennis - - - -	0	2	6	J. B. W.	For incorrect entries in the time bills.
Five-Mile-Town - -	0	1	6	C. M.	
Gorey - - - -	0	3	0	J. H.	For delays in riding duty.
Ballyshannon - -	0	1	0	W. H.	
Doneraile - - - -	0	1	0	J. B. W.]	
	0	9	0		

To Inland Office.

EDWARD S. LEES.

The above fines, amounting to 9s., have been charged against the deputies.

WILLIAM DONLEVY.

On the 24th of October 1814 there is a payment made to a person of 12l. 14s. for a tent?—That must have been for the entertainment I have alluded to.

Of course it was ordered by the same authority as the other?—Yes; but the vouchers themselves, I imagine, are in existence to explain it.

There is a payment made to the Derry contractor of 20l.; what is the explanation of that?—In general, refunding fines charged against them which have been deducted from their mileage.

On the opposite side of the account there is not a sum corresponding with that?—No; that sum might have been charged for three or four quarters preceding, and allowed at that period.

Does not that mode of keeping the accounts so confuse them that it is impossible to ascertain whether the disbursements do not exceed the sums that have been originally paid in?—Certainly it would be more correct if the accounts were kept more distinct.

Do you conceive there is any possibility of checking the accounts if the person managing the funds was disposed to charge larger sums than he had paid?—No, except by examining the vouchers afterwards.

Who audits this account?—It has never been audited.

There is paid to Mr. Russell, for a painting, 22l. 15s.; what is that for?—It is a view of the post-office, I believe.

What has become of that?—I do not know; probably the secretary has it.

How comes the suspension fund to be charged with that sum?—That I cannot say.

The voucher for Mr. Russell would point out, no doubt, what the sort of painting was?—No doubt.

Is he a landscape painter?—Upon my word I do not know.

On the credit side there is, on the 17th of May 1815, "Cash received of Mr. De Joncourt, on account of late newspapers, 30l. 5s."?—That was, I apprehend, money paid for being beyond the specified time.

What time was that?—I apprehend between six and seven, that they were liable to a charge of a halfpenny a paper.

At this time the box was open, for the purpose of free admission, till half past seven, was it not?—I cannot say accurately, from my recollection; if so, it has continued so still; that is, if half past seven was then the hour.

Would it not appear probable, therefore, that when the time was more limited, that if half past seven was then the time, and the period subsequently limited to six, more money would accrue from that source now than formerly?—There has been no further limit, I am sure.

Were not newspapers admitted till half past seven, free of any payment, at one time?—That never was the case, that I know of; they never were admitted beyond six o'clock.

There are frequent payments to the Derry contractors; here is another sum of 20l. without,

without any sum being charged against him in any of the preceding pages?—That must have been received then at a preceding time.

That would not be lumped together with other sums, would it?—No; there would be the name of the contractor separately.

Does Mr. Thomas Lees's book show this matter in detail?—Not unless that shows it; he has no other book.

Is there any account in which they are put down separately?—Yes, in the account I keep.

In fact, the receiver-general gets the fine account from you?—Yes, exactly so.

You only know what ought to be the amount of the fund, because you know what fines are levied; but you know nothing of the disbursement account?—Just so; of the amount or extent of the fund I know nothing.

You are accountant of the receipts of the fund?—Yes, exactly so.

On May the 10th, 1815, there is a sum, 3*l.* 8*s.* 3*d.*, paid to Mr. Anthony Lyster; do you know any thing of that?—Indeed I do not.

In July 1815, on the credit side, there is a statement of cash received from Mr. Swan, 129*l.* 19*s.* 8½*d.*, and a little below, "Received from fines from contractors, 13*l.*," but not saying what contractors; do you suppose that was one contractor?—I suppose there would be several contractors.

Do you apprehend this is a transcript of Mr. Thomas Lees's book?—I apprehend it is; and that the only difference is, that Mr. Thomas Lees's own book is not so legibly written as that.

Will not Mr. Thomas Lees be able to give a particular account?—Indeed I cannot say.

Until an account is audited, the person who is responsible keeps the vouchers for his account; if this account was never audited, Mr. Thomas Lees probably has the vouchers?—Undoubtedly he ought to have them; in fact, it is an account which has never, in my opinion, been controlled or checked in any way whatever.

There is a payment made to Mr. John Lawler of 10*l.*, on the 13th of August 1815; do you know what he was?—No, I do not recollect him.

Here is a sum paid of 5*s.* 5*d.* for conveying the British mail from the Pigeon-house?—I suppose they were obliged to hire a car for the second mail.

Here is "December 6th, 1815, cash received from Mr. J. De Joncourt's salary, to 5th October 1815, 42*l.* 9*s.*;" do you know the meaning of that?—That I apprehend must have been the son of old Mr. De Joncourt, who was in the British-mail office, and who was absent for a considerable time.

You keep the account of the fines yourself?—Yes.

You can have access to that account yourself?—Yes.

Can you spare that account for a day or two?—Yes, at any time.

[*The witness was directed to send that account to the Board.*]

Your account will show all the fines that are inflicted?—No; it will show all the fines that ought to be inflicted, not all that have been inflicted; for after I have made the return to the receiver-general, many of those charges on the contractors are rebated. The better account would (I respectfully submit) be Mr. Swan's book, in which he states the particular sums which have been imposed and which have afterwards been rebated, and the amount ultimately paid over to the suspension fund.

There is a payment made on the 16th of December 1815, "Paid receiver-general out of A. De Joncourt's salary, per order, 20*l.*;" do you know what that is?—No, I do not.

On the same day there appears to be a payment to yourself of 50*l.* 18*s.* 3*d.*; what is that?—That must be an accumulation of the per-centage on fines.

From the mode in which this account is kept, it does not appear that there is any possibility of ascertaining, except by calculating what principal would produce 50*l.* 18*s.*, whether that is right or not?—I keep a copy of the returns made by me to Mr. Swan at the end of every quarter, wherein it is regularly totted up and carried forward, and then of course the amount of the sums is ascertained; and it is on the certificate of Mr. Swan that that account is accurate and composed of various sums given by me to him that the per-centage is calculated.

Your per-centage is calculated only on sums actually received and paid in to the receiver-general, is it?—On the gross returns furnished by me to the receiver-general.

Though many of those fines are frequently remitted?—Yes, that very frequently occurs, but that is after it has left me; that does not come before me, and I know nothing of it; sometimes indeed I am aware of it; afterwards, in the case of postmasters, they are remitted (frequently), and I do not charge them; but in the case of a contractor they are rebated, probably, in the following quarter, after I have returned them, and been paid upon them.

Then, in point of fact, you are paid a per-centage on what is never paid to the fund?—Very frequently, and a most objectionable way it is of remunerating an officer.

The money practically belonging to the suspension fund is the amount left after the rebates?—Yes.

If a contractor is fined 50*l.*, does he pay this 50*l.* to the treasurer?—It is stopped from the mileage money payable to him.

Supposing the gross amount of fines that you returned to the receiver-general should amount to the sum of 1,000*l.*, you would receive a per-centage upon that amounting to 50*l.*?—Just so.

Examinations.

No. 125.

Mr.

John Burrowes.  
17th Oct. 1823.

Supposing, at the discretion of Mr. Thomas Lees, or any other person, there were rebates to the amount of 975*l.*, there would be in fact only 25*l.* received, and 50*l.* payable out of it?—Precisely so.

And it is quite at the discretion of Mr. Thomas Lees whether they shall be rebated or not?—No, I do not know of any fixed principle on which he proceeds in that respect.

Suppose the chief clerk, in whose management this fund is, thinks fit to charge on one side of his account a rebate to a mail contractor, which in point of fact has never been rebated, is there any means of tracing that?—None, except a reference to the vouchers.

But nobody looks to those vouchers?—No; it is an account that never yet has been audited.

It follows, as a matter of course, that it is your interest that the amount of fines returned to the receiver-general should be as large as possible?—Of course, the larger they are the larger my commission; at the same time I have no wish that they should be increased.

Would it not be possible, with an understanding between Mr. Thomas Lees, who manages the fund, and yourself, supposing you both so disposed, for him to make in the first instance very enormous fines, you receiving a per-centage upon that amount, and he ultimately remitting those fines, so that the fund should be positively a loser by that arrangement?—Only part of the fines could be directed to be levied by him; those on the postmasters are levied in offices different entirely from the secretary's office.

In those levied in his office might not that be the case?—Indeed it might, but it would be productive of a small sum; what composes the principal part of the per-centage on fines is paid actually by the public.

In what way?—In this way; the per-centage on the stoppages from the absent officers of the inland office is paid by the postmasters-general out of the funds of the post-office, and does not come out of the suspension fund. In fact (to make it more intelligible to you), originally the head of the inland office made the stoppages from the officers that were absent, and he paid the officers that were present to do their duty; but it so occurred that he was not as punctual in paying the officers who did the duty as he was in stopping from the officers who were absent, and the consequence of that was, that it led to a very many complaints, and brought a good deal of hardship on the junior officers who got no other subsistence; and it was proposed by me, that if allowed, I would gratuitously undertake to keep the accounts of the absent officers, and to keep regular accounts of the officers who did their duty, and make a return at the end of the quarter to the receiver-general, and another return to the chief clerk; at the time I did not succeed, but on the retirement of the late Mr. De Joncourt, there was no obstacle to my plan being carried into effect, and I did so for two years without any remuneration whatever; at the end of that time, finding the plan was a beneficial one, I memorialled the postmasters-general, and they have been pleased to grant me five per cent. on the amount.

The public does not pay the salary twice over?—No; but supposing the gross amount of stoppages for the last quarter would be 190*l.*, the postmasters-general would pay me, by warrant, five per cent. upon that sum, for this reason, that the amount paid to the officers who did the duty would be as great as the sum stopped; and if the per-centage was paid to me out of the suspension fund it would be eating up the fund; and for that reason the postmasters-general, finding there was a great deal of labour attending this duty, consented to pay me, at the end of every quarter, five per cent. upon it.

That appears in the incident account then?—Yes.

Then why does it appear here?—The payments there must be on the fines imposed on mail-coach contractors, &c.

Then the 50*l.* is not the per-centage on the whole amount of the fund?—Not on those in the inland office; one is paid out of incidents, and the other out of the suspension fund.

Did you make a return of the amount you get out of this in your return of emoluments?—Yes.

Then you have two per-centages which are sources of emolument?—Yes; there is the gross amount of the fines which has been called for for the last three years and it will appear in that what amount was paid to me out of the incidents, and what amount out of the fund.

Your per-centage is calculated on the fines upon the postmasters, and the coach contractors, and the clerks in the inland office?—Yes.

Are not the payments to you charged twice, or paid twice?—No, not paid twice; one portion of it is paid out of that fund, and the other out of the public fund.

What is supposed to be the average amount of the per-centage arising on your superintendence of the fines in the inland office?—About 40*l.* a year.

What is supposed to be the average amount of the per-centage arising on your superintendence of the fines of mail-coach contractors and postmasters?—I should imagine from 15*l.* to 20*l.* a year from both; but it is not the fact to suppose that I get a per-centage from the fund on the whole of the debit side of that account. To show the necessity of having the stoppages, as deducted from the officers of the inland office, brought into that account, and that the payments out of that should be on the opposite side, I will explain; as it was one of the reasons why I proposed it: take this day as an instance, and suppose there were ten officers absent this evening and ten in the morning, that would be ten times 3*s.* 9½*d.* to be deducted from those individuals; but suppose, from idleness or indisposition, only eight extras came to do their duty, there would be stoppages made from ten, but eight only paid; and if it was in the hands of any individual, he might stop those two 3*s.* 9½*d.* without accounting for it.

Examinations.  
 No. 125.  
 Mr.  
 John Burrowes.  
 17th Oct. 1823.

Suppose the secretary, or whoever is attending for him, is inclined to favour the person who keeps the account of the fines and stoppages, and he chooses to inflict a very arbitrary fine with a perfect knowledge that the fine is so enormous and so unjust that it must be rebated, very little injury will be done to the individual on whom a fine has been charged of 5*l.*, because it will be rebated; but a certain good will be done to the clerk who keeps the account, because out of the general account of the post-office his per-centage upon the 5*l.* will be paid?—Such cases as that are possible, I confess. Wherever there are cases of fines of that nature, they have been constantly rebated before the end of the quarter; and I have never in any instance got a per-centage on a fine so laid.

Does it not also open a door to a vindictive feeling in the mind of the individual who has the power of imposing the fine, to levy a more severe fine than he might otherwise?—That is in the mind of the individual.

It appears to yourself that there are objections to the principle?—It does; I have felt that to such a degree, that some years ago I begged Lord Rosse to alter the principle, and to allow a salary for doing this duty. I submitted to him a small scale of salary, to put the officers in the secretary's office independent, in some measure, of the secretary, that they should not be supposed to be at his will in consequence of a remuneration of this kind; this occurred to me as a bad mode of payment, and as leaving us in some measure at his will. Lord Rosse promised us that he would get us an increase of salary. That [*producing it*] is the scale we proposed to his lordship, and he promised to carry it into effect, and to abolish all those extra payments.\*

Do you know any thing of a payment to the widow Boxwell of 10*l.* in the year 1817?—She must have been the widow of some old officer in the establishment.

Do cases ever occur of payment of rewards to officers?—Some years ago there was a regular return, furnished at the end of every week, of the number of letters mis-sent by the officers of the inland office; and this return detailed the names of all the officers at the different roads; and it detailed the names of the persons who mis-sent any letters, and the names of those who did not mis-send any; those who mis-sent any were fined, and those who did not mis-send any were rewarded. Your question must apply to that.

Practically, are not the proceeds of this fund used for little payments about the office, that it may not be possible to get warrants for at the moment?—Never, except in the case of any extra payments; the demands against the establishment are invariably paid by warrant, no matter how small, except in the case of rebates.

The payment of 31*l.* for an entertainment is not a rebate?—No; that is an extra payment, certainly.

There is, "October 30th, 1817, paid to the solicitor for special purposes, 90*l.*;" do you know the nature of that payment?—I cannot explain it.

Will there be a voucher for that?—No doubt there will be a voucher.

The name of the widow Boxwell occurs in many instances, 10*l.* each time?—I apprehend she must be the widow of an old officer.

In 1818 there is, "Cash paid to Mrs. Shepherd, 20*l.*?"—Mrs. Shepherd was the widow of an officer, and I dare say it was a charitable payment.

You have no idea by whose authority that was ordered?—No; those payments are generally by authority of the postmasters-general.

"April 16th, in the year 1818, cash paid to Mr. Blake, 15*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.*;" and on the same day, "to Mr. Bloomfield, 11*l.* 12*s.* 11*d.*;" are those officers on the establishment?—Yes, they were extra officers; it was for duty performed in the inland office.

There is, "Paid, on the 4th of June, the master and band of the fourth dragoons, 4*l.* 11*s.*?"—That was for accompanying the procession of the mail-coaches on the King's birth-day.

"October 6th, 1818, paid widow Alcock, *vide* minute October, 1*l.* 5*s.*?"—She was the widow of a mail-guard.

Here is a charge, "August the 29th, 1818, paid the military guards and band who attended the Duke Michel, 4*l.* 11*s.*?"—I cannot explain that.

On the 14th September here is, "Paid Mr. Williams for loss of a coat, 4*l.*;" do you know on what ground that was?—I do not know indeed.

Is he on the establishment?—There is a Mr. Williams, a clerk, in the establishment.

In one instance the amount received from the treasurer is entered altogether at 206*l.*, and this is stated as fines against officers, including dead-letter office and mail-coach contractors; can you understand the motive for mixing up those accounts?—No; why he did not keep them separate I do not know.

Here is, "Allowance paid to Mrs. Glew, in January 1819, 5*l.*?"—She must have been the widow of some officer.

Here is an entry, "To ditto, received for fines, which should have been levied before against the Cork coach contractor, 9*l.*?"—I do not know any thing of that.

* Under 3 years	-	-	-	£100
Above 3 years and under 5	-	-	-	150
— 5	—	10	-	200
— 10	—	15	-	250
— 15	—	20	-	300
— 20 years	-	-	-	350

Examinations.

No. 125.

Mr.

John Burrowes.  
17th Oct. 1823.

Here is, "Paid John Bannon, omitted to be charged in December, 6*l.* 7*s.* 4*d.*"?—There is a letter-carrier of that name in the post-office; why it should not be introduced before I do not know.

Supposing a letter-carrier to be afflicted by sickness, does he receive his salary during the time?—A proportion of it.

Do you recollect what proportion he receives?—I believe every extra letter-carrier who does duty is secured 14*s.* a week\*; the absent carrier is of a class of a higher rate; he has the balance.

Then a sick extra letter-carrier stands on a very superior footing to a clerk in the inland office?—Yes.

Do you keep an account of the letter-carriers who are absent?—No, I do not.

In the incident account for the year ending the 5th of January 1823 there are the following charges: "Extra letter-carriers employed in the place of sick letter-carriers for one year, ended 5th October 1822, 102*l.* 2*s.* 10*d.* Ditto, penny post, 56*l.* 19*s.* 3*d.*"?—My former answer gives the answer to that; it was done for this purpose, that it was conceived a bad thing to have letter-carriers not in the receipt of a regular salary, and that led to the securing something to the extra letter-carriers, which was made up, part from the salary of the absent men, and part out of the funds of the post-office, as I have already explained.

In point of fact, when a letter-carrier is sick, the public is very considerably burthened by his illness?—Yes.

But in case of a clerk from the inland office being ill, he is charged a larger amount than is paid to his substitute?—In some instances.

Are all payments out of the suspension fund made by order of the secretary?—There are some made by order of the postmasters-general; the things to explain these matters would be the vouchers themselves; the fact is, I do not know how the payments are made, or how often they are made; it is a thing which never comes before me.

In the first return you made to this Board of your emoluments arising from your situation, you stated your salary at 200*l.*, and all other emoluments or advantages at about 50*l.*?—Yes, I did.

In the second return, you state them, "Salary 200*l.*; all other emoluments 192*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.*," so that there is a difference between the two of 142*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.*?—The first return was on an average of three years; what made the great difference was this, probably, the per-centage on fines for the last year was much greater than on any preceding.

The emoluments are stated as follows: "Supplying Acts of Parliament, 75*l.*"?—That was, when I was first examined, not considered by me an official emolument; though I was desirous to contribute on that to the superannuation fund, I was not allowed to do so.

That is one of the sources of emolument which arises out of your situation?—Distinctly so.

The suspension fund appears in that year to have produced 102*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.*; that is considerably above the general average?—Considerably so; it was in consequence of very large and heavy fines against mail-coach contractors.

In the incident account for 1822 there is charged for the suspension fund 58*l.* 6*s.* 2*d.* and 33*l.* 5*s.* 0½*d.*, making a total of 91*l.* 11*s.* 2½*d.*?—That must have been for a period long previous; in fact an accumulation of per-centage.

It would be extremely difficult for you to calculate, unless you went very particularly into the accounts, what was the benefit you derived from keeping this account?—Yes; and that may explain, when I stated 50*l.* or 60*l.* as the average.

Does the 392*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.*, as stated in your second return, constitute all the emoluments arising out of your situation at the post-office?—I should imagine so; there is one other I have not connected with my situation at the post-office, that is, managing the newspapers for Sir Edward Lees, as clerk of the Leinster road.

He is allowed a clerk by the public?—Yes, he is.

What may be the average emolument you receive, or do you receive a specific consideration for that?—That consideration is liable to deductions. I am obliged to provide an establishment to fold the newspapers, and so on.

Can you give any average sum as the emoluments you derive from that source?—It is a thing I never made out.

The proceeds of the Leinster road are all carried to the public account?—Yes, after the deductions are made. After paying for the newspapers I may send beyond the termination of a subscription, it may produce to me about 100*l.* a year.

If the clerk of the Leinster road sends papers beyond the time of the subscription, is that a loss to the public or a loss to him?—In fact it is a loss to me, who manages the account.

You undertake all those trifling risks that may arise to the clerk of the Leinster road, who is responsible to the public for the management of them?—Yes; every individual paper, no matter whether paid for or not, is accurately accounted for, and the profit returned at the end of the quarter; so that if I send six, eight, or ten papers that I have not received payment for, it will be so much loss to myself; the editors will not give them to me without payment; and I return them all as if there were a profit.

Supposing the case of the sale of papers on the Leinster road falling off very much, is it any loss to you?—No, none; the only falling off would be to the revenue.

\* 4*s.* 1*d.* from the public, and 11*s.* 9*d.* from the absent carrier.



Examinations.

No. 125.

Mr. John Burrows.  
17th Oct. 1823.

Did you receive any thing in the year in which you have returned those emoluments on account of English publications?—None.

Have you ever supplied any monthly publications as clerk of the roads?—Previous to the incorporation of the clerks of roads with the express clerks the British newspapers were managed by me.

Were there magazines also sent?—Yes, there were magazines went with them, the profits of which went to Sir Edward Lees.

Did you sustain any loss from that diminution?—Not a penny.

Did you travel to Gorey in the last year?—I did.

Do you recollect what you received for your travelling expenses?—Indeed I do not.

Do you recollect whether the sum charged by you was 26*l.* 10*s.*?—I cannot say, indeed. I went on to Wexford, and remained there some days.

On what subject did you go?—On the subject of anonymous letters, which had been sent to Lord Courtown. I was sent down by the orders of Government.

What you did receive would be charged on incidents?—Yes.

Did you expend that sum?—It was the usual allowance to surveyors of a shilling a mile, and twenty-six shillings a day.

Have you often been employed as surveyor?—I believe that was the second instance; going down at that time was much against my own wish, for I was obliged to neglect other things.

You were employed at one time as the deputy to the comptroller of the British-mail office?—Yes, I was.

By whom were you appointed to fill that office?—I think it was an arrangement with Mr. Homan himself.

Is it usual for the comptroller to exercise the power of selection?—I think in that case it was in consequence of a communication with the postmasters-general that he was allowed to do so.

Do you recollect the allowance you received for that duty?—I got no allowance whatever for it.

Was there any particular profit attached to it?—No, none in the world. I derived a profit in this way; that while I was in possession of the office, which was one of the reasons I went, there was a system of smuggling carrying on; some eminent jewellers in Dublin were in the habit of getting their small packages to Holyhead, and they were sent over, so as to evade the duty, and I communicated it to the Custom-house, and there were seizures made, and the Custom-house gave me for giving the information, I believe, 80*l.*

Was not the comptroller by virtue of his office entitled to receive that?—No, it was given to me as the informer.

Are you entitled to any fee on the change of a Lord Lieutenant?—Yes; there is 40*l.* divided among the officers.

That has been established for some time?—Yes, a great many years ago.

Have you any knowledge of a fee which Mr. Thomas Lees receives when packets are ordered from the Castle for any individual?—I know there is such a fee exists, but more than that I do not know; during the war it was a very productive thing to him; the number of expresses and extra packets coming was very considerable.

Had he a fee on expresses?—Yes.

On expresses sent by the Government and individuals?—Yes.

There is a small allowance from the Cow-pock Institution?—Yes, 15*l.*, which was returned in the last return made by me.

Is not there a fee received by the clerk who takes charge of the letters for charitable institutions?—That comes under that denomination, and there are other clerks receive the same.

The letters go free, but there is a remuneration made to the clerk who takes charge of them?—Yes.

Who is that clerk?—Mr. Crofton.

In what way is the gratuity received on the change of a Lord Lieutenant divided?—It is under a regulation I know nothing of; it was long before I came into the office.

By whose order or arrangement is the thing carried into effect?—The books probably would explain why it was divided in a certain way originally: what it was intended for, or why they should have given this or the other man 10*l.* or 5*l.* I do not know.

Has the same sum been awarded to the same officers on each occasion?—Yes, ever since I have been in the office.

In May 1819 there is a sum paid to the contractor of the Enniskillen coach of 60*l.*; can you state the nature of that?—No, I know nothing of the nature of the payment.

On 5th October 1819 there is a sum of 3*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.* paid to Mr. Green the grocer?—I believe that was to remunerate him for some money that had been purloined by one of the messengers out of a letter, which messenger was ultimately executed for murder, after having escaped that offence.

Here is a payment to O'Neill, the messenger, for attending the Persian ambassador, of 1*l.*?—That stands on the same footing as the others of the same nature, I presume.

In April 1820 there is a payment to five mail-guards on the Wexford line of 17*l.* 1*s.* 3*d.*; do you know the nature of that payment?—No, I do not.

The same occurs again further on. A charge also for chaise-hire with mail for Howth; what could be the occasion of that?—I do not know, indeed.

Examinations.

No. 125.

Mr. John Burrowes.  
17th Oct. 1823.

In July 1820 there is a payment made to George Middleton, by order of secretary, of 20*l.*; do you know the nature of that?—I do not.

Is not there a regulation, that the secretary shall never draw for sums amounting to more than 10*l.*?—If there is such a regulation I do not know of it.

Were you not appointed in the room of Mr. Archbold, as minute clerk, to prepare a warrant to that effect, that the secretary should not draw for more than 10*l.* except with the express approbation of the postmasters-general?—I cannot say, indeed; it might have been so, but I cannot say whether it was or not.

There appear latterly to have been no sums of money brought to account on the credit side of this account for the late newspapers?—No, because at a subsequent period one of the postmasters-general (I believe Lord Rosse) consented that those sums should go to the remuneration of the inspector of letter-carriers, and that is the reason they are not carried to account.

There is a sum of 25*l.* paid in June 1821 to Mr. Gillard, a mail-coach contractor; there could be no reason for paying to him that sum, unless it had been paid by him previously?—No, certainly not.

The whole sum paid by mail-coach contractors appears to be 19*l.*, and the sum paid back 25*l.*?—Yes, that may be so; for that may have been a sum paid by them a year and a half back.

There is a payment to James Drought for duty in the secretary's office, 1*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.*?—I know nothing of that.

There is a charge of yourself for duty in the British-mail office, November 13, 1821, 1*l.* 9*s.* 5*d.*; what is the reason of that?—It may have been that I might have been sent to do duty for Mr. Homan, and that it might have been stopped from him and paid over to me for doing duty for him; I presume that may be the occasion of it.

Here appears to be a charge for fines against the mail-coach contractors in January 1822, amounting to 308*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.*, and a rebate, 236*l.* 15*s.* 9*d.*; 71*l.* 13*s.* 11*d.* paid over?—That is one of the ridiculous absurdities of it, to say that there should be a per-centage paid on the gross amount of these, when they were rebated immediately afterwards.

Here is another instance where 107*l.* 2*s.* are charged on the contractors, and 100*l.* 7*s.* rebated?—Yes, that system is very bad, certainly.

Here is another instance where the mail-coach contractors are charged 8*l.*, and the rebate is seven guineas?—Yes; there was a loss there, certainly.

Here is "July 22d, 30*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.* paid to John Burrowes for his per-centage on fines paid over to the suspension fund on July 22d"?—The vouchers, I have no doubt, would explain that.

The vouchers of the suspension fund must be very numerous?—Indeed, I should apprehend so.

"November 25th, 1822, amount of fines rebated to the Cork and Waterford mail-coach, 60*l.* 19*s.* 11*d.*;" it appears as if the rebates in this year considerably exceed the payments?—They may do in that particular year, possibly.

Does the chief clerk derive any emolument or get any salary from this fund?—No; except having the use of the money; that must be more or less a remuneration; if it was invested in any kind of security it would produce an advantage.

Do you believe that there is an advantage?—There can be none, except it is that.

When clerks from the secretary's office or from the inland office are sent to perform the duties of surveyors, is there any minute made in the secretary's office that such and such persons have been sent?—No; it is not the habit to do so.

How is it done?—It is generally in that case done as a matter of favour; probably on application to one or other of the postmasters-general, who consent to his being employed as surveyor; but there is no regular minute made of it, I believe.

Your understanding is, that it is done as matter of favour?—Of course.

Suppose a clerk has relations that live in the county of Mayo, and he wants to go and see them, it would be a convenient thing if he could be sent on a survey?—It would, indeed; but the generality of cases in which it has occurred were not where it was done in that way, but to remunerate them pecuniarily, to enable them to derive the advantage of being out on a survey.

To reward them for diligent service in the secretary's office or elsewhere, they were sent out on survey?—Yes, more than to send them where their family or friends may live.

You are aware that there are regular surveyors on the establishment?—Yes.

Then this was a mode of rewarding officers that must necessarily interfere with the regular surveyors?—It did in very many instances; it was a thing that ought not to have been allowed at all.

In your situation, as minute clerk, do not all criminal proceedings, or proceedings by the solicitor, come under your knowledge?—Never.

Are not minutes made when proceedings are directed?—No, it has never been the habit to do so. If any proceeding is judged necessary, it emanates, I imagine, from the secretary himself to the solicitor, authorizing him to do so and so.

No minute is made of it?—No.

Is it done without any previous concert with the postmasters-general?—I cannot say.

Is Mr. Thomas Lees allowed a clerk for managing his road?—Yes.

Who is his clerk?—Mr. Urquhart.

J. BURROWES.

Examinations.

No. 126.

Mr. John Burrowes.  
20th Oct. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 126.

Monday, 20th October 1823.

Mr. JOHN BURROWES again called in and examined.

THIS is the book to which you referred in your evidence on Friday [*it being produced*]?—  
Yes.

This book contains an account of the fines inflicted on the deputy postmasters, the officers in the inland office, and the mail-coach contractors?—Yes.

From what do you make up that account?—That part which respects the clerks in the inland office from the morning report that is furnished daily, and contains a summary of the whole proceedings morning and evening, the number of officers absent, and the number of those who do the duty, and the letters passing inwards and outwards; in fact, it contains a summary of the proceedings daily of that office.

It is from that summary you make up this quarterly account?—From that each individual's name is recorded, and I charge the absent officers 2s. 2d. for the evening, and 1s. 7½d. in the morning; that will be best explained by the book in which each individual officer's account is kept.

Do you render a copy of this account to the receiver-general?—Yes.

At what periods?—Regularly at the termination of every quarter.

He is constantly in possession of the state of the suspension fund, with regard to the fines which you show from this book?—Indeed I should imagine he is; in fact the suspension fund consists exclusively of fines, and he is the person who stops those fines, therefore he must have an accurate idea of them.

On advertng to the book, it appears that after three years and a quarter there is a certificate on the part of the receiver-general, stating that he has paid over a certain sum, amounting to 1,003*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, into the hands of Mr. Thompson, to the credit of the suspension fund?—Yes; Mr. Thompson was the predecessor of Mr. Thomas Lees, as chief clerk.

Under that there is an order on Mr. Thompson, signed by Sir Edward Lees, desiring him to pay you at the rate of five per cent. upon that sum for keeping that account?—There is.

How often were those orders necessary?—That was optional with myself; whether quarterly or at a longer period.

In the course of thirteen years and three quarters, from the commencement of this book to the period to which the account is brought down, there appear to have been only three of those certificates on the part of the receiver-general, and three orders on the part of Sir Edward Lees, to pay you your per-centage?—I dare say it is so. I can explain why it was not continued in that book. At a period subsequent to the last certificate alluded to, the system was introduced by me of paying the extras; and as the per-centage on that had to be paid by the public, a similar certificate has been introduced, and it is on the document in which Mr. Thomas Lees paid me the per-centage on the suspension fund; there is the same certificate, though not recorded in the book.

In a subsequent part of the book there is here and there an entry in red ink?—One portion of the per-centage on the fines recorded in that book was paid over to me, on the certificate of Mr. Swan, and the other portion of it was paid to me by the warrant of the postmasters-general.

Was not the effect of that to make the payments appear more distinctly under their proper heads?—Quite so; because they were to come from separate sources, and it would be wrong to join them together.

That process having been adopted in that respect, was there any reason for continuing the accounts in the mixed-up state in which they are in one book; would it not have elucidated the account and rendered it much more clear if those proceeds that arose from fines inflicted on the officers in the inland office, upon which the per-centage was to be paid out of the public revenue, had been kept by themselves?—Yes, or they might have been kept in one book, explaining upon what portion the per-centage was to be paid out of one fund, and upon what portion out of the other.

Does it not appear to you that a part of the confusion in the suspension account, which there appeared in your examination on this subject, arose from their being kept in one book?—No, I think not; keeping the accounts of the officers is, literally speaking, all I had to do, and giving Mr. Swan the particulars of each person's account at the end of the quarter; it was not necessary I should keep the duplicate of that; it was kept only for my private satisfaction.

In those books which you have referred to as being in the office, are all the fines mingled up together?—No, each individual's account is separate.

(107.)

Is

## Examinations.

No. 126.

*Mr. John Burrowes.*  
20th Oct. 1823.

Is the same form observed in the other books in which you refer to the certificate of the receiver-general?—No; in the subsequent certificates it is taking the gross amount of the stoppages on which I was entitled to a per-centage out of the suspension fund; the amount of each quarter is detailed, and Mr. Swan certifies that that is a correct account, and there is an order to the officer to pay me.

This sort of certificate is now given by Mr. Thomas Lees?—Yes; and instead of being recorded in that book, it is recorded in a sheet of paper, containing the particulars of the fines.

Who kept this book at that period?—I kept it during Mr. Thompson's time; previous to my coming into office there was no such book at all kept.

Have you ever heard Mr. Thomas Lees express great regret at having the trouble of the suspension fund; that it is considered a grievance his having it?—Indeed, I do not think I ever did.

Do you suppose that it is a duty thrown upon the chief clerk for which he receives no advantage whatever, and which gives him a great deal of disagreeable business?—It cannot be a disagreeable business; I should apprehend the advantages of having the fund in his hands, which is more or less, is ample remuneration.

He has the power of making use of that money at all times?—Yes; in fact, it is a fund which has been in possession of the chief clerk for upwards of half a century.

Is it not an advantage to the chief clerk having it?—If I was in his situation I would consider it an advantage, certainly.

The balances in his hands appear latterly to have decreased very much?—I have not had an opportunity of ascertaining what the balance is.

The fines appear to have decreased?—That is very likely.

An accurate idea of the balances in his hands cannot, you think, be formed from your book?—No; for there are a great many fines appearing there which may never have been levied at all; I refer to those from the mail-coach contractors; and the only way of ascertaining the balance actually paid over to him would be by referring to the book kept by the receiver-general.

You neither directly nor indirectly know any thing of the mode in which the proceeds of this fund are appropriated, independent of the payment to the clerks who do the duty?—No; I might accidentally hear of this or the other sum being paid, but I have no possible means of ascertaining it accurately; there may be payments made out of it of which I know nothing.

The book you saw on Friday ought to contain an accurate account of the sums actually in his hands?—Undoubtedly.

It has not come to your knowledge that compensations to mail contractors for other duties, or for duties extraneous to the purposes of the contract, have been paid out of that fund?—I am unable to answer that question; there might be various payments made out of that fund of which I know nothing.

Did you ever hear of a payment made to the Derry contractor, not in the shape of a rebate, but in the shape of a consideration for extra duty performed?—I believe I have, but I cannot speak with perfect confidence to the fact.

Are you aware whether it has ever been the practice to take a retrospective view of the fines inflicted on mail-coach contractors seven or eight years before, and to give them the rebates at such a distance of time as that?—Such a transaction as that did take place; I cannot speak to the date; but some heavy fines, levied by Lord Clancarty when he was in office, were rebated in the time of Lord Rosse and Lord O'Neill.

They were his immediate successors?—Yes.

Were they rebated immediately, or at any distance of time?—I think it was at the distance of two or three years at least, if not more.

Would it not have been very difficult, if not impossible, to have brought such a rebate on the face of the incident account?—Not at all difficult.

If after the lapse of seven or eight years, would it not have been difficult?—No; the postmasters-general have the absolute power of ordering a payment at any distance of time.

Would there not have been an awkwardness in making the charge on the incident account at that distance of time?—No, I think not.

Would not the present postmasters-general have a difficulty in ascertaining the grounds on which Lord Clancarty imposed a fine?—I should think not.

Are the grounds on which the fines are imposed recorded?—There is not a single fine imposed for which the cause is not assigned.

Is there any book kept in which a record of the fines, or the reasons which caused their infliction, is stated?—One of the books sent for will explain the fines imposed and the reasons for imposing them. The keeping these accounts is a very voluminous and troublesome occupation.

To yourself?—Yes.

Does the book state the grounds on which the fines are inflicted as well as the fact?—Yes.

Does

Does it also state the ground of the rebates?—No; for the rebates may have been made after the money was paid over to the suspension fund, and on a ground of which I knew nothing.

Will there be any record of that?—In one case there will; that is, if the fine was rebated previous to the termination of the quarter, there would be authority for me not to return that fine to Mr. Swan at the termination of the quarter.

That applies principally to persons in the inland office, does it not?—Yes.

But supposing a fine is actually levied, and then rebated; that it stands as a debit to him, and is afterwards rebated, there is no record kept of the reason of the rebate?—None by me.

Does not it appear to you, that there should be?—Yes; that is one of the reasons why I cannot explain the cause of the rebate after the quarter.

Is there any book in which the grounds of the rebate after the quarter is ended are stated?—I believe not, unless it is Mr. Lees's book.

Mr. Lees's book does not state the ground?—Then there is no other I should think.

In whom is the discretion of making the rebates vested?—Generally the secretary.

The record of the fines shows the amount that the fund may receive, the record of the rebate would explain the ground of deduction from that receipt?—Distinctly.

By possibility there might be a chief clerk who might put down a rebate as a mode of accounting for the diminution of the fund; if there is no record kept of the grounds of the rebate, there can be no security, as far as check goes, that malversation of the fund may not take place?—Very possibly; certainly it is open to that abuse.

Will not the power be vested altogether in the chief clerk, if the secretary has never seen that account, which he states to be the fact; is there any check on the chief clerk entering rebates to any person he may think proper, without having done so?—Certainly, as the account has never been audited, it is open to that abuse.

Does any person receiving a rebate give an acknowledgment to the chief clerk of having received it?—I should think that he does, but I cannot speak to it of my own knowledge, the account not being subject to any controul, it is left in the discretion of the person keeping the account.

Then if there was an understanding between the secretary and the chief clerk, they might make any division they chose of the money?—Certainly there is nothing but the character of the individual against it.

The questions of the Commissioners are to be understood as applying generally, and without the least idea of supposing that the individuals at present in possession of those offices would be guilty of the frauds which are adverted to?—So I have taken it in the answers I have given, merely as applying generally.

Your's must be a voluminous account?—Yes, it occupies, including the mail-coach contractor's, sixty or seventy separate accounts.

There is not a quarter in which there are not fines against the mail-coach contractors and the deputy postmasters?—There are more or less every quarter.

[The witness produced the Inland morning report, the book containing the accounts of the officers distinctly posted from the morning reports, and the accounts of the deputy postmasters and mail-coach contractors.]

Are the fines imposed on the mail-coach contractors, for taking too large a number of outside passengers, equal to the fares received of those persons?—Yes, on the principle of their being infractions of the contract; those fines go to the benefit of the public.

Do the fines for coming in too late go to the same account?—No, they go to the suspension fund.

Is the fine for taking extra passengers ever remitted?—Yes, I believe it is very frequently: this [*producing it*] is the book containing accounts of the extra officers employed in performing the duty in the office; the compensation I receive for keeping these accounts averages 2s. a quarter for each of these accounts.

From whom do the fines on the mail-coach contractors emanate?—The fines on the mail-coach contractors emanate from the superintendent of mail-coaches.

On what principle is the fine for late arrival?—That is imposed on the principle laid down by Lord Clancarty of a shilling a minute.

J. BURROWES.

[*The Inland Morning Report was delivered in, and read as follows:*]

Examinations.

No. 126.

Mr. J. Burrowes.  
20th Oct. 1823.

SATURDAY EVENING - - 18th October 1823.

INLAND MAILS			One British Mail arrived and forwarded.			
Outwards.			Acting Clerks of Roads.	Divisions.	Coaches.	Dispatched.
						H. M.
	£	s. d.				
Amount of unpaid - -	254	1 5	Mowlds - -	No. 1.	Limerick - -	8 0
Sunday - - - -	103	3 1	Thompson - -	No. 2.	Belfast - -	8 0
Morning coach - -	15	4 8	Middleton - -	No. 3.	Galway - -	8 0
Inland paid - - -	31	3 3½	Maley - - -	No. 4.		Wexford - -
Total - - - -	£ 403	12 5¼	Walpole - -	No. 5.	Enniskillen - -	8 0
			Wilson - - -	No. 6.	Waterford - -	8 0
			Murphy - - -	No. 7.	Derry - - -	8 0
			E. De Joncourt -	No. 8.	Cork by Clonmel	7 30
					Belfast, M. M. -	7 0
					Cork by Cashel	7 0
<p style="text-align: center;">Officers absent :</p> <p>Wall, } Harrison, T. } West, } - sick. Cullen, } Harrison, R. } M'Gowan, } Parsons, } Paul, } O'Neill, N. J. } - leave. Devitt, } Leahy, - } Stoker - - } - off. M'Cauley, - } Hervey - - }</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Kendrick in Alphabet Office.</p> <p>Extra Probationers on duty :</p> <p>Drought, Cumine, Hall, Parsons, J. Mauly, Parsons, T. Price, Brabazon, Leahy, Wilson, J. B. Dobbs, R. Fuller, Field, Wilson, A. Lambert, Nickson, Ex<sup>r</sup> Thompson, Newspapers.</p> <p>Probationers absent :</p> <p>Dobbs, F. - } Neeson, - } - leave. Johnstone, - } Hunt, - - } Curtis, - - } - sick. O'Meara, - } Drury, - } - off. Burgess, - }</p>			<p>The Mails commenced dispatch at 8 o'clock, and were all out of this office at 8 o'clock.</p> <p>Country letters by the morning mails - 886 Country packet letters - - - 2,719 Paid - ditto - - - 597 Free - ditto - - - 1,080 Taxed - ditto - - - 3,554</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Number of letters outward - <u>8,836</u></p> <p>Mem.—Late State letters delayed the Cork mail by Clonmel.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(signed) AMB. LEET, V. President.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">STEPHEN DE JONCOURT, Vice President.</p>			

Examinations.

No. 126.  
Mr. John Burrowes.  
20th Oct. 1823.

MONDAY MORNING - - 20th October 1823.

**BRITISH MAILS.**

None arrived.

Due, none.

Arrivals.

Bags not arrived.

H.	M.															
6	0	Roscrea branch of the 5th instant due.														
6	0															
6	20															
6	0															
6	0	Total number of letters for Dublin - 5,299														
6	15	Of which for the letter-carriers - 4,170														
6	0															
6	0															
		<table border="0"> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Dublin,</td> <td rowspan="4">{</td> <td>Taxed single letters</td> <td>-</td> <td>3,755</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Taxed Enclosures</td> <td>- -</td> <td>848</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paid single</td> <td>- -</td> <td>425</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paid Enclosures</td> <td>- -</td> <td>201</td> </tr> </table>	Dublin,	{	Taxed single letters	-	3,755	Taxed Enclosures	- -	848	Paid single	- -	425	Paid Enclosures	- -	201
Dublin,	{	Taxed single letters			-	3,755										
		Taxed Enclosures			- -	848										
		Paid single			- -	425										
		Paid Enclosures	- -	201												
		Country - - - - 1,293														
		English - - - - 1,204														
		Free - - - - 1,945														
		<hr/>														
		Number of letters inwards - - 9,741														
		<hr/> <hr/>														

Advances, £31 1s. 6d.

Amount to letter-carriers, £312 2s. 7d.  
Last charge delivered at 7/55 o'clock.  
Letter-carriers dispatched at 9/15 o'clock.  
Delivery finished yesterday at 11 - ditto.

Officers absent :

Wall,	}	- sick.
Harrison, T.		
Cullen,		
Page,		
M'Gowan,	}	- leave.
Harrison, R.		
Parsons,		
Paul,		
O'Neill, N.J.	}	- off.
Devitt,		
Maley,	}	- off.
Riddle,		
Middleton,		

Kendrick in Alphabet Office.

Extra Probationers on duty :

Drury,	Hall,
Price,	Field,
Drought,	Wilson, J. B.
O'Meara,	Parsons, J.
Brabazon,	Parsons, T.
Manley,	Leahy,
Dobbs, R.	Thompson,
Lambert,	Cumine,

Probationers absent :

Dobbs, F.	}	leave.
Neeson,		
Johnston,		
Curtis,	}	sick.
Hunt,		
Wilson, F.		
Fuller,		
Nickson,		
Burges,		
Ex. Newsp.		

(signed) **AMB. LEET,**  
V. President.  
**STEPHEN DE JONCOURT,**  
Vice President.

## Examinations.

No. 127.  
G. C. Swan, Esq.  
1st Sept. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 127.

1st September 1823.

GRAVES CHAMNEY SWAN Esquire called in, and examined.

WHAT office do you hold in the post office?—Receiver-general.

For what length of time have you held that office?—Since January 1808.

You were appointed by patent?—Yes.

You hold that patent during pleasure?—I do.

Will you have the goodness to state the nature of your attendance at the post-office?—My attendance is daily, Sundays excepted.

For what length of time?—Except perhaps at the end of a quarter, when the establishment is in the course of payment, and when the greater part of the incidents are paid; the time is very uncertain.

Does it exceed half an hour or an hour a day?—No.

Not so much?—No, not so much.

Have you daily duties to perform?—No; except so far as this, to look over the account-books in the office.

All the account-books?—There are very few account-books that are in daily use. They use the letter-carriers pay-books, and the receiver-general's draft-book on the Bank of Ireland.

Do you inspect those books in any other place than the office?—No.

Then the whole of your inspection of those books is confined to the small space of time you have described?—Except at the end of a quarter, and on the Mondays, when the weekly accounts are made up.

At what time do you go to the office on Mondays?—At twelve or one o'clock. We do not make up the books till three o'clock, for we are obliged to certify the balance to the Board, which is not known till three o'clock.

When you say twelve or one o'clock, is it sometimes one, and sometimes the other?—Yes.

Which the most frequently?—One o'clock.

On Mondays your duties are confined to two hours?—Yes.

Does your duty extend to any thing else but the examining of books?—And the making out the abstracts, signing drafts on the Bank, and framing returns.

To whom are they returned?—The weekly abstracts are returned to the vice-treasurer here, and the accountant-general of the custom-house.

What are they?—They are abstracts of the receipts and payments of my office for the preceding week, the net revenue.

Do you make those out with your own hand?—I draw them out in the book, and my senior clerk, Mr. Symes, copies them into abstracts, which are sent to the vice-treasurer and the accountant-general of the custom-house.

The book itself is kept in your own hand writing?—Not the whole of it.

A considerable part of it?—A considerable part of it is done by a junior clerk.

Is any other part of it done by any other clerk?—No.

How many clerks have you?—Two clerks, between whom I divide the business of the office; the senior clerk collects all the cash revenue, and pays it into the Bank; the junior clerk takes care of the accounts of the office.

Is the money paid into your hands?—No; into the hands of the senior clerk.

What security is given by yourself?—16,000*l*.

What security is given by the senior clerk?—1000*l*; I am security for the senior clerk.

Is any security given by the junior?—Yes, there is, I believe, a double security; for he has two situations, one in the inland office, and the other in my office.

Have either of them any business out of the post-office?—Yes; my senior clerk holds also a situation in the Bank.

Does that occupy much of his time?—It does; his attendance in the Bank should be from ten until three o'clock.

Was he appointed by yourself?—No; he was appointed by Lord Rosse.

Had he that office in the Bank when he was so appointed?—He either had the same office, or a similar one in a private bank.

Is it not, in your opinion, objectionable that a person in such a situation in the post-office should have another in another office?—I think there might be objections to it; in this case I think not.

In what way are the objections obviated in this case?—The advantages of it in this case are these: I do not think that any other person than the person who now fills the situation would be able of himself to collect the revenue; he is assisted by the clerks in the Bank; if he is pressed to make a lodgment, all the clerks in the Bank give him a preference to strangers; he is able to get the collections into the Bank, when a stranger never would be able to do it in proper time.



Examinations.

No. 127.  
G. C. Swan, Esq.  
1st Sept. 1823.

Within what time is he forced to pay them in?—Before three o'clock; the Bank closes at three.

So that a convenience in his case, you think, arises from his being able to obtain favour in the Bank, which he could not otherwise obtain?—Favour in that way; and also in this way revenue is remitted to us in a great variety of value; in bank bills and money orders of different kinds, on different people spread over the city; the runners of the Bank will sometimes oblige my senior clerk by taking out those orders and obtaining the money for him.

You think that though he loses time by having this separate duty, he reaps an advantage by his connection?—I think the public is advantaged by it.

If that person held any other situation not connected with the Bank, you have no hesitation in saying that would be a detriment to the public service?—No hesitation at all.

Are you yourself connected with or engaged in any other business than your public duty at the post-office?—Yes.

What is that?—A very extensive agency.

Of what nature?—Land agency.

In the individual management of the estates, or in what way; in buying and selling land?—In that way also; a general agent so far as concerns landed property.

Are you in the habit of receiving rents?—Yes, largely; I am agent to different noblemen and gentlemen.

Will you have the goodness to state whether your employment on your own account, as the agent of those estates, interferes at all with your duty to the public?—No, I do not think it does in the least.

You think you have still time and attention enough to devote to the office?—Yes, with the assistance of good clerks.

In the money transactions you carry on in your private concerns as general agent, and your public capacity of receiver, are the two at all connected together?—No more than if they were in distinct hands.

They have no relation to each other?—No relation in the world.

The money that is received in the one is never applied to the other?—The money collected in the office I never touch; it is collected by my senior clerk, and paid by him into the Bank, and the Bank balance is certified every Monday at three o'clock.

The two accounts are in every respect entirely separate; and in all matters of bills and money the receipt and payment are perpetually distinct, and in no instance cross or interfere?—Perpetually distinct; all the revenue is paid into an account at the Bank on account of the postmasters-general, with which I have no concern whatever.

In your situation at the post-office, have you the power and authority of franking?—I have.

Is that power and authority given to you by Act of Parliament?—It is.

Under what limitations and restrictions?—It is limited to the business of the office and my own private concerns.

Do you mean that the words of the Act are your own private concerns?—I will not pretend to say that I cite the words of the Act correctly.

Is that what you understand to be the meaning of the Act?—What I have understood to be the meaning of the Act was, that I was at liberty to receive and send letters through the office on the office business, and on my own private affairs.

That is the mode in which you act upon it; is it confined to that?—No, I cannot say that; I must admit there has been an abuse in it.

In exercising this privilege, what form of frank do you use; do you date the letters?—I always date them.

And sign them with your own name?—Yes, I sign my own name. In some few cases, but very few, when an officer in the post-office has brought me his letter, with his name marked upon the top of it, I have perhaps in twenty instances since I have been receiver-general put my name on the corner of the letter, but the officer in that case puts his name on the top of the letter, to show that it is vouched by that means to be the letter of an officer in the post-office. I do not suppose there have been during the sixteen years I have been in the post-office more than thirty or forty instances of the kind.

Have you an official seal as well as an official direction?—I have an official seal, but I do not always make use of it.

The letters pass equally whether you do or not?—Yes.

You frank at your own residence as well as in the post-office, probably?—Always.

To what extent do you conceive the privilege of franking for your private concerns extends; does it extend to your agency business?—I should suppose it does.

You have been in the habit of covering with your own frank the correspondence of your agency business, and of receiving such letters as are connected with your agency business, free?—I have been both, except in a few cases that, perhaps, I would not.

Are you to be understood, that except in those few cases the whole correspondence of your general agency is sent free under your post-office privilege?—I am.

And that the whole correspondence of your general agency is received free, equally?—Yes.

Is a large proportion of your correspondence above weight?—Yes, it is.

Have you any reserve as to the weight of parcels; suppose the case that one of your correspondents or sub-agents in the country, connected with a gentleman's estate, which

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you manage, was to have an account book to send you, would there be any scruple in packing that up and sending it to you free of postage?—Indeed there would not.

Have you any partner?—I have one; Mr. Henry Stewart.

In what business is he engaged?—He is not otherwise engaged in business than as my partner. I am the active partner. Mr. Henry Stewart is an elderly man, and resides entirely in the country. I am the sole active partner.

What portion of his business is covered or affected by your privilege of franking?—Merely communications between him and me, and between him and his sons, one or two of whom are generally in my office, and also his friends.

In what situation?—His son is a clerk, merely training to the business of an agent.

Will you state, as nearly as you can, what number of letters per day you are in the habit of franking under the privilege which you possess?—That I cannot exactly say.

Will you state it as nearly as you can, with reference to a week or any time?—I should answer that question with reference to the season of the year when the rents are in the progress of receipt; the number that I receive at that time, and the number that I frank, acknowledging receipts from the country, exceed greatly the number I am franking at other times. There are times when I do not receive three letters in a day; there may be others when there are twelve, fourteen, or fifteen; and in general the letters I receive all require acknowledgments.

Do you abide strictly by the rule of confining your privilege to your own private concerns, or do you extend the accommodation to friends?—I have done it towards friends, but I believe with less breach of the privilege than almost any officer in the post-office; I believe my refusing to do it has gained me many enemies.

Have you on any occasion made use of your privilege of franking for any one for a consideration?—Never.

You have not used it for the purpose of facilitating the conduct of the business of any other person, in order that you might yourself receive any participation in the advantages that might be derived from so doing, of a pecuniary nature or otherwise?—Never.

Have you used it for the accommodation of friends, ladies for instance; franking game, and things of that sort?—I have never made use of it for that purpose.

Is there any other house of business besides your own who have been in the habit of having their letters sent under cover to you?—No.

Has such a thing as that happened occasionally?—Yes; Lord Longford, for instance, and I correspond; perhaps I receive three or four letters a week from his lordship; when his letters to me exceed the weight, he will send them direct; and indeed, he very seldom franks a letter to me; but always, when his lordship's letters exceed the ounce, they come to me free, under my privilege.

Those are letters on the subject of your own agency?—Certainly.

Will you have the goodness to state what additional expense your agency business would incur, if, instead of having the correspondence carried on under the privilege you enjoy of sending and receiving letters free, the whole of such correspondence were carried on in the usual way, through the medium of the post-office?—I should not suppose it could be less than 100*l.* a year if they were sent through the post; some part would in that case be sent in parcels by the coach; what are sent are half notes or account books, when the receivers are collecting the rents.

Would it not amount to considerably more than 100*l.* a year?—I should conceive not. When I mention that sum, I speak of the money I should have to pay myself on the letters I receive; there are my answers of course to be considered; but before I had my present situation, and had this privilege, I had the half notes up as parcels by the coach, or by private hand.

What do you suppose the postage of the letters you send would amount to?—Unless I were to speak with an allowance, and perhaps speaking very widely from the truth, I could not say.

Will you have the goodness to state whether you have any business connected with your land agency business, as money agency in bills, and so on?—Yes.

To any considerable extent?—Yes.

Will you have the goodness to describe the nature of it?—I keep accounts with a number of people as banker; I am private banker to a number of people to whom I am not agent; those people when they go to England look to me to supply them with a letter of credit upon England for the monies they may want there.

Are the remittances you make to answer those bills there made under your privilege?—No; I have no privilege to England; my privilege is confined to Ireland.

What facilities does the privilege give you in transacting business of that kind; you receive remittances from the country under cover?—Yes; the agents are directed to remit to me as their banker.

And you give to certain persons letters of credit on your banker in London?—Yes; my Lord Rosse did allow the officers of the establishment to receive letters for themselves under the privilege of the secretary of the post-office; and in that way I have been in the habit of receiving many letters.

Does this privilege cover the United Kingdom?—It does.

Then your correspondence with your agents in London would probably be carried on by that means?—It would.

Does that correspondence include many letters over weight?—No; very few over weight; the remittances always are going the other way.

Have you any corresponding facility of transmitting letters under the direction of any clerks or others connected with the post-office, who have the power of franking through the United Kingdom?—There is no clerk in the office has the privilege, except the secretary; he has been in the habit of franking my own letters; but, generally speaking, he has always put me to my word, to say that they were on my own private business. I have so many friends members of Parliament that I very seldom have occasion to ask him for a frank.

When you have not been able to procure franks from your friends who are members of Parliament, have you found any difficulty in obtaining from the secretary such as might be necessary to cover the remaining remittances to meet the letters of credit you have given?—Yes; I have sometimes met with difficulty in obtaining them.

But that is the course you have pursued?—Yes.

Has the remittance of the whole of the money you have sent been made under post-office franks, and those you have received from members of Parliament?—Yes, with a few exceptions.

So that you have been in the habit of incurring no expense in making those remittances?—In some few instances I might, but very rarely.

Does this mode of carrying on your business give you advantages in the negotiation of your bills on England?—No, none in the world.

Are your bills remitted with any advantage, or are you forced still to pay the same rate of exchange with other persons?—There is a public building close to the Castle called our Royal Exchange; on three days in each week, namely, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the merchants assemble there, some bringing bills with them to sell, others going there to purchase; it is not known for what purpose an individual wants a bill, and no question is asked, unless the solvency of the person is doubted, or he is not known to the individual with whom he is dealing, then he applies to another person to vouch them.

In your own individual case the bills are bought in the open Change?—I go there and buy them from the merchants the same as another.

With no other advantages except the facilities you have of transmitting them postage free?—Nothing else; but perhaps there may be two or three persons looking to buy the same bill; whoever will give most for it will get it in that case.

Your salary amounts to 600*l.* a year?—It does.

You have stated that all the emoluments and advantages amount to 150*l.*?—Yes.

In what way do you make that estimate?—I make it out in this way; before there was a regulation respecting the packet establishment here, the remittances to England, which it is a part of my duty to make, were less than they are at present; at present I would state it to be perhaps 20*l.* or 25*l.* more; at the time that I stated that the remittances for the four quarters balance for England were, say 20,000*l.*, I paid to Messrs. Puget and Bainbridge, as their commission for accepting and paying my bills, a quarter per cent.; the gross profit of one per cent. would have been 200*l.* a year; what was allowed to the receiver-general was one per cent., which is the exchange which the banks charged. Messrs. Puget and Bainbridge charge me a quarter per cent. for accepting and paying the bills; then there was my three quarters per cent. on the quarterly balances remitted to England.

In what way do those quarterly balances arise?—There is an account between the two offices for postage. The postage of a letter from London to Holyhead is English postage, received in this country; on the other hand, a letter from Cork passing through Dublin to London, there is an Irish postage from Cork to Dublin, which postage is received in England: accounts are kept of those several branches of postage, and at the end of the quarter there is a debtor and creditor account on which a balance is struck, and that balance is always against Ireland, because there are other charges paid in England on account of this country. For the packet establishment 4,000*l.* a year British is allowed that ought to be a charge against this country for the packets between this and Holyhead, that is paid in England, and then England takes credit for that sum in the account between the English office and this office.

That being so, there is always a quarterly balance to be remitted by you to the post-office in England?—Yes.

Upon that you yourself draw three quarters per cent. and your agents one quarter?—Yes.

Has the amount of that balance been gradually increasing?—It has.

When was this return of 150*l.* made?—About four or five years since. It does not fall within my province to know exactly the state of the account between England and this country otherwise than by the balance that is struck; the account is made up in the office of the accountant-general in each country, and the balance being ascertained and agreed upon, that balance is then remitted by me.

In what hands does the money remain until the quarterly balance is struck?—In the account at the Bank of Ireland, which is the account of the postmasters-general of Ireland.

In what way do you draw the money from the Bank of Ireland?—There is a minute made out in the secretary's office of all warrants called for, calling for the signatures of the postmasters-general; the warrants are annexed on the left hand of a draft on the Bank; both postmasters-general sign this warrant, and then it comes to me for my signature, which makes it a draft on the Bank; but, with the exception of a payment into the Treasury, the order is that every draft of mine shall have annexed to it a warrant signed by the two postmasters-general; in the case of a payment into the Exchequer the signature of one postmaster-general is taken.

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In what shape do the Bank issue the money upon that draft?—In any way in which I am pleased to take it; in notes.

Is it issued to you in Dublin?—It is issued to me at the Bank of Ireland.

On what day of the quarter?—That depends upon the day on which the two offices agree upon the account, and it is signed and made up; and then it depends upon the time at which the warrant which is annexed to the draft is returned, signed by the two postmasters-general.

What course exactly do you take in remitting the money on the receipt of it into your hands?—I purchase the bills on the Royal Exchange, and remit them to Messrs. Puget and Bainbridge; at the same time I draw a bill upon them for the balance in favour of the receiver-general of the English office.

Under that arrangement can any advantage or loss arise to you or any other person on the rate of exchange?—None, except what I have mentioned, the three quarters per cent.

The price at which you draw the bills, and the bills you draw, are equally affected by the rate of exchange?—Exactly; there may be a shade of difference, an eighth per cent.; we may sometimes have an advantage in a few days of a bill; we may get a bill which has twenty-three or twenty-five days to run as cheap as a bill which may have thirty days.

Occasionally advantages arise to you from the dealing in exchange and the purchase of bills?—Yes, in that way; only two or three days; but in general the merchants calculate to a day.

Is there ever any loss in the rate of exchange?—Very often.

In what way do you conceive yourself entitled to compensation for such loss?—I have none; I take the chance of that; I have lost some hundreds by bad bills.

In what way is the one per cent. which you are entitled to upon the remittance of the balance charged or brought to account?—The merchants exchange is always one per cent. under bankers exchange; our bankers go like myself to the exchange to buy bills, and to remit them, in order to form a fund on which to draw; I do the same precisely, and therefore, in that respect, I have the advantage that was enjoyed by the banker. Until I came into office this was enjoyed by Mr. Shaw, the banker, and member for our city; it was thought by Lord Rosse unreasonable that a person unconnected with the post-office should have this advantage, and he thought further that the bill which was to be remitted should be done under the immediate superintendence of his own officer, namely, the accountant-general, who always countersigns the bill which I myself draw on Messrs. Puget and Bainbridge.

Who preceded you as receiver-general?—The late Lord Wicklow.

The 150*l.* which is stated here as including all emoluments and advantages in addition to the salary of 600*l.* is short of the actual advantage by about 50*l.*, and does not include any advantage you may derive by your official privilege of franking?—Yes, just so.

You do not reside in the post-office?—No.

Are there any other facilities or advantages which your situation in the post-office gives you in the conduct of your private concerns?—Not any that I am aware of, except that of the privilege of franking; if the privilege of franking was withdrawn I should consider myself quite a separate individual, almost unconnected with the post-office, except my salary.

What check do you exercise upon the letter-carriers charge book?—None; the charge book is made out from sheets sent from the office where the account of the Irish postage is kept, and from the office where the account of English postage is kept, and from the window where the post-paid letters pass.

Those books are examined in your office?—They are made up at the commencement of every week; Monday we begin to make up the account; that account is not finally closed until, perhaps, Wednesday; when I say it is closed, I mean that it is reduced into what I call our cash account; it is a ledger, debtor and creditor; it is then taken into the accountant-general's office for check and examination; if he finds I have not fully accounted, by showing that the whole has been lodged in the Bank to the credit of the postmasters-general, he reports it under the head of deficiency.

Are such deficiencies frequently reported?—Last week there was one, which is the only deficiency which has been reported for, I believe, two years.

No balance whatever remains in your hands?—No; I am not ever allowed to retain any; it was a mistake in the totting.

Are the accounts of the letter-carriers and the receipts of the office kept in such a way as to make you confident you receive the whole money you ought to receive?—Provided the returns that are sent to me are correct, they are so.

You have no means of knowing whether those returns are correct or not?—None whatever.

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ROBERT SHAW Esq. called in and examined.

WHAT is the office you hold in the post-office?—That of accountant-general.

Do you transact the business of the office yourself?—I superintend the whole business of the office, and transact, I conceive, a good deal of the business.

Will you have the goodness to describe the nature of the duties of that office?—The superintending of the officers under me, seeing that they daily post and perform the business which comes through their hands, and the checking myself personally every account that is sent out of the office.

How long have you held this office?—Three years; I was appointed in April 1820.

Previous to that had you held any office in the post-office?—No, I had not.

It is a patent office?—It is.

Have you made any return of the salary and the emoluments?—I have.

Will you have the goodness to state the amount?—£500 a year.

Do you derive any emoluments from it except the salary itself?—None.

How early is your attendance required in the morning?—I do not conceive that it is necessary for me for public utility to be at my office before twelve o'clock, but it is my general impression that I should be there at that hour, and I am frequently in the habit of being there before; it may so happen that I am not there at that hour, but I think seldom; I remain there till three. The reason of my thinking that those hours are sufficient for the public business is, that it is only between those hours that any warrants are presented to me for signature.

Practically your attendance is from twelve to three?—It is.

Is it so on every day of the week?—On every day of the week; sometimes on Monday I have absented myself, but not at all usually. I conceive I can stay away on Monday when I so arrange the business as on that day there are no drafts paid to the public.

Is there any thing in the nature of leave, when you absent yourself?—There is.

From whom?—I make an application to the secretary, requesting that he will obtain leave from the postmasters-general.

Is that obtained on each occasion of your being absent on Mondays?—Not for a single day.

Is there any fine for absence on a single day?—Not to me.

Your attendance does not include Sundays?—No.

Absence on Mondays depends upon your own will, and is a matter for which you are not accountable?—Yes; when I have business to perform I always attend my office on that day, and I only absent myself on Monday, when I apprehend I can do so without injury to the public service.

You do not feel that the public service suffers by your absence on a Monday?—No.

Does that happen each week?—No.

How often in the course of a year does it occur, two Mondays out of three, or three out of four?—I think perhaps on an average half the Mondays in a year. In stating that my attendance is from twelve to three, I am in general in the office at those hours, but I have within those hours sometimes been obliged to go out upon business for half an hour at a time, or perhaps more.

Is any part of the duty that it would fall to you individually to do, discharged by deputy?

When I came into the office I was not a perfect accountant, and I found that the duties of the office had been for three years previously discharged by my head-clerk Mr. Mills, and I have been obliged to apply to him frequently for instruction on particular parts of the business; but I do not conceive that any part of the superintendence of the office has been discharged by deputy, except in the event of my absence by permission; he prepares the accounts, but I check every account which goes out of my office.

Have you been in the habit of paying or making any allowance to any clerk for discharging any part of the duties?—Yes, I have.

To what clerk?—To Mr. Mills.

What is the amount of the allowance?—£100 a year.

Is that still continued?—It is.

Were you connected with any business before you entered into the post-office?—No, I was not.

You were not connected with Sir Robert Shaw's bank?—No.

Had you any partnership or interest in any other concern?—No. The reason I granted that allowance to Mr. Mills was, that he made an application to the postmasters-general for an increase of salary; he stated that he conceived that he was entitled in consequence of the duties of the office being heavier. I must remark at the time there was a clerk reduced, consequently the duties of Mr. Mills were heavier. The postmasters-general, as I have heard, stated to him that the Government would not make him any additional allowance of salary, and Lord Rosse recommended that I should make an allowance to Mr. Mills as Mr. Prior had done before.

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When you first came into the office, did you conceive that Mr. Mills was charged with any responsibility with respect to the accounts, or the management of the office, in such a way as to relieve yourself from it?—No, not in such a way as to relieve myself from it; but I felt that if I had taken the accounts out of Mr. Mills's hands I should not have served the public by so doing; they appeared to me to be kept in such perfect order; he was a regular accountant; it was merely a private transaction; it was known only to Lord Rosse and the secretary and my father; it was merely stated verbally.

Do you give security for the execution of the duties of your office?—Yes, I do.

Do you remember the amount of it?—I am not prepared to state it.

Do you know whether Mr. Mills gives any security?—I do not know.

Part of your duty is to examine and sign the weekly check accounts?—It is.

Are they signed by any other individual but yourself?—No, they are not.

Are they examined by any other individual but yourself?—They are, in every instance; I sometimes make them up myself, and have them examined by another person; and when I do not make them up myself, they are prepared by my clerk, and I re-examine them. I conceive it necessary that they should be doubly examined.

Are you frequently in the habit of examining them in the first instance yourself, before any examination takes place by any other individual?—I am, frequently.

How long have you been in the habit of making that examination?—For upwards of a year. I will show, if you please, the quarterly check of the last year. I do not conceive it to be my duty myself to prepare those; I have frequently done it from choice; and frequently when I have heard that my clerk was engaged, I have been in the habit of doing it that he might go on with his other business.

Will you show the weeks in which the accounts were examined by yourself?—I shall show the weeks in which the accounts were entirely made up by myself. There was one reason that I preferred having Mr. Mills's figures to my own in those accounts; his are those of a regular accountant, and mine are not so. [*The witness produced the accounts.*] This account has been entirely prepared by myself: the amount of Irish produce; that is, the amount that comes in to us daily from the inland Irish office. This I enter into the book of Irish produce, and the amount of them is brought forward here as a charge against the receiver-general. In like manner the English produce, the amount of the deputies remittances in bills and post bills, and cash and notes: this has been incorrectly written in as to the place of the heading, the amount of the penny post.

What is the date of that account?—February 1822.

What period of time would it take from the proper documents to make that up?—It would take three or four hours.

In preparing it, should you examine the vouchers from which it is made, so as to verify them; is that a part of your duty?—As to the accuracy of the calculation it is, but not as to the accuracy of the items; for of them I have no means of judging. I know that the documents are regularly entered as they are presented to me. This is for the week ending February the 9th, 1822; this book contains one in every week for the year 1822.

That probably is the first in your own handwriting for that year?—This is the first of that year in my hand; but I think there are some accounts before this in my handwriting. Here is another week. In this the charge has been entered by me, and the discharge by Mr. Mills. The week ending the 2d of March 1822 is also in my handwriting. I do not remember the cause of my not completing the account to which I have just referred.

Where is the heading written?—The heading is written in the writing office; it, used to be printed.

Could there be any difficulty in the clerks in your own office writing in the headings?—No; the heading of this book is now written in my own office, for we found it more correct. Here is another week, ending the 20th of April 1822, which is entirely prepared by me; and when I prepare those I almost always enter all the intermediate books that I take this from, from the original dockets myself. The next week in my handwriting ends the 22d of June 1822. The next week in my handwriting ends the 3d of August 1822. The next week the 7th of September 1822. The next week the 21st of September 1822. The next week the 28th of September 1822. The next week ends the 9th of November 1822. The next week ends the 30th of November 1822.

That is the book for the last year?—It is the book for the year ending the 5th of January 1823.

Can you state what has been the practice for the current year; what proportion of weeks you have made up in your own handwriting?—I have not written so many in my own hand in the present year; but at the same time, when they are prepared by Mr. Mills I check them in the same manner in my office as if I prepared them myself; and the only reason for my not doing it is, that finding Mr. Mills unemployed, I have preferred his doing it, because his writing and figures on the face of the account I conceived looked better.

It is a part of your duty to sign the checks upon the bank, which have been previously signed by the receiver-general for the payments?—Yes.

Is that a duty to be performed frequently?—Daily, except on Mondays. On Mondays there are no drafts paid, because the bank books are closed.

What previous examination is there into those checks before your signature is given?—Previous to the warrant the bill is presented at my office for calculation; it is previous to being sent into my office signed by the secretary; I there examine it as to calculation either by myself or by two of my officers; each bill is always twice examined; it is then entered in what is called the minute book, and is then returned and sent to the post-masters-

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masters-general with a warrant for their signature; the postmasters-general sign this warrant, and send it back to the receiver-general; he signs it; it is then presented to me for my signature, and I do not sign it until I see that it agrees with the account in my minute book; at the time I sign it, it is entered in my draft-book.

By whom are those accounts examined in order to see that the check and the account for which it is to be drawn agree?—They are either examined by myself or by one of my officers; if it is correct, it is marked out of the minute book.

Is that work usually done by the clerks?—It is; the second clerk keeps the minute book, and he usually checks it.

Is that the whole of the duty connected with the weekly check accounts?—At the end of the week I get those bills that have been originally presented to me with the receipts from the parties to whom they have been paid; I enter them in my weekly incident book, and I then compare the bills with the drafts that I have paid during the week.

Is that a part of the duty of your office?—Yes; when I make up the accounts myself I do that myself; when Mr. Mills makes them up, he enters them and I examine them.

Is that a part of the business connected with the making up of the weekly account?—It is.

Will you have the goodness to state in what manner you examine or check the quarterly accounts with the London office?—The account is prepared by my clerk, and I compare it with the account that he has made up from the original documents.

The clerk makes up the account from the original documents?—Yes; these dockets are posted weekly.

Does he produce to you the original documents and the account?—He does not produce to me the original account, but he produces me the books from which the original account has been transcribed; but I see the original documents weekly as they come into the office.

He makes the account and puts it before you?—Yes.

What is it your duty to do with it?—I compare it with the accounts that he has prepared, and see that it is accurately prepared.

Then does it form an item in that general weekly account which you have referred to?—No, it does not; it is only quarterly.

Is that the account from which the receipts of the money transferred to England are posted?—It is.

What is the nature of the quarterly account transmitted to the Lords of the Treasury?—It gives the amount of the total receipts and payments of the revenue.

By whom is that account prepared?—It is prepared by Mr. Mills.

There appears to be an account returned by yourself of the deputy postmasters quarterly accounts?—This is the book [*producing it*]; this contains the accounts of the postmasters; the different post-towns are divided into eight divisions, and this is one half.

How is this book kept?—It is kept by my second clerk.

Does the heading of that continue to be printed?—It does.

That is not one of the books prepared in the writing office?—No, it is not.

In what way do you examine or check that?—I compare every postmaster's account with the original documents forwarded to me.

From whence do you receive those documents?—I receive the account of the general letters monthly from the letter-bill office, which is a branch of the secretary's office.

You have no reason to know whether those accounts are accurate or inaccurate?—Not further than as to calculation.

As you receive them they are copied into this book?—Yes; and the slips, with their counterparts, compared by my third clerk; when the second clerk has this account balanced and ready, and my third clerk has his portion of it prepared, I take the portion prepared by my third clerk, and personally check it as to the items.

How often does that duty occur?—Four times a year.

What length of time may it occupy on each occasion?—I think four or five days; I am not quite certain.

It requires four or five days attendance on your part?—It does.

On those days is the duration of your attendance much prolonged?—Frequently.

To what number of hours?—Frequently till four, and sometimes till after four o'clock.

From what hour?—From eleven in the morning, or half past.

Is your attendance entered regularly in the attendance books?—I believe not.

It has not been the practice of the office?—I fancy not.

There appear to be some books examined as to their numerical accuracy in your office; will you have the goodness to state the nature of them?—Every account presented to me is examined carefully as to its numerical accuracy.

Are those the accounts of the expenses of office?—Those are the incidents.

Which of your clerks overlooks that part of the business?—The first and the second clerk.

Do these comprise the whole of the duties of your office?—There are a great many minor accounts. The accounts of the ship letters come before us for examination; some of them are very long, and there is so much allowed per mile for extra duty, and this is to be computed, and then examined as to its numerical accuracy; these all come under my own individual superintendence. I do not say that I myself make them out, but I see every one of those, and see that the proper vouchers are with them, and frequently have sent back the incidents.

**Examinations.**

No. 128.

*Robert Shaw, Esq.*  
10th Sept. 1823.

Is the payment to Mr. Mills to be considered a temporary or a permanent payment?—As a temporary payment.

It has not yet ceased?—It has not; Mr. Mills applied to me for compensation during my absence; previous to the time of this application I had been absent for nearly three months.

At what period of the year?—It was, I think, in the spring, after the April quarter of 1821. I conceived that in making this allowance to Mr. Mills in case of my absence, I should require him to do my business without his having any further claim upon me for compensation. At the time of my illness in the spring, I was for nearly two months confined entirely to the house with very severe illness; at that time I corresponded with Mr. Mills, and was obliged to depend upon him for reporting to me.

You consider that the 100*l.* a year covers that?—Yes; that it covers all that kind of thing; that Mr. Mills is bound to report to me any irregularity which may occur, which is perhaps not under my immediate observation; and that in my absence he is responsible to me for the conduct of the office.

Have you the privilege of franking?—No.

Have you been in the habit of exercising it in any way officially?—No; we have no correspondence but with the postmasters; those are sent down in covers in an official manner, and go down free; they are usually franked in the secretary's office.

That official manner is with the signature of some one, perhaps?—“On His Majesty's service.” They go a number together; it is apparent what they are.

Are they franked by the secretary?—I believe not.

They are directed from your office?—Yes; they are directed to the postmaster at Ballynacargy, and so on.

Are you so well acquainted with the manner in which those packets are made up, as to be able to say that they are confined solely to official business, and are in no degree made use of for the purpose of the transmission of private letters or papers?—Certainly; I see them myself generally folded up.

In what manner are your private letters sent?—Since I came into the office I do not think I have applied to Sir Edward Lees above four or five times for a frank; my Irish letters I was in the habit of getting franked by Mr. Thomas Orde Lees. I was told, on coming into the office, that, being an officer of the post-office, I was privileged to have my letters free, and that my predecessor had had that advantage.

Were those letters confined to your private correspondence, or were they connected with any matters of business?—I do not think they were; I have occasionally, but very seldom, got a letter franked for a friend of mine who may have asked me.

Letters under an ounce, or heavier?—Perhaps heavier.

Has that occurred frequently?—Latterly it has not occurred at all, nor can I say that it has occurred frequently; once or twice a week it may have occurred, but I am not prepared to say.

Of course, of the contents of those packets you knew nothing?—I think on very few occasions I have ever had a packet from a stranger to get franked; I never wished much to ask for it, and I have stated that.

In what manner are your private letters received?—When I first came into the office I was told I had the privilege of receiving single Irish letters free, and I have been in the habit of so receiving them.

How were the double letters?—I think they were all charged, but it did not make much impression upon my mind.

You were not in the habit of receiving double letters or packages free?—No; they were in the first instance charged, but upon my representing to the secretary that they were for myself, they have been allowed. My private letters I can generally get through another quarter. I wish it to be understood, that since I came into the office I have always superintended the office entirely, and had the management of it always in my own hands.

ROBERT SHAW.

## Appendix, No. 129.

3d September 1823.

Mr. GEORGE DALLAS MILLS called in and examined.

YOU are Chief Clerk in the accountant-general's office in the post-office?—I am.

How long have you been in that situation?—Since June 1809; not chief clerk the whole of that time, but only since the retirement of my predecessor; I do not recollect the exact time; I suppose about seven or eight years ago.

The salary and fixed allowances of your office are stated at 150*l.*?—That is the amount.

It is stated that you have no other emoluments or advantages, and that the general total of your receipt is 146*l.*?—That is the fixed allowance.

What is meant by the return to “Any other emoluments or advantages”?—I receive no other advantages from the post-office, except at the termination of the year in preparing the accounts



accounts for Parliament, when I am obliged to attend at extra hours, and during that time I am allowed at the rate of 5s. 5d. per day, for about two months.

Do not you receive a payment for taking upon yourself the performance of part of the duties of the accountant-general?—Not from the post-office; I have received for one year and a quarter only, at the rate of 100*l.* per annum from the accountant-general.

Is not that with the cognizance of the post-office?—I was, previous to coming into the post-office one of the book-keepers in the Bank of Ireland; I was appointed to the inland office by Lord O'Neill, and by Lord Clancarty I was appointed to the accountant-general's office, in consequence of the state of the accounts in the accountant-general's office; at the time I came in it was necessary to investigate them for the two years preceding, during which time Mr. Rochford was accountant-general; Mr. Prior, the newly-appointed accountant-general, thought right to command my services; I was obliged to give up my attendance in the inland office entirely; this investigation went on for about six months or more; at the close of it, on my applying to Mr. De Joncourt, who was at the head of the inland office, he refused to permit me to return; and on the retirement of Mr. Prior from the accountant-general's office, for whom I had been doing duty for some time, I thought it a grievance that another man was put over my head, who I thought was not equal to the duty; and I presented a memorial to Lord Rosse, praying that he would be pleased to recommend me for an advance on my salary of 150*l.* a year. Sir Edward Lees applied, I believe, to Sir Robert Shaw, the father of the accountant-general, and an arrangement was made, which he did not wish I should make known, by which I was to be paid 100*l.* a year out of his 500*l.* a year. I received nothing for the two years previous to that, though I claimed it, but I received it only since April twelvemonth.

It was Mr. Shaw's appointment that you considered a grievance to you?—I considered it a grievance to have a person put over my head, for the correct discharge of whose duties I was held responsible.

He became of course responsible for the duties of that office when he was appointed?—I was held, as the next officer, responsible, in case of any absence of the accountant-general, without ever having a possibility of succeeding him by right, I may by favour, but not by right. I am appointed by the postmasters-general. He is appointed by letters patent. I applied by letter to Lord Talbot and Mr. Secretary Grant at that time, but without success.

How can you be legally deemed responsible for the duties of his office?—I was informed that I was held so.

Are you held so in consequence of the receipt of the money being recognized in the office, and that being considered as imposing his duties upon you, or by the common rules of the office, that holding the situation of clerk, you are and always have been considered as responsible for the duties of the accountant-general?—In his absence at all times; I consider myself now, and have considered myself so since Mr. Shaw's appointment, because he was not acquainted with the duties of the office, and was therefore at the mercy of his officers.

What part of the duty is performed by Mr. Shaw?—He signs such papers as I lay before him, such accounts as I prepare; he signs the warrants of the postmasters-general for payments; he signs the incidental bills examined by me.

What is Mr. Shaw's usual attendance?—His attendance is daily.

When he does attend what are the duties he performs?—He signs the warrants of the postmasters-general on the Bank, which have been previously signed by the receiver-general, for payments; he signs the incidental bills, and other papers that may be laid before him.

Do they undergo any examination before him?—I examine them all; he is in the office; he is at liberty of course at any time to sit by, and see how they are prepared.

Are they examined by him?—Not by him.

By whom are they examined?—By me.

Is he a party to that examination in any way?—Not that I am aware of.

Then the whole that he does is authenticating that report of the accounts which you make?—Chiefly so.

Does not that amount to your, in fact, doing the whole of the substantial part of the duty, and his complying only with the forms of it?—Nothing more that I am aware of.

Will you state as shortly as you can what are the particular duties in which you are employed?—The duties are the cash accounts of the office: each week I check the returns of postage, enter them, make out a weekly check of the entire receipts and payments of the Dublin office against the receiver-general, and prepare a copy, which Mr. Shaw signs, and it is sent to the Board; in his absence I sign it. I keep all the accounts of the office by double entry, and superintend the performance of the other branches in the office, which are performed by two junior clerks.

Do you keep the accounts of the office with the deputy-postmasters?—I do not keep them myself; they are kept by the next officer to me.

They are usually in arrear, are they not?—All the acting deputies are allowed, according to the regulations of the office, to hold one month's revenue in hand.

Is that all which is due, or is there not generally an arrear beyond the amount which they are allowed to hold?—They are considerably in arrear beyond the amount which is allowed, in some instances.

Does that arise chiefly from their own deficiency in the payments, or are there any other circumstances that contribute to it?—I have a memorandum of the arrears (I think it is 16,000*l.*) for the last quarter, according to the information I have received; but

Examinations.

No. 129.

*Mr. G. D. Mills.*  
3d Sept. 1823.

I understand there have been sums paid by the deputies by the order of Government, enforced by the postmasters-general, to soldiers wives for travelling allowances; and from some informality, with which I am not exactly acquainted, those receipts have never been brought to their credit; this sum amounts probably to 2,000*l.* or 3,000*l.*, which would considerably reduce their credit.

Where have you received that information that such has been the case?—By some of the deputies writing up to me when I sign their accounts as pro-accountant-general, stating that their balances were not correct; that they had not got credit for soldiers wives receipts; and sometimes they enumerated the amount. I have known where a deputy-postmaster has been put out of office, and a balance stated by me, when I have actually seen the receipts returned overpaid the account by four or five pounds, and his securities have been written to for the amount of the balance stated by me.

Has it happened that a man in those circumstances has been dismissed for his supposed arrear?—Not that I am aware of; the man was dismissed from his office, but not for arrear; but in consequence of those receipts never being brought to his credit I was obliged to state a balance due by him, when having submitted his receipts to me I found there was actually a balance due to him.

Have you reason to think that that has happened in many instances?—I have.

When the postmasters at the end of the month settle their accounts, do not they habitually send up those receipts for the money they have paid to soldiers wives?—They remit them as so much cash, but they are not brought to their credit, in consequence of some informality in the form of the receipt.

Then they have in that case actually been paid, but not carried to their account?—The receipts have come to the Dublin office as cash, but I am not aware that they have been presented to the army agent, or otherwise, for payment. I understand there are several sacks of those receipts in the office.

What is considered as the balance is the arrear of the deputy-postmasters, the excess of the monthly instalments?—The entire sum due by the postmasters, including the instalment each is allowed to hold over.

Including that they are allowed to have in hand, and any arrear?—Yes.

What proportion does the instalment they are allowed to have in hand bear to the actual arrear?—I could not answer that without referring to the account.

They are allowed to retain one month?—Yes.

When you find that they are more in arrear than that, what do you do?—In the office to which I am attached we do not interfere at all; we prepare an account quarterly from the postmaster's ledger of accounts kept in our office, but we do not interfere with the deputies; we furnish an account quarterly to the secretary; he hands it to the remittance clerk to ascertain how much that exceeds the amount the deputies ought to have in hand, and then they are written to accordingly.

It appears that part of your duty is to specify the duties performed, for which any warrant of the postmasters-general is issued?—I make an entry of each.

Is not the same entry made by some other person in the post-office?—By the minute clerk in the secretary's office.

From whom do you receive those warrants, and what do you do with them?—A bill of the party is presented to the secretary; he initials that bill, and sends it into the accountant-general's office, where it is examined as to calculation, signed as correct, entered in the minute book, and sent to the secretary's office for a warrant of the postmasters-general; the minute clerk prepares that warrant, and after receiving the postmaster-general's signature, it is sent to the receiver-general, attached to which is a bank draft; the receiver-general fills this draft, and sends by the party to the accountant-general's office, where the nature of the account, the service, and the amount, is entered; the draft is countersigned, the party takes it to the Bank, and it is paid.

Where are the two accounts examined so as to check each other?—We make an entry of having examined the account, and having found it correct enter the name of the party, and the service, and so on; when the party presents the draft, with the signature of the postmasters-general and the receiver-general, we refer to see that the amount is the same as that we originally checked the bill for.

Is that the whole of the check you have?—No; at the end of each week we call on the receiver-general to furnish the various warrants, with the bills and receipts of the parties which appear to have been paid during the week by the Bank; we select them out, and enter them under the proper heads, according to the manner in which we keep our books, and return them again to him.

Does your examination of the accounts amount to any thing more than examining the numerical accuracy or correctness of them?—The numerical accuracy of them chiefly.

You do not go into the purposes for which they are incurred?—We are not empowered to do that.

Do all the accounts of the post-office come under your inspection?—Every thing that is paid by draft.

What is not paid by a draft?—There are allowances to postmasters, as credits in their accounts, that are not paid by drafts; the allowances under the heads of incidental expenses, and ship letters, and even those documents are now submitted to our examination as to numerical accuracy.

No other examination takes place?—They are first initialed by the secretary, who sees that they are correct.

Do

Do you ever see vouchers?—Always; I do not mean myself; it is another officer's duty to examine those, but they are examined in the office to which I am attached.

In what way are the vouchers compared with the accounts?—They are checked as to numerical accuracy, and the receipts of the parties examined for the sums claimed by the deputies.

When this person has examined the whole, does he make any report upon the accounts, or does he state merely that they are accurate?—He writes upon them "Examined as to calculation," and submits them to the accountant-general for his signature.

Do you examine them also?—No; they are examined by two junior clerks.

Does the accountant-general examine them before he certifies them by his signature?—That I cannot take upon myself to say.

You keep an account of the amount of the English and Irish postage?—I do.

What is the species of account which you keep?—I keep in detail the cash accounts, and I keep in abstract, by double entry, the whole of the accounts.

As accountant-general, do you ever compare the accounts of the receipts of the post-office with the accounts of the deputy-postmasters which are sent up?—Not with their original letter-bills.

Whose duty is that?—The general and post-paid letters are checked in the letter-bill office, and sent in to me monthly.

The question refers to the letters inwards which are not post-paid?—That is one of the first articles of the cash account which I check; I receive a return from the inland office, signed by the president of that office, of the amount, under different heads.

You are stated in this account to keep the deputy-postmasters accounts; what is the account which you keep?—One account is the inwards cash account; and the deputies accounts are the outward accounts. We get an abstract of the inwards account from the president of the inland office.

In what way is that sent to you?—I have one in my pocket [*producing it*]; with the debtor side of that account I have nothing whatever to do.

Having received this bill from him, what entry do you make?—I enter that under the heads of letter-carriers, penny post, and paid window as a charge, and I debit the receiver-general with the 112*l.*, which is the amount for that day.

What is meant by the first column in this paper?—I cannot say; I have inquired, but never could understand it. From the explanations given me by the officers who prepare it, the balance appears to me a balance of errors, but it does not affect the accuracy of the amount chargeable against the receiver-general, which is all I require to know; the other items are superfluous, as the difference between the total postage coming into the office and the amount received in Dublin is charged on the postmasters, and the return thereof furnished by the letter-bill officer to the accountant-general monthly.

GEORGE D. MILLS.

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Accountant-General's Office, General Post-office,  
8th September 1823.

Sir,

I BEG leave to inclose herewith a brief abstract of or index to the post-office accounts, which I most respectfully request may be added to the copy of my examination, as revised by me this day, if not contrary to your wish and the regulations which govern your Board.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,  
Your very humble and most obedient servant,

G. D. MILLS,  
Chief Clerk.

The Right Hon. Thomas Wallace,  
Board of Revenue Inquiry.

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AN ABSTRACT of the Nature or Description of the Accounts of the Irish Post-Office,  
classed under Three separate Heads, viz.;

The Inwards, or Cash Accounts of the Dublin Office;

The Outwards, or Charge against the Deputy-Postmasters; and

The Account of Postage between Great Britain and Ireland.

The inwards or cash accounts consist of the postage received for unpaid letters delivered in Dublin, British and Irish; and the postage received at the post-paid window for letters post-paid for the country parts of Ireland, and for Great Britain:

The remittances from the deputies in cash, bills, post-bills, and other securities:

The payments made by the comptroller of the penny post on account of the postage received by his office:

The postage received by the superintendent of the dead-letter office for letters returned to his department:

The amounts received by the express clerk for private expresses:

(107.)

The

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The sums received by the solicitor on account of arrears due by deceased and dismissed deputies and letter-carriers, together with such miscellaneous receipts and repayments as may from time to time be placed to the credit of the public.

The items thus enumerated form the charge side of the cash account against the receiver-general.

The Discharge is as follows; viz.

The payments made by him on the warrants of the postmasters-general for incidents:

The balances paid to deputies on the same authority:

The wages paid to the letter-carriers and house servants:

The payments for mail-coaches, tolls, and conveyance of second guards and Sunday mails:

The salaries of officers on the various establishments (quarterly):

The payments to the teller of the Exchequer:

The quarterly balances to Great Britain:

The periodical amount of postage on letters returned to the dead-letter office by the letter-carriers and alphabet; and the arrears of such letter-carriers as may be dismissed.

These items constitute the discharge of the cash account, which, with the charge, is fully stated to the Board each week, from the accountant-general's office; and any deficiency or short payment particularly noticed and reported for the information of the postmasters-general.

The outwards or charge against the deputy postmasters consists of the balances due at the close of the preceding quarter:

The postage on unpaid letters sent to them, and of post-paid letters sent by them:

The bye and cross-road postage of letters not passing through Dublin:

The postage on letters *from* Great Britain *unpaid*, and *for* Great Britain *paid*, passing through the offices at Waterford and Donaghadee.

The discharge of this account consists of the allowances for salaries and post-riding:

The postage on letters and rebate covers, general and bye, returned by the deputies to the dead-letter office:

The allowance for conveying expresses:

The incidental claims:

The payments for ship-letters:

The mail-guards wages; and the actual amount of remittances made by them (the deputies), and lodged as cash in the Bank of Ireland by the receiver-general during each quarter.

These items form the discharge of the deputy-postmasters account.

The charge side of the account between Great Britain and Ireland shows the amount of British postage on letters *to* Ireland *unpaid*, and on *paid* letters *for* Great Britain from Ireland.

The discharge consists of the amount of inland Irish postage on *unpaid* letters *outwards*, and on *paid* letters *inwards*; with the allowance to Ireland in lieu of packet postage.

G. D. MILLS.

### Appendix, No. 130.

13th December 1823.

Mr. GEORGE DALLAS MILLS again called in and examined.

No. 130.  
Mr. G. D. Mills.  
13th Dec. 1823.

IS it any part of your duty to keep the cash accounts in the post-office?—Yes.  
Describe whether you have any and what efficient checks upon those accounts?—We have the check of the postage dockets for the inland postage, and also for the British postage, from the offices where the letters arrive, and from which they are given to the carriers; those two form the first item of charge against the receiver-general, and are authenticated by the signatures of the heads of the inland and British-mail offices; the next item is the remittances from the deputy postmasters; those we have a check so far on, that we take the account entered in the remittance-book by the remittance-clerk in the secretary's office, and we see that the receiver-general lodges that amount to the credit of the public. The next which follows is the penny post payments, respecting which we get a letter from the comptroller of the office, and on that letter alone, without having any account whatever, we enter the amount. The following two items are the quarterly postage for dead letters and that

that received for private expresses, on neither of which items we have any efficient check, inasmuch as that we are obliged to take the *ipse dixit* of the parties themselves.

Is the check on the receipt of the inland Irish postage in your opinion sufficient?—I think it is sufficient.

Does this check enable you to know more than the exact amount received, or which ought to be received, for the postage of letters received and delivered in Dublin from the different parts of Ireland?—It enables us to tell what is the amount of the postage on letters for the city of Dublin as delivered, a portion to the letter-carriers, and the remainder to the alphabet; it also enables us to check the post-paid Irish window money, so far as the net amount payable to the receiver-general.

Is the check which you have on the receipt of the money due on letters which arrive from Great Britain sufficient?—I think it quite sufficient, for the same reasons, that the document from which we take it is prepared by the parties from whose hands the letters pass, but not from those who receive the money.

Have you a sufficient check over the receipts from the deputy postmasters?—We have no check more than that of the entry made by the remittance clerk in his ledger, which he sends in to the accountant-general every week.

Is that sufficient to enable you to know that the amount actually received is therein stated?—It is not, inasmuch as the remittances of the postmasters might be more or less for any thing we know.

If they were either more or less than was stated in this account, in what way would that appear to any check officer in the department?—If the remittances were more than was stated in that book it could not be checked till the expiration of the quarter, when the postmasters receive their quarterly accounts, and see what they are credited with in those accounts.

Have the deputy postmasters always an opportunity of seeing the account which is made out of the money transmitted by them?—We give them in our quarterly account a statement of the amount remitted by them, according to the returns made to us.

Are not the Commissioners to conclude that the deputy-postmaster, when he sees the quarterly account returned by you, would in all cases make an application to the office if he saw that the amount of money stated in that account to have been received differed from that he knew to have been actually paid by him?—Undoubtedly he would.

To whom in that case would he apply?—To the secretary, as he is forbidden to apply to any other person but the secretary on this subject.

Are there any reasons which lead you to think that that communication should be made directly or circuitously to the accountant-general?—I think, undoubtedly, that in every thing regarding the postmasters quarterly accounts the accountant-general should be consulted, and should have the power of calling for the original documents to see who was in fault.

If in any case the deputy postmaster does communicate that the account transmitted to him does not agree with his remittances, although the application is transmitted to the secretary, to what officer in fact is that representation made?—If the letters were opened by one of the secretary's officers, he would very naturally hand it to the secretary's clerk, the remittance officer, as being the officer with whom, if there were an error, it might possibly originate.

Does it not appear to you that that is an improper course, as it may prevent the proper check being exercised on that officer?—Undoubtedly.

Have you ever known any instances of that kind to occur?—Frequently applications of that kind.

Arising out of incorrect accounts?—Either incorrect, or alleged to be so by the postmasters.

Have you ever had reason to believe that the deputy postmasters have not their accounts credited with the full amount they remit?—In some instances they have stated so, and the explanation has been given by the remittance clerk, either direct to the postmasters or through the secretary.

Does it not appear to you that it would be right in all such cases to let the information be communicated to the controlling officer of the accounts, and to let him have the power of calling for the respective parties, each of whom should show their accounts, in order to decide with whom the inaccuracy lay?—Undoubtedly; I think that would tend very much to accuracy.

Would you not think it a desirable thing if the deputy postmaster, when he sends the remittance to the remittance clerk, were to send a letter of advice at the same time to the accountant-general?—It would be desirable on sending the second halves, but it would be attended with a vast deal of additional trouble to the accountant-general and to the postmasters.

You have stated that you have not sufficient check upon the accounts of the money received for penny postage; does any check exist elsewhere in the office, if not in your office?—None that I am aware of.

Is there any representation made of the amount of letters sent, and the amount of postage received?—None to the officer receiving the money, who is the receiver-general, nor to the accountant-general; the only information the accountant-general receives, to ascertain what amount to debit the receiver-general with, is a letter from the comptroller of the penny-post: "Sir, I have this day paid in to the receiver-general the sum of so and so, on

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account of penny postage;" but he does not tell whether that is the amount of the postage for a week, or how much it is deficient thereof.

Ought there not to be an account given of the number of letters delivered to each letter-carrier, and should not that individual give a receipt for the number so put into his hands; and should not a statement of the number of letters delivered be made to the accountant-general, and at the same time a statement of the sum of money received as postage for those letters?—There should be a weekly return of the whole postage of the penny post made to the accountant-general, which should also contain what particular part of that had been paid to the receiver-general, and how the remainder was disposed of.

Would any thing show what the remainder must in that case be, except an accurate account of the number of letters delivered on each day?—The weekly return would show in whose hands the remaining part of the money was; whether in the letter-carriers, in the comptrollers, or in the collectors; and what portion in each, if any.

Can any thing show the exact amount of the daily receipts but the amount of the daily deliveries?—The return I allude to would show it. The payments vary from 750*l.* to 850*l.* or 900*l.* a quarter.

Are the accounts sworn to at the end of each quarter?—They are not. The last quarter the amount paid was 1,600*l.*

To what do you attribute that?—I cannot take upon me to swear to what it is to be attributed. In the annual accounts which I have prepared for Parliament, I have had no information that would enable me to state the penny post or the penny post letter-carriers to be in arrear, which is constantly the case with the general post department.

Do you know what are the rules with respect to the payments in the office; are they forced to pay up their money weekly or daily?—I cannot say how they (the penny post carriers) pay them; I should suppose daily, to the collector, or the comptroller in the office, I do not know which. The comptroller, according to the letter he sends to the accountant-general, hands the penny postage, or whatever portion of it he thinks proper, to the receiver-general, and the accountant-general credits him, without knowing whether it is the whole or a part.

How is it possible for any person to know what balance is retained in the hands of the collector?—It is not known by the accountant-general what balance is in his hands.

Is it known by any body but himself?—I should suppose the comptroller of the office must know it.

You have stated that there are no checks with respect to the receipt of the postage on dead letters; in what way is that account managed?—The letters are returned to the dead-letter office, and we take the entry made by the person who hands the letter to the party applying for it as correct. We have no means of knowing whether it is so or not. We take the charge made by the person, who enters it against himself.

Does he swear to his account?—Never, but at a final audit, which has not taken place since 1817.

Are his payments pretty regular, or do they differ?—Sometimes they differ a few pounds; the last quarter was considerably more than formerly.

Is it known whether he retains any balance in his hands?—According to the statement he makes, he retains no balance unknown; he makes up his account quarterly, and sends it to the accountant-general to be checked, as to calculation of totals. He acquaints the accountant-general, that the amount in the book so made up by him is the amount of postage received by the dead-letter office for dead letters during the quarter.

Is there any person who controls the deliveries and the receipts in that office as they occur from day to day?—The superintendent, I presume, does; but I cannot take upon myself to swear that.

You are understood to say, that the account for private expresses is not checked; in what way is that kept?—It is kept by the express clerk in the secretary's office; he enters certain sums for expresses, and from the statement he makes we take it, as in the case of the dead letters, as the amount he should be debited with for the quarter; we do not see the original express-sheets or way-bills of the postmasters.

Does the course in which those payments are made lead you to believe that they retain balances in their hands from time to time?—Not from the statement of the accounts more than the sum from quarter to quarter, which cannot be paid in precisely at the quarter-day; it is a very small sum.

In regard to payments from the window-man, do any observations present themselves to you?—The gross amount received by the Alphabet, or post-paid window, for paid letters, subject to deductions made on certain orders which are not seen by the accountant-general, is paid to the receiver-general.

Are those orders or vouchers ever seen by the accountant-general?—Never.

Does not that necessarily make the check on the account imperfect?—If the officers in the inland office and British-mail office who check those vouchers, or are supposed to check them, perform their duty, undoubtedly the check ought to be perfect.

Does any communication take place between the head of the office and the head of the British-mail office, by whom this should be checked, and the accountant-general?—Not concerning those letters, but they sign the document on which the deductions are made.

Are the checks on the accounts of the general expenditure sufficient?—The entire expenditure comes in the nature of bills and warrants before the postmasters-general; all bills on which there are calculations are submitted to the accountant-general, being first submitted to and signed by the secretary. I do not know any additional check wanting on the bills  
for

for the discharge of the amount; there is no money paid that is not paid by draft on the Bank, and the allowances to the deputies are warranted by the postmasters-general.

Is there any adequate check on the items which constitute the amount; is there any person whose duty it is to see that the work charged in the bills is actually done, that it is work which ought to be done, and that the charges made for it are the proper charges?—As to whether it is actually done we presume it is, by seeing the signature of the secretary; with respect to the manner in which it is done, such bills as are certified by the architect we have his authority for believing to be so; with respect to the necessity of having the work done, we have no means of judging.

G. D. MILLS.

Examinations.

No. 130:  
Mr. G. D. Mills.  
13th Dec. 1823.

### Appendix, No. 131.

20th August 1823.

WILLIAM DONLEVY, Esq., called in and examined.

WHAT situation do you hold in the post-office?—I am President of the Inland Office.

How long have you held that situation?—I suppose about eight years. I was a vice-president prior to that, and succeeded Mr. De Joncourt, the father of the gentleman who is now an express clerk.

Will you state whether you ever received any written instructions from the secretary, or from the postmasters-general, to govern you in refusing or receiving the English letters into the inland office at any fixed time?—I have no recollection of receiving any written instructions, but it was generally understood by me that there was a certain hour, seven o'clock, but that every exertion should at all times be made to get them out.

Was that understanding founded upon the general report that was made by Lord Clancarty in the year 1808?—No, I cannot think it was; it had nothing to do with any report of Lord Clancarty's that I have any recollection of, but it may be included in those instructions.

On what is it founded?—It is founded on the idea that a fixed hour would be necessary, not to delay the general dispatch of the coaches; even if we make every exertion in our power, so as not to delay them too long, the arrival of the packet after seven o'clock is the cause of very great confusion; and as it has been the case of late years that every thing was to be sacrificed to dispatch, the confusion of dispatching the mails has been sometimes very great. I should say that seven o'clock was rather going beyond what was desirable; that if I had the power of saying, I should probably say six or half past six; that if a mail came after that I would not dispatch it. The coaches all come in at that hour, and I am looked to as president to get them off at eight, and working the men under me as hard as I can; I am then obliged to account for any delay which may occur after that, and my desire to forward the public service induces me to do all I can.

The sending none which arrive after seven o'clock is an understanding; there is no precise regulation?—It is considered the same as a regulation; it is not a written one, certainly.

When a mail arrives at seven o'clock, do you or do you not consider it your bounden duty to forward that mail?—If it arrived as the clock was striking, or the moment before, we should forward it. We are obliged to be very strict; even in shutting the receiver we must be guided by time, for we are working against time; we shut the receiver as the first stroke of the clock is given; we do not wait for the conclusion of the striking; if the clock has begun striking I should not venture to arrange for sending it on, unless it was a very light evening, or something of that kind.

Supposing the clock had struck its first stroke, and yet that by the time-piece delivered to the guard of the mail-coach the arrival took place at one minute before seven, should you or should you not think it your duty to forward the mail?—I would certainly think it my duty to forward it if satisfied as to the fact, and when that has occurred I have done so.

If a mail arrives at seven o'clock, you consider that it is within the compass of the fair and usual exertion of the office to dispatch that mail at eight o'clock, do you not?—No, it is not within the fair compass of the office; it will probably exceed a little in point of time; but I hold myself, from regulation, bound to make the attempt, and to get it forwarded.

Supposing the mail-coach to arrive at seven o'clock, at what time do you conceive it certain that the mails may be forwarded?—It depends upon the quantity of letters in that packet; sometimes there are American and other foreign letters; the number may be small, or it may be great. The Sunday's mail from London, which arrives here on Tuesdays, brings very few letters; I would venture it then, even if it came after seven; but if it was any other day, and it brought an American or any foreign mail, I should not run the risk.

What is the common period that it requires from the arrival of the mail on a common day to the forwarding the letters into the country; is it more than an hour?—More, certainly, because it is with difficulty we can do it without the packet. If the packet comes in at two or three o'clock, we can do it without difficulty.

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No. 131.  
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Esq.  
20th Aug. 1823.

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No. 131.

William Donlevy,  
Esq.  
20th Aug. 1823.

What time does it require after the arrival of the mail on usual days to dispatch the mails; does it require, with great exertion, an hour or an hour and a half?—The business of the Irish office is going on when the packet arrives; it would on that principle take an hour and a half; I should presume from that time I might get it out at twenty minutes or half an hour after eight, according to the quantity of letters in the packet.

Then if the mail arrives at seven, or a minute after, the delay of the mails till nearly half-past eight will necessarily take place?—Yes.

If a mail arrived at three minutes after seven, would that do more than add three minutes to the time of departure?—Certainly not.

Then, if it arrived at three minutes after that time, would it not be possible, by extraordinary exertion, to enable the letters it contained to go on by the inland mails, without any more than the usual delay?—If it was on a heavy night, such as I have described, especially if there were foreign letters, it would take more time, and they would be delayed perhaps a quarter of an hour more.

Supposing a mail to arrive three minutes later than seven, could not those three minutes be made up for by extraordinary exertion, so as to allow of the mail departing at the usual time?—It could not make more difference than the three minutes certainly, but sometimes the time will extend beyond that I have first stated, it will go sometimes to a quarter before nine. On a Saturday night we cannot get the letters out, even without the packet, within fifteen or twenty minutes; that might extend it, with a heavy mail, to a quarter before nine.

Do you mean to say, that it is not uncommon to have the mails start on the Saturday night at a quarter before nine?—No, not often; a quarter after eight, perhaps.

You are under a regulation to send the mail forward if it arrives at seven o'clock; and you state that you can, under those circumstances, send it forward at half past eight?—Yes, or nearer a quarter before nine, I should think.

In the course of your recollection of the post-office, have you frequently forwarded the letters into the country so late as a quarter before nine?—No, not frequently.

There are not many instances of that?—No; because it is a very rare thing that a packet arrives at that particular hour; nothing but the arrival of a packet could create that particular delay.

Has it ever arrived at that particular time?—Not very often, but it has occurred.

In how many instances do you think the mail has gone from Dublin so late as a quarter before nine, within your recollection?—Very few; because it can occur only in case of a packet arriving.

Is there a book kept specifying the time of the departure of the mail?—There is.

Have you that book with you?—I have.

Will you refer to that book, and state whether there are any instances of the mail going so late as that?—I do not see one at the moment.

What is the latest hour at which it appears, according to that book, mails have been forwarded into the country?—The latest I have cast my eye upon are twenty minutes and half past eight.

[The witness was directed to furnish to this Board the twenty instances subsequent to the 5th of January 1821, of the latest periods at which the mail departed from Dublin, distinguishing the instances in which the delay was occasioned by an order of Government, or if the twenty latest instances should have been all occasioned by order of Government, then to add at least ten which were not so occasioned.]

It appears that the Belfast mail did not depart till half past eight on the 10th of February and the 6th of March last?—Sometimes they are stopped by some casualty occurring; if there is a heavy pressure, and the packets come in bringing foreign mails, they are generally for the north of Ireland, and are often with such blind directions that it is very difficult and necessary to decipher many of them. Most of those will be going by the Belfast mail; that applies only to that particular coach.

You say you do not recollect many instances in which the British mail has arrived at seven or near it?—Not many; it is a very rare thing.

Was it very rare during the years 1821 and 1822?—I have not that fact in my recollection.

Was it very rare that the mail did not arrive till after seven, and was therefore stopped?—Frequently; and in winter particularly, it very often came after, and then it was not dispatched at all.

When it has arrived at near seven o'clock, and some exertion has been required to forward the mails, have you not frequently been applied to from the British-mail office for assistance, and whenever you have been applied to for assistance have you not always given it?—I think I have always given it, if there was a possibility of getting it forward; but where I saw it could not be done, there was no use in giving it. Wherever I thought the thing could be done with any sort of possibility without injuring the revenue, I did it; but if the clerks were too much hurried, the revenue would not be reckoned properly; I wished it to be done whenever it could.

And you always gave the assistance required?—There was very little I could give out of my office, because the clerks were frequently very much engaged, and I could not give any assistance.

You are aware that if the letters are not sent forward on a Saturday night, the delay with respect to many of them is greater than on other nights, that though some would be delayed



delayed only four and twenty hours, others, for towns to which the post goes only two or three times a week, would be delayed forty-eight or seventy-two hours?—Yes.

Consequently the forwarding the mails on a Saturday night is of more importance than it is on almost any other night of the week?—Certainly, with respect to those towns alluded to; but almost all the post-towns are forwarded on Saturday night.

You would therefore, as standing at the head of your office, have felt yourself called upon to make a greater exertion to forward them that night than you would on any other night in the week?—I certainly would; I have made every exertion; and it most certainly would be the duty of the office to make every exertion on a Saturday night; without that the mails could not be got off many times at all, and the consequence would be to delay the coaches. I am bound, as near as possible, to get them off at eight; therefore it would be a dangerous experiment to risk the sending them if there were not time to get them ready; the contractors would make it the subject of complaint, their horses and their passengers being kept waiting; it is only where exertion can be successfully made that it should be.

You must feel that on that night the importance of it was so great, that risk would be better run that night than on any other night of the week?—Indeed, I think it should be so.

Are you more fully prepared for the dispatch of the business on a Saturday night than on the other nights of the week?—No; the establishment is just the same.

In how many instances do you recollect an English mail that has arrived within a few minutes of seven, but after the clock had struck seven, being forwarded to the interior?—There are very few instances, but there have been, from my desire to get them forward; I have certainly in some instances done it, where the business was easier in the inland office, and therefore where I saw there was no risk of delaying the mails too much.

Will you state how far the preparation of the newspapers is one of the causes which produces the delay in sending off the mails?—The clerks of the roads get them very late from the editors sometimes, and then they are obliged to make an effort to get them in; the editors first serve themselves, and then give them to the clerks of the roads.

Is not the delay of the coaches beyond eight o'clock very frequently occasioned by the newspapers not being ready?—Not frequently; they could not be permitted to be delayed; in such cases I have returned them; I would not send them when they caused a delay of more than four or five minutes.

In how many instances have you returned the newspapers?—Not in a great many instances; I returned some this last week, since this new paper, the evening mail, I think, of which there have been such a number sent that we could not get them sufficiently in time; but they never sent forward to delay the mails.

If the British mail was stamped and made ready to be sent into the inland office before the newspapers which were to be sent by that mail were brought into the inland office, would not, in that case, the British mail be time enough to proceed as early as the newspapers?—No; the letters in that state are to be taxed and the postage put upon them—the English struck out, and the Irish put on them instead; newspapers can be forwarded with more ease than letters, from that circumstance, that they are to be taxed and then charged against the different postmasters, and entered on the several dockets and the road slips, &c.

But the newspapers must be sorted and distributed to go into the different bags, must they not?—Of course.

Then the only difference between the newspapers and the letters is the time that it requires to tax them?—And to charge them, &c.; that makes an immense difference, as before stated.

The difference is the time it requires to tax them; the distribution must be the same?—Yes; with the addition of taxing, entering them, &c., as before stated.

What is the time that it requires to tax the letters for the country, in addition to the distribution of them?—I suppose it would take nearly three quarters of an hour delay to do it, and probably more.

Do you mean that it takes three quarters of an hour more to distribute and to charge and send forward the same quantity of letters, than it does to distribute and send forward the same quantity of newspapers?—It would take three quarters of an hour more.

That the difference of the time between the newspapers and the letters would be three quarters of an hour?—Yes.

What is the total time between the time that the British mail letters are brought into the inland office and the time at which they are usually forwarded?—When they come in they remain till the evening; then we begin and sort them with the Irish; it is only when the packet arrives at a late hour that the question alludes to.

The packet letters, between the time of their being sent into the office and their departure, require, you state, about three quarters of an hour one day with another?—Certainly.

Then if the packet letters are in the post-office by five and twenty minutes after seven, they may be in a condition to depart by ten minutes after eight?—No, that could not be.

If it requires only three quarters of an hour to dispatch the letters after they come from the British-mail office into the inland office, if they are in the inland office by five and twenty minutes past seven, is there any reason why they should not be dispatched at ten minutes past eight?—When they come to be blended with the others, it would be impossible to get them out by ten minutes after eight. I know that, with the press of business in the office, it could not be done; it is then blended with the press of business in the office; my intention was to say, that a packet coming in at that time would occasion an additional delay of from half an hour to three quarters.

Examinations.  
 —  
 No. 131.  
*William Donlevy,*  
*Esq.*  
 20th Aug. 1823.

At what time do you conceive, supposing the British mail out of the question, the inland letters ought to be ready; at what time are they put into the post-office?—We open the receiver at five o'clock until seven.

From five o'clock till the time that it is closed you are going on sorting the letters?—Yes, and taxing them as busily as possible.

Are you not able to sort and to charge the letters almost as fast as they are brought into the office?—Nearly so; it is constantly going on.

Then when you come to seven o'clock, there are very few of those before put in remaining to be taxed?—We are not quite ready, but nearly so.

If you were to shut up at seven o'clock, and dispatch those Irish letters as soon as you possibly could, having only those which had come in just before seven to distribute and charge, in addition to those which have been distributed and charged between five and seven, how soon could you send off the post?—At eight o'clock; the delay is in filling the bags; after we have all complete, and have them all taxed and sorted there, then comes the process of putting them into the bags, and then they are to be tied and sealed, and all this creates that delay, which has nothing to do with the taxing and charging.

You think, even if you had nothing to do with the English mail, and no delay from newspapers, you could not dispatch them within that time?—If we had nothing to do with newspapers, we might get them out a good deal sooner; sometimes it is waiting for newspapers.

Do you think you could do it in that case by half past seven?—Indeed I think we could not; there is one coach dispatched at from a quarter to twenty-five minutes after seven, which carries those which have been made up.

Then the English mails can only add to the time necessary for the dispatch of the letters; and if you could dispatch the Irish letters at half after seven, with the addition of the English letters, you could dispatch them in three quarters of an hour afterwards, that would be at a quarter past eight?—Yes.

Then the additional delay to that time is occasioned by the newspapers?—Partly it is.

Is it not entirely?—It would appear so, certainly; but though we were not waiting for the newspapers, we wait until the quarter; supposing that State letters, or any Government letters or dispatches, may come in.

In that case it is the newspapers that create the delay till eight; if you had nothing to dispatch but the Irish letters, you might dispatch them by half after seven?—Yes, I think we might, if no newspapers were admitted in the post-office after six o'clock.

Then the arrival of the English mail can only affect the sending forward of the letters; and therefore, if you add three quarters of an hour to the English letters, if it depended on the English mail only, though arriving at seven o'clock, you can dispatch the mails at a quarter past eight?—No, I could not.

Will you state why you could not, putting the newspapers out of the question?—The newspapers are entirely out of the question; at present they are made up in a separate place, and have nothing to do with the delay.

You stated that they were so late you have been obliged more than once to return them?—Yes; but they did not delay the thing; I would not wait for them.

You do not mean to say you would not wait a few minutes?—If it was only a few that might be rather later. Supposing they are making up five or six hundred, or three hundred, and there were only ten that were late, they would not create the delay which a larger number would; we would not permit them to delay the mails.

If the newspapers do not delay them, and you could make up the letters by half past seven, and the British mail adds only three quarters of an hour to the Irish letters, why could not they be dispatched by a quarter past eight?—There is no contradicting that; but so it is, that in working the business it creates a great delay; the packet arriving at seven o'clock would create at least from half an hour to three quarters unusual delay.

That is delay beyond what would be necessary for the dispatch of the Irish letters?—Yes.

Supposing that to have been, by common exertion, possible at half past seven, they might be dispatched at from a quarter to half past eight?—Or a quarter before nine.

How many extra probationers are there employed in the newspaper office?—Eight.

At what time of the evening does the pressure in the newspaper office usually take place?—From half past five to half past six; in getting them in, then they are to be made up, and put into bags like letter-bags.

After half past six are any clerks in that office unemployed?—Then they go on in the same way as they do with the letters; they put the newspapers into bags.

That is the time when the people are most unemployed, is it not?—Then they are employed in getting them into bags.

What is the period at which the clerks are in the greatest state of employment?—From half past five to half past six; then it is their duty to take them out of the boxes, and put them into bags.

At half after six, when the pressure ceases in some degree, could any hands be spared from that office?—Not until a quarter or ten minutes before eight, when they bring in the bags from the newspaper office into the inland office to receive the letters; as soon as those eight persons bring in the bags to the inland office to receive the letters, they are then employed, one at each of the divisions, tying the bags, and to make themselves useful to try to get the mails off by eight o'clock.

When they finish their duty in the newspaper office, between that time and their ceasing

to tie up the bags, how are they employed?—They are busily employed the whole time; there are perhaps a few minutes that they are waiting, but the letters are put into the bags, and then they are waiting at each of those divisions to tie them, and to assist in the general dispatch of the mails.

Do you recollect being in the office on the 8th of March last?—I was not in the office that night; it was one of my off-nights. Mr. Leet and Mr. Harvey were the two presiding officers that night.

You were not at all in the office that night?—I was not; I was on duty on the morning of that day.

Of course you were not privy to any conversation that passed in the post-office that night?—No.

Do you recollect any conversation passing in your hearing, on that or any other day, on the subject of the delay of the mails that night?—I was not present at any conversation on the subject.

Are you one of the express clerks?—No; Mr. Leet and Mr. De Joncourt are the express clerks.

Have not the express clerks an interest in the delay of all other intelligence but that which goes by the express papers?—They have a general interest; but there is a proportion goes to each.

Are you a clerk of the roads?—Yes, I am.

Is it now a general interest with the clerks of the roads and the express clerks; is there a peculiar interest in the two express clerks, separate from the clerks of roads?—The express clerks derive their principal emoluments and have a greater benefit from the English newspapers; my part of the benefit is about 28*l.* or 30*l.*

How came you to have that interest?—The reason was, that as clerk of the Connaught road, three or four years ago, I made that by circulating them, and they were all thrown into one branch, and I have received in that proportion.

Have you had much communication with a person of the name of Homan, who was at the head of the British-mail office?—Very little; only officially.

He is not under your control at all?—Not in the least.

WILLIAM DONLEVY.

Examinations.

No. 131.

William Donlevy,  
Esq.

20th Aug. 1823.

### Appendix, No. 132.

23d September 1823.

WILLIAM DONLEVY Esq. again called in and examined.

SOME papers have been laid before the Commissioners, in which they see, in various instances, the infliction of fines upon the different officers in the department, and occasionally upon yourself; by whom have those fines been imposed?—By the secretary.

Under what authority?—I do not know, except as secretary, and he acting under the postmasters-general.

It appears that the chief clerk, Mr. Thomas Lees, has also imposed fines?—He can do it only when he has been acting as pro-secretary.

They appear to have been inflicted in the most arbitrary manner, without any reasons, but merely a statement that such persons are to be fined. The reasons and cause of the fines inflicted are usually written on the order which fines?—Just so; I am obliged to make returns of the deputy postmasters; they have also incurred fines; there are also fines for incorrect riding. There is a list sent down to me to the inland office to charge those fines against those persons, to enter it on their dockets, and it goes into the revenue. I return that to the secretary, and he signs it, "Sir, you are to fine such and such persons." With respect to the officers, there was an order sent down some time ago to fine me 50*l.*, but they thought proper not to levy it, for I explained the matter. They thought, probably, that I was negligent in dispatching the mail; but the only fine I paid was a great number of years ago, and that I did in consequence of some state letters having been left behind by the messenger. Lord Clancarty (for it was so long ago as that) wished me to explain that again, and I preferred at once paying the fine; it was five guineas, I think. I think myself it should be always by the order of the Board.

You state that the fines to the deputy postmasters go to the revenue; in what way do you know that?—I charge it to their account, on the same dockets sent to deputies, charging them with the postage on the letters.

It appears that fines are imposed not only on the persons in the office, but on the contractors?—I am sure they are.

It appears also that those fines are to a very considerable extent remitted; can you state how they are imposed, and how they are remitted?—We will suppose that the Cork mail, or any other coach, is late this morning; it would be my duty to report that such a coach had arrived late, and to state the hour; upon that report, I presume, those fines have been levied, but by what authority, except that of the secretary or the postmasters-general, I cannot say; it then leaves my possession entirely, considering that I have done my duty

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 Esq.  
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by the report. I know no more; but I have heard that they have been severely fined, and afterwards often remitted, as in the case of myself; on apologizing or explaining the matter, it has been taken off; and there is what is called a per-centage in and out upon those fines.

Do you happen to know whether, when those fines are imposed, and are remitted or not, the per-centage is paid upon them to some person in the office?—I rather think from report there is a per-centage in and out; but never having paid any myself, I cannot say; I believe it becomes a sort of fee to some person, which is also, I think, a wrong thing.

They are imposed and they are remitted by the same arbitrary authority?—By some authority; I will not say arbitrary; but when I have been attempted to be fined, I have endeavoured to have it done away, by showing I did not deserve it.

Did you do that by an appeal to the postmasters-general?—No; by a letter to the secretary, or in conversation.

Do you happen to know any thing of the remittances made by the postmasters?—No; it is not at all under my view.

Have any complaints made by the postmasters on account of the manner in which their remittances are acknowledged, come under your knowledge?—No, not at all; that is with the treasurer and the accountant, I believe.

Do the riding surveyors come at all under your observation?—Not at all.

Are you aware of the practice of taking persons out of the different parts of the office, some of whom must have been taken from the inland office, and employing them upon surveys?—I have heard it spoken of, and know it to have been done, that they have employed persons from the different offices, and sent them out on particular service; but why they were sent out, or on what service, I never inquired; it did not come under my inspection at all.

When it happened to be a person in the inland office, did it not come under your view?—So far as putting a substitute in his place; and as there is a benefit attached to it, I would rather, supposing that I had nothing to do with it, that he was sent.

Do you know whether this has taken place when the riding surveyors have been unemployed?—I have, within these very few days, heard that it did; but before that I did not know it. According to my own idea, the riding surveyors should be always on duty.

Who is Thomas Parsons, a clerk in the inland office?—They say that he is related to Lord Rosse; he was a clerk in the secretary's office, and not in the inland office, which he has given up, I believe, within the last year or a half.

Is there any thing particular in him that should recommend him to the performance of those duties beyond any other clerk in the office?—No, by no means.

Has he been absent always on account of surveys?—Not on post-office surveys.

It appears, that so late as the year 1821, he was employed on surveys no less than 217 days; can you give any explanation of that?—Not the least, as he was not in my department.

Can you state whether, during the time that he was absent those 217 days, there was any body necessarily employed in his place?—No, I cannot, as he belonged to the secretary's office; but in the inland office it is impossible for any person to be away unless there is a substitute. The money is stopped out of his salary, and the substitute who does the duty is paid out of it; the number is always kept up.

What proportion of his salary is deducted for the purpose of paying his substitute?—One shilling and seven-pence halfpenny for the morning duty, and 2s. 1½d. for the evening; 3s. 9d. a day, making a guinea a week.

Is not that in some instances above the whole they receive?—Yes; of the class of those who have 52l., the deduction in that case is greater than the whole amount of their pay. Paying is an excellent thing with young persons, to prevent their getting away on an excuse of sickness; and it is very right, perhaps, that a man with a good salary should pay. I would think it fair that a larger proportion should be taken out of the income of a man who has a large salary, though I am speaking against my own interest, rather than so much taken from those who have so little. I have been myself forty-seven years in the post-office, and last winter was the most severe I have ever met with, and there were a great many of the young men sick, and they could not afford it. I have made out a list of all the persons absent during the year, and the amount which was stopped for each; this will show the number of persons that have been absent, the number of days they have been absent; some probably have availed themselves of the privilege of staying away at a small expense to them, but those in the lower departments could not afford it. It takes nearly 52l. a year to pay for diet and lodging, and unless their friends assist in supporting them, they are worse off than a common labourer, for they must dress decently, and they are under great temptation to take a letter if it comes into their power.

Are there a great many persons in your office?—Yes; I am aware that there has been an idea that there are too many persons employed, but it is not so; there is a certain quantity of business to be done in a certain time; I must, between six and a quarter before seven, get the letters into the British-mail office, or they will be left behind; having been thirty-five years advancing to 100l. a year, and so on, before I got any thing considerable: I have now a handsome income, and so have two others; but take away those situations, and the salaries of the rest added together amount but to little; and if there are not sufficient hands the revenue is lost. There will be to-night two packets due; the hurry will be immense, and if we are stinted in time we might lose 15l. in an undercharge of the letters; this would be lost, for the deputy postmasters are a set of needy men, who very probably would not account for it.

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Will you state, as far as your experience goes, what is the description of people of whom the country deputies are chiefly composed?—They are generally composed of persons recommended by the lords of the manor and soil; for instance, any nobleman whose estate it is on; it has been the practice these forty years, that instead of the postmaster-general having the appointment, it is the parties in the town or on the estate who recommend, and then this Board may form some idea of the kind of person we may get. A nobleman may think a man very fit for the situation who is not; for the situation of postmaster at Limerick, I knew a man was sent from the post-office a great many years ago, when there was a dispute with the merchants, and the post-office thought it proper to interfere, but in general it is on the nomination of the lord of the soil; they are shopkeepers on a very small scale; the salary is so small it is not worth their taking it. If I am stinted in hands to do the duty, a man of that description is not to be trusted; if I make a mistake of 1*l.* or 10*s.* he will return the docket without inserting it, and it is lost.

How are the accounts of the postmasters kept?—First the amount is charged from my office against the deputies of all postage, English and Irish, all blended and sent to them, and the amount also entered on a slip in the inland office, which is kept and sent the following morning to the letter-bill office, and then, on comparing the docket with the amount written upon it when they reckon their letters, they return the docket signed with the amount right; if it is an error they report that error, but if there should be an error in their favour, the danger is, that they might not feel the necessity of doing so, and there might be revenue lost in consequence of this; and this would certainly be the case, as I know it used to be, if there was not a redundancy of clerks.

How are their quarterly accounts made up; are they made up from those charges which you make against them, or from the charges which they make upon themselves?—They are made up upon the charges that I make against them, corrected or acknowledged by my docket, and as charged and entered on the road slips, as before stated; it is then returned by the postmaster to the letter-bill office; it is then sent to the accountant-general, and the accountant-general then makes out the tots at the end of the quarter from the returns made to him per the letter-bill office, making allowance I presume for the salary, and it is sent down to the man to remit for; but they are not allowed to wait for the quarter to remit, for they make monthly remittances.

They make monthly remittances, but quarterly accounts?—Yes; indeed I believe there are many of them that cannot be trusted for the quarter.

They swear to the quarter's account, do they not?—I have often spoken to magistrates on the idea; I am afraid that men having confidence in a man, for instance, half-pay officers, and so on; the magistrates too often put their names without the form. I conceive that a man signing his name is equal to an oath; but I am afraid that many of them conceive, if they have not kissed the book, they are not bound. I think no postmaster's account should be received without proof that they have actually sworn to their account; I am afraid there is a loose way of doing it.

The account which they profess to swear to is the amount with which they charge themselves?—We charge them, and they acknowledge it, but is charged from the road slip first against them.

It is that part of the charge which you make upon them which they choose to acknowledge?—Yes; the bill comes back the next post, signed and acknowledged by them; the clerk of the name of Beare, who has the management of that department, enters this acknowledgment of the post-office; if he sees that the postmaster has made an allowance to a member of Parliament, or an allowance, saying, that he has charged so much, that creates suspicion, and the secretary communicates with me, and we put a check upon this man; we have put a check on a man just now; it is written, "Put a check on such a man;" that is, that the charge against him should be checked by two officers instead of one each night, that in case we find it necessary to prosecute that man as a rogue we should have evidence against him; I sometimes do it myself; there is a check on one man at this moment; if he makes a false return and takes an allowance which he is not entitled to he will be removed, or there will be prosecution against him for his attempt at fraud. Within these three or four months there was a check put upon a man, and I examined the letters myself, but he turned out to be correct, and I reported accordingly.

Are the accounts from those people passed without knowing whether they have taken the oath or not?—That is only my own fear that there is such a thing; I wish to prevent the evil if it has occurred.

Do you recollect a check being imposed on the deputy postmaster at Dundalk?—Yes, I think I do; it is some time ago.

Was it kept upon him a considerable time?—I have not it immediately in my mind; I know that there was a check upon him.

Do you happen to recollect this peculiar circumstance connected with that case, that while the check was upon him he contrived to defraud the revenue of about 300*l.*?—No; it might be the case without my knowledge; but I know there was a check upon him. I understand, if I am correct in my recollection, that it was his assistant or some one that was detected; but it does not lie in my department, further, than as soon as I make the check, I report upon it, and the secretary acts upon it.

Do you recollect whether he was removed?—I do not. I think, if my recollection serves me, it was his deputy; whether the deputy was removed, I do not know; but that he got out of it in some way, by proving it was his deputy.

Do you recollect whether that man had not succeeded his father in that office, who had

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also been detected in the same fraud?—I think I do recollect that when the check was put on, I remember I thought that he had been an old offender; there had been a check on the Dundalk man so far back as in the old office; but that was on the old man.

The dispatch of the Cork mail comes immediately under your observation?—It does, like all the rest; the dispatch of all of them is under my observation.

Have there not been frequent changes in the dispatch of that mail?—Frequent, but not of late.

It is now dispatched at seven o'clock, is it not?—It is; and also at seven o'clock in the evening.

Does not the dispatch of it at seven o'clock produce considerable hurry and confusion?—Indeed it does; and there is another thing which should be abolished, in my idea; there is also a coach arrives from Cork in the evening, and another from Belfast, at the very time when we are in the midst of sorting the letters for the country; this very much perplexes us in getting the duty done. It should never in my opinion have been; however the advantage may be so great to the merchants as to justify it; I am not aware that it is so. The Belfast coach never comes in time hardly to be sent out in the evening; the Cork coach comes in before six; my object is to get the bags that come in by it opened; it arrives probably at half after five.

Does not the necessity of dispatching a mail which arrives so late produce a great deal of confusion in the office?—I cannot call it confusion; it creates a hurry and press of business.

Does not that hurry always lead to the duty being imperfectly performed?—No, I do not think it does; the thing is done correctly, but it is only by having a great number of persons to do it; the arrivals and dispatches, in my own opinion, should be all at the same time; there should be no preference of Cork; a merchant at Galway has the same right to complain that his letters are not sent out; it is like the sending one man's letters out before another; I have been always for the dispatch at nights, and the arrival in the morning; I do not care how early, but there should be a certain hour for it; I would not have particular coaches going out also in the morning; but when I give that opinion, I know that it is not an opinion that would be approved probably, and if any change were to take place it might create some uncomfortableness among them, and it would get into the newspapers, and create what is called a row here; but an extension of that I think is by no means advisable.

Have you any acquaintance with the circumstances that led to the establishment of that second Cork mail?—I was questioned at the time there was an investigation, some years ago, as a witness; and I believe then I did express myself much in the same way as I have done now, publicly on oath; my opinion was probably singular, but without having any notion what the contract was; I afterwards heard that it was a contract for a great many years.

Did you not state at that time, that the public were losers of upwards of 400*l.* a-year by that contract, in your opinion?—I do not recollect exactly what my evidence was; there was a man of the name of Anderson, who is since dead, he was there.

Was it he who got the contract?—I believe it was; but as to the contract, I believe there was not more than one offering; I think a contract should not be made without the greatest publicity; I think I said it appeared to me a heavy expense without any benefit to the revenue.

Does any special inconvenience arise out of that mail independent of its being a useless expense?—No further than its arriving at an unreasonable hour, and merely the trying to get the letters out by the penny post; there is an additional penny put on for that, and some will not submit to it. An attorney I know, who is a litigious man, declared he would not pay it, and so his letters and others are not sent out till the next morning, and that benefit which was proposed to be realized does not appear to me so beneficial to the public.

Are you not one of the clerks to whom compensation has been given as a clerk of the roads?—I am.

In what manner was that compensation adjusted?—At the time Lord Clancarty, who was a very clever man, was here making his arrangements, I understood from his lordship that he could not satisfactorily find out what the value of those employments was, and he sent to me, as being the next in succession to the Connaught road, or the first which should fall. Mr. Harrison was a very old gentleman at that time. Lord Clancarty said to me, "You can tell me probably what is the profit from the situation of clerks of the roads?" I said I did not know what it was, but, however, I told him, that as soon as I got this situation I would tell him what it was worth. The Commissioners of Inquiry, of whom Mr. Hawthorne was one, had endeavoured to inform themselves of the worth of this situation; they had gone through the investigation of the post-office, and immediately after they had finished, this place fell vacant; I was unwell at the time it was announced to me, and was of course very glad to receive it; when I came into the receipt of it, I found that, instead of 523*l.*, which the clerks of roads had been receiving from Government, it produced 1,200*l.* a year. I felt that I was bound to tell this, and I communicated, I believe through the secretary, officially, that the Commissioners were in great error; this was told the Commissioners, and they could not believe it; but at the conclusion of the year, when I had made the 1,200*l.* in the year of it, I went to the Commissioners and told them I had made that sum.

How was it made?—By the sale of newspapers; it was by my own working it; those men whom they employed, and the person employed for old Lees, were every one robbing, and the thing was all blown, and they were all called to an account by the Commissioners. The commission was revived, and I produced the accounts that I had got, making it 1,200*l.*

a year.

a year. The Commissioners, I thought, were a little annoyed that they had let the thing escape their notice, and when they found that the profits were so much, those people who had been pocketing the 523*l.* from Government were all dismissed; and there was a man of the name of Armit who had the conducting it for the Lees's; it was a terrible thing for them. The editors of the newspapers, upon finding I had produced this, said, "Instead of having twenty-five papers for the quire, you shall have only twenty-four; and we will reduce your profit, cutting it up so that it would bear little more than the expenses." There was a representation made to Government, and out of their great humanity and kindness they said, "We can do no more than give you the 523*l.* that Harrison had for it;" and I received the 523*l.* for it, and have from that time, so that I have been a loser by that disclosure of the difference between 523*l.* per annum and the sum of 1,200*l.* per annum.

Within a given time a completely new arrangement has been made upon that subject, has there not; the express papers, the periodical publications, and every thing, have been thrown into one lump, and it is divided among a certain number of people, according to certain rates?—Yes; it is all managed by Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt.

In what way is the proportion of each ascertained?—I had so very few English papers taken from me, that my share of the division is not what that of some of the others is.

According to the consumption of English papers on the different roads they receive a consideration?—Yes.

The sum you receive from Government is as a composition for Irish papers?—Yes.

The sum you receive through Leet and De Joncourt is for English papers?—Yes.

A compensation is also given to Sir Edward Lees?—He succeeded to his father. He had 849*l.*, and he still has it, because he was in possession; but on coming into possession I had the profits; and I have lost from that to the present day 400*l.* a-year; say the loss is the difference between 523*l.* and 1,200*l.* per annum.

The bargain was, that it should be made up to you a certain sum?—Yes.

How is the sum that arises from the English papers accounted for at all; do you get a specific sum?—I get 523*l.* for the Irish papers, for my salary 300*l.*, and 23*l.* 15*s.* 8*d.* for my proportion of English papers that I used to send to Connaught; making the gross amount of mine 847*l.* a-year.

The other clerks of roads, who received a compensation in the first instance, have now annually a compensation to make up their profits from the Irish papers, a certain sum?—Yes.

Do you know in what way they calculate their receipts, so as to form an estimate of what they receive from the editors papers?—It is done quarterly, and on oath. I am obliged myself to swear to my accounts. It is done in that way that the public revenue cannot be injured; we make what we can by our receipts and payments; there is a profit of so much on every quire we sell; and if I were to sell any I did not obtain payment for, Government would not lose by it, but myself; I do not draw the 523*l.* from Government; I do not draw more than 400*l.* a year from Government, for I make perhaps 123*l.* I am completely in the power of the newspaper editors; and if a newspaper editor were to say I will not hand you over these papers, I should still have my 523*l.*; but at the present moment, while they do continue that small allowance to me, I make what I can, and I receive the balance from the Government.

You never got more than 523*l.*?—No.

Was that the same bargain that was made with Sir Edward Lees?—The very same.

When you got the 523*l.*, you gave up the difference between that and the 1,200*l.*?—Yes; when it was discovered that I had been making 1,200*l.* a year the editors of the papers reduced it; and instead of allowing me 3*s.* or 4*s.* a quire, the profits fell away. Then when it was represented to Government, that by telling what I had been making, and showing that those persons had been robbing, I had sustained an injury, they gave me that certainty.

What privilege had you at that time with respect to periodical publications?—The same that I have now; if a gentleman from the country wrote to me to say that he wished for an English publication, I would get it from Mr. Austin of the post-office in London; and the profit upon it was so trifling after my getting it over here, and then refranking it, his privilege extending only here, there were very few. I have generally written to Mr. Austin to request him to send to the gentleman's address or to me the particular publication. If a gentleman sent to me in the course of the quarter I would get it here perhaps.

The practice now is to deal with the booksellers?—Yes; they have the twenty-five per cent. which the trade allow; but now Dublin is in such a wretched way they do not publish any magazine; they publish nothing but the religious tracts, and all I get is one for my own reading.

In the calculation you make of your profits in the sale of newspapers, is it on the gross receipt, or do you merely take into account the net profit?—The net profit. I state first the expenses what I pay for them, the profit upon them, and whatever I make at the end of the quarter. I state the allowance from Government, 523*l.*, deduct so much profit made this quarter, and then I take the balance.

In the calculation of the profit you calculate the payment made to you by your customer, and the allowance made to you by the bookseller?—I charge myself with the actual profit, and they make up the difference to me.

Has the sale of newspapers diminished?—No; but the editors have taken it into their own hands; they supply the people we used to supply; they have a double profit; and if those men were to say, after such a day we will not give you a paper at all, and we will

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supply them all ourselves, I should be thrown as a greater burden on Government. There is another point I would beg to mention: I think that if the postage in this country was lowered there would not be that conveyance by private hand; the Commissioners, I think, cannot be aware of the extent to which that goes. If there can be any law that could prevent either mail guards or passengers conveying letters it would be very desirable; there is an immense conveyance by these means; my idea was all along to reduce the postage, for I think it is excessive.

The postage in Ireland is not so high as in England, is it?—They are better able to pay it in England than they are here; no persons would think it worth their while then to be carriers; and if the postage was reduced it might have a good effect in increasing the revenue postage, if the illicit carriage of letters could be prevented.

WILLIAM DONLEVY.

Appendix, No. 133.

18th August 1823.

Mr. AMBROSE LEET called in and examined.

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 Mr. Ambrose Leet.  
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WHAT situation do you hold in the post-office?—Vice-president of the Inland Department; at present I am acting as comptroller of the British-mail office.

You are put into the charge of it during the suspension of Mr. Homan?—Yes.

Are you one of the clerks that have the expresses?—I am.

How long have you been in the office?—I have been in the office eight-and-thirty years and a half or thereabouts.

A part of your advantage in those expresses arises from their being dispatched at all times, and even at times when the British mail cannot go?—Certainly.

You consider that as a very important part of your advantage?—That is a part of my advantage, certainly; the principal part of the emoluments is derived from sending papers out in Dublin by expresses, immediately on the arrival of the mails.

Under what authority do you send newspapers?—Under the authority of the postmasters-general, as I conceive.

Under any Act of Parliament?—I really do not know whether there is an Act of Parliament for it or not, but it is one of the situations we have been looking up to from the time we were appointed in the office; it was one of those things that was held out for long and faithful services. I entered the post-office at 30*l.* a-year salary, and by regular succession I came to that situation.

Who is Mr. De Joncourt?—Mr. De Joncourt is my partner in the newspaper business.

Are there any more?—There are four clerks of roads, but there are only two express delivery clerks; but by a late arrangement of the postmasters-general, under their sanction, the clerks of the roads who formerly sold British newspapers united their interest with others, and they have all now a proportionate share of the emoluments of sending British newspapers either by express or otherwise.

And publications?—Yes, and publications.

How long have you exercised that privilege?—Since October 1818, I think.

Did you become an express clerk at that time?—Yes.

Are you also a clerk of the roads?—No, I am not; I am next in succession to the clerks of the roads.

Do you know a book called *The Gentleman's and Citizen's Almanack*?—I do.

Are you in possession of it?—Indeed I dare say I am.

Do you know any thing of that advertisement?—[*The notification at the commencement of the almanack.*]—That is my advertisement.

Under what authority do you conceive yourself justified to publish that advertisement?—Indeed, I conceive, under the authority of the postmasters-general.

Have you any distinct authority to show for it?—No distinct authority, only the employment I have was recognized, I conceive, by Lord Clancarty.

Did you conceive that authority of Lord Clancarty went to the circulation of all those publications that are stated there?—Indeed I did, coupled particularly now with the privileges of the secretary and the clerks of roads, who are joined in the same advantages.

How was it recognized by Lord Clancarty?—In his statement to Government he mentioned the several employments and emoluments in the post-office, and the employment and emolument of clerks of express newspapers was one of them, in which he stated that the emoluments derived by the possessor amounted to about 1,150*l.* a year; that statement was laid before Government.

Did he state the sources from whence that emolument arose?—The privilege of sending British newspapers earlier than the usual course of post.

Do the British newspapers include those publications there stated?—No, not exactly; but it was considered, at the time I took that office, a branch of the employment to send periodical publications.

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What do you mean by periodical publications?—Monthly magazines, reviews, and things of that description.

You mean, of course, numbers published periodically of any work?—Yes; the British and Scotch periodical publications.

As for instance, Rees's Encyclopedia?—No.

That is published in numbers, and periodically?—It is generally confined to magazines; we have sent a few books, but since I have been in office I suppose not above a dozen.

Will you have the goodness to state when you first put in that species of advertisement?—I put it in after I was connected with the clerks of the roads; previous to that there was a shorter advertisement which did not specify particulars.

When was that?—It was the year before last, I believe.

Do you conceive that the supply of reading-rooms fall within your privilege?—Yes.

Do you supply many of those in Ireland?—I do.

Do you know the number you supply?—Indeed I cannot tell the number.

Can you guess?—No; the amount of the profits I can state, but I could not mention the number; but I could ascertain that.

Do you supply any of those in Dublin?—I do, a great number of them.

What puts it in your power to supply those publications to the different persons in Dublin on better terms than the booksellers in Dublin can do it?—I do not know that it is so; I am sure it is not. I am now commencing the supplying them at the shop price, and I am enabled to do that by paying ready money to the booksellers in London and getting them direct.

Do you get the bookseller's allowance?—I have the bookseller's profit, and am satisfied with a small profit.

What was there to prevent your supplying them at the bookseller's price at any time?—Formerly we paid a higher price for them; before I commenced the business my predecessors paid a higher price for them; then they could not do so; it was by an arrangement I entered into with a bookseller in London that I was enabled to reduce my price.

Do you mean to say that you undersell the trade?—By no means; I only sell to reading-rooms at the shop prices; I charge to private individuals 6*d.* British a number more.

If that is the case, why should any reading-room rather prefer receiving them through the post-office than through the bookseller?—Because they get them at an earlier period.

Do you not conceive that to be an advantage equal to underselling?—Yes, certainly it is an advantage.

How do you get them at an earlier period?—I get them by the mail-coach; I pay a higher rate than they do, as I suppose they get them by the usual conveyance.

When you have got them to Holyhead, do not they come over free of all charge?—They do.

Do not you disperse them through Ireland free of all charge?—Yes.

There is no carriage paid from Howth to Dublin for them?—No.

The freedom of carriage across, and the freedom of carriage through Ireland, enables you to undersell?—Yes, it gives a decided advantage; but we do not undersell.

They are not subject to any countervailing duty?—No.

Nor to custom-house search?—No.

What advantage does Sir Edward Lees derive from these?—He formerly supplied a portion of those; and according to the proportion of the emoluments he derived from that source at the time of our commencement of partnership he receives a proportion now.

How is that paid; out of your profits?—Yes; or out of the profits of the employment.

What is the proportion that he receives?—Something less than 200*l.* a year.

What is the proportion?—I believe it is one sixth of two fifths of the emolument. There are four clerks of roads, and two express clerks; but before we commenced we had the entire express delivery in our own persons, under the sanction of the postmasters-general.

Then his share fluctuates?—Yes, according to the emolument derived from it.

Then he has the same interest you have with respect to the expresses?—In a proportionate degree.

He has the same interest you have in the priority of intelligence by the expresses, in any cases over the regular post?—Yes, except that it is a smaller proportion of his emolument than it is of mine.

You very seldom send books to subscribers, you say?—I suppose I have not sent ten books.

But it has happened?—It has happened so far.

Is it not the understanding in Dublin that any persons may have any book that they choose to order through that channel?—No.

You are quite sure of that?—Yes.

You are sure that none of the book societies understand that?—They do not.

If any secretary of a book society happens to have stated that, he has stated that which is not true?—I never made any such proposal to any book society.

Do you mean to state, that if he has stated that he has stated that which is not true?—It is not true.

If he stated that he could have a set of the Edinburgh Review, if a book society wanted to complete their set, for instance, bound or in boards, that is not so?—If they wanted me to complete a set of the Edinburgh Review, I would get them, certainly; but they do not come bound, but in numbers; but it does not occur to me that I ever was asked the question by any secretary of an institution.

In what manner do those books, brought over to Ireland under your post-office regulation,

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avoid the search at the custom-house?—They come over in bags by the Holyhead mail, addressed to Sir Edward Lees.

Do they leave London in that bag?—They do.

Are they dispatched in any way from the post-office?—No; by the booksellers.

What bag is that; is it a leather bag?—Yes. The books were formerly supplied to me by a gentleman in the post-office in London; his terms were too high; they were higher than I could afford, so as to have my profit upon them, and I changed to a bookseller.

Is there a seal on the bag?—I cannot say that I have remarked; I know it is tied.

As this is a bag not dispatched from the post-office, do you not conceive it is the duty of the customs to search it?—They did search them once, but they found them to contain nothing but periodical publications.

Are they not subject to the countervailing duty?—No; that has been lately taken off; they were examined once at the custom-house, but were, on an examination, given up.

How long ago was that?—About a year and half ago.

That was before the withdrawal of the countervailing duty?—Yes.

Antecedent to your application a year and a half ago, were they subject to the countervailing duty and drawback?—They were at one time; and I went and represented to the officer what they were, and they were discharged.

How long have you imported publications under this privilege?—We have always imported a small portion, these two years at least, or a year and a half; something between a year and half and two years.

Were you not in the habit of importing periodical publications longer than two years ago?—No, because I had not any demand for them; my predecessor had; the clerks of the roads and my privilege became united at that time.

Was it before that carried on through the clerks of the roads?—It was always.

Did they enjoy this privilege to the same extent?—They did.

Previous to the time that you made the application and they were delivered out to you, had they been in the habit of paying?—Never; I never heard of their having paid.

Then what led you to your application?—They were brought to the custom-house.

Did the custom-house call for the duties?—They sent word that there was a parcel addressed to the post-office at the custom-house; I went forward for them, and on my representation they were returned to me.

What representation did you make?—Only a note from Sir Edward Lees's brother, stating that they were periodicals for the privilege of the office; I do not remember the words of the note.

Who was the officer to whom it went?—To the surveyor-general of the custom-house, I think.

Who was the surveyor-general?—I think, Mr. Crampton.

Did he give you the order for their discharge?—He did.

He thought himself, upon that note which he received, at liberty to dispense with the law of the country?—I do not know what was his reason for doing it, but I suppose he considered himself justified.

They never had paid before?—Never, that I know of.

Did those which came to the booksellers pay?—I do not know; I think very possibly they might; but I understand it was returned to them again; I did not understand that they were subject to any duty.

You understood that the facilities which attended your mode of getting those publications were the grounds on which a preference was given to you, and upon which this traffic which you carried on in Dublin subsisted?—Certainly.

How long is it since you recollect, or can speak officially to, the mode in which this was carried on?—Ever since I came into the post-office.

Can you state the comparative extent to which it was carried on at that time and now?—Indeed, I cannot.

Do you think it was one fiftieth part of what it is at present?—I should conceive it was always to the extreme extent it is now.

How many of those publications, a list of which has been given in, have been in existence during that time?—There have been different magazines, which have been silenced long since, which have been discontinued.

Because the privilege had been abused to a certain extent at an earlier period, you and your friends thought it fair to extend that abuse to every possible periodical publication which should issue from the press?—I considered these were the same sort of publications that always went, and the officers were always in the habit of supplying those before I came into office.

Sir Edward Lees knew the extent to which it went?—Indeed I cannot say that he did.

He derived a partial profit from it?—He did, but he never inspected it particularly.

He knew the portion of profit he derived?—I do not suppose he did till the other day, when he asked me what profit the periodical publications produced.

Is it not positively within your knowledge that there were not thirty-eight years ago nearly the number of periodical publications there are now?—I do not supply one half of those which are contained in that list.

This sentence is probably drawn up by you: "Country correspondents will have a peculiar advantage, as upon all occasions when the packet arrives before the dispatch of the inland mails, but too late for general transmission, all newspapers, &c. will be forwarded at the last possible moment?"—It is.

Does not that give you an obvious advantage in the delay of the mails?—Decidedly it does, if the mails do not go forward.

And that is an advantage in which Sir Edward Lees participates?—Certainly.

Do you remember any thing of the delay of the mails on the 8th of March last?—I recollect the delay of one mail, to which I suppose the question alludes.

Do you recollect the circumstances of that delay?—I do very well.

Do you remember that the consequence of that delay was a suspension of the transmission of the letters into the country for four-and-twenty-hours?—No; part of the mails went forward the following morning, the remainder on the Sunday evening.

Do you recollect the hour at which the mail was prepared to have gone on?—I do; I think it was twenty minutes after seven o'clock when I got notice that it was Mr. Homan's intention to send it forward, and immediately afterwards Mr. Homan notified his intention to me in person.

When was that note taken, which you are reading from?—It was taken on the 13th of March.

That was five days afterwards; will you take upon yourself to say, on your oath, that the mail was not prepared to have gone on at twenty-seven minutes after seven?—Indeed, I do not believe it was.

Will you swear it was not?—I do swear, to the best of my belief, that it was not.

Was application made to you for assistance to enable him to send on the mail?—There was.

What answer did you give him?—I said I had no assistance to spare, inasmuch as the office was very full, and there was a vast deal of business to perform; it is not usual for the inland office to spare any officers unless the office is full and they have an overplus.

Did he apply through you to Sir Edward Lees?—He applied to Sir Edward Lees direct.

Did he apply to you more than once?—Yes, I believe he did; I think he applied a second time.

Did the answer come from Sir Edward Lees direct, or through you?—I think the first answer came to him direct, and the second to me.

What was the notification that came to you?—The note to me was, to direct I would forward the English mails, if it would not delay the inland mails too long.

Did you consider that answer as authorizing or directing you to give what assistance you could towards the forwarding of those mails?—Certainly.

Did you give any assistance?—I could not give any; I had none to give.

You mean to state that positively?—I mean to state that positively.

That if you had had ever so much inclination to forward the mails, you could not have given any assistance?—I could not have given any assistance to Mr. Homan to forward the mails.

Have you any account in the office of the hour at which the mail has departed from the office, for a twelvemonth past?—Yes.

Specifying the precise minute at which it departed?—Yes.

For how long have you that account?—It is constantly kept up by the president's clerk.

Did Sir Edward Lees come into the office?—No, he did not; I waited upon him.

What questions did he put to you?—He asked me what state the office was in; I told him there was a vast deal to do, and it would be delaying the mails considerably if I forwarded them.

Upon that representation of yours, he ordered the mails not to be delayed?—Upon that representation of mine, he told me, if the case was so, not to delay them.

Were you examined on the investigation before Lord Rosse?—I was.

Were there other officers examined besides yourself?—Yes.

Were there any who disagreed with you in your opinion as to whether the mails could have been forwarded?—I do not think there were any; I am sure there could not.

Were there any officers that stated a difference of opinion, and who thought that, with the assistance he had required from Sir Edward Lees, it was possible the mails might have been forwarded that night?—Indeed I do not know, unless Mr. Homan did, that there were.

You do not know that any persons agreed with Mr. Homan in that impression?—Indeed I do not.

Do you know that they did not agree with him?—I was not present at the whole examination.

Then you cannot know whether there was any agreement or not?—Certainly not, any further than I heard.

Do you recollect any of the officers of the British-mail office being examined?—Not in my presence: I do not think there were.

Then you cannot know at all what evidence they gave?—No.

Did you never see afterwards in that office, the minutes of the examinations?—No, I am sure I never did.

Did you never hear that the officers of the British-mail office all thought it might have been forwarded?—I did not hear any such thing.

At what time did the mails go?—The inland mails, I think, were not dispatched until twenty minutes after eight that night.

At what time do they usually go?—As soon after eight as possible. The order is, that they shall be dispatched from the gate at eight o'clock, when the clock chimes; and they often go out as the clock strikes.

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They are often delayed?—Yes; but the order is, that they shall be dispatched at eight o'clock.

Whose order is that?—The order of the secretary. I understand it to be the order of the board.

At what time does the business in your office cease?—Immediately after the dispatch of the mail. I suppose about five or ten minutes after eight, or twenty minutes, if the mail is delayed so long. We are out of the office in five or ten minutes after the mails are gone.

There is nothing to prevent the letters for the inland mails that come into your office being made up to a precise moment?—No, unless from some unforeseen circumstance.

Do not you always make them up with a view to their going at eight o'clock?—Yes.

Then they were finished by eight most probably; the mail is not delayed, because the inland letters are not ready, of course?—The receiver is closed at seven o'clock, and as soon after as they are ready, and the papers come in from the newspaper office, they are made up.

At what period usually do the duties of the inland office, that part of the regular duty upon which there can be no fluctuation, terminate with a view to the letters being sent off at eight o'clock?—The duties of the post-office are always fluctuating; but it is our object to get them out at eight o'clock if possible. Some nights there are a greater number of letters than there are on other nights.

When the mail is delayed it is either by some extraordinary event connected with the British-mail office, or some delay on the part of the Government?—Yes; there are also other casual circumstances to prevent the punctuality of dispatch.

You can never anticipate either the one or the other, and therefore your business is always done with a view to eight o'clock?—Yes.

How much before eight o'clock does the business of the inland office terminate?—Very seldom five minutes before eight.

Did it terminate at five minutes before eight that evening?—No, nor till twenty minutes after.

For what reason?—The extraordinary number of letters that evening, and the number of newspapers; there is always a great delay on the Saturday evening.

There is always a great delay on the Saturday evening?—Yes; there are a vast number of papers always on the Saturday evening.

The same persons are not employed on the newspapers that are on the letters?—No; they are made up in another office.

Then the newspapers could not affect the duties of your office?—They do; the quantity of newspapers that come in on the Saturday night delay the mails.

The letters being made up in your office, does the quantity of newspapers affect the period at which the letters are made up?—No.

At what time were the letters made up that night?—The mails were dispatched at twenty minutes after eight o'clock, but I cannot speak to five minutes, for making up the letters.

There are a great many more letters on a Saturday night as well as newspapers, you say?—There are.

For what reason?—There is no dispatch on the Sunday night of Irish letters; it is the fact that there are more letters and more newspapers on the Saturday night.

Is it usual for the mail to be delayed by that regular circumstance, from twenty minutes to half after eight?—It is.

Will you take upon you upon your oath to say, that if proper exertion had been made, those letters on that night could not have been dispatched by half past eight?—Upon my word they could not.

You are aware that there may exist a difference of opinion in other officers on that subject?—There may be for ought I know.

You are aware that a different opinion may have been given by other persons in the office?—I do not think that any other opinion could be given; I did not hear the testimony of several of the persons who were examined, nor did I inquire what was the nature of it, nor do I know the names of the officers who were examined upon the occasion.

What question did Sir Edward Lees put to you when you went up to him?—He asked me in what state the business was, and could the British-mails be forwarded without delaying the mails; I said they could not.

Did he ask you whether by additional assistance being given to the British-mail office it could have been done?—He did not ask me that.

You positively assert, that there was no person whose assistance you could have afforded to Mr. Homan?—Indeed I do. There was one whom he had got from the newspaper office, and I withdrew him from him, because he had more than he could possibly do in his own office to do it correctly.

What was his name?—Indeed I believe it was Manley, a little boy.

You do not recollect the precise period at which the British-mail was made up?—Mr. Homan called upon me, to say that they were ready.

At what time was that; was not it at twenty-seven minutes after seven?—No; I believe it was stated to me to be ready at forty-five minutes after eight.

What was the latest hour to which you recollect the mail to have been delayed?—I have known it to be above half past eight, owing to the Government letters, or things of that description.

Have

Have you ever known it to be kept, by the accidents you have mentioned, to half past eight?—Yes, I think I recollect its being delayed for a long time by similar circumstances; but it is contrary to the rule of the office; it is only by casualty that those things occur.

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Mr. AMBROSE LEET again called in and examined.

YOU have now the charge of the British-mail office?—I have.

You have had it, since what period?—Indeed I do not know exactly; I believe three or four months; but I really do not recollect the month I was put in charge.

You were put in on the removal of Mr. Homan?—I was.

Are you at the head of the inland office?—I am second in that office.

By whom were you ordered to take charge of the office?—Mr. Donlevy, the president of the inland office; the letter from the secretary was directed to him; that letter directed him to appoint a vice-president to it.

Who was the other vice-president?—Mr. De Joncourt.

There was no other vice-president but you two?—There was Mr. Harvey, who succeeded to the vice-presidency on one being promoted.

There are no other vice-presidents but you two?—No.

Both you and Mr. De Joncourt are clerks of the expresses?—We are.

Since you took charge of that office, have any occasions occurred on which the British mail has not been forwarded?—Yes, I believe two or three.

Can you point out the periods at which they occurred?—Indeed I cannot, but I made a return, and I imagine it is before the Board.

Do you recollect at what time the mails arrived, when that took place?—Indeed I do not at this moment recollect; I did not take any note of them.

Do you, according to any instructions you have lately received or received at the time you took charge of the office, feel yourself bound not to attempt to forward the English mail if it should arrive after the clock has struck seven?—I do.

Under what instructions?—Under the general instructions of the office, particularly sanctioned, as I understand, by Lord Rosse, on the investigation of that question.

When did that investigation take place?—Soon after the circumstance occurred it was particularly notified by the secretary, that my conduct had Lord Rosse's approbation.

Do you conceive yourself bound not to attempt to forward letters if they arrive after the clock has struck seven?—Certainly.

Under what instructions do you conceive yourself so warranted?—Under the instructions of the office.

At what period were those regulations or instructions given?—Indeed they have been of very long-standing; they have been occasionally varied from on express orders, but they were understood to be the regulations of the office.

You say they have been deviated from; do you mean to say, that a mail which has arrived after the clock struck seven has never subsequent to that time been forwarded to the interior, except by an express order from somebody?—Certainly not, except by an order of the president of the office; he takes upon himself to act, and in such cases as he directs it to go forward it certainly has gone forward; whether he had instructions from the secretary or not, I cannot say.

The president of the office, or the president and vice-presidents?—The president of the inland office.

They have never gone on but by an express order from him?—Certainly not.

Do you mean by that to say, that it would not be competent for one of the vice-presidents of the night, acting as the president in the absence of Mr. Donlevy, to give that order?—Certainly, whoever is acting as president for the night.

Then you mean either the president or the vice-president?—Certainly, the acting president of the night.

Have you had occasion frequently to act as president of the night?—Yes, frequently.

How often have you acted?—Two nights in the week when I was in the inland office.

Mr. De Joncourt two, and Mr. Donlevy two?—Yes.

Have you frequently had to exercise an option upon that subject?—I do not think I have had one occasion to exercise that option.

Do you conceive yourself to be bound by the arrival of the mail, and to refuse it if it arrives after that hour?—I conceive I would not be bound to send it forward after seven o'clock, unless I had a distinct order from the president, or the secretary when I was acting as president; I would immediately refer it to the secretary if such a circumstance occurred.

And receive his directions upon the subject?—Decidedly, until it was finally arranged.

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Was that the course you did, in point of fact, take on the 8th of March last, when you were acting as president?—I took upon me to refuse; the letters came in after seven o'clock; but as soon as Mr. Homan said they should come in, I immediately waited on the secretary, which I would have done under such circumstances.

Did you yourself wait upon the secretary before Mr. Homan had written to him?—I do not know. On Mr. Homan's applying to me, I thought it necessary to wait upon the secretary; when he said he would forward the mail, at which time I did not know that he had written to the secretary.

Did you know the time at which the mail arrived?—I was told it arrived at five or seven minutes after the hour.

From whom did you receive that information?—I received it from Mr. Henry.

Mr. Henry is your particular clerk, is he not?—Yes, he is.

Did he tell you at the same time, that he understood the letters were to go forward, or that Mr. Homan had expressed any intention upon that subject?—Not at that time he did not, but he merely notified to me that the mail was in.

At what time was that?—At about seven minutes after seven, I think.

When did you know that an application had been made by Mr. Homan to Sir Edward Lees upon the subject of sending them forward?—Not till after Mr. Homan spoke to me.

What passed between you and Mr. Homan?—It was notified to me at twenty minutes after seven, that he intended to send forward the mail; he then notified it to me in person.

Had you previous to that had any communication with Sir Edward Lees?—No, I had not.

Though the arrival of the coach did take place very near to seven o'clock, you had not thought it necessary to take the opinion of Sir Edward Lees, whether the mail should go forward or not?—I did, at half after seven; immediately after hearing from Mr. Homan that he intended to forward the mail; about twenty-five minutes after seven.

Did not you know at half after seven, if that was the first motion that was made towards sending forward the mails, that it must have been a great deal too late to admit of their going?—Certainly.

And it was at that time, not having said one single word to Sir Edward Lees upon the subject before, that you first went to take his orders upon the subject?—It was immediately on receiving an intimation from Mr. Homan.

Did not Mr. Homan previous to that, and considerably previous to that, apply to you for assistance?—No, not till twenty minutes after seven.

Did he apply to you to receive the mail?—He did not.

Not before that time?—No.

You do not know the particular time at which he applied to Sir Edward Lees for assistance, in the first instance?—No, I do not.

You went into the British-mail office, did you not?—I did not go into the British-mail office that night. I went to the door of the office that night, but not into the office.

Did you go near enough to have a considerable discussion with Mr. Homan upon the subject?—I was in the inland office, and he had the door open; that was at a quarter before eight o'clock, not previous; it was a quarter before eight when he came to the office door, a door between the two offices.

What passed at that time?—He told me he had written to the secretary, and he understood that I had got an answer; that he thought it was very improper that I should have got the answer to his note. He asked me for the note, and I showed him the memorandum Sir Edward Lees had addressed to me upon it.

Did not you show him that answer of your own accord, without his coming to ask you for it?—No, he came and asked me for it.

What was the purport of that note?—It directed me to forward the letters, if I could, without delaying the mails too long.

Did you go and communicate that answer in the British-mail office?—No, I did not.

Why did you not?—It was not my business to go into the British-mail office.

It was not your duty to go into the British-mail office to see whether they could be forwarded?—No, I never did interfere with the business of the British-mail office.

For what did you go to the door?—On his coming to it.

Though Sir Edward Lees might have wished that the mails should have been forwarded that night, and had written to you upon that subject, you did not think it necessary to interfere so far as to state what the opinion of Sir Edward Lees was, and to see whether it could be effected or not?—I showed the letter to Mr. Homan, and consulted with my vice-president about the practicability of sending forward the mails, and he was quite of my opinion, that they could not be forwarded without delaying the mails too long.

Who was your vice-president?—Mr. Harvey.

When did you consult with Mr. Harvey?—I think immediately on Mr. Homan's first communication with me.

At what period was that?—About twenty minutes past seven.

Are you sure it was not earlier?—I am sure it was not.

What means had you of ascertaining that?—I must have looked at my watch to ascertain it, I should think.

Did you look at your watch?—I cannot say that I did, but there is a clock in the office.

What means did you take to ascertain the hour, so as to be able to speak to it?—I must have looked at my watch or the clock; I must suppose I did.

All you know about it is, that you do not recollect whether you did look at your watch or not?—I must have looked either at my watch or the clock.

Why must you have done so?—Because I was able afterwards to ascertain the time.

On what ground do you venture to state positively on oath, that it was at twenty minutes past seven, and not before?—Because I stated it in a note I took a few days after of the fact, and it must have been the case; I cannot say which I looked at, but I think I certainly must have looked at one or the other.

In consequence of that first application to you, you consulted Mr. Harvey?—I did.

And you and Mr. Harvey entertaining that opinion, you did nothing?—I did nothing.

When Mr. Homan applied to you for assistance, had you any assistance to give him?—None, that I know of.

Therefore, if you had ever so much disposition to send them forward, you do not think you could have done it?—Indeed I do not think I could, without delaying the mails.

How was Mr. Henry employed at that time?—He was employed on that night in examining the newspapers.

Are you sure he was employed at that hour in examining the newspapers?—Indeed I believe he was.

Did you take any trouble to ascertain whether he was or not?—No; I cannot say that I did; it was his duty.

Then you merely state that you think he must have been so?—It was his duty to be.

What particular newspapers was he on?—The papers thrown into the Irish receiver.

Was not he examining the express papers, and was not that the duty that was assigned to him?—It was not necessary for him to do so; I believe he went into the British-mail office to get them, but he was not under the necessity of doing that; I had two messengers for that purpose.

Have you ever taken the trouble to ask him what he was doing?—No, but he ought to be examining the newspapers thrown into the Irish receiver.

Do not you know that the Irish newspapers were not brought into the office at that time?—They were thrown into the Irish receiver.

Is that the case with all the Irish papers?—With what we call the dry papers; the editors papers are directly put into the newspaper office, but the dry papers all pass through the Irish receiver.

It was his duty to examine them?—It was.

Was it the duty of the other clerks to do that?—It was not the duty of any other person.

Therefore you believe he was examining them?—Yes.

Are you quite sure that under your own directions he was not at that time examining and separating the express papers?—I am most positive that I never did give him directions upon the subject; and on the contrary I never allowed him to interfere in the express papers when he had any business to do in the inland office, nor was it necessary for him to do so, for I had two messengers for the purpose; I cannot say that I observed him on that particular night.

If he happened to be examining the express papers, has it been usual, in case of a pressure of business, to call him from doing that, to assist in any business in which he was wanted?—If he happened to be on the express papers he would be called for.

Therefore if he was examining the express papers at that time he might have been applied to the assistance of the British-mail office, if he was wanted?—Certainly.

When assistance was called for from the British-mail office, did you take the trouble of ascertaining how he was employed?—Indeed I did not.

At what time do the duties of the other clerks of the newspapers begin?—Immediately on their going into the office they begin.

Is that always the case?—When there is no packet in, the editors papers are first examined.

The duties of the clerks, whose duty it is to arrange and sort the editors newspapers, do not begin before the editors newspapers arrive in the office?—No.

Then if the editors newspapers had not arrived in the office, they were in a situation to be disposable?—Yes.

And they might have been applied to the assistance of the British-mail office if that was the case?—Yes.

Did you take the trouble to ascertain whether they had arrived?—Yes, they certainly had.

If they had come, and the clerks of the roads papers had not come in, and they were waiting for them, would they not have been disposable?—Certainly they would.

Did you ascertain whether that was the case?—No.

Then how could you take upon yourself to say you had no assistance to give?—I looked about me in the office and saw every one engaged.

There are two cases in which assistance might have been afforded, which you did not have recourse to, and did not inquire whether it could be given?—Indeed I did not see that assistance could be afforded from any point.

The rule is, that when there are only thirty-seven clerks present, that operation which is called fishing of newspapers does not take place?—It does not.

Mr. Henry was employed some part of that night in fishing newspapers?—Yes.

Then that is a proof that there were thirty-eight present?—Yes.

In case of a pressure of business the fishing of newspapers might have been dispensed with?—Yes; we never have that done if there are but thirty-seven present; but if there is a thirty-eighth we put him to that.

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Then he might have been withdrawn from that, might he not?—No; I conceive it a very essential part of the duty; it is only necessarily dispensed with when we have not an opportunity of performing it.

Is it not dispensed with when you have not thirty-eight in the office?—Certainly.

Thirty-seven is the common compliment?—Yes.

Do you think the question whether the inland British letters should be sent forward or not sent forward, was not an occasion of importance enough to have withdrawn a clerk from that operation?—Certainly it was; but I do not think one officer was sufficient to do that, without delaying the mails too long.

Will you take upon yourself to say that you are quite sure you did not see Mr. Homan before twenty minutes past seven, and you had not heard from Mr. Homan before that time that he meant, if possible, to send forward the letters?—Certainly not.

You stated that you never were in the British-mail office that night?—I think it is most probable I was not; I have not the slightest recollection of having been there.

Were you there or not?—To the best of my recollection I was not.

Have you endeavoured to recollect yourself?—I have.

Do you remember withdrawing from the British-mail office a person of the name of Manley?—I do.

Where were you at that time?—Between the British-mail office door and the newspaper office; I do not think I was within side of the office, but certainly if I was it was no more.

You were so near the office that you had a command of the office with your eye?—Yes.

And you called out Manley, who was assisting in stamping?—I did.

You also forbade a person of the name of Field from going to assist, did you not?—I do not know that I forbade him, but I certainly called Manley out.

What duty had Manley to perform?—One of the newspaper clerks.

Did you go into the newspaper office at that time?—I did.

How were those persons employed in the newspaper office at the time you went in?—I do believe they were employed sorting the papers.

What did you see?—I saw them all engaged, to the best of my belief.

What papers were they sorting?—I cannot say whether the clerks of the roads papers, or the editors papers, or the papers they got from the inland office, but they were engaged on the papers, I believe.

You believe they were?—They were engaged in their usual occupation.

You take upon yourself to state that they were all engaged in sorting newspapers?—Yes.

The whole number?—Yes, to the best of my belief they were.

Do you recollect the mails having been delayed that night?—Yes.

Till what hour?—Till twenty minutes past eight.

Are you sure it was not later than that?—It might have been five minutes after that, but it was twenty or five and twenty minutes; it was stated by some twenty minutes, and by some five and twenty minutes.

Have you no record of the time at which it goes away?—It is entered on the office books.

You have not thought it necessary to refresh your memory on the subject?—Indeed I have not.

What was it that detained the mails that night?—The general pressure of business.

You take upon you, upon your oath, to say that it was that?—Yes, I believe it was.

Do you not know or believe that it was on account of the clerks of the roads papers not being ready?—No, I did not hear any such thing.

Do you remember at what time they were brought into the inland office?—No, indeed I do not.

Do you happen to recollect that they were brought in at a much later hour than they usually were?—Indeed I cannot speak positively to that; I do not think that the pressure was in consequence of those newspapers.

If the newspapers were sorted in the inland office that night, instead of being sorted in the newspaper office, under whose orders would that have been done?—When the clerks of the roads newspapers come in before half-past seven they are sorted in the newspaper office; when they come in after that time, they are brought into the inland office, to prevent the delay of the bags.

When that circumstance happens is it intimated to the president of the night?—Not always; it is done as a matter of course.

Does it come to his knowledge in any way officially?—Most probably he will see it being done.

Could he avoid observing it?—No, he could not avoid observing the sorting of the papers in the inland office.

Will you take upon yourself, upon your oath, to say that that was not the case that night?—Indeed I will not; I do not recollect that that was the fact.

If that was the fact, was it not a proof that they had come in too late?—Yes; but the proportion of papers that come in after half past seven are not such as to create much delay.

Will you take upon you, upon your oath, to say that the delay was not occasioned by those papers not being ready?—Indeed I cannot; I really cannot assert whether it was by the newspapers or the letters that the delay was occasioned, but I conceive it to be the general pressure of the business.

You went to Sir Edward Lees in the course of that evening?—I did.

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What passed between you and Sir Edward Lees on that occasion?—I mentioned to Sir Edward Lees the circumstance of the mail coming in.

You went to him in consequence of a second application from Mr. Homan, did you not?—I believe it was in consequence of the first.

At what time was it?—A little before half after seven.

What passed between you and Sir Edward Lees?—I reported to him the coming in of the mail, and the time, and that it would delay the mails very considerably if they were forwarded.

Did you know at that time that there was a difference of opinion between you and Mr. Homan?—There was evidently a difference of opinion.

Did Sir Edward Lees make any further inquiry, or merely receive what you stated to him upon the subject?—I do not know if he did.

Did he come down into the office?—No.

Did he look to see whether there were any clerks who could be sent to assist Mr. Homan?—Sir Edward Lees did not come down into the inland office.

Has he been in the habit of coming into the office?—Not very frequently.

On what occasions has he been in the habit of coming into the office?—Occasionally introducing gentlemen to see the office; sometimes I have seen him with the postmasters-general.

Does he ever come in for the purpose of seeing that the business is going forward, or exercising a general superintendence?—No, it is not usual; he has come in to observe any alteration, or to give any particular order he wished to give; but it is not usual.

He has been in the habit sometimes of coming in to give a particular order himself?—Yes, I think he has.

When there was this difference of opinion between you and Mr. Homan upon the subject, did he express any wish to you to see what assistance you could give, or whether you could supply him with any hands?—No.

He was quite satisfied with the representation you made of the impossibility, and therefore did nothing?—Yes.

How long after that conversation was it that he wrote that note which he sent to you at the back of Mr. Homan's note?—About ten minutes after, I think.

Had any body been with him upon that subject in the interim?—I do not know.

Did it not appear very extraordinary after your statement to him, and his having agreed with you, that he should write on the back of Mr. Homan's note, that if the letters could be forwarded they should be forwarded?—I have not formed an opinion upon that subject; I received the note.

You did not think after what had passed, that his expressing a doubt whether they could be forwarded or not was extraordinary?—I thought his note quite unnecessary after the explanation I had given him.

Did you think there was nothing odd in the communication itself?—That did not strike me; I thought it extraordinary that I should receive a second communication after the first; I thought it unnecessary, certainly.

Did you not think it extraordinary, if he was satisfied with your explanation at half past seven, that he should write a note purporting that he entertained a doubt upon the subject ten minutes later?—It never entered my head to form an opinion upon that subject; I received the note.

What did you do with the note?—I put it into my desk or on my ink-stand, which is usual on those occasions; I marked the date when I received it; it was a very particular circumstance.

You marked it upon the note at the time you received it?—I did.

Did you mark it at the moment?—I did.

At what time did you consult Mr. Harvey?—Immediately on receiving the communication from Mr. Homan.

What was the nature of the communication you received from Mr. Homan?—That he intended to forward the mails.

AMB. LEET.

Examinations.

No. 135.

Mr.

Robert B. West.  
3d Sept. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 135.

3d September 1823.

Mr. ROBERT B. WEST called in and examined.

HOW long have you exercised the duty of Inspector of Franks?—I should suppose about twelve years; not always, but occasionally.

It is not a regular appointment?—It depends in a great measure on the attendance of others; in case of any person in a higher situation being absent, I should be taken from it to fill another situation; I am not permanently fixed to it.

What other person exercises that duty besides yourself?—Several persons; Mr. Mowlds, a taxing clerk, Mr. Heron, a taxing clerk, Mr. Edward De Joncourt, a taxing clerk, have also occasionally filled the situation of inspector of franks.

Under whose orders do you perform that duty?—The president of the inland office.

The president of the inland office says who is to be the inspector of franks for the night?—Yes; the office is under his control, and he directs who shall fulfil the duties in the morning and the evening.

Under what directions do you check the franks; have you any written directions?—According to the Acts of Parliament.

Do you mean by that, that you stop all franks that are not directed by some person authorized to do so by Act of Parliament?—Certainly.

How long has that been the case?—It has been the case ever since I recollect; I suppose the question applies to members of parliament franks.

The question refers to all franks that come through your office. Your duty is to examine all letters and packets intended to pass free of postage?—Yes.

Do you check and charge all those which are not franked by some person having the privilege of franking by Act of Parliament?—Certainly.

Have you been in the habit of stopping the letters of the audit office?—Yes, latterly.

Since what time?—I should suppose within this fortnight, by an order in writing given to me to that effect.

Why did not you do it before?—It was always customary for them to go free.

You stated that you were governed by Act of Parliament?—I suppose there was an Act of Parliament for it; they were always used to go free.

Then you include not only those that you have seen an Act of Parliament for passing, but those that have been in the habit of going free?—Yes; I suppose by seeing them going free, that they are permitted by some Act of Parliament to go.

Where is the order under which you have permitted the franks of those persons to go free?—According to the printed list of persons handed to me, by which I am guided.

Have you that printed list?—I have; not about me.

By whom is that given to you?—It is printed by direction and authority of the secretary.

Is his name attached at the bottom of the paper?—It is signed to it.

Can it be sent for?—It is in a box locked up with the stamps in the inland office; I have the key.

Can you procure it by sending the key to some person in the office?—I can.

[The witness was directed to procure the paper.]

Have you been the person that has been most frequently, for some years past, employed in this duty?—Not within this year and a quarter; I have not filled the situation within this year and a quarter, until the arrival of Mr. Hume and Mr. Johnson from the London post-office.

During that time, who did fill it?—Different persons.

Previous to the time you mention when you ceased to fill it, had you been in the habit of filling it pretty constantly for some years?—I cannot exactly recollect now; it depends very much on the attendance of others. I have done the duties for a number of years occasionally, but not constantly, in consequence of those changes. I have performed the duty for four or five months together, and then have been taken from it again.

In that time had you ever occasion to make any observation to the postmasters-general or to the secretary upon the subject of the franks that come through your office?—No.

When the franks are brought to you, what is the sort of inspection you apply to them?—Just to see that they are signed and directed by persons who are authorized to it, either by Act of Parliament or privilege of their office.

If you find, or have reason to suspect, that they are not signed by the persons whose names they purport to bear, what do you do?—We are, in fact, enjoined not to charge them without authority. In some cases letters come from the Castle, merely the persons names signed in another hand; there is an official letter sent to the secretary requesting they may pass free, and they are not charged. We may suppose any of the privileged persons may, from not having sufficient time to frank themselves, have sent them without date; and there has been a letter sent with them from the Castle requesting they may pass free, and they pass free accordingly.

When that was the case, did the secretary of the post-office give you directions that all the letters that bore that person's name should go free on that day?—That has been the custom

custom of the office, but the letter being directed to the secretary or the principal clerk in waiting, it is not sent to the secretary, but acted upon in the office at once; it is addressed to him or to the principal clerk in waiting, and being directed to the principal clerk in waiting, it is opened in the inland office, and acted upon of course, agreeably to the instructions of the secretary in such case to respect every letter so transmitted. There is an order of the secretary that they are not to be charged in such cases, and they are not charged.

Have you always received an order of that kind when you have permitted letters that have been written bearing the same name, but in different hands, to pass free?—We could not pass them free without that written instruction.

Do you mean that they never were passed without that written instruction on the day on which it occurred?—They never were.

Are those instructions kept in the office?—I should suppose the president keeps them.

On each occasion there comes a letter from the Castle?—Yes.

From whom does the letter come, and to whom is it addressed?—It is addressed to the secretary, generally signed in Mr. Goulburn's name, or sometimes in Mr. Gregory's name, or from Mr. Connor.

Or Mr. Mangin?—Yes.

Should you think it your duty to obey such a letter, sent either by Mr. Mangin, Mr. Connor, Mr. Goulburn, or Mr. Gregory, equally?—Certainly.

Are those notes in the handwriting of the person who makes the request?—No; sometimes I have seen a letter written in Mr. Goulburn's name in Mr. Connor's handwriting, which I know very well, requesting that such letters and packets may be sent free.

Is that an occurrence that frequently happens?—It very often happens.

Who is the person whose franks are most frequently ordered to go, whether they are written in his own handwriting or not?—Mr. Connor.

Are they frequently from Mr. Mangin?—Not so frequently.

Of what size are the letters which so come?—Sometimes they are small letters, and sometimes very thick packages, which are tied round, and are handed to the president on duty.

Did they appear to be official communications?—We never examine into them, therefore I cannot speak to that.

You can judge perhaps, from the appearance of the packets, whether they are official communications or books?—I should suppose them to be official; but without a degree of scrutiny it would be impossible to give an opinion.

Does the same examination take place when letters are franked in the post-office by Sir Edward Lees?—Yes; all Irish franks come before me.

In cases in which it has appeared to you that Sir Edward Lees's name has not been written by himself, what do you do?—We would charge if they were not written by him, if the signature appeared to be counterfeited.

Do you mean that persons do not frank for him?—They do not in his name; there are persons who have privileges of their own.

You are sure that no persons, under his authority and for his convenience, ever write his name upon a frank?—They never do; there are publications from different charitable societies that are open and which pass free.

You mean that no sealed letters or packets ever pass free with his name upon them, which you have reason to believe are not written in his own handwriting?—Never.

You never heard of any person in the office being authorized by him to sign for him?—I never knew an instance of it, except on letters coming from charitable boards that are left open at the corner, by which it can be ascertained what they are.

You know his handwriting very well?—Certainly.

Should you detect it if it was so?—Certainly.

Did you ever see any that you had a suspicion of?—I never saw a letter on which it was attempted; I could not be mistaken if it was.

How long have you been in the habit of inspecting franks?—The last twelve years.

Was it before the year 1814 you were employed in that way?—It must have been, I think, after that; I have filled so many different situations in the office, I cannot recollect the period when I first filled the situation of inspector of franks.

Will you take upon yourself to say, that within the period when you exercised those duties Mr. Thomas Lees has not franked in his name?—He has always franked in his own name.

Has not he franked in his brother's name within the time you have been accustomed to perform that duty?—I have never known an instance of his writing or affixing the signature of his brother to any letter or packet.

And you have been there twelve years?—Yes.

You are sure no other person has done it?—Not that I know of; his handwriting would be very easily discoverable by me if it was counterfeited; I am so well acquainted with his handwriting, I think no person could do it without my perceiving it.

If you did perceive it, what should you do?—I should charge it as a counterfeit.

Should you make any observation upon it to Sir Edward Lees?—We have a stamp which I should put upon the letter itself before I sent it on.

You would send it on?—Yes.

Should you make any report upon it to Sir Edward Lees?—No, I should not.

Why should you not?—If it could be ascertained by whom the frank was counterfeited

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and forged, I should then feel it my duty if I knew the person who did so, otherwise I would not; I should be merely satisfied with charging it.

Do not you think that if such a fraud as that was practised, it would be your duty to report it?—If it became a general principle; if it was renewed several times, it would require to be represented; but supposing only an odd instance took place, I might be satisfied with charging it, leaving it to the party to pay it.

You would not feel it your duty to report to Sir Edward Lees that there was some person who had attempted to forge his name?—If it was made a practice I should, certainly.

Have you ever had to charge a letter?—Frequently; I have charged several letters.

Because they were not directed by the person whose name they bore?—Yes.

Whose letters have you so charged?—Several members.

Have you had occasion to charge the letters bearing the names of any officers in the post-office upon them?—No.

Do the letters passing into England pass under your notice?—No.

Have you ever made any observation upon the manner in which the franking has taken place on the part of Mr. Connor or Mr. Mangin?—No; I never read the Act; I am not in possession of the Act; I act on the printed list sent to me of those that are privileged to pass letters and packets free of postage; that is the guide by which I go.

Does that list contain the names of persons who have the privilege of franking without dating, and those who are obliged to date?—It does.

If a person franks without dating when he ought to date, what do you do with such a letter?—If it is a member of parliament's letter of course it is charged.

What do you do if it is not a member of parliament's letter?—We are obliged to send it free.

Whether conformable to the Act of Parliament or not?—Yes.

You conceive yourself bound to do so under the order of Sir Edward Lees?—Yes; I could not exercise any discretion upon it.

Though they pass free, do you not feel it your duty, when they are franked inconsistently with the directions of the list you receive, to bring that under the notice of Sir Edward Lees?—He is well aware that several officers in the Castle do not comply with the Act; that they frank without dating; of course I could not attempt to charge them without his authority.

Did you bring that under his notice when you first observed it?—Certainly.

How long is that ago?—I cannot exactly say.

State as nearly as you can when it first came under your notice, and when you reported it; was it two or three years ago?—It must be more than that; they have been in the habit of doing it for a considerable time.

Did you observe it soon after you began to be employed in the capacity of inspector of franks?—As far as my recollection goes, I think the practice has taken place within the last three or four years.

Do you think that as much as about two or three years ago you brought it under his notice?—I think within the last three or four years.

Do you remember, when you brought it under his notice, whether he made any observation to you or not?—I do not recollect his making any observation to me; but I suppose there must have been, of course, some communication from the Castle to him, requesting they might be permitted so to send them, in consequence of the hurry of business.

Did he say that they were to go free notwithstanding, or was there any written order to that effect?—I suppose there must be an order in the inland office; but the order of the head of the inland office to send them free would be sufficient for me.

Is that order forthcoming?—I suppose it is; it is not in my custody.

Who has acted latterly as inspector of franks, since you have ceased to be so, regularly?—Several persons have filled the situation; there is one person who filled it, who is since dead; I think Mr. Mowlds has been more employed in it latterly.

This is the book by which you are bound?—[*The book being produced.*]—Yes.

In this book there do not appear Mr. Thomas Lees, or any of the clerks of roads; on what authority did you let their letters go free?—They had exercised that privilege before I came into the office; it was a mere courtesy or order of the postmasters-general; of course there is no Act of Parliament for their franking; they were never included in any list given to the inspector of franks or sent to any postmaster in the kingdom; it was a privilege given to them for their letters, supposed to be on the business of the roads; they were not supposed to be at liberty to frank a letter even on their own private concerns, but I believe they have.

By whom was the power supposed to be given?—By the postmasters-general; it was supposed to be for the purpose of their correspondence on the business of their newspapers.

There are persons of less consequence who are inserted in the list; the riding surveyors for instance?—That was by Act of Parliament.

Do you know whether it has been usual to keep any account of the franks that have gone to and come from each particular public office?—It has never.

Has that been kept lately?—I have been directed to make out an account of the letters and packages which have gone to or come from the offices.

How long have you kept that account?—Very nearly a fortnight. I believe, since the gentlemen

gentlemen from the English post-office have been here; I have furnished that account to Mr. Hume.

The clerks of roads have ceased to exercise that privilege within the last few days, have they not?—They have; they are allowed to send still, with their names, the small printed papers relative to the receipt of the subscriptions, but they frank no letters.

They are still permitted to send free all those papers which belong to their privilege of sending newspapers?—Yes; though they are not permitted to receive any letters free.

They used formerly to receive all letters free?—Yes.

And to send all letters free?—Yes; to send as many as they pleased; there was no restriction.

Was there any written order to you to charge those letters?—There was.

From whom?—From the secretary.

Have you that letter?—No; it was not addressed to me, but to the president of the inland office, from whom I received my direction.

Did you ever act as a sorter?—I did.

How long have you acted as a sorter?—I suppose, for about a year and a half after I first came into the office.

Have you at different times since acted as a sorter?—No; the establishment has been altered since I came into it; when I came in I came in only as a sorter; now numbers are appointed without being on the establishment at all.

You have not acted as a sorter under the present system?—No, I have not.

Did you ever act as a taxing clerk under the present establishment?—I have.

As a taxing clerk, do you recollect that the letters that came for any persons in the office came under your notice?—They have.

What did you do with them?—Sent them to them.

You did not charge them, but sent them to the person, whoever he might be, in the office?—Yes.

They never were brought to the account at all?—No; nor paid for.

That applied to every person in the office?—Yes, to every person.

From the highest to the lowest?—Yes, exactly so.

If the letters were large or small, would it equally have applied?—Just the same.

If a sealed packet had come for any one of them; the postage of which, if you had had to charge it, might have been a pound?—In fact they generally came charged, and we delivered them to those persons free; we did do so.

That has been lately stopped?—Yes, it has.

The operation of this practice destroyed completely the check that arose out of the bills sent from the country, did it not?—I should think it did, if the postmaster charged them, as he did, most likely, in the account.

If the taxing clerk took them out without carrying them to the account, of course that account could never check the account from the postmaster in the country?—The postage never was accounted for; but then they contrived to make it agree by adding the postage upon letters so taken to the country account, because there is a debtor and creditor account; and supposing they took so many letters for Dublin, and added the postage taken to the country letters, that would make the matter tally.

By charging so much more upon the country letters?—Yes.

That was the way that the postage of the clerk's letters was usually paid for?—That was the way that the taxing clerks closed their books.

Then the account tallied because the only check was the sum, and not the number of letters; and by overcharging the other letters they were made to agree?—Yes.

And that was the common practice?—Yes.

Did you do that as a taxing clerk?—I did.

How did you calculate the charges on the letters that you overcharged?—We kept an account of the number of letters, and then reckoned the amount of the postage that we re-charged, and that was included; there was a column for it in this sheet or book; we entered the exact amount that we made, and the advances on letters; each clerk gave his account every morning.

A letter to a clerk in the post-office was never paid, but it was necessary to make up the amount to tally with the account of the deputy postmaster sent up from the country?—Yes.

How was that managed; will you explain it?—The postmaster would say so many paid letters, and so many unpaid letters, from the country.

Supposing the charge of the deputy postmaster was 5*l.* for the letters he transmitted you, and that the letters for the clerks amounted to 1*l.*, how would that be made up?—They are not entered in the post-office account till the account is adjusted; all the bills from each bag are entered in a book; they would be adjusted before they were entered; we should alter the postmaster's entry to make it agree.

You would, in adjusting the postmaster's account, alter his entry, so that it should agree with the account in the post-office, after the letters belonging to the persons employed in the post-office had been taken out?—Yes.

That has been the usual practice?—It has.

Have you acted as a taxing clerk within this year or two?—Not since the year 1810, I think.

Have you any reason to believe that the same course has prevailed ever since?—I should suppose that it has; my belief is, that it has existed until very lately.

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It has lasted till within these two months?—I believe so.

The receiving of letters by the persons in the post-office free is not confined to single letters?—It is not.

You are quite sure that the practice has not been to carry the letters of the clerks to account, and then to deliver them free to the clerks afterwards?—They were always given to the different clerks free.

And not carried to account?—No.

Is the franking of game frequent?—I have seen parcels come up to different persons.

Is that frequent?—Till latterly it was the custom; they came up in the bags.

Would it extend to hares and things of that kind?—I have seen them.

To whom were they addressed?—To the secretary, and to his brother, Mr. Thomas Lees.

So that there would be more than one parcel in the day, or as often in the season as game; every day, do you suppose?—I cannot say, indeed; but they came pretty frequently.

R. B. WEST.

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### Appendix, No. 136.

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Mr. NEVILL M'GOWAN called in and examined.

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Mr

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YOU have been sent here by Sir Edward Lees, have you not?—Yes.

What directions did he give you when he sent you?—His directions were written, that I should wait upon the Commissioners of Inquiry.

For what purpose?—I do not know that.

Did he send you here for no purpose?—He did not specify to me any purpose for which I was to come.

What office do you hold in the post-office?—I am of a particular class they call taxing clerks in the post-office.

Your duty is to put the charge on the letters, is it not?—It is.

When you are doing that, what is your practice about your own letters, and the letters of the clerks, if any of them come into your hands?—We have been in the habit of giving them to the persons in our office to whom they are directed.

Do you continue to do so?—No.

How long have you ceased?—Not more than, perhaps, two or three weeks.

Up to that time you continued the habit of giving them to the persons to whom they were directed?—We gave them; but it was not our continual habit to seek out those persons to give them to, but if they were near to us we handed them to them, if not we let them go into the alphabet.

If a letter came to yourself, you would take it?—If a letter came to me I should do so, but I have not a recollection of one coming.

That applied to double as well as single?—Yes.

If a packet of that size [*containing five or six sheets*] came, would you do so?—No; I have sent such into the alphabet myself; there is a written minute from the postmasters-general that entitles the clerks in the post-office, whose business it is to dispatch and prepare letters, to receive them free; certainly the orderly way is to let them go into the alphabet; in some cases they have not, but they have been handed to them; but as to packets, I have sent such myself to the alphabet, and I believe that a great many others have done the same.

Up to the last order, which was two or three weeks ago, the usual practice was that which you have stated?—Indeed, I think the usual practice was to send them into the alphabet.

Before that time?—Yes; I think that was the regular way, and the greater proportion went to the alphabet; but very many of them, no doubt, were handed immediately to the persons to whom they were directed.

At what period was it that none of them went to the alphabet, that they were habitually taken by the clerks, and handed to each other?—I do not know of any time when that was the case; they have always gone to the alphabet, or ought to go.

You do not mean that any of them went to the alphabet above a year ago, do you?—Always; from the day I entered the post-office, until a fortnight since, the order was, that letters directed to the clerks should be sent to the alphabet; and they have been always done so, but certainly with deviations.

Do you mean to state that the practice has always subsisted of sending those letters for the clerks to the alphabet?—Yes; where they were received, and received free.

Do you know what the date of the order for that being done is?—No, I do not; the only order that I know of in existence about the thing at all, is a minute, I believe, to exist,

by the postmaster-general, allowing the clerks to receive their order-letters free; but I never saw that minute.

Were you on duty in the office on the 8th of March last?—I have not a recollection of the exact date, but I presume I was; it was the evening, I believe, when the English packet arrived at a particular hour, seven o'clock; I recollect a night on which such a thing occurred, but the date I do not remember.

What makes you remember it?—Because it was a thing that would naturally remain in my mind; the circumstance of the packet having arrived just at the hour, and the doubt for five or ten minutes whether it would go forward or not.

Did you hear any dispute upon that?—No, not at the time.

In what part of the office were you?—I was standing at my own situation, taxing the letters on the Galway road.

Was that near the door of the British-mail office?—No; it is not very far from it; about the distance from where I am now sitting to the chimney-piece.

Did you hear any altercation going on between any persons in the course of that evening?—No, none.

Do you know any thing of the transactions of that evening yourself?—I have no personal knowledge.

Nothing but what you have heard since?—Nothing further than I have heard since.

Were you acting as a taxing clerk that night?—I was.

Have you any thing to do with the newspapers when you are in the character of a taxing clerk?—Not much; it is my duty to assist in forwarding them.

Do you recollect at what time the newspapers of the clerks of the roads came into the office that night?—No, I have no recollection of when they came in, but I believe, from what I have heard, that they came in late.

You have no knowledge of the going out of the mail that night?—I have a knowledge that the mails were late that night; I believe it was from having heard it spoken of, for the circumstance of the mails going late is not very likely to remain in our minds, as it sometimes does happen.

Do you know any thing about Mr. Homan, or the subject of dispute between him and Mr. Leet or Sir Edward Lees?—No; I have not the slightest opportunity of knowing any thing; every thing I know is in the first place very vague, and in the next place not authentic; I know nothing from myself.

NEVILL M'GOWAN.

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Mr. GEORGE FREDERICK MOWLDS called in and examined.

YOU are one of the Taxing Clerks in the post-office?—I am.

How long have you been in that situation?—I suppose, twelve or thirteen years.

What is your duty?—To tax the Irish letters and throw them forward, and to make up the mails in the evening.

You are not appropriated to any particular road, are you?—No.

In taxing the letters, if you come to any letters of your own, or those belonging to the office, what do you do with them?—If I saw a letter of my own I would take it.

If it was for any of your neighbours in the post-office you would equally take it and throw it to them, would you not?—I would.

Has that been always the practice?—Until latterly.

How long ago has it been changed?—There was an order about eight or nine months ago; I am not exact as to the date.

What has been the alteration which has taken place?—There was an order from Mr. Lees that all the clerks should pay for their letters; in consequence of that order I sent them to the alphabet, and my letters were frequently sent to the alphabet.

Then the letters were paid for, and the money returned again to the clerks?—If Mr. Lees found that they were letters for the clerks on business, by applying to Mr. Lees, he would give an order that the postage should be returned; but any letters that came that were not on my own private business, I always paid the postage, and never applied for the money; in one or two instances I did apply and got it back, but not more.

Is that now general?—I believe it is general.

Now you all pay for your letters?—We all pay for our letters.

You do not pay for them if they are single letters?—I do; I have paid for three single letters this week.

How long is it since you have paid for single letters?—I have paid for three single letters this week.

How long has the paying for single letters been the practice?—I believe the practice has been five or six months; we paid for single letters, and the postage was returned in case it

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went into the alphabet; there was an order came from the secretary that all letters belonging to the clerks in the office should be sent to the alphabet, and if it appeared that they were single letters, and for the clerks, Mr. Lees wrote upon the back of them, "the postage to be allowed," and we took them down to the alphabet and got the postage returned.

How came you to pay for three single letters after that order?—There was an order made a short time ago that we should all pay for our single letters.

When was that order made?—The last week.

And you do not expect to have the postage returned?—I do; I am told I shall get it back.

Before this last alteration, were they sent to the alphabet?—I believe not; I believe the clerks got their letters.

The clerks just took their letters as they did before, did they?—I believe they did.

If they did take the letters as they did before, was there any check upon them?—I apprehend they would not dare to take them after Mr. Lees's order.

How is the money to be returned?—I have not got it back, but I understand that by applying to Mr. Lees, and bringing the letter to him, it will be allowed.

Then what is the difference between that and the former practice?—There is no difference.

Then what was the object of the order about a week ago?—The first order that came down was, that all the letters should be sent to the alphabet office, with the exception of the single letters; the second order was that all letters should go there.

Since that order nine months ago have you been in the habit of taxing the letters?—Yes.

Do you pursue the old practice, or send the letters to the alphabet?—I always send them to the alphabet.

You never take your own letters or those of the other clerks?—I never did; my letters were all at the Belfast road, and I was at the Limerick road; they were always sent in by the clerk of that road to the alphabet.

Till about nine months ago the practice was otherwise, that you just took your letters, and took those of your friends, and delivered them to the persons in the office?—Yes, it was always the practice ever since I came into the office.

When that was the practice, how were the accounts of the receipts of the post-office, and the accounts sent in by the deputy postmasters from the country, made to tally?—When I was the clerk that made up the sheet, the way I did it was this; there is a place for takings off; there is the word "off;" I used to deduct that postage of the clerks, and say, "off so much;" there are several letters that come up for the Castle charged, and the clerks say 2s. 2d. off, and 3s. 4d., and so on; and when that was done I used to put down the sum of those letters, and say, "off so much," which made the sheet balance.

You have been inspector of franks, have you not?—I have, frequently.

There is no regular appointment of inspector of franks?—No.

The senior officer in the inland office deposes a person to be inspector, does he not?—The senior clerk on duty is the inspector of franks; when any officer senior to me is on duty he is inspector.

Were you ever present at a meeting in which a string of resolutions was drawn up, bearing in some degree on Mr. Leet?—Yes, I was; I was suspended for it; dismissed, I believe.

Are you in the office now?—Yes; but I was dismissed or suspended at that time.

When was that meeting held?—It is upwards of a year ago.

Who were present at it?—There was Mr. John O'Neill, Mr. Walpole, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Shiells, and a great many others.

Were they all clerks in the inland office?—They were all but one, that was Mr. Shiells.

Did the meeting include all the persons who were clerks in the inland office?—No, they were not all present.

What was the object of the meeting?—The object of the meeting was in consequence of Mr. Leet turning young Purse out of the office.

Why had he turned him out?—Purse was looking over the free letters, and he desired him not to look over the free letters, and they had some dispute, and he turned him out.

The clerks got together and held a meeting?—Yes.

They drew up a string of resolutions?—They drew up some resolutions; I do not remember them.

Do not you remember what they were?—No.

Were they put into writing?—They were.

Did you sign them as chairman?—I did.

Did the rest of the clerks sign them?—They did not.

Did you present the resolutions to Mr. Leet?—I sent them to Sir Edward Lees.

What might have been the purport of the resolutions?—I cannot remember.

What did they mean?—Indeed I cannot say.

Did they praise him or find fault with him?—They found fault with his conduct, saying it was highly reprehensible, or something of that kind, in having turned him out of the office.

Are you sure it was confined to the having turned Mr. Purse out of the office?—I think it was; I know it was; I regret it exceedingly that I have not a copy of those resolutions by me, for I tore the copy of the thing itself the other day.

What



What induced you to tear it?—I was taking some papers out of a press I have, and I tore this among a parcel of waste papers I had.

Did you think it was likely you should be asked for it by the Commissioners?—Indeed I did not; I did not think it likely the Commissioners would have me before them at all.

Was any other person suspended but yourself for holding that meeting?—No.

Were you the person who drew the resolutions?—No.

Nor were you the person who moved them in the meeting?—I was not.

How long did you continue suspended?—I was nearly three months suspended.

Was your pay stopped during the time you were suspended?—There was a guinea a week stopped.

Then you were ultimately restored?—I was restored on waiting on Lord Rosse, and stating I had been three and twenty years in the post-office; and he thought it a severe measure dismissing me.

GEO. F. MOWLDS.

Examinations.

No. 137.

Mr.

George F. Mowlds.  
3d Sept. 1823.

Appendix, No. 138.

8th September 1823.

Mr. GEORGE FREDERICK MOWLDS again called in and examined.

HAVE you ever performed the duty of a sorter?—I have.

Have you ever performed that of a taxing clerk?—I have.

Have you ever performed that of a bag-opener?—Frequently; I have gone through all the gradations in the office.

When you acted as a bag-opener, and any correspondence, either to you or to any of the clerks in the office, came under your notice, did not you select them and put them away, and give them to them?—I always did.

That was the common practice?—That was the practice of every one in the office; I have not been a bag-opener for thirteen or fourteen years; I am a taxing clerk.

What proportion of letters were taken out in that way of those that were intended for the clerks; the greatest proportion of them, or not?—I should apprehend there were never more than one or two that came within my knowledge in a day; for instance, this morning I have not seen one in the general routine of the road I was attached to; I never saw more than one or two letters directed to the clerks.

When you were bag-opener, used not you to have many more letters directed to the clerks than one or two?—Upon my oath I did not.

Not for the clerks in the whole office?—No; the bags are divided into divisions, and I had only an eighth part, or perhaps a sixth part of the road.

In short, those which were either for yourself or the clerks in the office were taken out?—Always.

That was before the letters went to the taxing officers?—When I was a bag-opener it was; I never sent them to the taxing clerk.

When the taxing clerk came to look over the letters, if he found any for himself, or any of the persons in the office, he also took them out?—Always.

And the sorters did the same?—The sorters did the same, and the stampers did the same; it was the general practice.

When they saw letters of that kind they all took them out?—Yes, they all of them took them or sent them to them.

How long has that practice ceased?—I think eight or nine months.

What do they do with the letters now?—They send them into the alphabet.

Do you mean that that regulation has been complied with?—Indeed I do.

Strictly?—Indeed I comply with it most strictly; every letter that comes within my sight directed to any of the clerks that have not the privilege of receiving them free, I tax them, and send them into the alphabet with the rest of the letters.

What new regulation has taken place within the last three weeks?—The regulation within the last three weeks is, that all letters are to go into the alphabet, single and double.

Do you mean that within the last six months you have sent any there but the double letters?—Any single letter I saw I would not send it to the alphabet.

You have not done it for the last nine months?—No.

Would you do it now?—Certainly.

Are not you a professional man?—I am.

Have you been long a professional man?—I believe it is thirteen years since I was sworn; I believe it was in the summer of 1810 I was sworn an attorney.

Was that before or after you went into the post-office?—I went into the post-office in February 1800.

Have you any partner?—No, I have no partner.

Are you in the habit of attending the courts?—Yes, I do attend the courts.

Examinations.

No. 138.

Mr.

*George F. Mowlds.*  
8th Sept. 1823.

Are you in the habit of doing the business of your office yourself?—I do.  
 Do not you find that that interferes with your duties in the post-office?—Not a bit.  
 How do you manage to prevent that?—I get away from the post-office about eight in the morning, and I do not go there again till a little after five.  
 The rest of the day is employed in your office?—Either employed in the office or any thing I have to do.  
 Are you in considerable employment as an attorney?—I am not.  
 Have you much correspondence in the country as an attorney?—I have not.  
 Is your practice confined to Dublin?—It is confined to Dublin; I am a Dublin man.  
 Where is your office?—No. 2, North Cumberland-street, where I have my house.  
 You have not occasion for much correspondence in the country?—Whenever I have occasion to correspond, I write them at my own house, and have them directed to my own house, North Cumberland-street; the general routine of business is, if any one employs an attorney he writes a letter to him, and directs it from his own house, and gets his answer back again; and if it is answered, the postage of that letter I charge to my client.  
 Do you mean, that any letters that came to you from any of your clients, directed to you, if you saw them in turning over the letters, you should not avail yourself of your privilege to take?—Not if they were directed to my house.  
 What is there to prevent you but your own sense of propriety?—I conceive it would be very improper, and under that impression I would not do it.  
 Is there any official check that would prevent you doing it?—There is no check, unless the letter would be a double letter; and if it were a double letter or a post-paid letter it would be entered on the docket which came up with the bag, so that I could not take it; there is a docket comes up from the post-office, and if it was a post-paid letter it would be entered on the back; that I could not take; or if it was a double letter, directed from the country, it would be entered on a piece of paper, a docket which the postmaster sends up of the double letters; it would be checked off by the clerk, so that I could not get it; it must be sent out by the letter-carriers.  
 Are those slips separate from the daily bill that the postmaster sends up?—It is the daily bill that he sends up.  
 Is it the daily bill which contains this list?—It is a slip he sends up accompanying it; those dockets are sent up to the secretary's office, and entered.  
 When letters are taken out by the bag-opener, and delivered to the clerks, how is the account in the office made to meet the account that is contained in the bill sent up by the postmaster?—It is made by taking off franked letters, and the letters that ought to be charged, and those are added.  
 Then the letters must come under the eye of the taxing clerk; he makes out this bill, does not he?—No; it is the next clerk to the taxing clerk.  
 How does he know how much to take off?—The clerk who opens the bag, when he has finished opening the bag, states what he has taken off; there are a number that must be taken off; the English franks, and so on, that are obliged to be taken off; there are also money letters that he gives a memorandum of; he tells the taxing clerk to take this from the amount; the clerk of the money book enters them in the book, and the clerk that opens the bag states the amount of the postage to be taken off to make the account tally.  
 He falsifies that account for the purpose of making it meet, does he not?—Not as to the money letters, but as to the letters to the clerks; certainly it is taking off a sum of money; it is not accounted for.

GEORGE FREDERICK MOWLDS.

## Appendix, No. 139.

8th September 1823.

Mr. WILLIAM CULLEN called in and examined.

No. 139.  
*Mr. William Cullen.*  
8th Sept. 1823.

YOU hold the rank in the establishment of the post-office of Taxing Clerk, do you not?—I do.  
 How long have you been a taxing clerk?—On the 5th of July was the first quarter that I received that rate of salary.  
 How long have you been in the office?—I was appointed, I think, in 1807.  
 Were you appointed by Lord Clancarty?—I was.  
 Of course you have performed all the duties, at different times, of sorter and taxing clerk and bag-opener?—I have.  
 What has been the practice with respect to opening the bags, up to a certain period, with reference to the letters of the individuals who opened the bags, and the other persons in the office?—For a considerable period past, before I got on the establishment as taxing clerk, I acted as such in the office, and at that period it was not usual for the taxing clerk to open bags.  
 When you acted as opener of bags, what was then the practice?—It is a long time ago since I opened the bags; but it certainly was the practice in the office, a good deal, either

either to hand the letters to the individuals, or that they were sent into the alphabet; it certainly was the practice, if they happened to be there, to hand them to them; but certainly that practice has for a considerable period, so far as relates to my knowledge, been done away, prohibited, and for three or four years I do not know that I have opened any bags, unless it was accidentally, for I was clerk of the money-bill.

What is that?—All letters coming up from the country entered by the deputy postmasters as money letters, were entered in a bill.

Do you know that that practice has ceased till within a very short period?—I certainly know that it has ceased; I know that for a considerable period past—I speak before I heard any thing of a commission being about to issue for any inquiry—I should suppose two years.

Has it ceased more than seven or eight months?—There was a check put to it two years ago; but within these few months a letter has issued from the Castle, quoting part of an Act of Parliament, and I knew it was my duty to let them go on to the alphabet.

This applies to double letters, letters with inclosures?—Yes, it does.

The single letters you have had up to within the last three weeks, have you not?—Yes; I understood the officers were allowed to receive any letters.

When you have acted as taxing clerk, how have you conducted yourself with reference to the letters coming under your hand, previously to the letter from the Castle, and since the letter from the Castle, up to the last order you received from the post-office?—It had been checked considerably before that last order. I do not know that I saw any order. I saw an extract from an Act of Parliament that was given there previously to that; I cannot say that I ever saw the order, it was generally promulgated in the office.

Do you recollect what the order was?—As well as I can recollect, it was an order sent down, that it was supposed that persons in the office were in the habit of receiving letters or inclosures. I know that at one period they were in the habit of receiving letters.

Are you in any profession?—I am.

In what profession?—I am an attorney.

Is it a firm, or do you carry on the business yourself?—I am in partnership.

Then the active duties of the office, such as attending the courts, probably are done chiefly by your partner?—In term it is to a considerable extent, as well as by myself; in the office we employ clerks.

You do not find that that interferes with your duty in the post-office?—Not by any means.

Is your employment in Dublin or in the country?—In Dublin entirely.

You have very little external correspondence?—Very little.

Has that correspondence you have had externally gone at all through the post-office?—Any professional letters I ever write are invariably written from the office.

Are all letters on professional business directed to the office?—Invariably.

Supposing a letter comes directed to your office, but directed to you, would the bag-opener deliver it to you, or send it in the common course of other letters to go to your office?—It is impossible for me to say; but I have no recollection of an instance of the kind having occurred of a letter directed to my office being handed to me; in fact, very few of our clients know that I hold any situation, and I never correspond with them in relation to the post-office; we charge the postage of letters to them.

When letters are directed either to the person who happens to be opening the bags, or to the taxing officer, and directed to them at their houses in Dublin, are they taken out in the same way as letters directed to them at the post-office?—I scarcely know an instance where I have seen letters for any person in the post-office directed to them but at the post-office.

Up to the last week, if you had chosen to have all your letters of the firm directed to you at the post-office, was there any thing to have prevented it?—I certainly would not have received them myself; and I have paid for private letters directed to myself at the alphabet, at a period more remote than that.

The question refers to the practice of the office, and not the mind of the individual?—I am sure I could not.

What could have prevented you?—I do not believe a person there would have given them; there was a degree of particularity observed; if I had seen a letter directed to a firm I would not have given it.

The question supposes the letters to be directed to the individual; was there any thing to have prevented your receiving them free?—Latterly, I am confident I could not.

Up to the time that the order was given from the Castle, about a twelvemonth ago?—Up to that period, about a twelvemonth, it would in a great measure depend on circumstances; it would depend in a great measure on the feeling of the party.

Was there any thing in the regulations of the office that would have prevented it?—If it had been done, the management of it must have been confined to the persons opening the bags, and so on; I conceive it would be impossible to prevent it if they were inclined to do it.

W. CULLEN.

Examinations.

No. 139.

Mr. William Cullen.  
8th Sept. 1823.

## Examinations.

No. 140.  
Mr. Robert Maley.  
8th Sept. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 140.

8th September 1823.

Mr. ROBERT MALEY called in and examined.

YOU are a Senior Sorter?—I am.

Do you sometimes tax letters?—Yes; I am not a taxing clerk on the establishment, but I tax letters.

When you are taxing letters, supposing any letter was directed either to yourself or to any persons in the office, what do you do with it?—If it is directed to myself I take it; if it was to another person, provided there was not an inclosure to another, I should give it him; that has been the custom, but not latterly; at present it is not.

How long has it not been the case; within the last fortnight?—It is an old standing order; longer than that; sometimes they go into the alphabet; if I saw a letter with an inclosure, I would not give it him; but if it was a letter *bonâ fide* to him, I would give it him.

That is optional with the clerk?—Yes.

But his own correspondence he puts into his own pocket?—Just so.

And you have done as the rest have done?—Yes, when I have seen letters.

Are you in any profession or business?—I am serving my time to an attorney.

What attorney?—A younger brother.

Has the business correspondence of the office been sent under cover to you?—No; in two or three instances it has; but I desired my brother on no account to direct any correspondence of his under cover to me.

How long is it since you gave him that direction?—Before I was apprentice to him; he receives his correspondence by the letter-carrier, and he pays his postage; in a few instances it has occurred that I have received some of his correspondence.

Before that time, did his correspondence usually come under cover to you?—Only in a few instances; it is only three years that he has been an attorney, and I have been only since last Easter term twelvemonth serving my time with him; I sent a letter for him free once, and it returned with 4s. 9d. postage upon it; the cover had been taken off in the country; I could ascertain all the letters I have received for him.

Is it the practice, or has it ever been the practice in the office, to take off the covers of letters that appeared to contain inclosures; if you sent a letter directed to a person with a sealed letter within it, obviously containing an inclosure which might probably not be for himself, would any body in the office open that?—I never have opened any other person's letters.

Is there any officer in the office that takes upon himself to open letters directed to another person?—No; one might give directions to another to open his letters.

Suppose in sorting your letters you were to find a packet directed to one of the clerks, and upon feeling the packet it was quite obvious there were a number of sealed letters in it, and you did not give it him, but it went to the alphabet; would any one venture to open that letter?—No; only the person to whom it was directed.

Did you ever know an instance of a letter being opened by any one in the office with a view of charging the letters in the inside?—No; but I have heard about seven years ago—I think Mr. Leet was put into the alphabet as comptroller, and he made representations to the postmasters-general on the subject of the abuse of persons receiving inclosures; I never heard whether there was any direction to have them opened and charged.

Did you ever know an instance of a letter being opened and charged because there was an inclosure of it?—I have known persons in the office who have received letters, and they have opened the outside covers and charged the inclosures, and sent them out.

You never knew them open them except when directed to themselves?—No; I do not suppose any man who was sworn in the office would attempt to open a letter, except to himself.

Do you still continue to take any letters which come for you, and which come in your way when you are sorting?—If a letter came to me that was a single one, I would take it.

It must depend upon yourself whether you chose to take a double letter directed to yourself or not, must it not?—Yes.

And whether you chose to take a double one directed to another?—Yes; there was an order of Lord Rosse directing that the clerks should receive their own letters free, or any of their immediate family: I heard that promulgated in the office.

What is your attendance in the office?—From six in the morning till eight, or until the letter-carriers are discharged, or about going out; and from a quarter past five in the evening until the mails are ready to start.

What is your attendance either in your brother's office or in the courts?—I do not attend there at all; I read some law books. My motive in going apprentice to him was, a Treasury letter, a year and a half or two years ago, stating that there would no more promotion take place in the offices for some time, and suspending all increase of salary. I had but 80*l.* a year at that time, and I went apprentice in consequence; last January I got an increase of 45*l.* a year.

R. MALEY.

## Appendix, No. 141.

Examinations:

No. 141.

Mr. Thomas Fisher.  
3d Sept. 1823.

3d September 1823.

Mr. THOMAS FISHER called in and examined.

YOU are a Junior Sorter in the post-office, are you not?—I think I am a senior sorter on the establishment.

How long have you been in the office?—Going on sixteen years.

Does your duty begin before or after that of the taxing clerks?—Though I am a senior sorter on the establishment, I do the duty generally of a taxing clerk in the inland office.

Does the duty of the taxing clerks precede that of the sorters?—No, after they are sorted.

Did you ever do duty as a sorter?—I have.

How long ago did you do duty as a sorter?—I dare say about seven years since, I did duty as a regular sorter; I have sorted occasionally since that.

When you were sorting the letters as a sorter, whether occasionally or otherwise, and you found any letters of your own, or any letters directed to any other clerks in the office, what did you do with them?—If the person was near me I gave him the letter that was directed to him; or if I met with one of my own, I would take it. I beg to say that until latterly that has been the case; until some few months ago.

How long ago has it ceased to be the practice?—Some months.

How many months?—It has been so generally done for these last six months, I dare say.

Is it about that time?—Yes, about that time.

Before that it was the usual and common practice of the office?—Yes.

Did you do that as a sorter or a taxing clerk, or both?—Indeed, as both.

Then it was only those that were not thrown out by the sorters that came to the taxing clerks?—Yes.

If a taxing-clerk found any letters of his, or of those in the office, he took them out?—The bag-opener sends the letters to the taxing clerk, the person who stamps the letters sends them; this is the morning duty. The taxing clerk hands them to the stamper, he takes the custom-house and alphabet letters out of the general letters for Dublin; it might occur that I would not do it if a person was not near me; I would not give it him.

The first person who was sorting out did it?—The bag-opener might do it, or the taxing clerk might do it, or the sorters might do it.

In short, any person who found the letters did it?—Yes.

Whether they were single letters or double letters, or packets?—Single or double is the same.

What has been your practice for the last six months?—The letters were sent into the alphabet; I dare say the last six months I have given some, and others I have sent into the alphabet; there was an allowance to men receiving letters on their own private business, or business of their own family, and if I could see that a letter was such, I would give it.

How could you see that?—If I saw that a letter contained an inclosure, and that it was not a sealed inclosure, I would give it; and if I saw a letter that was, I would say it was against the order, and request that the person would not get into that situation again.

Those letters that appeared to be for their families you continued to give as you had done before?—Yes, or their own private business.

Who was the person into whose hands they first came?—The bag-opener; from him they went to the taxing clerk, and from thence to the stamper.

The taxing clerk was the first who looked them over?—Yes.

If the stamper found any letters of the same kind, he took them out, probably?—I dare say he did.

And the sorter the same?—Yes, I have no doubt of it.

Then it is probable that not many went to the alphabet?—Yes, many went to the alphabet if the person was not near.

If he was not on duty, or out of the office, it went forward?—Yes; sometimes there was a feeling that we did not choose to give it; then it went forward.

Then it was considered as matter of favour?—There are some persons that one would not speak to, or was not on terms with, then it went forward, but the sorter might give it.

When you take out those letters and give them to the clerks, how do you make the account of the receipt of the post-office and the bill sent up by the deputy postmasters tally?—That is not the duty of the taxing clerk in general; but there are advances made upon letters charged too little, and those advances are charged; in fact, the balance was generally struck on the sheets, for it was an immaterial thing; it was considered that it did not affect the revenue one way or another with respect to those sheets in the office.

Did it not affect the revenue?—I do not think it did at all.

Those letters put into the pocket of the clerk could never be carried into the account?—No, certainly not.

When you took those letters, or gave them to the clerks near you, how did you contrive to make the bill of the postmaster and the receipt in the post-office tally?—I dare say it was added in the general taking off of the morning.

## Examinations.

No. 141.  
Mr.  
Thomas Fisher.  
3d Sept. 1823.

Was that the business of the taxing clerk?—The person who opened the bag seeing a free letter charged by the postmaster might strike it off and send it to the free table; then he would tell the taxing clerk to take off so much; the taxing clerk reduced the charge on letters, which was takings-off.

Your practice was first to take the letters, and then, that it might tally, to falsify the account?—Yes, it was.

THOMAS FISHER.

Appendix, No. 142.

8th September 1823.

Mr. HENRY LEAHY called in and examined.

No. 142.  
Mr.  
Henry Leahy.  
8th Sept. 1823.

YOU are a Clerk in the post-office, are not you?—Yes.

What is your rank in the establishment?—I am a sorter of letters.

A senior or a junior sorter?—A junior sorter; I have been only two years and a half last quarter on the establishment.

You have been in the habit of performing your duties in the office as a sorter?—I have.

Have you ever performed any duties as a taxing officer?—I have.

You all indifferently perform your duties, sometimes as taxing officers, sometimes as sorters?—Yes, indeed, except the very juniors in the office.

Have you ever acted as a bag-opener?—I have; it is my common duty.

As a bag-opener what did you do with your own letters, and the letters of the other clerks; did you take them out and deliver them to them?—They were generally taken out and put by on the division of the road where the bags were opened, and they were either given to them, or they came for them and took them away.

That you did as a bag-opener?—Yes.

When letters for yourself or other clerks came before you as a taxing officer, did you do the same; did you take them out and give them to the persons for whom they were directed?—Indeed it was commonly done.

Is it done now?—No, it is not.

When did the alteration take place?—The practice has not been long.

Has it been a fortnight?—Yes, I take it, at least so far as I am concerned myself; I would not have given the letters four or five months ago, that is, I would not have given a double letter.

Do you mean that the bag-openers at this moment do not give letters, and that they have not done it up to within this fortnight or three weeks?—I rather believe not; I know, myself, I was obliged to pay for a single letter from a brother of mine who is in Guernsey, and I sent to Mr. Thomas Lees about it, and he would not allow it.

How long ago is that?—Five or six days.

How long has that been the case?—I do not think the regulation was strictly observed until lately with respect to letters belonging to the officers.

What power have you of sending your own letters free?—The power was to put the name of the person on the corner of the letter, and send it up to Sir Edward Lees to frank.

Did he frank those letters always?—He did commonly.

Whether they were double or single?—Yes.

That has ceased, has it not?—I have understood so, but I have not tried it latterly.

Do you hold any other situation besides that in the post-office?—I do.

What is that?—I am in the profession of an attorney.

Are you yourself an acting professional man?—I am.

How does that consist with your duties in the post-office?—The post-office duty can be attended without interfering with my profession; the attendance is from six in the morning till about half-past seven, and from a quarter after five in the evening until eight; at other hours we have nothing to do.

Are you in the habit as an attorney of attending the courts?—I am.

Do not you find one attendance interfere with the other?—It might sometimes interfere.

You have business also to prepare for the courts?—Yes; but I have not been long a practising attorney; particularly in the summer season it does not interfere.

When you have acted as a bag-opener, you of course took your own correspondence?—That was the case.

Whether they were double or single?—Yes.

You did that both for yourself and for the other clerks?—Yes.

Did your professional correspondence come to you in the same way?—No; there might be an instance; but the common way of our receiving our correspondence is directed to our office. I am in partnership with the gentleman I served my time to, Mr. Mahon. I have received perhaps at different times papers, but I never received, to the best of my recollection, any letters with papers inclosed to the firm that I am connected with.

You are quite sure that the professional letters, or a proportion of the professional letters of the firm with which you are connected, never came under your privilege?—No.

Nor were sent under the privilege of the secretary?—No.

If you had chosen to carry on the whole correspondence of your office under that privilege, was there any thing in the world to have prevented you?—Not any thing; the correspondence we receive are generally single letters.

There was nothing to prevent your receiving them through the office, but it was your own forbearance?—No; we receive very few letters; not that I conceive that it would be out of the course of the gentlemen of the office to receive them.

Do you know that other gentlemen in the office have been in the habit of receiving correspondence connected with other business?—That I do not know; if they received inclosures, and they took the letters, I could not know what the nature of those inclosures was.

Those gentlemen who had no privilege of franking?—No privilege of franking.

You mean that you did not receive single letters on business?—No; there might be a solitary case, but I am satisfied it did not exceed that.

HENRY LEAHY.

Examinations.

No. 142.

Mr. Henry Leahy.  
8th Sept. 1823.

### Appendix, No. 144.

23d September 1823.

Mr. ROBERT HUGH HENRY called in and examined.

IN addition to your situation of a probationer in the inland office, you hold the situation of clerk to Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, in their dealings with respect to newspapers?—I do.

Do you keep their accounts?—Part of them I do.

What part of them do you keep, and what part do you not keep?—The sums received from the correspondents, and the time that the subscriptions may be out when the times expire.

Do you keep a list of the subscribers?—Yes, I do.

What are those which you do not keep?—The quarterly account is generally made up by Mr. Leet; the accounts of the emoluments and profits I assist him in making up, though they are not particularly under me.

Do they remain in your possession after they are made up?—No; Mr. Leet has the key; I have access to them when I wish by asking Mr. Leet for the key.

The books are not in your possession?—No, not that particular book; but the other books are.

That particular book states the emoluments derived from that business?—It does.

What is the title of that book?—There is no title that I know of; the quarterly account book, or something of that nature.

Are those accounts made up quarterly?—They are.

Is the settlement made with the persons having a claim upon that fund quarterly?—Yes.

The whole business now of the clerks of the roads, and all their emoluments arising out of the British papers, go into a common fund?—Yes.

And all the business is done by Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—Yes, assisted by me.

Who shares in the emoluments of the British papers?—Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, Sir Edward Lees, Mr. Thomas Lees, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Donlevy; that is, the clerks of the roads and the clerks of the express papers.

How long have you been concerned in keeping the accounts of Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—Since March twelvemonth, I believe.

What do you receive for so doing?—I have received 50*l.* a year for the last quarter.

What is your agreement?—Fifty pounds a year.

In what way are the accounts kept; are they accounts as arising out of the distribution of each paper and each periodical publication, or are they kept as arising out of the papers generally and the periodical publications generally?—In the newspaper account we write the name of the individual and the paper sent, the sum paid for that paper, and the sum received for it; then, by adding up the column of sums paid and sums received, we deduct the sum paid out of that received, and the remainder is profit; the periodicals are put down, so many copies of each work, and added up in the same way, the sum paid and the sum received.

Then there is an account kept on each newspaper and on each periodical?—Yes; so as to tell the entire profit derived from the business.

Will you state, in the instance of any one of the English newspapers, what is the expense paid, and what is the charge for the supply of that newspaper?—For a daily paper 9*l.* British is paid; and the sum charged is in some instances, indeed the major part of them, ten guineas a year, or 11*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* Irish; there are some in Dublin delivered at 10*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* Irish, that is 10*s.* a year less than ten guineas.

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Do

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No. 144.

*Mr. R. H. Henry.*  
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Do you mean that there is no more profit than the 1*l.* 10*s.* on each paper?—That is all. I think there is some allowance, a per-centage on that 9*l.*; we do not get any of the papers from the editors, but from Mr. Austin, the clerk of a road in the English post-office; he is clerk of the Chester road, I think.

Mr. Austin makes an allowance?—Yes, I think of five per cent. on the 9*l.*; the express papers, I should state, pay more than that.

What is paid for the papers?—Nine pounds.

The papers are brought free from England under the privilege of the English clerk of the roads?—Yes.

And they are delivered free through Ireland under the privilege of the Irish clerks of the roads?—Yes, they are.

One pound ten shillings is the clear profit on each paper?—Yes, on those for the country.

What is the number of the subscribers to the clerks of the roads papers?—I have not an idea of that.

What account do you keep?—I never reckon the number of papers; the account I keep is of the termination of subscriptions.

If you keep an account of the subscriptions, you must know the number there are?—I have not the slightest idea of what the number is.

They are constantly under your eye?—Yes, but I never counted the number; it was not part of my business to do so, and I have not had the curiosity to do it.

Can you state the quarterly profit?—I cannot speak precisely, but I think somewhere about 300*l.* the entire profit.

Of the quarter?—Yes.

Are you sure it was not more?—No, I am not certain whether it was more or less; the making up of that particular account is not my business.

What is your particular business?—I attend to the correspondence when a subscription is to be renewed; if it is wished I could ascertain the amount.

Do you mean to state that, having those books before your eyes, and being engaged in making up the quarterly account with Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, you have never looked at what the amount of the profit was?—I certainly may have looked; I think it was about 300*l.*; but the way in which I am employed is calculating the profit on each particular paper. Mr. Leet adds up both columns and strikes the balance.

But you have seen it after it has been struck?—Yes, I have.

How long have you been in that situation?—Since March twelvemonth.

Who was in it before that?—No one; no one acted as clerk to them before me.

You were taken into this situation probably at the time that they extended their business, and began to publish the advertisement prefixed to the calendar?—At the time that the clerks of the roads joined with the express clerks in the privilege.

The profit on the newspapers was about 300*l.* a quarter?—On the newspapers and the periodicals; I cannot state what the profit on the newspapers strictly has been; I think the whole was about 300*l.*

You, of course, keep separate accounts of the periodicals and the newspapers?—I think the profit on the periodicals last quarter was ninety or a hundred pounds, but I could not pretend to speak as to the number of books sent.

Out of the 300*l.* you think that not more than ninety or a hundred pounds arose out of the periodicals?—So I should think; but this is an account with which I am less conversant than any other, as I merely make out the items for each paper.

You make out the items for each periodical too, probably?—Yes, but I have nothing to do with the total.

You can state probably what are the periodicals that are chiefly distributed, and how they are supplied?—They are procured in London, and then sent free of postage through the country.

Of whom are they ordered?—Of Sherwood and Jones.

They are booksellers?—Yes.

Where are they sent by Sherwood and Jones?—They are sent by Sherwood to the coach-office.

Are you sure they are not sent to the post-office?—Certainly not; they pay the carriage to Holyhead, and they come across by the packet.

You know that they pay the carriage to Holyhead?—Yes, I know they pay carriage; I believe it is to Holyhead; the last months, I know, was paid to Dublin.

Do you open them when they arrive?—Yes, I do.

In what shape do they come?—They come up in brown paper parcels; then those parcels are put into a bag.

Is not that bag a post-office bag?—I cannot say.

Is it not the same sort of bag that the letters come in?—Yes, it is.

Does it come sealed?—No; I have not the slightest recollection of its being sealed.

How is it fastened?—It is tied with a string.

So that any one might take a parcel out, or put one in upon the road?—If they cut the string or opened the string, they could.

Do you mean that there is no security but the mere common tying of a string that prevents their being opened?—That is all.

You are sure there is no seal?—I think I can state positively that there is no seal.

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Seeing that they come in a bag similar to that containing the letters, and with the letters, you are sure that they do not come from the post-office in London?—Certainly, I am.

That they are sent to the mail-coach office, and that they are sent down as a common parcel?—They are; they come as a regular mail parcel.

What means have you of knowing that?—Because we pay the carriage; I see the sum charged, and I know the carriage is paid by Mr. Leet.

To whom is it paid?—It is paid to the coach-office in London; Sherwood charges us with so much paid for the carriage each quarter.

Do you know in what part of the coach the letter-bag is deposited?—I believe it is called the mail-boot, in general.

Does this bag come in the same boot?—I do not know; I never asked.

But you are quite sure it pays to Holyhead?—Yes.

When it gets to Holyhead, what becomes of it?—Then it comes over with the mail to Dublin.

To Dublin it does not pay?—To Dublin it has not paid until the last month.

This bag contains the periodicals?—It does.

The newspapers of course come in the letter-bag?—The newspapers come with the mail, as a part of the mail.

As you keep the accounts of each of those periodical publications, as well as the newspapers, you can state whether all stated in this list annexed to the Dublin calendar have been supplied through the express clerks, or which of them, to the best of your recollection, have been so supplied; do you remember most of them having come under your eye?—I think every one of them except the New European.

As you have the opening of the bags, will you state whether any books of any description have come under your eye that are not included in this list?—Yes, there have.

Of what species have they been; books?—Yes; there was about a dozen books got; but they did not come with those; they came as a parcel from London by themselves.

What books were they?—I do not recollect the titles; the History of Windsor, I think, one was.

Did they come to Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—They did.

Did they come for the supply of any bookseller?—No.

For what did they come?—They came for the supply of a private gentleman.

They came to them, and were sent by them to a private gentleman?—A gentleman sent them an order for them.

Have they been in the habit of supplying any orders that were sent to them in the same way?—Yes; we have supplied others, but not always.

When those books were so supplied, were they supplied to gentlemen in the country, or in Dublin?—In the country.

At any considerable distance from Dublin?—I cannot state the distance.

Did those books you so supplied under those orders; come free from Holyhead, and were they sent free into the country under the privilege of the clerks of the roads?—Yes, I believe they were.

Has that been a frequent practice?—No.

You are sure of that?—Yes.

Have any books been supplied to persons in Dublin?—I do not recollect any.

Either private persons, or any of the reading societies?—I do not recollect any in Dublin, except periodicals.

Will you state what the advantage is to a person residing in Dublin in taking a periodical publication through the post-office rather than through the common channel of a bookseller?—It appears to me that it is a disadvantage to them; they pay more for it; but they get it a few days earlier; that is the only advantage.

How is it they pay more for it?—A bookseller charges only the market-price for a book; Leet and De Joncourt charge something more.

Do not the booksellers charge the carriage?—I believe only the market-price; I have bought books myself, and paid only the London price.

How long have they been reduced to the London price in the booksellers shops?—I do not know how long; but I have bought them, I suppose, a year and a half ago.

Do not you know that that was in consequence of the price at which the periodical publications were supplied by Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—No, I never heard that, and do not believe it; I believe it has been the general practice in Dublin to sell periodical publications at the London prices.

Do not Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt now sell at the London prices?—They do, to societies.

Do not they to individuals?—No.

Do not you know that the supply of publications through Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, in Dublin, has considerably increased lately?—I believe in Dublin it has not increased lately; I rather think it has fallen off.

When was this advertisement first published?—Some little time prior to the publication of the calendar, which was the 1st of January.

Do not you know that several persons have left off taking from the booksellers, and transferred their custom to Leet and De Joncourt?—I dare say some in the country may have done so, but I know of none in Dublin.

Can you state with any positiveness that persons in Dublin have not taken from the booksellers

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booksellers the supply of periodical publications to them, for the purpose of transferring it to the post office?—No, they have not; the last month we have got one or two new orders, but not before that; I think the Dublin periodical trade has been just what it was when we began.

There was a circular sent round by Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—There was; not to private individuals, but to the reading societies.

Have not those reading societies transferred their custom to Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—The Dublin Institution did; and we send to the lending library, which we did not.

Do you mean to state that a great many persons who used to take their periodical publications through the Dublin booksellers do not take them through Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—No.

From what time do you speak?—From the time that I began to keep the accounts; March twelvemonth.

Do you know any thing of the state of the thing previous to your taking the charge of it?—No, I do not; Mr. Burrowes then managed it for Sir Edward Lees.

Do you know what number of periodical publications there are that are distributed monthly?—No, I do not know the number; I can state the number of one or two particular works; of the Monthly Review, there have, I think, been twenty copies sent; of the Monthly Magazine, about eleven.

Are not those the smallest?—No; of the Monthly Review we sell more than any other.

What number do you sell of the Edinburgh Review?—I forgot that; we sell about thirty-seven of that.

How many of the Quarterly?—I think thirty-three; I may not be particular as to two or three books.

Of the Evangelical Magazine, how many?—We sell only four of those.

Are you in the habit of receiving orders for new novels?—No.

Nor in the habit of getting them over?—I think Mr. Leet got one over for Mr. West of the post-office; for nobody else that I know of; only one, I think.

Were not several copies of some of the new novels got over?—Not to my knowledge: I received no orders for them.

Do the orders go through you?—Almost all of them.

Are they all executed by the same person in London?—Yes.

Does this duty of yours oblige you to be in any particular office each day?—Yes; in the newspaper office.

That is not the place where you would naturally be, is it?—If I would not be engaged, I would not be in the office.

Is that the place where you would be for the performance of your duty in the newspaper office?—I should not be employed at all during the hours that I am employed in the newspaper business.

Are not you employed in sorting the newspapers for the clerks of the roads?—No.

Or putting up the newspapers?—No, except those for Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt.

You have nothing to do with putting up the newspapers for the clerks of the roads?—No, except when I am on duty in the inland office.

What is the duty performed by the clerks in the newspaper office, in respect of the newspapers of the clerks of the roads?—I do not know; I was never on duty in that office.

Where are you when on duty?—In the inland office; all the newspapers I have to do with are those that come in late.

You do not know in what state the newspapers are brought to the newspaper office?—They are brought tied up in parcels.

Are they brought folded or not?—They are brought folded, and with covers on them.

Do you mean the editors papers, or the clerks of roads papers?—All the papers I have seen there have been brought in folded.

The editors papers come in first, do they not?—I do not know.

Describe what the express papers are?—They are English newspapers coming here, and they are sent out by Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, by their messengers, as soon as it is possible after the arrival of the mail in Dublin.

Do you keep the accounts of those?—They are all in one account, along with the rest of the papers.

Do you keep a separate account of those?—No; they are all together.

Is there not a distinct account of the profit of those?—No; they are all divided, according to a certain rate, among the clerks of the roads and the express clerks.

What is the ratio in which the profits are divided?—I cannot distinctly call to my mind the ratio; Sir Edward Lees a  $6\frac{2}{3}$ ths of the whole; that was made out by a regular calculation; it was made out by Mr. Mills of the post-office.

Has Sir Edward Lees the largest share?—He has the largest after Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt; the largest of the clerks of the roads.

Can you state what is the sum which has been received in any one year?—No, I cannot.

About what sum?—I have not the slightest idea.

Is the calculation made on the gross amount of the profits of periodicals and newspapers?—Yes; the profits made by each individual were summed up together; and as the profit of Sir Edward Lees was to the total so is  $6\frac{2}{3}$ ths to the present profit.

Supposing the whole profits amounted to 1,000*l.* for instance, what would each man receive?—I am not able to state that at the present moment; I will get the proportions.

Do you know what is the amount which is paid for publications, and what is the amount that is charged?—If any book was named I could state.

Take the Edinburgh Review?—Four shillings and seven-pence British is paid for it; supposing four in the year, that would be 18*s.* 4*d.* English; they are sold for 26*s.* English, that is 1*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.* Irish.

That profit is made by the clerks of the roads by their privilege of sending them free through the country?—Yes.

That is the way in which they are enabled to supply them cheaper than the booksellers, the persons not paying the carriage?—We have had a letter from a gentleman in the country, who stated that the booksellers would send them to him at the market price; speaking of a particular book, the Edinburgh Review, the market price is 6*s.* English, that is sold for 6*s.* 6*d.* English by Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt; that is 6*d.* English, or 6½*d.* Irish, more than the market price.

Would not the conveyance of one of those to any given place in Ireland cost more than 6*d.*?—I suppose it would.

Then they get it cheaper from Leet and De Joncourt than from the other booksellers?—I suppose in that way they could; but there may be a variety of conveyances by which they may be sent down without paying carriage; if they pay carriage to any place far down, it will amount to more than 6*d.* no doubt.

If they do not get an advantage, how do you suppose they are induced to take them from Leet and De Joncourt rather than from the booksellers?—They get them more expeditiously.

Do you mean to state that they do not get them cheaper?—I do not think they do, unless that there may be a difference in the carriage.

There is no additional expedition; the booksellers may send them equally by the mail?—Certainly, if the persons buying them will pay for the charge by the mail; but I should think they would not pay for it.

They charge 6*d.* more for each publication for the additional expedition?—They do.

With respect to the express newspapers, what advantage has a person taking them and paying more for them?—The advantage is, that he gets them as soon as possible after the arrival of the mail; and if the mail arrives after seven o'clock, which is the latest hour that the letter-carriers are sent out, if it is before eleven o'clock, he will get his express newspaper; but the others will not be sent out till the following morning. Supposing two newspapers, one express and the other not, if the mail come in between seven and eleven, one will be sent out immediately on the arrival of the mail, but the other will not be sent out till the following morning.

The express newspapers are sent out?—They are.

By whom are they sent out?—By the express messengers.

Who are the express messengers?—They are two men paid by Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt.

Are they sent out by the letter-carriers?—No.

What are the names of the express messengers?—The one is Young and the other M'Culler; I do not know their Christian names.

What advantage have persons in the country in taking those express papers?—There is no such thing as an express paper sent into the country paying those high rates; but the advantage of correspondents in the country is, that when the mail arrives between seven and eight o'clock their papers are forwarded.

What do you mean by no express papers being sent into the country?—In the paper before the Board there is a charge of 15*l.* 14*s.* being paid; the charge in the country is ten guineas.

Is there any paper for which 17*l.* is paid?—No, not that I am aware of.

In Dublin they are charged 15*l.* 14*s.*?—Yes; and those sent to the country ten guineas, which is 11*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The advantage they have in taking the express papers in the country is the certainty of having them forwarded at all times?—Yes.

They are forwarded, whether the letters are forwarded or not?—No; certainly not without the Irish letters.

They are forwarded without the English letters?—Yes, they are; the papers to the country are sent if they arrive at any time at which it is possible to send them.

If the mail arrives before the coaches go, they are sent, are they not?—If the coach is in the yard just going, it would not stop for them.

Do you mean to say that the mail has never been stopped to carry the express papers?—No, it never has; there have been instances in which we have been able to forward only to particular towns; there have been only one or two towns in the whole mail to which we have been able to send out the papers.

The great inducement, and of course the great advantage the clerks have, is in the sending out those papers, and their receiving the papers at the time when they would receive no other English papers, and when they would not receive the English letters?—Yes.

The oftener that happens, the greater the inducement is to take the express papers?—Decidedly so.

You have stated what is the principal advantage in Dublin?—Yes, when the mail arrives after seven o'clock; and there is every day an advantage.

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What is that advantage?—The express papers are sent out immediately, that is, within five or ten minutes after the arrival of the mail; the others are not sent out till the letter-carriers go, half an hour or three quarters of an hour after.

Do all the public offices take the express papers?—Not all; the Custom-house takes them.

The Excise?—Yes.

The Stamps?—The Stamps and the Ordnance; the principal part of the express papers are sent to the clubs and reading-rooms, and societies.

It appears that there is a difference of charge in the alphabet to different bodies who take their letters; is there any difference between the charge made to the public bodies who take the express papers and the public?—They pay the same as individuals.

What number of the express papers are the Custom-house and the Excise subscribers for?—They only now get one for the Customs, and one for the Excise.

Do you mean when you say *now*, to refer to any alteration within the last month?—No; for the last several months the Customs took one express paper, the Excise one, and the Stamps, I think, took two.

What have you to do with the dispatch of the express papers every evening; do you superintend it?—Yes, I do.

State distinctly what your business is with the express papers?—When the mail arrives I am generally there, and see that the men sort the papers, and get them out as soon as possible.

When the mail arrives, where are you, and what are you doing?—I am generally in the newspaper office, and one of them comes up to me to tell me that it is in.

What are you doing in the newspaper office?—Employed about the business of the office.

What newspaper office are you speaking of?—Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt's office; there is a newspaper office below stairs, which is the Irish newspaper office.

What do you do?—I then go down to see them got out, as soon as possible; I take those papers, not express papers, and if time allows, stamp them myself, and send them to the different divisions; that is the eight roads.

Do you send any thing besides the express papers?—Not at that time; the mail arrives generally about three o'clock in the day.

How long does that take?—I suppose about half an hour, examining the papers and doing that.

Do you assist in sorting the Irish papers for the clerks of the roads?—No, I never assisted in that in my life.

You do nothing but just take charge of this office, and sort them and see them sent on?—Yes.

Is that your whole business?—That is my whole business for Leet and De Joncourt.

That is the business every day?—Yes.

What are the other clerks in the inland office doing at the time you are doing that?—They are not there at all; this I am speaking of is generally the middle of the day, when the packet comes in.

Supposing the packet comes in, and is delivered at five or six o'clock, what would be the case?—That would be a critical time, and I would not have time to stamp those papers and sort them.

Do you mean to say, that in that case it would not be done at all?—No; it would be done by the messengers; I would be then employed about other business.

What business?—The business of the inland office, unless I went off duty for the purpose.

How often do you go off duty for the purpose?—It so seldom occurs that the mail arrives at that time, that I cannot speak to that.

The mail has within the last week arrived more than once after five o'clock?—Yes; then they have been stamped by the messengers; there was an evening last week, and I got a friend of mine to stamp them for me.

A person unconnected with the post-office?—He was in the post-office, but off duty; he was not employed.

What was he?—He was in the inland office; but if they come a quarter after five, they are not employed, and they pay 2s. 2d. for another doing their duty.

If there are messengers whose business it is to sort them if you are absent, what was the occasion of your calling in your friend?—I had an anxiety to see it done, that they might go forward.

Does not that anxiety refer to your duty every evening, to see that those papers are stamped, to be sent forward?—I am anxious of course to see that it is done.

Is

Is your attendance in that office considered as an attendance in the inland office?—No, it is not.

Is Leet and De Joncourt's own office a part of the post-office?—It is; it is in the post-office.

Whereabout?—Immediately over the gate leading into Henry-street; it is a part of the building of the post-office.

It is a private office altogether?—Yes.

You consider it as a private one?—I do.

How many rooms have they?—One.

Are any other clerks ever employed in the office but yourself?—No.

Not from any of the other offices?—No person but myself.

Where does the stationery come from that is used in this office?—There is an allowance made to Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt as clerks of express papers; they purchase some paper, I believe.

How much of your time does the carrying on the correspondence employ?—I attend from twelve o'clock till four every day.

As a sorting clerk, you attend from six to ten?—I attend from six o'clock in the morning till the business is done, then I go away; I go back at twelve to Leet and De Joncourt; if the mail should chance to come in at four, it keeps me longer, but if not, I go away to dinner, and return at a quarter past five.

You have about two or three hours to yourself during the day?—Yes, I have more than that.

How long does your business in the morning confine you?—Till between eight and nine.

Do you devote all this additional time, beyond that you are necessarily confined to your duties in the post-office, to the newspaper concern, for 50*l.* a year?—Yes, I do; and I am better paid by them than I am by the public; I have but 52*l.* a year from the public, and I have been eight years in the office, and if I were sick a week I should be obliged to pay a guinea, my salary being but 1*l.*

Is the 52*l.* you receive, in Irish currency?—Yes; and I should have to pay 1*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.* in case of absence; my salary is only 3*s.* 4*d.* a day, and I am paid nothing for Sundays, having to attend, and if I am absent I have to pay 3*s.* 9½*d.*

Suppose the chief clerk in the secretary's office were absent from sickness, is there any deduction from his salary?—I can only speak to those who are in the inland office; if Mr. Donlevy, the president, were absent one day, he would pay 3*s.* 9½*d.*; if he and I were absent a day, we should each pay the same.

In what way is the payment made, through the suspension fund, or direct from yourselves?—There is so much stopped from us up stairs by the receiver-general, and that is handed over to pay the extra probationers.

Has it ever happened to you to have any fines inflicted upon you?—No; I am proud to say I was never fined or suspended; but there have been instances in which officers equally as regular as myself have been fined three or four or five shillings for absence, independent of the 1*s.* 7½*d.* paid to the suspension fund.

An officer of the same rank as yourself?—Yes; whether those fines have been paid or not, I cannot tell, but I have heard them read out at the head of the office as so much stopped.

Do you mean, that though imposed, they might have been remitted?—Yes, they might have been, on the cause being shown.

The per-centage is always paid, is it not?—I do not know.

Do you get a receipt for the stoppages?—No; my salary for the quarter is 13*l.*, and I sign for that, and the account is shown me in another book of what the stoppage is; in the same way if I got leave, I should have to pay a guinea for a week.

The History of Windsor, to which you have referred, is an expensive work?—Yes, it appeared to me a very expensive work; the sale price I think is four guineas; there are plates to it.

ROBERT H. HENRY.

Examinations.

No. 144.

Mr. R. H. Henry.  
23d Sept. 1823.

## Examinations.

No. 145.  
Mr. Adam Fuller.  
8th Sept. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 145.

8th September 1823.

Mr. ADAM FULLER called in and examined:

ARE you a sorter in the post-office?—I am.

As a sorter, you have the privilege of having your correspondence free?—Yes.

How do you get it free; do you take it out yourself, or is it given to you by the taxing officers?—Sometimes it is given by the taxing officers, and sometimes by the sorters.

Is not it given out by the taxing officers before it comes to the sorters?—It comes to the bag-openers first.

Do the bag-openers take any out and give you them?—Sometimes they do.

When the taxing officers get them, they take out those belonging to the clerks in the office, do they not?—Yes, sometimes; if they are given by the bag-openers they do not come to the taxing officers at all; sometimes the taxing clerks do.

Do not they all do so?—Not all.

They all do so to their friends, do they not?—I have known some give them and some not give them; in general they give them to the officers; in general they come to the bag-openers hands before they come to the taxing clerks.

Is it more general to receive them from the bag-opener before they come to the taxing clerk?—Yes, it is.

You have also the privilege of sending letters free, have not you?—Yes.

How is that contrived?—In general we leave them on the desk of Mr. Donlevy, the president of the office, and he sends them up, or the secretary sends down for them at a certain hour.

The secretary franks them?—Yes.

Have you ever seen the letters lying on Mr. Donlevy's desk before they were sent up to the secretary?—Yes, I have.

Are they a great many in number?—I have not seen more than seven or eight in a morning; about seven or eight; I have not seen ten together on his desk in a morning.

Are those letters going into England?—No; if they wanted a frank for Ireland, they would be laid on the desk of Mr. Donlevy before eleven in the morning.

They do not go away before seven in the evening?—No.

Is that the latest hour at which they can be franked?—Yes, that is the hour at which Sir Edward Lees franks.

Do not the clerks of the roads frank for you?—They used to frank; if an officer was late with a letter that he had not got franked, he would ask a clerk of the roads.

Does this extend to yourself and your friends?—Some receive theirs for their friends as well as themselves.

Have you got them for your friends as well as yourself?—Yes.

Are you in any other capacity?—I am serving my time to a surgeon.

Have you ever received his correspondence?—Never.

How long have you been in the office?—Five years.

What is the attendance you give in the office?—From six in the morning till about eight or half past eight, and from a quarter after five in the evening to about eight.

Is that every day?—Yes.

What attendance do you give to the person with whom you are serving your time?—From about eight or nine till ten in the morning in the hospital, and then I have the rest of the day to attend the office.

Your attention to that profession does not interfere with your attendance at the office?—No, not at all.

Is it single letters, or any letters that the secretary franks for the clerks?—He sometimes franks a double letter, but then he will make an objection.

Have those objections been only lately?—They have been constantly made.

How long?—Indeed I always recollect an objection on the part of the secretary to the franking double letters.

But somebody else would frank them if he did not, would not they?—Not double letters; they have made an objection to franking double letters.

Who are the persons who open the bags; are they letter-carriers?—No; they belong to the office.

Is their whole duty opening the bags?—Opening the bags in the morning; they have different duties during the day; the letters are opened about seven in the morning.

Who are the bag-openers?—I cannot name them all; there are three to No. 1. road, four or five to No. 2, and so on.

Are they clerks in the office?—Yes.

Are they sorters?—Sometimes I am a bag-opener myself in a morning.

Is it just as you happen to be there?—Yes.

When you are a bag-opener, what do you do; do you see all the letters as they come out?—The bag-opener does not look over them all; some packages of letters I do; those that we must be more careful of, the paid letters and the double letters.

Unless you look over them, how do you find out the letters directed either for yourself or any body else?—At the table at which they are divided for the letter-carriers and the alphabet, and the custom-house, we see them.

Are they divided by the bag-openers?—They are divided by the person belonging to the road; some one acts as a bag-opener.

You stand by and take the letters for yourself, or the other clerks in the office at the same time?—Just as we happen to see them.

You take them indifferently, whether they are double letters or single letters, do not you?—Lately they have not taken the double letters; but it was the custom to give them to those that they were for, whether single or double.

Those letters were never carried to account in any way whatever?—No.

ADAM FULLER.

Examinations.

No. 145.

Mr. Adam Fuller.  
8th Sept. 1823.

### Appendix, No. 146.

15th December 1823.

Mr. CHARLES FIELD called in and further examined.

HAS any remark been made to you on the evidence you have given here?—No.

Have you been as much employed in the British-mail office during the time Mr. Leet had charge of it, as you were while Mr. Homan had charge of it?—No, I was not.

Did any conversation take place between you and Mr. Leet respecting your efficiency to be employed in the British-mail office?—No.

Do you know any thing about supplements of papers being charged with postage?—There were some papers charged; I cannot say whether they were supplements or papers.

What is the rule in the newspaper office respecting the supplements of papers being charged with postage, or being allowed to go free?—I am not sure whether they have been charged, but I have seen them taken to the president to know whether they should be charged; I understood they were to be charged.

Have you ever known any distinction between certain newspapers; some supplements allowed to go free, and others charged with postage?—I do not recollect any.

Did you ever hear of a circular letter of this description: "All letters from the Weekly Register Office that went charged from this establishment on Wednesday last, the several postmasters are directed to deliver free, and all on which postage has been charged, the amount to be returned"?—I recollect those papers being charged.

Were those papers or supplements?—I do not recollect; I rather think they were supplements.

Did you ever take any supplements of the Evening Mail into the inland office to know whether they should be charged or not?—No, never.

You are quite sure of that?—Yes.

And you are quite certain you never said to any body, "I was considered to be fit to be employed in the British-mail office before I gave my evidence, but now the case is different"?—No, never.

You have stated that your situation in the post-office has not in any respect altered since you gave your evidence here?—Just the same.

Has it been in any respect altered since the 8th of March?—No; my treatment is the same, but I was in the newspaper office; now I do duty in the inland office.

Has Mr. Leet on any occasion expressed any hostility towards you?—No.

Has he never told you he would take the first occasion of putting you off duty?—No, never.

Has he the power of depriving you of extra duty?—Yes; if he liked he could put us off.

Have you been deprived of extra duty by him since the 8th of March?—No.

In fact you have no reason to think that his conduct since that period has been different from what it was previous to that?—No, not the least.

CHARLES FIELD.

No. 146.

Mr. Charles Field.  
15th Dec. 1823.

Examinations.

No. 147.

Mr.

Robert Manley.  
15th Dec. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 147.

Monday, 15th December 1823.

Mr. ROBERT MANLEY called in and further examined.

ARE you in the same situation now as you were when you were last before this Board?  
—Yes.

You have not been removed at all?—No.

When Mr. Leet was in charge of the British-mail office, did he employ you in the newspaper office?—Yes; that is connected with the inland office.

You have been concerned in the transmission of the newspapers?—Occasionally.

What directions have you received particularly as to the transmission of the supplements of any particular newspaper; are some sent free and some not?—No, not unless they accompany the papers.

Do you know there are occasionally supplements to the *Warder* and *Antidote*?—There are, I believe, but I never remarked it.

Do you know any thing of an advertisement that was put into the paper in May last, on the subject of newspapers?—No, I do not recollect it.

It is dated the 17th of May 1823, that all papers from the *Weekly Register* office that went charged from the office on the Wednesday evening were to be delivered free, and, if charged, the money to be refunded?—Yes, I saw a circular letter go to the postmasters.

On what occasion was that issued?—There were some supplements sent in on the night that the papers went before, and there was no paper accompanied them.

Do you recollect to what paper they belonged?—No, I do not.

Has the supplement of the *Warder* and *Antidote* been sent free under those circumstances when it has come the next after the paper?—I never have seen it.

If they had been sent free, would you have seen it?—I might not.

Have not you been generally employed in the newspaper office?—Only occasionally; it is not regular.

You know of no order that the supplement to the *Warder* or the *Antidote* should go free?—No; I believe there is an express order for every paper which is not free to be charged.

Have you ever received any direction respecting the *Evening Mail* particularly?—No, not that I recollect.

Are the same description of people employed in the British-mail office that were before?—Yes; I am not certain whether Mr. Draper, who is now doing duty there, was there, but the rest are the same.

Was Mr. Irvine doing duty there when Mr. Leet had charge of the office?—He was.

Did he do duty in it before Mr. Homan was suspended?—I do not know; I was not in the British-mail office at that time.

Were not you in it on the 8th of March?—He was in it that night, but whether he was permanently there I cannot say.

Had Mr. Irvine any experience in sorting in the inland office before he was attached to the British-mail office?—I do not know.

Where was he employed?—In the writing office.

Has it been usual to send persons at once to the British-mail office before they have had experience in sorting in the inland office?—That I cannot say.

Do not you know whether they send them to the British-mail office before they have been employed in the inland office?—They send in any persons who are wanted in the office in consequence of the absence of those regularly employed there.

Has any remark been made to you by any one in the post-office upon the evidence you gave to this Board on a former occasion?—No, by no one.

ROBERT MANLEY.



## Appendix, No. 148.

Tuesday, 19th August 1823.

Mr. FREDERICK HOMAN called in and examined.

YOU hold the situation of Comptroller of the British-Mail Office?—I do.

You were appointed in October 1810, were you not?—I was.

What did you understand to be the value of that office when you were appointed to it?—I understood the value of it to be 400*l.* at the time I was appointed.

How did you understand that?—I understood it from Mr. Pole's letter, stating that Mr. William Lees, the brother of the secretary, would be willing to exchange with me, and that his situation was worth 400*l.* a year. By exchanging with Mr. Lees I could have got 400*l.* a year.

Mr. Pole in his letter states that the salary is 180*l.* a year, and will rise according to length of service to 225*l.* a year; that it is much sought after, and that Mr. Lees, the secretary of the post-office, is very desirous that his brother, who holds the office of surveyor of roads, with a salary of 400*l.* a year, should exchange with you that he might reside in Dublin?—I have, perhaps, misunderstood the letter; but I understood there were advantages by which it was equal to that. The editors of newspapers and other gentlemen told me it was a very desirable situation, and not to be induced to change it. I understood there were considerable fees.

Arising from what?—From expresses.

Were you the first person that was appointed to hold this office upon its establishment?—I was appointed in the room of Mr. Jackson Goulding; he had been in the sorting office as comptroller, and was transferred by Lord Clancarty from thence to the British-mail office.

Upon what terms did he hold it?—The establishment is the only thing that can direct me in that.

Had Mr. Goulding those fees which you refer to?—I do not know that he had.

Had he the expresses?—I cannot state what part of the express business he had; I rather think he had not, but he had a more considerable salary. His salary I understood was 250*l.* on the establishment.

What was the establishment which you had under you?—I had four clerks at that time.

Were those Mr. De Joncourt, Mr. Clare, Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Darley?—Yes; there are only two of those clerks now in the office; Mr. De Joncourt was senior clerk, and he exceeded me in salary. His salary was 200*l.* a year before he left the office, and the first clerk now has a salary of 200*l.* a year.

Did that salary arise from length of service?—I fancy so, under the arrangement of Lord Clancarty; but they had also a considerable benefit from the expresses, and so had the messenger attached to my office.

Will you state the duties attached to the office of comptroller of the British mail?—I never got any instructions when I came into the office as to what those duties were.

What are the duties you have been in the habit of performing?—The duties I have been in the habit of performing are those of control and superintendence over the duties of the office on the arrival and dispatch of the mails, to see that the officers attended to their duty.

Will you describe the duties performed both ways?—General superintendence, executed in person. Since I got apartments there I have been constantly there. I have to examine the returns, and to see that the officers perform their duty.

What returns do you examine?—The returns of the charges on the English postages, and the accounts connected with them. To make the allowances and rebates, and orders drawn from the window-man, or alphabet keeper. The attendance of the officers in the morning is required at six o'clock; the mails are dispatched at seven. Their attendance is again required on the arrival of the mails; that is of course uncertain as to time; from half past two, or sometimes earlier; it may be stated generally now from half past one to five or six, and again from a little after eight to ten. If the mails come in after that hour at any time before eleven, the state letters (those for the Lord Lieutenant and the officers of state) are dispatched. The letters for distribution in Dublin are dispatched by the letter-carriers if they arrive at any time before six; (it was five when I was first appointed) and now I understand an order has been made on the 13th, that no mails should be dispatched into the country arriving after seven o'clock.

You have three things to look to; the dispatch of the mails to England, the receipt of the mails, the distribution of the letters that come by those mails in Dublin, and the dispatch of the others for the country?—Yes; I forward them into the inland office with that view.

## Examinations.

No. 148.

Mr.

*Frederick Homan.*  
19th Aug. 1823.

Is there any precise regulation as to the time of their being forwarded?—I have forwarded them coming after seven o'clock; I was not obliged to do it; but wishing to forward the public correspondence whenever it could be done, I have always done so, until the 8th of March, when I was first interrupted.

Is there any special regulation as to the moment up to which they shall be dispatched?—I never saw an order on that subject; there is no order in that office.

Has your attendance been constant in the office?—It has been, ever since I got apartments, and had been for some time before.

Have you ever received any reproof or reprimand of any kind from Sir Edward Lees on the manner of your performing the duties of your office?—Repeatedly. I have been frequently suspended.

For what?—Very frequently in consequence of the neglect of others.

How came that?—I have not at present access to the books of my office, or they would enable me to state with more precision than I could otherwise do it, the dates of my suspensions and the causes.

What books do you wish to refer to?—I wish to have free access to the books in my office; the books containing all the accounts and reports. If I had liberty to examine them, I could select those which may be material. One cause of my suspension was an order I made shortly after my appointment. Finding the office in a very irregular state, I made several regulations, as I conceived for the good of the public service. Amongst others, I made an order for the attendance of the officer in waiting; there is always one officer in waiting to receive expresses, the express business being entirely confided to my office; one officer was considered as in waiting during the 24 hours, and he had the benefit of the expresses during that time. The office being removed to Suffolk-street, having reported the insufficiency of the old office, which was only six feet square or a little more, and great confusion having arisen there, I applied for a larger office. I did this officially; I did not obtain it for some time, until Lord Rosse came to Dublin, when I applied to his lordship, and stated to him the impossibility I felt of executing the public duty I was entrusted with in so small an office. Lord Rosse desired me to inspect houses then in the possession of the post-office, in Suffolk-street, and to report to him if any of those houses would answer for the public service. I examined the house No. 5, in Suffolk-street, then occupied by the deputy housekeeper, and reported to his lordship that I considered the rear of that house communicating with the post-office, which could be done by a passage, that would be an advantageous situation; his lordship approved of it, and the house was got ready for us. I attended until the arrangements were made for removing the business, and then I attended at that office; but I had no instructions what I was to do. In fact I found that the officers had been a long time without any control, my predecessor holding the situation nearly if not altogether as a sinecure. I found great difficulty in getting the officer in waiting to be at his post. I then made an order that the officer in waiting should be in the house from an early hour of the business until an advanced hour in the evening, and that he should be responsible to me; and I directed that there should be a room in the house for his sleeping. This order I issued to the clerks; it was returned to me within a day or two, with an observation by the secretary written on the back of it, the purport of which was, that it was considered an unnecessary severity, and that so long as the officer could be found within the post-office building, the object of the postmasters would be attained. This was sent open to me, and it was brought to me in a triumphant manner by my first clerk, and I certainly felt a very great want of authority from the manner of that communication. I have felt the effects of that order ever since. The office being removed to Suffolk-street, it was at a distance from the old post-office, and I could not tell whether the clerks were there or not; therefore, having appointed a particular duty for the officer on duty to do in the office, and given him notice that there was a room for his accommodation, I did not consider it a severity of duty, as there were four officers, and they were amply compensated by the expresses. The result of that was my suspension, on Mr. Gregory's report. He called at the office one Sunday for the officer in waiting; he called two or three times that day, and did not see the officer in waiting. The officer that should have been in waiting was suspended in consequence, and so was I.

For what were you suspended?—I never could understand why. If the man had been there as I desired him I should not have been suspended; all would have been right in that case.

You have stated, that that officer not being there you and he were both suspended, you having insisted upon the attendance of that officer, and Sir Edward Lees having objected to it, and stated it to be an unnecessary severity of duty?—Yes; I was suspended, not by the secretary, but by Mr. Thomas Lees, the pro-secretary.

Does any one appear on the establishment with the title of pro-secretary?—He signs as such; he has suspended three of my clerks at one time.

Have you ever been suspended for want of proper attendance on your duties at the office since you had apartments within the office?—No.

Has any observation been made to you on the subject of the performance of your duties, in the way of censure since that time?—No.

Are you not at this time under suspension?—I am.

Will you state the circumstances which have led to that suspension?—On the 8th of March last I was in waiting, in my own apartments, the arrival of the mail; my son came and told me the mail was in, and I went immediately into the office.

At what hour was that?—I think I am quite positive I was in the office about a minute after seven o'clock. Shortly after I met Mr. Leet, the vice-president of the inland office, and I requested that he would send me the usual assistance of an officer or two to stamp the country letters.

When you speak of the usual assistance, are you to be understood to mean that he had been in the habit of rendering you assistance when the mail arrived nearly about that time?—I had always got that assistance, though I cannot charge my memory with having got it from him. I was never refused before.

What answer did Mr. Leet make to you?—He said he could give me no assistance, and that he would not receive or forward the country correspondence.

Did he state to you at the time any reason why he would not receive it?—He said, "It is now past seven." "It is so near it," said I, "that you should receive it, and take care what you do." I then wrote to Sir Edward Lees.

What was the purport of your note to him?—I have a copy of it. "British-mail Office, 8th March. Sir,—The mail came to the door at seven; if you order assistance from the inland office the mails for the interior can be sent off this night; they can be in the inland office in twenty minutes. I am, your obedient servant, signed, F. Homan." Here is the reply. "If it can be done without delaying the mails too long, it would be very desirable; but as the coaches in some places now go six miles an hour, delays here are very inconvenient." I sent this communication to the secretary by Francis Craig, and I have a copy of his information which I did not swear, but as a magistrate, I told him I would swear him to it. He states that he took a letter from Mr. Homan to the secretary on Saturday night, the 8th instant, from the British-mail office, before the bags containing the mails were all opened, and brought an answer from the secretary to Mr. Homan, which is the answer I have read. I have also the information of Michael M'Donnell, the mail-coach driver, who drove the mail up from Howth, that he rapped at the British-mail office door on Saturday night, the 8th instant, before the clock struck seven.

Is that an affidavit?—I did not swear him; I took it in the form of an affidavit; I made him read it, and told him I should swear him to it; but I thought perhaps the consequence of my swearing him would be that he would be dismissed. Then here is also the information of the mail guard, taken in the same manner, "John Whitacre, guard, That he looked at his timepiece when he came up to the British office, and that it wanted a minute of seven o'clock, on Saturday night, the 8th instant." He told me that he had returned it "at seven o'clock" to Mr. Ferguson, who keeps the documents in the office. I have also the time bill of the agent at Howth. "9th of March 1823, packet arrived, Meteor mail, at 55 minutes past five on the 8th." They are allowed an hour for conveying the mails from Howth, so that unless they lost considerable time on the road they ought to have been here five minutes before seven. Having called in two officers I got the country letters in a state of forwardness, several officers being at that time unemployed in the newspaper office.

You did not get the usual assistance from Mr. Leet?—No.

But there were other officers unemployed at the time, whose assistance you did obtain?—Yes; I got a gentleman of the name of Field and Mr. Manley.

By the assistance of those officers you got the mail ready, at what time?—At 25 minutes past seven; it was as near that time as possible. I was very much agitated; I looked at my watch two or three times, and know it was as near that as possible.

Did you make any second application to the secretary?—I had in the meantime sent in the English newspapers; the letters being refused, I wrote again.

At what time did you make your second application?—At 25 minutes after seven.

When did you complete the sorting?—They were very nearly all ready at the time; but it is necessary to explain one part of the business. Within less than ten minutes after the arrival of the mail we very often get the letters into the inland office, by stamping the letters for the country immediately, and sending them in without taking the amount of the postage, which, on the mails going out under particular circumstances, we do. It was always an accommodation for the officers of the inland office to assist us, for the sooner they got the letters of the mails, the quicker they went on themselves. At that hour, I had a great portion of the correspondence ready, and offered them to Mr. Leet; he refused them.

Then you wrote again to Sir Edward Lees?—I did.

What was the purport of that note?—I have no copy of it.

Was it in these terms: "The country letters are ready, and will not be received in the inland office"?—Yes, I believe those were the terms; something to that effect.

What was the answer that Sir Edward Lees returned to you?—I got no answer; he sent the reply to my letter by my messenger to Mr. Leet, and not to me. Mr. Leet again went, I understand, to the secretary, for he had been with him before; and on his return from the secretary he came into my office, and addressing himself to the gentlemen, not at all to me, says, "Gentlemen, the secretary says that the country is not to go forward to-night. Come out from that," calling out Mr. Manley, "you have no business here, Sir; come out of that office."

(107.)

Examinations.

No. 148.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
19th Aug. 1823.

Examinations.

No. 148.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
19th Aug. 1823.

office." That was a gentleman I had procured, together with Mr. Field; he desired him to come out also.

At what period was that that he called out this officer?—It was immediately after I sent the second communication to Sir Edward Lees. I then gave up the thing; I found it could not be done.

What was your application to Mr. Leet?—To receive the letters; I had them ready to go in.

After the letters were ready and he refused, he stated that Sir Edward Lees said the letters were not to go forward, and he called away Mr. Manley who was actually then stamping them?—Yes, and Mr. Field, two officers that I got out of the newspaper office, and sent back the entire of the English newspapers that had been previously in the office.

Did you ever see the note that Sir Edward Lees wrote on your last application?—I never had it in my hand. Mr. Leet held it in his hand in a way of triumph, and said, "I have it here."

In the course of the evidence before Lord Rosse, the secretary's answer is stated, and stated in your narrative?—Then they must have given it for me, for I never had it. I have the solicitor's copy here, but there is no such thing here as given by me.

Have you ever seen the notes of the investigation?—I never have. I applied for them.

You are quite sure, that in the course of your statement before Lord Rosse, you did not produce that letter from Sir Edward Lees?—I did not; it was never given to me; I never saw it but in Mr. Leet's hand.

Look at that letter of Sir Edward Lees set forth in the statement of your evidence before Lord Rosse, did you produce that letter in the examination before Lord Rosse?—No, they would not give it me; I asked for the letter.

Have you ever seen the letter?—I saw it in Mr. Leet's hand, but he told me it was his, and not mine.

Did you read it?—I saw the purport; that I was not attaining my object; I know nothing further of it.

Can you state whether the purport of it is correctly stated in those words?—It may be, very likely, but I cannot say; there was an observation upon that letter. I remember Lord Rosse remarking that Mr. Leet had put down in pencil the date of the communication I made to him, and another part of it was in ink; and I said, "Why did not you do it all in ink if it was at the same time; did you make that at the same time in the office?" And he said, "I did." But part was in pencil and part in ink.

The words are these: "The country letters to be sent forward if it can be done, without delaying the letters too long." You do not know whether that was what he wrote or not?—I do not.

What passed then?—I think I sent back my messenger to Sir Edward Lees, to say that the letters were ready, but I will not be certain to that. I think that my messenger, Bartholomew Wheeler, will state that he went a second time to Sir Edward Lees with a verbal message, to say that Mr. Leet had still refused to receive the letters. I asked him on his return the first time, "What have you done with the answer?" He said, "The secretary desired me to give it to Mr. Leet." He said, "The devil a letter will they send forward to-night, Sir, you may as well let it alone." And a clerk said, "They will not let them go forward." I said, "They must take care what they are about, for I will report them."

Did any thing pass between you and Mr. Leet after his production of that note from Sir Edward Lees, which he stated to be addressed to him?—I think I spoke very sharply to him, and said that he must take care what he was doing, that the delay of the mail on the Saturday night was a very inconvenient thing; and I said, "Remember you have sent back the English newspapers that were already in your office." I had sent in the entire of the newspapers for the interior; they were in the office a considerable time before I made the second application to Sir Edward Lees. It takes a very little time to select the Dublin newspapers from the country; they were sent in to what they term the newspaper office, which is the letter-carriers office.

For what purpose were they sent in there?—For the purpose of being sorted out to the different county towns, and sent forward. At the time that I applied to Mr. Leet there were several officers in this office under his control unemployed; I have the names of three or four of them; and the clerks of the roads papers and Irish papers were all forwarded long after that; I reported the delay on the daily report from my office to the secretary, which I had put into his letter-bag to prevent any mistake as to its being forwarded; there is a daily report from my office of the arrival of the mails, and the dispatch and attendance of the officers; and on this report I stated that the mails had been delayed, which report I put into his letter-pouch and sent locked up, as was customary, from the office.

Did he ever make any remark to you upon that report?—He did; he wrote me a letter some days afterwards, desiring I would state the precise time that the mail arrived.

What

What is the date of that letter which he so wrote to you referring to your report?—I suppose on the 10th; but the report book is in my office.

Can you come at that letter?—I can get at it in the office.

[*The Witness was directed to produce this letter.*]

Your report upon which that letter was an observation was in fact a complaint of the mail having been delayed?—It was.

That was made to Sir Edward Lees?—Yes; I then communicated the delay to Lord Rosse, who was then in Dublin, before I made a full report.

After the first report and previous to the second, you had communicated the circumstance to Lord Rosse?—I had.

Have you the letter that you wrote to Sir Edward Lees in answer to his?—I have.

[*The Witness delivered in the same, which was read as follows.*]

“ Sir,

“ British-Mail Office, March 12th, 1823.

In answer to yours of the 11th instant, I beg to inform you that the mail guard states that the mail arrived at the office one minute before seven o'clock; the last of the bags was in the office at three minutes after seven. My officers instantly attended, with the exception of Mr. Shiells, who was sick. Immediately after the arrival of the mail, before a bag was opened, I told Mr. Leet I should send in the country letters and papers, and requested the assistance of an officer from the inland office to expedite the business, which he refused, and added, that if I sent in the country correspondence he would not receive them. I then wrote to you, and on receiving your reply, I communicated it to Mr. Leet, who again replied he would not receive them, and went off direct to you; and on his return, came into my office, and addressing my officers in my presence, thought proper to say, Gentlemen, the secretary says the country correspondence is not to go forward this night; and ordered Mr. Manley, who was then stamping the country letters in my office, to come out of that office, where he had no business. I had obtained Mr. Manley, who was unemployed in the newspaper office. Previous to this, the English newspapers for the country parts of Ireland had been sent from the British office into the newspaper office, and were returned. My officers, in spite of the obstacle thus thrown in their way, and the absence of one of their number, with that zeal for the public service for which they are so remarkable, contrived to have the letters for the interior ready for the inland office within twenty minutes after the arrival of the mail. I then again wrote to you, to say that the vice-president would not receive them. My messenger informed you that you desired him to take the reply to Mr. Leet. I then again tendered the letters for the inland dispatch, and was again refused in the presence of Mr. Harvey, who desired me to consider him as a witness to said refusal, and that he considered Mr. Leet perfectly right. My unsuccessful efforts to forward the country correspondence, therefore, terminated at twenty-five minutes after seven o'clock. Bundles of Irish newspapers were brought into the newspaper office, and were forwarded after the English newspapers had been refused. I need not remark that, had the English mail been in my office three minutes sooner, it must have gone forward without any favour. I should recommend, in order to prevent in future any interruption of the public service, that I should have a permanent order on the inland office for the assistance of an officer or officers when either illness or other circumstances should cause the absence of any of the officers of the British-mail office, or where a press of business may require assistance, which I have now to request that you will favour me with; the order being in my office will facilitate the public service.

“ F. HOMAN, Comptroller.”

“ To Sir Edward S. Lees.”

(*Mr. Homan.*)—That letter I submitted to Lord Rosse before I sent it to Sir Edward Lees.

On what day did you receive Sir Edward Lees's letter to which that is an answer?—I wrote that the very day on which I received his; the impression upon my mind is, that I made the communication at the Castle before I received that letter.

The letters were refused, and newspapers were sent on that came into the office subsequent to the period of your stating that your mail was ready to go forward?—That is the fact.

The result was, that the mail was left behind, and the express papers exclusively sent forward?—Just so.

In your report of that night to Sir Edward Lees, you remarked this circumstance, and complained of it?—I did.

After that complaint, what was your proceeding?—I called on Lord Rosse, who was in town.

When did you call on Lord Rosse?—On the following morning, the Sunday.

At what time?—Indeed I think it was very nearly twelve o'clock; I had previously written to him; I know it was very near church time when I saw his lordship.

Did you apply to see Lord Rosse?—I did.

And he answered, that he should be glad to see you?—He did.

(107.)

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Examinations.

No. 148.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
19th Aug. 1823.

## Examinations.

No. 148.

Mr.

*Frederick Homan.*  
19th Aug. 1823.

What did you state to his lordship?—I stated to his lordship the delay of the mail, and the great disadvantage to the public service of the officers having the power to stop the correspondence, and being benefited by it: that the express papers were alone sent forward; that I was never refused any assistance before. Lord Rosse desired me to report it. I told his lordship that I had reported it to Sir Edward Lees.

Did any thing further pass between you and Lord Rosse; did you press Lord Rosse to institute an inquiry?—I told his lordship that he ought to prevent such things in future; that it was a very great abuse, and he admitted it; I have not notes of the conversation, but I mentioned to his lordship the abuses in the post-office.

Did you go to Lord Rosse for the purpose of communicating with him upon the subject of this delay?—That was one great object.

You do not recollect what you pressed his lordship to do?—I pointed out the abuse; I considered it my duty, and he desired me to report it, and I told him I had done so.

Did you propose to him that any inquiry should be instituted?—Indeed I think I did; and I pointed out to Lord Rosse at the time, "If an inquiry is not instituted while you are in Dublin, I can expect nothing afterwards." I had received a letter from his lordship, which induced me to think he was going out of town. I waited impatiently for this inquiry; I then wrote this full report, which I sent to Lord Rosse two days afterwards—*[producing it.]*

What observation did Lord Rosse make to you at that time?—Lord Rosse told me that he considered Mr. Leet entirely to blame.

In the interim between your first communication with Lord Rosse and your second communication with Lord Rosse, had you had any conversation with Captain Webster, or was it after your second communication with Lord Rosse?—It was after my second communication with Lord Rosse; I was apprehensive of his going out of town, and I requested that Captain Webster would mention it to the Lord Lieutenant, and that if the Lord Lieutenant commanded it, he would institute an inquiry into it.

Your apprehension was, that nothing would be done if Lord Rosse went away; you were fearful of Lord Rosse going away, it being his intention to leave Dublin; you therefore mentioned the circumstance to Captain Webster, desiring him to mention it to the Lord Lieutenant, that the Lord Lieutenant might suggest to Lord Rosse the propriety of that examination before he went away?—Precisely so; that was my object; in this letter written Thursday, Lord Rosse said he was leaving town on Friday.

In your second conversation with Lord Rosse, did you state that if he went away you had no hopes of any inquiry upon the subject, and request him to make the inquiry before he went?—I believe I did, and in proof of that, I told his lordship that I had got a severe letter and reprimand a few days before from Lord O'Neill, who was then in London; a letter I had received the very day previous on a supposed neglect of mine, and that his lordship was in Dublin when the complaint was made, and Lord O'Neill in London.

On what day did your conversation with Captain Webster take place?—It was either the 11th or the 12th; I cannot positively say whether it was the 11th or 12th.

In what way did your conversation with Captain Webster take place?—I went to Captain Webster at the Castle.

Had you been in habits of acquaintance with Captain Webster?—I had.

You went there expressly for the purpose of making this communication?—I went there expressly for the purpose, and I requested that he would inform his Excellency of the delay, and that his Excellency would direct Lord Rosse, then in Dublin, to institute an inquiry.

You are sure that was the purport of your communication to Captain Webster?—It was.

And that a part of your communication was, your request that his Excellency would interfere so far as to induce Lord Rosse to institute an inquiry?—Precisely so; I stated to him also that Lord Rosse was to leave town in a day or two.

State the purport of the complaint you made to Captain Webster, and to whom it related?—I told Captain Webster that on Saturday night the entire country correspondence had been delayed, with the exception of the express newspapers, which were exclusively forwarded to the great benefit of those who were interested in them, and that I wished it should be prevented in future. I should not have communicated to Captain Webster, but for this letter of Lord Rosse, that he was leaving town after the drawing-room on Thursday.

Did you hear the charge that was made against you by Sir Edward Lees, in the investigation before Lord Rosse, or was it communicated to you in writing?—It was not communicated to me in writing; the cause of my suspension was communicated, but not the charge.

Did you state to Captain Webster that Sir Edward Lees had detained, for thirty-six hours, the English mails?—I contradicted that at the time; I said I would avow the declaration that was made, with the exception of the hours; I said, Captain Webster has made a little mistake as to the hours.

It is stated here, that you stated that you admitted the substance of the above, with some inaccuracy on the part of Sir Edward Lees as to time, and some facts?—That is a mistake; the mistake was on the part of Captain Webster; as to the number of hours, it must be either twenty-four, or forty-eight, or seventy-two hours, according to whether it was a one, two, or three day post.

Did you throw the blame of the delay on Sir Edward Lees?—I certainly did in a great measure; if he had interfered they would have been forwarded.

On the 13th the investigation was entered upon?—Yes; on the 12th Sir Edward Lees sent for me while the mail was sorting; I understood that Sir Colin Campbell was with him at the time; he desired me to come up immediately to his office; in a moment after, another messenger came down and said he did not want me, and I heard nothing further of it till the following day, when I received this letter,—

“ Sir Edward Lees requests that Mr. Homan, and all his officers, will be in attendance to-morrow at twelve o'clock.”

“ 12th March.

EDWARD S. LEES.”

On receiving this letter, I went again to Lord Rosse; I gave him the letter, and said I hoped his lordship would attend, as I supposed there was to be some investigation, according to the summons I had received.

His lordship did attend?—Yes.

And then the investigation took place?—It did.

Did that investigation take place by the exhibition of charges against you by Sir Edward Lees, or was it an investigation into the circumstances of the delay of the mail merely?—I considered the former.

The complaint against you was, that you had made a complaint of your superior officer for a breach of his official duty?—Yes.

Were you present during the whole of the investigation?—I was.

How was that complaint proceeded in?—On going into the room I observed the secretary, the pro-secretary, the post-office counsel (Mr. Crofton), the post-office solicitor (Mr. Thompson), Mr. Burrowes (Sir Edward Lees's private secretary). The Prayer Book was handed to me by some person; I asked for what purpose; Sir Edward Lees replied, “ To be sworn to answer such questions as I shall put to you.”

Under what authority was that oath offered to you?—I made a remark upon that; I appealed to Lord Rosse, and said, “ Any questions his lordship thinks proper to put to me I shall answer; I conceive he presides here, but I shall not swear; I deny the competency of this court to administer that oath; any statement I make I am prepared to swear to, if necessary, but the practice of swearing is too general in the office, and I shall not swear till I know what the object is.” Sir Edward Lees said, “ You shall not know, Sir, what the object is until your are sworn.” I then appealed to Lord Rosse to know: I said, “ My lord, I came here, as I suppose, to prove the delay of the mail; I appeal to your lordship whether I am not entitled to know the charges which seem to be preferred against me.”

Who first mentioned charges against you?—Mr. Thomas Lees had previously said, “ You have brought charges against my brother, which, if true, he is unworthy to hold the situation he fills in the post-office.” I said, any charge I have brought against Sir Edward Lees I was prepared to prove, and I begged to know what the charges were; the secretary replied that I should not know them until I was sworn; I then appealed to Lord Rosse, and his lordship said that I should know the charges, and mentioned the awkwardness of my situation as I came there for a different purpose; I saw a great array of counsel on the other side, and wished to know whether I should remain there at all or not; Lord Rosse desired Sir Edward Lees to state the charges; he asked me whether I had not been at the Castle; I said if he would mention the charges I would avow them if they were correct.

Did Sir Edward Lees state the nature of the charges?—He did.

Do you recollect the nature of the charges?—I think he stated it as it has just been read, and I acknowledged it, with the exception of those errors as to the time of the delay; I said I had been at the Castle, and that my object in going there was to prevent such things occurring in future.

Did the charge state that you had attributed to Sir Edward Lees the delay, and also that you attributed to it a special political motive?—No; there was nothing on the subject of politics; the papers of that evening certainly contained a very interesting debate, which made it the more advantageous to send the express papers exclusively forward.

It is stated here “ that the mails had brought the result of Mr. Secretary Goulburn's speech on Mr. Abercromby's motion, touching the Orange societies.”—He mentioned that.

Had you mentioned that to Captain Webster?—I might have mentioned that.

Had you suggested that as the motive for the delay of the mails?—Indeed I think there were two motives; I thought he was interested in both ways, because he was concerned in the express papers with Mr. Leet, and their politics might have gone along with their interest; I dare say I did state that; whatever is stated there I avowed, with the exception of some errors; I told them that day before Lord Rosse, that their interest and their politics might have gone together; that the interesting nature of the debate made it more their interest to send the express papers forward. Mr. Thomas Lees then said, “ You have used his lordship extremely ill in passing him (Lord Rosse) over, and going to the Lord Lieutenant.”

In what character did Mr. Thomas Lees take any part in this investigation?—Mr. Thomas Lees is one of the rulers of the post-office; Mr. Thomas Lees and Sir Edward Lees are virtually, if not nominally, the postmasters-general.

(107.)

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Examinations.

No. 148.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
19th Aug. 1823.

## Examinations.

No. 148.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
19th Aug. 1823.

What ostensible character does he hold that brought him there to take the part you describe?—I cannot say; he is pro-secretary; he told me that I had used Lord Rosse extremely ill in passing him over and going to the Lord Lieutenant; I replied that it was to prevent his lordship being passed over that I went to the Lord Lieutenant, and to prevent such delays in future; that the secretary having passed over Lord Rosse a few days back, and preferred a complaint against me to Lord O'Neill, who was in London, I thought he might do the same upon the present occasion, and refer it to Lord O'Neill. I said before them to Lord Rosse, "I gave your lordship that letter to read," meaning my report to Sir Edward Lees. "You did," says he, "but I have not received it officially, or seen it officially until now." "No," says the secretary; "it remained in my office, where it ought to do." "I think it necessary," says Lord Rosse, "to state that I have not seen it officially until now, in order to account to the Government for not having sooner inquired into the business, and I desire you to put that down."

Then it appears that though you had made those communications to my Lord Rosse, of which the secretary was himself ignorant, the secretary had not made any official communication of any kind upon the subject to his lordship?—Precisely so; my Lord Rosse stated that himself, that he had not seen that report of mine officially, until that time; and to that the secretary replied, "No; it remained in my office, where it ought to do."

What witnesses were produced?—Four or five; three of these were implicated in the delay.

What number of witnesses were sworn?—I understood forty.

Were you present when they were sworn?—No; they were sworn before I got there, or I should have objected to their being sworn.

Is Sir Edward Lees a magistrate?—No, I believe not.

Are you aware that he has, as secretary to the post-office, any power by Act of Parliament of administering an oath?—No; I swear letter-carriers and others of the establishment; if he had the power, I should think he would do it; I stated that I could not swear any person without telling him what he was going to be examined to; but that I would substantiate all I should state.

Who were the witnesses examined?—Mr. Leet was one; there was a letter of his produced.

Were you present during the examination of the witnesses?—I was; Lord Rosse desired me to stay.

Who examined the witnesses?—Indeed I think Sir Edward Lees and the pro-secretary.

Did the solicitor interfere?—I cannot say indeed; I was so confounded by the change of my situation, that I did not know very well, at one part of the time, what was going on. I came there as I thought merely to prove the delay of the mail. Mr. Leet was called upon to swear to the truth of a letter which was produced.

What letter was that?—I have got no copy of it, but I believe it was a letter from him in answer to my charge of delay.

FREDERICK HOMAN.

## Appendix, No. 149.

Friday, 12th September 1823.

Mr. FREDERICK HOMAN again called in, and made the following Statement:

No. 149.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
12th Sept. 1823.

I HAVE a letter which I wrote in 1810, very shortly after my appointment, in consequence of a letter which I received desiring me to inquire with respect to the overcharge of a letter; it refers to the state of the office, and the manner in which every thing was conducted.

[The same was delivered in.]



Examinations.

No. 150.

Mr.

Alex. Mitchell.

14th Nov. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 150.

14th November 1823.

Mr. ALEXANDER MITCHELL called in and examined.

HAVE you been, at any period of your life, a clerk in the post-office?—Yes, I have been in it since the year 1816.

Are you upon the establishment now?—I cannot answer that question, for I got neither dismissal, nor was I allowed to go to the office since I came to town; I cannot answer the question whether I am off or on.

How long did you continue to discharge your duty in the office?—I think from the year 1816 to the 10th of June this very year.

In what department were you?—In the British-mail office.

Did you cease to attend voluntarily, or was it in consequence of any suspension, or any reprimand, or any thing that took place in the office?—Neither suspension, reprimand, or any thing took place in the office at all.

Were you ever, by any of the superiors in your office, charged with any misconduct; or were you ever told that any individual had accused you of any misconduct?—I never was told of any individual having laid any charge to me, nor was any thing said to me, but to account for my absence, and I did do that.

Did you withdraw because you understood that legal proceedings were taken against you on other grounds with which the public has nothing to do, and to get out of the way of the difficulties they might bring upon you?—Only the difficulties that came upon myself, but nothing at all in relation to my conduct in the office.

Did you ever hear it stated or insinuated by any person, that a letter containing property or something of value had been purloined in its passage through the post-office, and that you were individually suspected of having been concerned in that?—The only person that ever gave me any information upon this subject, only ten or twelve days ago, was Mr. Homan, and I immediately wrote back, that if that was the case I should appear forthwith in Dublin to answer and meet any thing; I got from no other person any intimation whatever upon the subject.

During the time that you were a clerk in the post-office, did any person or persons make any offer to you of a payment of money, either in a whole sum, or an annual sum, if you would resign your office in favour of another individual?—One Mr. Irvine offered me a sum of 50*l.* in a letter, to resign my situation and let him fill it; that he would renew it during my uncle's life, as he supposed I should not retain the office any longer than he lived; and he would give Mr. Thomas Lees and Mr. Anthony Lyster as securities for the payment of that to me.

Was that conveyed to you by letter?—Yes, and I immediately came up, and would not hear of it.

When was this letter written?—In June 1822.

Where were you when you received it?—I was in Ballymahon on leave of absence, with my uncle.

Have you the letter still?—I believe I have; I immediately came up and resumed my duty.

What answer did you make?—I said I would not accept the offer; that I was come back to my office.

You say Mr. Lees and Mr. Lyster were proposed as securities for this contract; had you ever any conversation with them upon the subject?—I had conversation with Mr. Lyster; I do not recollect whether Mr. Thomas Lees was by or not, but I think he was; but Mr. Irvine, I dare say, will say that that was part of the proposal. Mr. Lyster would have done so on my coming up; but when they found I had come up, it was immediately knocked on the head; there was no more of it.

Have you any reason to know that Mr. Lyster or Mr. Thomas Lees were made acquainted with this proposal, either before or at the time it was made to you?—I am very certain they were; one of them suggested it to Irvine; I do not think Mr. Irvine would have made such a proposal, unless it had been suggested to him.

In what office was Mr. Irvine?—He was in the writing office.

What enables you to say you are certain that they were?—Because Irvine was a very great favourite both with Mr. Thomas Lees and Mr. Lyster, and I think it was to benefit Mr. Irvine that they did it; I saw the partiality which they showed to him.

Has any thing taken place since that time upon the subject?—Nothing more.

ALEXANDER MITCHELL.

Examinations.

No. 151.

Mr.

John Hebden.  
3d Nov. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 151.

Monday, 3d November 1823.

Mr. JOHN HEBDEN called in and examined.

WHAT situation do you hold in the post-office?—Superintendent of the dead-letter office since Mr. Johnston's death, and a taxing clerk in the inland department.

How long have you held that situation?—I have been nearly twenty years; I have been longer than that in the custom-house; I held a situation in the custom-house for upwards of twenty-two years.

Before you went into the post-office?—At the time that I was in the post-office; but I was superseded in March 1822, unless I resigned my situation in the post-office.

In what way were your duties in the post-office performed while you were a clerk in the custom-house?—I performed the duty in person.

What hours of attendance did you give at the custom-house?—The latter part of the time I did not, the early part of the time I did, and not only did my own duty, but performed extra duty; I have received ten guineas a quarter several quarters for performing duty for absentees.

How was your duty performed in the post-office in the meanwhile?—I had leave at that time from the postmaster-general, from the late Marquis of Ely.

In what year did he give you leave?—In 1805 and part of 1806; I think I was absent from the dead-letter office only.

How long did that leave last?—It lasted until his death; he died in 1806, to the best of my recollection.

How long were you absent on leave after that?—I cannot say exactly.

Was it for years or months?—Indeed, I had unlimited leave from the Board; the late Marquis of Ely would have done any thing for me so far as accommodating me in such a thing as that.

He would have permitted you to abandon your duties according to any discretion you might wish to exercise?—I was never an idler; I paid every attention as far as circumstances would admit.

But when you had leave of absence, your diligence was not applied to the performance of your duties in the post-office?—No, not at that time.

In point of fact how many years were you absent from your duties in the post-office?—I could not exactly say.

Was it ten years?—No, I think not so much.

Was it five years?—I really cannot tell exactly.

When did you begin to attend to your duties in the post-office, after having had leave of absence from the Marquis of Ely?—I began after his death, I think he died in 1806.

Since that period have you attended your duty in the post-office, or has it been done by deputy?—It has not been done by deputy; it may have been done on an occasion; there was always a deputy appointed when a clerk was absent.

Were you on the sick list when you had leave of absence?—No.

You were merely absent on leave, without cause being assigned?—It was from himself; I cannot say that there was any cause assigned; in fact, I was told when I was appointed to the dead-letter office that it would be a sinecure situation.

Who told you that?—I believe the lady who applied for it for me; I do not know whether she applied for me, or how it was; I did not apply for it myself, and did not know any thing of it until I was appointed; I then mentioned that I thought I could not attend to it, that I had already sufficient business to attend to with my custom-house situation and the inland department in the post-office.

At the time you were appointed to the dead-letter office, you had one situation in the custom-house and another in the post-office?—Yes, in the inland department; it is morning and evening duty.

Are you in the inland office still?—I am.

Can you execute the duties of the two situations you hold in the post-office?—Yes, I do.

In person?—Yes.

You have no deputy?—No, except I may stay away on an evening; there are supernumeraries in that case; but I believe there are no better attendants than I am.

Since the death of Mr. Johnston you have been at the head of the dead-letter office?—Yes.

Describe what are your duties in the dead-letter office?—Checking the bye-letter vouchers, and superintending the office, at present the cross-post department.

In what form do those vouchers come to you?—They come monthly.

In what form are the accounts made out?—They are made out monthly; but those checking the bye letters, they are charged quarterly; the accounts are made out in the accountant-general's office, we check them with respect to the sums they receive; one postmaster sends letters, and enters the amount of postage in the sent side of his voucher, and the postmaster who receives them enters the amount in the received side, and we compare

compare them to see that they are correct, or if they are not correct, we furnish them with a list of surcharges quarterly.

You are now describing what is done with respect to the bye letters?—Yes.

What do you know by the name of bye letters?—Letters that do not pass through Dublin.

Have you any means of knowing whether the check upon the account of the bye letters is sufficient, or whether the country postmasters have the power of committing frauds by collusion between each other?—It is in their power to do so if they are in league with one another; we could not possibly have any check upon them except by the surveyors examining the mails between the different towns; those are the only means I could point out that would be a complete check upon them.

Have you any duty to perform with regard to those accounts than to examine the vouchers to see whether they are correctly cast up and stated; or is it your duty to examine them in such a way as to ascertain whether the postmasters in the country have made either incorrect or false accounts?—It would be my business to examine, if I suspected any thing of the sort; at the same time there is not an item that we do not check, to see that the letters sent and the letters received agree, for one must enter his letters sent on the vouchers, and the postmaster who receives has a received side, and they must correspond, and if they do not, we charge the postmaster with the largest amount, and he must furnish the docket to certify, before he can be allowed the amount.

Does it frequently happen that you detect such variations in the account?—Yes, frequently.

Are they ever to such an extent that you suspect collusion, or do you generally believe that it arises from negligence or mistake?—From negligence more than any thing else, I believe.

Have you ever had occasion to detect any collusion between two officers?—No; I never had any reason to suspect it.

Is the principal part of your duty connected with this examination of the vouchers of bye letters?—It is the principal.

Does the duty connected with this examination fall particularly at certain periods, or is it pretty equally spread over the whole period of your attendance?—It is always very severe after the 7th of the month till about the 26th or 27th of the same month, for the gentlemen in the accountant-general's office are always very anxious to get the accounts about that time to go on with their part of the duty.

What other duties do you perform?—I superintend the office at present; since Mr. Johnston's death I am responsible for the duty performed.

Is it not called the dead-letter office?—It is.

Have you any superintendence of any description of letters known by the name of "dead letters"?—Before Mr. Webb died, I checked those that came up with the dead letters from the country, Dublin dead letters, and cross-post dead letters.

What description of letters are referred to the dead-letter office?—All dead letters, such as those that are refused, or where the person cannot be found.

Do letters that are re-directed come into your office?—They should not; they are inclosed in a particular cover, so as to be known from any others, and they should be opened in the inland office; the two juniors in our department attend, one three days in a week, and the other three days in a week.

What letters are re-directed?—Those of gentlemen changing their residence from one place to another; gentlemen residing in the country for a short time, after they quit that, and come to Dublin, will leave word with the postmaster there to have their letters re-directed to their houses in Dublin; and in order to prevent their meeting with any delay, a clerk attends from our office in the inland office in the morning to open them and check them, and see that the amount claimed by the deputy postmasters is correct. Our duty as to re-directed letters respects those that come through Dublin or to Dublin. There may be re-directed letters sent by cross-post from one town to another, without coming to Dublin again; with those we have nothing to do in the Dublin office.

What cognizance do you take of re-directed letters that come through Dublin?—Merely to check the amounts, to see that the amounts correspond exactly with the docket sent, and then this docket is preserved to the close of the quarter, and is checked with the postmaster's account, to see that he does not take credit for more than he should.

Does that enable you to check the bye-letter vouchers?—No; we have five or six of these quarterly from every postmaster through the kingdom.

Where the letters do not come through Dublin you have only the account of the postmaster in the country; but where the letters come through Dublin, you have the additional check of the inspection of the letters themselves?—Yes, just so.

You say the junior clerks in your office attend in the inland office in the morning, to take away the Dublin re-directed letters; is that duty regularly performed?—Latterly it has been so.

By latterly, what period do you mean to include?—Since the gentlemen from the London office were here.

Previous to their arrival what course was pursued?—Those re-directed letters were sent up to the dead-letter office, and opened as soon as the clerks came, and then were sent out by the twelve o'clock delivery; there was a delay at eight o'clock, when they ought to have gone out; but they were regularly sent out through the penny post at twelve.

The penny postage was of course added to the general postage?—No, it was not.

(107.)

Was

Examinations.

No. 151.

Mr.

John Hebdon.

3d Nov. 1823.

Examinations.

—  
No. 151.

Mr.

John Hebden.  
3d Nov. 1823.

Was not there an additional penny charged?—There was a penny allowed for the penny post; it made no difference to the public or the revenue.

Was there a charge for the re-direction, as such?—No; but these re-directed letters that ought to have gone out in the morning were sent out through the penny post.

Was not there an additional charge of a penny for that?—No, we avoided that.

Then the penny was not charged on those letters?—Not an additional penny.

Was there any penny charged?—The regular tax.

The regular general post tax?—Yes; on all letters passing through the penny post-office there is a penny charged; that applies not only to the re-directed letters, but to all letters.

When a letter is sent through the general post, the general postage is charged upon it; and if in the regular course it is to pass through the penny post, the penny postage is added to that?—Yes.

Do you mean to say that there is a distinction made as to re-directed letters, and that there is no charge made of the penny postage on them?—Not on those that were re-directed. There was an understanding between the superintendent of the penny post department and the dead-letter office that those letters that ought to have gone out in the morning should not be charged, but we allowed them a penny on each letter.

If there was ten-pence due to the general post-office, you allowed a penny of that postage to the penny post?—We charged them only nine-pence for that.

Then did the revenue lose the difference, because they were not dispatched in time by the regular letter-carriers?—If it was lost in the one revenue, it went into the other; it was taken from the one revenue and went into the other.

You kept an account with the penny post-office, and in your account you charged nine-pence where you ought to have had the ten-pence?—Yes, and they charged the ten-pence.

By what authority did you make that arrangement?—It was not my arrangement.

Whose arrangement was it?—It was an understanding between the two offices, that the individuals should not suffer by the delay of the letters.

And this arose from the nonattendance of the clerks in the office at an early hour?—Yes, they did not attend.

That went to swell the amount of the penny post, taking it from the general post revenue?—Yes; but the re-directed letters were very few that went through the penny post.

What description of letters are returned to your office?—Re-directed letters, refused letters, letters that do not go to hand, mis-sent letters—they do not always come to our office; it is possible a letter mis-sent to a town may be sent by cross-post to another town; in case it can be done, it is the duty of the country postmaster to send it forward to the other town to which it should have gone.

With respect to the penny postage, the individual who was to receive a letter, the general postage on which was ten-pence, would pay only ten-pence?—Just so.

The postmaster in the country charged the ten-pence on the letter, did he not?—If it went to his office he would charge five-pence, then in coming back it would be five-pence more; we charge both ways where parties desire letters to be re-directed.

What do you do with letters that have been refused to be received by the persons to whom they were addressed; to such as are returned for any cause, or such as are directed to persons who are unknown?—We destroy them.

How long do you keep them?—The country letters we keep only a few days; the Dublin letters we keep for a month.

If during that month any person asks for them, what course do you pursue?—We deliver them to them; we alphabet the letters, so that we can refer to them.

Do you ever deliver them without the postage being paid?—No.

If they are not inquired for in a month, you destroy them?—Yes; the English letters we return to the London office.

With examination, or without examination?—We examine them, and strike off the Irish tax, and put on the English tax.

Do you examine the letters in order to see whether they contain property of any kind?—We open them all to ascertain that most particularly, and keep a registry of the property.

The amount of postage due on letters of this description in the year ended 5th January 1823 appears to have been 12,237l.; can you describe what class of letters this amount of postage principally arose upon?—Principally on Dublin letters and English; the cross-post is not so heavy as what we call the general letters—all passing through Dublin or the English letters; the cross-post are called the bye letters.

Is this deficiency chiefly from letters refused, or from letters directed to persons unknown?—Chiefly refused.

Can you give any account of the class of letters which are refused?—A great number of them circular letters; from merchants, the great bulk.

Printed letters?—Yes.

Are the refusals of letters directed to persons in the country numerous, on account of the high postage, or the poverty of the persons to whom they are directed?—Indeed I cannot say; those circular letters I believe they would not receive if there was only half the amount of postage; they are very numerous.

Is it common for persons in the country to refuse letters from their friends and relations, and others, on account of their poverty?—Indeed they do; the postage is very high, and a great

a great many foreign letters; American letters are refused because the persons are not able to pay for them; there are a great many of them in this country.

In what way does the tax arise on the American letters?—Just the regular postage.

Are they ship-letters?—Packet letters principally; they are *2s. 6d.* and *2s. 7d.* for a single letter, and the people cannot afford to pay for them in many cases.

Does the amount of postage charged and refused for letters of this description vary much from year to year?—I do not think it does vary much; the business of the office has fallen off a good deal within these ten years: the amount was a great deal heavier than it is at present.

You think the principal portion of this sum arises from letters that are refused?—Yes.

Can you state what is the next class which contributes to this sum?—Letters improperly directed.

If the address is changed you ultimately receive the postage for that?—Yes, if it is corrected, but it is a great chance that it might not be; people in the country changing their place of residence never think of giving their address to the postmasters.

And then the letters are lost?—Yes, they are, in many instances.

Are the letters which are circular from shopkeepers usually printed?—Yes, they are, principally.

Is there any mode by which you can distinguish the letters that are refused on account of the postage being too high, not being circular letters, but such as persons would be desirous of receiving if they could pay the postage for them?—I cannot; for if the parties refuse to pay for the letters, the postmaster has only to put on "refused;" he does not say whether the party was able to pay or not.

Do any newspapers come into your office?—Yes; not many.

Under what circumstances do they come?—Sometimes parties have changed their residence, and have not left their direction.

What do you do with such newspapers?—Destroy them.

After what time?—A few days; if they are from the country to Dublin they are kept a month.

Are they ever sold?—No.

You never knew an instance of a paper being sold?—No.

Have you ever known an instance of a newspaper of this class being lent?—If any one were to ask for an old paper we should give them one or two; but it is after they have remained their time, and they are of no use but as waste paper.

What do you call their time?—A month for the Dublin.

What time should you keep the country papers?—Till we get time to examine the deputy's accounts; the papers and accounts are sent back to us in a fortnight.

Is it usual for you to lend them to persons after you have checked the dockets?—We never lend them, we have given them in some instances; if we found there were a number of papers returned, all of one address, and from any publisher, we returned them to him, as notice not to send any more, or the man would continue to send them.

Is it to newspaper vendors principally you give those papers?—No, never; we are very exact in our office upon those subjects.

Have you ever any papers returned to your office that have been sent abroad?—No, not that I recollect.

Have you ever heard of any?—No, I never noticed any such thing.

Did you ever see any papers directed to Canada that came back to the dead-letter office?—I do not recollect it; there are such numbers that I cannot state the directions of them; they are nothing more than waste paper.

You would be aware whether it was a newspaper sent to Canada or to Dundalk; would not the one be charged with money, and the other not?—I do not know how the papers are circumstanced; the letters from Dublin to the colonies are disposed of in the London office.

Are all Dublin letters for the colonies sent through the London office?—Yes, they are.

You have no mails made up here for the West Indies?—No; I do not believe the West India letters pass through the London office; they are sent to Falmouth.

Will they not come back from London to the Dublin office?—Yes; any dead letters would come back.

Would the newspapers be returned to you?—I cannot say; it would depend on the gentlemen of the London office whether they sent them or not; I have no recollection of having received any such.

How many years have you been in the dead-letter office?—Upwards of nineteen.

Would it be possible for them to come back to you in numbers without your observing it?—I might not see them; there are a great many gentlemen in the dead-letter office employed.

Do you know any officer in the department of the name of Drought?—I do; he belongs to the inland department.

What office does he hold?—He is a junior clerk.

Do you know of his having been sent into the country as a surveyor?—I have heard that he was sent as a surveyor; I suppose it was the case.

To what place?—I think it was Foxford, in the county of Mayo; I do not speak to a certainty; I have merely heard it spoken of in the office.

Do you recollect the time that he was in charge of that office?—I do not recollect; but it is not long ago, I believe; he has been sent out frequently.

Examinations.

No. 151.

Mr. John Hebden.  
3d Nov. 1823.

Did you ever hear of a postmaster being fined for negligence of duty, while Mr. Drought was giving directions in his office?—No, I do not recollect it; in fact, we are fining the postmasters every day, and I could not charge my memory with those things.

Did you ever hear of Mr. Drought being sent to Athboy?—No.

Can you state whether the correspondence of members of Parliament is in all cases transmitted through the office in the same manner, or whether the correspondence of any individuals is managed in a particular way?—The members of Parliament's privilege is respected at the post-office.

Is their correspondence managed in all cases alike, or do you know of any individual whose correspondence is managed in a way different from another?—No, I do not.

Do you know of any individuals whose letters come locked up in a pouch, while the letters of some others come open?—No, I do not know of any difference; there are particular gentlemen about the Castle who send their letters in pouches.

Do you know of any members of Parliament, not being gentlemen about the Castle, who send their letters in pouches?—I knew Sir Robert Shaw inclosed those letters to the inspector of franks that he particularly wished to go free, in case he exceeded his number; but he has not done that latterly.

What do you mean by latterly?—I may say within this couple of months, or perhaps longer.

To whom was that packet delivered?—They were put into the receiver, inclosed under a cover, and directed to the inspector of franks.

Did you ever happen to open that cover?—I have frequently.

Did it contain ten letters?—In some instances it has.

Did it generally contain ten?—Pretty often; but sometimes not above five or six; sometimes there would be the full number; he could frank only ten.

What did you understand this arrangement to be?—That having exceeded his number, he wished those ten to go free, and to charge all the rest.

What is there in that transaction that need be discontinued?—Nothing at all.

Why do you understand it to be discontinued?—I cannot say why he discontinued it.

Do you see any reason why it has been discontinued?—As far as I understood, a number of the English letters were charged through mismanagement somewhere or another through the inland department and the British-mail office, and he found it did not answer his ideas; that he thought it was better to put them into the receiver all together. The inspector of franks does not charge the British letters, and some of his correspondents in England were charged; the inspector of franks sent in the list to the British-mail office.

Are you at the head of the dead-letter office now?—Yes.

Has any new appointment been made in consequence of your rise?—No.

Who is the junior clerk in your office?—Mr. Kellett.

How long has he been in the office?—I cannot exactly say; a year and a half, or two years.

Whom did he succeed?—Mr. Henry Parsons.

Did you ever hear any thing in the office relating to that succession?—Yes, I did, latterly; I have heard it said in the office there was some understanding.

What were the particulars you heard?—I have heard about two months ago that a Mr. Johnston had been had up here, and stated the business.

You did not hear so long ago as two months that Mr. Johnston had been here?—I think I heard of it at that time; I had not the most distant idea of the kind till then.

Was Mr. Parsons in the habit of attending the dead-letter office?—He did attend sometimes.

Did he attend once a month?—Sometimes he attended very regularly, and sometimes he would be off for a month or two months together.

Was there a return made of his absence then?—I am sure Mr. Johnston was very accurate in those matters, that he would return him.

Was there any fine levied for his non-attendance?—That rested with the secretary entirely; Mr. Johnston had nothing to do with that.

You heard two months ago there had been an understanding upon the subject of Mr. Kellett?—I think it was about that; but I knew nothing of it myself, nor heard of it till then; I believe the young gentleman himself knew nothing of it.

When was it first mentioned to the young gentleman?—About two months since; he denied it altogether that there was any such thing; and I do believe he had no knowledge of it; from what I have seen of him I believe he would not deny it if he knew it.

Do you apprehend any inconvenience from a reduction of the number of clerks in the dead-letter office?—No, I do not apprehend any serious consequence; the business must be done.

You do not apprehend any inconvenience to the office from the reduction?—There has not been any reduction yet; Mr. Johnston only signed the papers monthly or quarterly.

He was there every day, was not he?—Most days.

You will have to superintend it now?—Yes, I must perform the duty as hitherto, and superintend the office.

You do not apprehend any inconvenience from that?—No inconvenience beyond that we shall be able to provide for; but there is a good deal to do, particularly in the cross-post department.

You are also in the inland office?—Yes.

Then your attendance is all day?—Yes, it is.

From six in the morning till nine at night?—I generally am preparing at half past five o'clock in the morning, and do not leave the inland office till eight at night.

You have no interval except for meals?—No.

You do not get an extra probationer to do your duty in the inland office?—No, except occasionally, when I may have a friend with me; but I am as little absent as any man in the office.

What do you mean by having a friend?—In case any friend invited me to dinner.

How many days in a month do you suppose you are absent from the inland office; are you absent a third of the month?—No, not at all; I could not afford that; I have a large family, particularly since I lost the Custom-house; but when I was in the Custom-house I was one of the best attendants in the office.

Did you attend the Custom-house too?—The salary was only 60*l.* a year until 1808, afterwards 100*l.*, at the Custom-house; but the Commissioners gave us that that we might be under their control; we were completely under their control; we did business for merchants on the Custom-house quay. I sometimes paid for doing my duty at the Custom-house, at other times I received.

JOHN HEBDEN.

Examinations.

No. 151.

Mr. John Hebden.  
3d Nov. 1823.

Appendix, No. 152.

Thursday, 18th September 1823.

Mr. WILLIAM CUPPLES called in and examined.

YOU are a Surveyor?—I am.

How long have you been in that situation?—Since October 1811.

Are you an extra surveyor, or on the establishment?—On the establishment.

Were you in any situation in the post-office before you were made a surveyor?—Never.

Will you state what you conceive to be the duties of your situation practically?—In a general way, just these; the internal regulation of all the country offices of the district; that is the principal feature of the duty.

What district have you?—The north-west.

Do you reside in that district?—I do not.

What does it comprehend?—It comprehends the line of road from Dublin to Enniskillen, and from thence to Rutland in Donegal, and the line of road from Kinnegad to Sligo; called the Sligo branch.

In the execution of your duty, what do you do?—In the execution of my duty, in case of a postmaster dying, I take charge of his office, become postmaster *pro tempore*, until the place is supplied by an appointment; and I also, (but I must be ordered to do these matters,) in case of any fraud, investigate that matter, report it to the postmasters-general, and abide their commands.

Are you in the habit of making any surveys through your own district, considering it as under your special inspection, without a special order from the postmasters-general?—Certainly not; I am very often in the habit of visiting offices for my own satisfaction, but I make no charge, knowing it would not be allowed.

Supposing you found an office in a bad state, should you think yourself competent immediately to take charge of that office?—In any case of emergency I would take charge of it, and report to the Board; but I would not stay any time to inspect that office, or do any thing which I did not consider particularly necessary; but in case of fraud, or in case of death, I would take charge.

As surveyor of the roads, you carry on a considerable correspondence, do you not?—Yes, I do.

With whom do you carry that on?—Principally with the deputy-postmasters of my district.

What are the subjects of that correspondence generally?—I will suppose a new communication opened; I am obliged to acquaint every postmaster within the range of that communication with the circumstance of its being opened, giving the distance in miles and furlongs from his office to that identical communication, also the postage; this sometimes occasions sixty letters to be written, sometimes fifty, as the number of towns affected by the new arrangement may be.

That is a duty you have not to perform above once in a year, probably?—It is accidentally; sometimes two or three in a year, sometimes none, according to circumstances.

Are there any subjects of daily or weekly occurrence on which they correspond with you, or you have to correspond with them?—None that I am aware of; unless, if I observe a letter charged with wrong postage, I communicate with the postmaster, and tell him that the distance from such a town to such a town is so much, and the postage should be so and so.

What opportunity have you of learning that?—At Lisburne, which is my residence, I attend frequently at the post-office, and if I see any letters wrong charged, I acquaint the postmaster; or if I am on the road I go to a post-office, and if I observe any thing wrong, I notice it immediately.

(107.)

You

No. 152.

Mr. Wm. Cupples.  
18th Sept. 1823.

Examinations.

No. 152.

Mr. Wm. Cupples.  
18th Sept. 1823.

You are not resident in your district?—No; I live at Lisburne, near Belfast; it is not immediately in my district, but it is my father's house, and my allowance would not allow of my living separately.

Is it not the practice for the surveyors to reside in their district?—They should.

Is your residing out of your district the subject of special permission?—It is permitted; I never had any objection made to it.

Is it a thing expressly permitted by the secretary, or the persons who have the control and superintendence of the general management of the post-office?—Sir Edward Lees permits me to reside there, and the postmasters-general. My brother surveyor, Mr. Heron, acts for me in the north-west district occasionally, and I act occasionally in the north-east for him.

Is it a part of your duty ever to examine the accounts of the deputy postmasters?—Seldom or never, unless when I am in charge of an office; we can do no act without a special order.

Are those orders received in writing?—They are issued in writing.

How often have you received special orders in the course of the last year?—Indeed I could not state the number at the moment; if I had been aware of that question, I could have referred to my letters.

How much have you been on duty within the last twelvemonth?—I suppose I have been about one half of the last twelve months on duty; between one half and two thirds; I cannot swear exactly to the time.

What have been the general subjects on which you have been ordered to proceed to inspection?—There was an instance of a Newry postmaster dying; I was in charge of that office for two months (a most laborious office it is), until an appointment took place; and a variety of matters incident to that, investigating complaints, opening communications, and so on.

Supposing a complaint were made to the post-office of the conduct of any postmaster in your district, would that complaint be addressed to the post-office or to you?—To the post-office in the first instance; then the secretary incloses it to me or to the surveyor contiguous.

Do you receive orders to proceed in case of such complaint?—I suppose so; but I cannot detail what complaints may have been received in the office; I receive complaints, with directions to investigate them.

Has it ever happened to you to have any other person sent down into your district to examine into any complaints or to make any inspection?—I dare say there have been.

When you have been in the district yourself?—I cannot state that decidedly, for I do not know the orders which have been issued from this office; I have been sent down to relieve clerks that have been sent from the office.

Why were not you detached yourself to do that duty, instead of being sent to relieve those who were originally sent?—As far as I can recollect, I may have been employed at the time.

Can you state, in point of fact, that when that happened you were employed in any other way?—I could not tell who were employed and who were not employed.

Do you know any instances of persons having been sent to do any part of the business of inspection in your district at the time when you were not yourself employed?—I can state an instance very recently; a person was sent down to a place called Glenarm, where a new postmaster was appointed; I at the time was at Lisburne at my residence, and notwithstanding that, I understand (I do not know it from my own knowledge) Mr. Charles Harrison was sent down.

When you were yourself unemployed at Lisburne, the employment of that man took so much money out of your pocket to put into his?—I would have been very thankful to have been employed.

Have you reason to believe that that has been the case with respect to other surveyors besides yourself?—I do not know whether other surveyors were employed or not employed during the employment of those clerks, but I know that clerks have been sent down to the country; I cannot tell whether the surveyors were employed or not at the precise time.

You have no reason to think that was owing to any dissatisfaction entertained with respect to yourself by the authorities in the post-office?—Indeed I believe not; I do not entertain any such idea; I should rather expect Sir Edward Lees would be my friend; but I certainly think it would be for the advantage of the public if the surveyors were kept employed in their district; it would save an infinite deal of trouble.

Before Mr. Harrison was employed in your district, was any communication made to you of the intention of sending him into your district?—None whatever.

There was no understanding with you that he was to go?—No.

You were not written to upon the subject?—No; on the contrary, I had written a private letter to one of the clerks that I should have been glad to have gone to Glenarm.

To whom addressed?—Mr. Anthony Lyster. I had been employed at Donaghadee previous to that; perhaps they might have thought I was still employed.

When your employment ceases, do not you report yourself?—Not always, when it is contiguous to my residence; it is not necessary always to report it.

Do not you always make a report when you come from an inspection?—I always send up my report, and proceed home.

Then they know perfectly well that you are at home after having made that report, and are ready to be employed again?—In all cases they should know that. This case of Donaghadee



Donaghadee was a peculiar one; perhaps they might have expected it to take up more time than it did.

But if you wrote that letter at the time, and made a return, they must have known when it ceased?—I should think so.

How long might it have ceased before Mr. Harrison was sent?—He may have been sent before I was unemployed; but I know that his employment there continued after I was unemployed.

What inspection did Mr. Harrison perform in your district?—The duty of instructing the new postmaster at Glenarm was that he had to attend to.

How long is that ago?—It was in the early part of July; I cannot state the precise day.

Do you know any thing of the monthly accounts that are sent up by the deputies?—Yes; I understand the arrangement of them.

Will you describe the nature of those accounts?—I will first of all commence with the bye letters. There is one account with two sides, a sent side and a received side: on the sent side there are a number of columns for each post-town that the deputy holds an account with; he heads each column accordingly; on that sent side he charges each postmaster with the amount of unpaid letters that he sends to him, and he states also the amount of the post-paid that he sent from his own office to that particular deputy; and so on through the other columns: on the received side of his account the postmaster enters the amount of the unpaid that he has received from his corresponding deputies, and the amount of the post-paid. That is the nature of that account. The deputies hold account one against another, and they may commit frauds unless the surveyor is actively employed in coming upon them unexpectedly.

Are the surveyors ever so employed?—They have just an order to do a particular thing, but they have no power to inspect at the moment; a combination of those deputies could defraud the public to any extent whatever, unless there was some check by personal inspection.

There is an account with Dublin?—Yes, in which there are three columns: there is one in which the amount of the post-paid letters from the particular office for Dublin, or forwarded by Dublin, is entered, in which the deputy charges himself; there is another column, in which he enters the amount of the unpaid letters he receives from Dublin; and there is a column left for him to correct the General Post-office charge, if it be either under or over; so that the postmaster even there may take an advantage.

The amount with which he is ultimately charged is the account which he himself makes out and returns, and makes his affidavit to?—Yes.

Do you understand that upon the truth of that account there is any check, saving his own oath?—Nothing, but his own oath, unless there is a person always on the movement to examine each office; and the dread and fear of such a person coming in upon them at the time would operate as a check.

There is no such person so employed?—No; the surveyor is the person who should do that duty, but we are just kept strictly to the object of the removal of a postmaster or the death of a postmaster; we have no power whatever to proceed without orders.

From what you know of the postmasters you have had to deal with, do you think that the account sent in by them, confirmed only by their own declaration, is an account much to be relied upon?—Indeed I do not suspect any postmaster in my district that he would give a false account; that is so far as my means of information go.

Are you disposed to think that though that is a door to fraud, which appears to be very open, yet that it is an advantage which is not usually taken by the postmasters?—Indeed my opinion is in favour of the postmasters; I think there is an integrity in the province of Ulster, so far as I have the means of ascertaining.

What should you say of any other part of the country?—Of the south of Ireland I have perhaps a different opinion, for they are very poor, and they have not the same habits of industry as those in the north.

What are the description of persons who generally hold the situation of postmaster in the province in which you are?—They are usually shopkeepers.

Are they educated persons, and capable of keeping their accounts?—They generally are able to write and to read, and have some vague idea of accounts; it is very difficult to make them understand their duty perfectly; but the salary is so small it is very difficult to get any person of respectability to take such an appointment with 10*l.* or 20*l.* or 25*l.* a year, and to be confined to the hours; it only surprizes me that there is so much integrity in the office.

Have you had any occasion ever to make a representation to the post-office on any of those points in which you think they are open to fraud, and which a different mode of employing the surveyors would tend to remedy?—No, I never did; for I feared it would be imputed to improper motives; that I wished to be employed, and of course to be paid.

Do you think, so far as you have seen of the surveyors, that four surveyors are sufficient to do the business that is to be done?—I do not; I think the four surveyors would require perhaps four auxiliaries to be occasionally employed; persons who should be well drilled in the detail of the business.

There are four on the establishment at present, and two extras?—There are.

You do not consider that number as more than sufficient?—No.

You think that they are not more than sufficient to do the duty, if done as it ought to be done; but do you think they are more than sufficient, being sent out only specially?—I do not think the duty of the kingdom is effectually done.

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Mr. Wm. Cupples.  
18th Sept. 1823.

Do you not think that they are more than sufficient to do the duty in the manner in which it is done at present?—Indeed, I cannot come to a conclusion upon that.

Are they fully employed?—Certainly not; but if they were employed fully, I think it would take more.

At present they are not by any means fully employed?—Certainly not; I am not fully employed.

Then, as the business at present is conducted, there are more than sufficient?—Certainly.

But if they were employed, as you think they ought to be, with a view to securing the revenue in the best manner, you think they would not be sufficient?—Just so; it is a matter of considerable moment to the public; it should be a matter of vigilance and general superintendence.

In the country, the efficiency of the post-office regulations depends upon the efficiency of the surveyors?—Certainly; the surveyor is the eye of the post-office; he should be zealous, with a discretionary power to act.

Is it no part of your duty as a surveyor, when you happen to be in your district, to send any report to the post-office of the general state of your district?—I never was called upon to make it; I never was ordered to inspect my district; it was always a case just of emergency. There is one matter I would beg to mention. The postmasters have a facility of committing fraud in this way: a letter is dispatched from Dublin erroneously charged; perhaps a double or treble letter, and it is charged only single; the postmaster has power to re-charge it; he may put that into his pocket; there is a column to enter the re-charge in his document, but he may omit it. A surveyor should, upon those occasions, make it his business to inquire of the gentlemen or merchants of the neighbourhood for their letters, and by examining the backs of them he would see the re-charges, the Dublin post-mark would show the date at which it should be entered, and if that was not entered, the postmaster should be called to account.

It rests with the postmaster whether he will charge himself with the additional postage or not?—Yes.

Have you reason to believe that frauds of that kind are committed?—I am afraid there are, because there appear to be very loose ideas among the postmasters and the public; they consider it in some instances, I am afraid, as the perquisite of the postmasters; and that will amount, if it is not watched, to a large sum. There is another thing I will take the liberty of mentioning. If there were any means of putting our salaries on a higher scale, it would be desirable: I have 100*l.* a year, and the other three have 100*l.* a year each; I have been twelve years in the post-office; some of them may have been twenty or thirty; their salary is precisely the same as mine.

Their principal emolument arises from employment?—Yes. “No work no pay” is a very good motto; but I think there should be a somewhat higher salary, even if it were taken off the allowances, which would be a spur.

Have you had any reason to believe that the employment of the surveyors has been given to others as a matter of favour and as a matter of partiality?—I know in many instances that there have been clerks sent down to do the duty of surveyors, and the instances I know were, where some of them were distressed in circumstances, rather poor; there was one young man, Mr. Devitt, he had a large family and was distressed, but he did the duty remarkably well; there was another gentleman of respectable circumstances of the name of Shiell was sent down; he did the duty remarkably well, but it certainly was to the injury of the surveyor for the district. It may be useful to observe that there are a number of villages in this country where there is a great American connection; there has been a great emigration from the province of Ulster; and I think it would tend to the benefit of the country if what are called receiving-houses were established at those villages; it would cause a dispersion of the letters, and save their being thrown into the dead-letter office and lost. I do think that system, if it were pursued, would be a great benefit to the northern part of Ireland particularly; they will give any money for an American letter, and sometimes they are so anxious, they will go to one place and another place, and are quite uncertain where they shall get a letter; they will say, “I will give you a guinea for the letter.”

For what purpose would you propose the receiving-houses?—I will suppose post-offices in particular situations, then I would establish what is called a receiving-house or sub-office, with a messenger to go to that point and deposit the letters with the postmaster, who shall keep an account with the parent office in the district. There are many letters which lie in the post-offices; the postmasters are sometimes so indolent about the delivery of those letters, a poor creature goes about from one office to another, but does not get his letter; the surveyors should examine the alphabet from time to time, and inquire why those letters were not delivered.

Are the postmasters in the habit of sending those letters round the country?—No; the person must call for them. There is another matter I would beg to mention. I think that the Act of Parliament respecting the conveyance of letters in this country is very defective. There are a vast number of letters carried by private individuals; a great illicit conveyance of letters, if it can be so termed; for the twenty-fourth of the King has a most extraordinary clause of exemption from the penalties: it says, “Save and excepting letters carried by friends on their way of journey or travel.” Surely no man will hesitate to carry a letter in his pocket with that clause in his favour.

Is not that clause in fact repealed?—I believe not; there is a clause affecting guards or drivers of coaches; but an individual travelling in a coach may carry his pocket full of letters.

Did you state that you had been twelve years in office, and that you never had had an instruction to make a general inspection of your district?—I never had.

Did you ever hear of any such instruction being given to any one?—Never; I expected naturally that there should be an order to me to inspect my whole district, and to make a return of it; but I suppose that is to be attributed to economy.

Have you ever been sent into your district with a view to any new communications being established?—Very often; I make a branch from one post-town to another; lately I was at Kings-court; it formerly branched from the Enniskillen line, now from the Derry line; in order to be in greater communication with Belfast and Drogheda, it is necessary to state that change to every postmaster, to give him the distance in miles and furlongs, and the postage.

Have you been employed on any survey where a new line was proposed to be established?—Yes.

What is the process in that case?—First of all to acquaint the postmasters in the vicinity. Is the application made to the surveyor of the district, in the first instance?—It is; it is first of all discussed; the application is sent to the surveyor, and he makes his report, stating the advantages or disadvantages, so far as he is competent to judge, and his local knowledge is of course useful in such matters.

Is he directed by the post-office to examine and make a report?—He is.

What is the next proceeding?—Then he is commanded to open any new line of posts that may be thought fit.

Is he commanded to make the arrangement of the country?—Yes, he is; sometimes the superintendent of mail-coaches does it, but most frequently the surveyor. I opened a line of road from Banbridge up to Antrim, about two years ago.

What are the instructions you receive in that case?—They generally write to the surveyor, that an application has been made for a new line of road from A. to B.; lately the direction has been to open the communication, taking care that the expense shall not exceed the old arrangement; it is generally an alteration of line in order to make the communication more convenient.

Have you in your district a great many horse-posts?—Indeed we have a great many.

Do you think there are any where coaches could be advantageously employed?—I think a communication from Belfast to Enniskillen by coach would be very advantageous.

Do you think it would support a coach?—I think it would.

Does it open a new country?—It opens a very respectable country; there is want of a direct post to Armagh, Monaghan, Clones, and Cootehill. Letters for those places go by Newry.

Do you find that great advantage is derived to the particular parts of the country through which or to which coaches have been established, from the circumstance of the establishment of the coaches?—Indeed, I think so; my opinion is strongly in favour of their establishment.

Does it produce additional communication?—Decidedly so.

Did you ever suggest to the post-office the direct communication from Belfast to Enniskillen?—I have had correspondence with the post-office on the subject.

WILLIAM CUPPLES, Surveyor.

Examinations.

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Mr. Wm. Cupples.  
18th Sept. 1823.

### Appendix, No. 153.

Wednesday, 10th September 1823.

Mr. HUGH LANG called in and examined.

IT appears by the book delivered in that you are an Extra Riding Surveyor in the post-office?—I am.

When were you appointed?—I was appointed in April 1816.

Do you know at all what led to your appointment?—I believe the removal of Mr. Parsons, who was on the establishment as surveyor, and the consequent promotion of Mr. Cupples, who was an extra, led to my appointment.

You were not among the first extras that were appointed?—I was not; I am the junior extra.

Do you know how long it is since the practice of appointing extras commenced?—I have no knowledge of that.

Are you in all respects on the same footing with the established officers?—With this exception, that the established officers have the privilege of franking, and they receive 100*l.* a year, which we have not.

You have not the privilege of franking?—No.

How are your communications made?—From the secretary and to the secretary on all occasions.

Your letters go free in his name instead of your own?—Yes; any thing coming to me is franked by the secretary, and I receive it free of course.

How are you paid?—I am paid 1*l.* 6*s.* a day when employed, and a shilling a mile, mileage.

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Mr. Hugh Lang.  
10th Sept. 1823.

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No. 153.

Mr. Hugh Lang.  
10th Sept. 1823.

What are the services on which you have been employed?—I have been sent in charge of an office when the deputy has been dismissed, or there have been causes of complaint against him, in cases of inquiry into his conduct.

In what instances have you been so employed?—I have been employed in charge of Ballymoney office.

How long were you in charge of that office?—I think I was a month in charge of that office, if I recollect right.

When was that?—It was two years back; I was in charge of Castledawson office about five weeks.

Are those the only two offices of which you have been in charge?—I have been in charge of Ballymena office also; I have been in charge of Newton Stewart office some years back.

What duties did you perform in the last year?—I was employed chiefly that year on inquiries on complaints against the postmasters; I had one inquiry that kept me five weeks; I had about 150 witnesses to examine; a charge brought by Mr. Boyd against a postmaster; I was sent to instruct the deputy at Bailieborough; I was sent on an inquiry to Newbliss, in the county of Monaghan, the last year.

How much were you actually employed during the last year?—I cannot exactly say; but I think the emoluments I received during the last year were about 300*l*.

You have no other emoluments but those?—No other.

Do you connect your situation in the office with any out of it?—No; I hold no other situation under the Crown.

Do you hold any situation in your private character?—I do not; I had been a captain of a militia regiment, but they are reduced now.

You are not connected with any firm of business of any description?—No, not at all.

Has it not been usual frequently to employ persons who are not appointed riding surveyors to do the duty of riding surveyors for the office?—I understand it has been the custom to employ those persons.

When they do the duty of riding surveyors they have allowances as riding surveyors?—Yes.

Has that been a frequent practice?—I believe it has; I believe there have been a good many of those gentlemen employed.

Are those who are named as surveyors, Mr. Lees, Mr. Fetherston, Mr. Heron, and Mr. Cupples, competent to do their duty in point of health and strength?—Mr. Lees, Mr. Cupples, and Mr. Heron I am acquainted with, and conceive them perfectly competent in point of health and abilities; Mr. Fetherston I do not know that I ever met but once, but as far as I can judge from appearance he is perfectly capable; Mr. Webb, the other extra surveyor, I never saw.

Is Mr. William Lees the brother of Sir Edward?—He is.

He is a younger brother, probably?—Yes; he is about three-and-thirty, I suppose.

Have they performed their duties in person?—Always in person, I believe.

Have they performed the duty, or has the duty been performed by persons sent out by the office, in many instances where they have not been employed?—That I cannot speak to; I do not know whether they were actually in employment when those persons were sent out or not; wherever we are we receive our orders from the secretary, and we do not know what is going on in the office, or what officers may be out and what officers may be in.

Can you state the names of any of the persons who have been employed occasionally as riding surveyors?—Mr. Clotworthy Devitt; Mr. Harrison has been employed as a riding surveyor.

Is that the Mr. Harrison who is in the secretary's office?—A brother of his, Mr. Charles Harrison; I understand that Mr. Coffey also has been employed as a riding surveyor, and Mr. Burrowes and Mr. Drought.

Have they been employed lately?—I cannot speak to that; I speak to it only from hearsay; Mr. Devitt and Mr. Harrison have been employed within my own knowledge.

When you are employed do you make reports?—I always report to the secretary.

Are those reports official reports?—Yes.

Do you know whether those reports are kept?—I really cannot say; I have no knowledge of that; as soon as they leave us we conceive we have done with them.

How often do you make reports when you are employed?—Never, unless any thing particular occurs when we are in charge; we do not make any report until the person arrives who is to take charge; then we instruct him; provided a person dies, then a surveyor is sent in charge.

Is it not your duty to look to the general conduct of the offices?—We have never been ordered to do so. I conceive it would have a very beneficial effect if we were ordered to do that; but we are ordered on a particular duty, either to take charge of an office, or to instruct a deputy, and we do not take cognizance of any office unless it comes across us in our duty; if we see any thing irregular in the vouchers of the offices in the country we take notice of it; but we are not allowed to go and inspect any number of offices in any part of the country.

Is not your duty that of inspecting the conduct of all the deputy postmasters within the district when they are performing their duties, and if you saw any ill conduct, taking charge of them yourself?—Not at all; unless we receive orders from the secretary to visit a particular office, we are not allowed to go there at all.

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When you do go on an inspection, your inquiries are limited to a particular office?—Yes; if when we are in charge we see any thing wrong in the vouchers of any of the postmasters, we take notice of it immediately; otherwise we are confined to a particular office.

You report when you have closed your duty at a particular office?—Yes; then we are ordered to another office, or off duty, and we never receive our pay till we are ordered out on duty again.

Do you ever remain long off duty?—A considerable time sometimes; sometimes six weeks.

HUGH LANG.

Examinations.

No. 153.

Mr. Hugh Lang.  
10th Sept 1823.

Appendix, No. 154.

20th October 1823.

Mr. ARTHUR WILLIAM WEBB called in and examined.

WHAT is the situation which you hold in the General Post-office?—Extra Surveyor.

By whom were you appointed?—By Lord Rosse, in 1812.

What is the duty of your office?—To transact all the external duties of the office, changing of postmasters, taking charge of post-offices, examining into any inaccuracies, and making any arrangements which may be necessary in the country establishments.

What is the income you receive?—We have no salary; we have travelling charges at the rate of 1s. a mile, and 1*l.* 6*s.* per day.

Your emoluments depend on the quantum of time you are employed?—Exactly.

How often are you generally employed in a year on surveys of that nature?—Indeed I cannot exactly say how often, but probably from three to four months in the year, taking it altogether; some years more, and other years less; but taking it on an average, I should say that I should be from three to four months in the year on duty.

Do you recollect what time you were employed during the last year?—The last year I was very little employed since January.

Are you at all aware from what circumstance that has arisen?—No, I am not; but I have been very little employed during the last year; during the last quarter I was three weeks employed.

In what district were you employed in the last quarter?—In Mr. William Lees's district, the southern district, the towns of Tullow and Ross.

Has each surveyor a district assigned to him?—Yes; the four regular surveyors have a district assigned to each, but they are not confined to that district, but sometimes travel out of it; the two extra surveyors have no district whatever.

Have any other officers been employed in that district of Mr. William Lees's in which you have been employed?—I believe there have.

Have those persons been extra surveyors?—I believe they have been clerks from the office; that there have been one or two during the time. I have not met any of them on duty, but I have heard at the office that there were.

Is it customary, when the extra surveyors are out of employ, to employ clerks from the office to go into that district in which they have been employed?—It has been done. We understood that the nature of our employment was, that we should be employed whenever the other surveyors were on duty, and there was duty to be done. The year before last there was five or six months or more that it was at my own option to be unemployed for particular private reasons. My wife was in so bad a state of health I could not leave her; and during that time there were two or three orders sent to me, and I had to return a letter requesting another person might be sent.

Have you expressed the same wish in the present year?—No; I was unemployed a considerable time in the last quarter, and I wrote a private letter to Mr. Thomas Lees, stating that I was so, and he returned me an answer, stating that it was unknown to himself and the secretary, and they were in want of a surveyor at the time. The clerk who should have made the return had not done so, and they imagined I was on duty, and immediately after there was an order sent to me for duty.

When a clerk is sent from the Post-office to perform the duty of a surveyor, is he remunerated in the same manner as an extra surveyor?—I believe he has the same allowance, 1*l.* 6*s.* a day; and 1*s.* a mile for travelling.

During his absence from his situation, is it within your knowledge whether any other person is employed to do the duties in the office which he has left?—I cannot say from my own observation that it is so, but I believe it is, that extra clerks are employed to do their duty at so much a day; but I know very little of the internal arrangement of the office.

Supposing you are correct in that impression, the public has in point of fact to pay the difference between the clerk's salary in the office to which he belongs, and the sum he receives as compared with that which they would have to pay if a regular surveyor was employed?—I do not know whether the entire amount of his salary is paid to the extra clerk, but he receives the emolument which a surveyor would receive were he employed upon that duty, however that duty might be performed by a clerk or a surveyor.

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Mr. A. W. Webb.  
20th Oct. 1823.

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No. 154.

Mr. A. W. Webb.  
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Does the business of a surveyor require previous information and knowledge to enable him to effect it?—Indeed I should say that it does; the entire external arrangement is entrusted to him.

Do you conceive that a clerk going from the post-office can know the nature of the duties and execute them properly?—I do not think he could execute them perfectly; he might give to a postmaster the instruction of the different vouchers necessary for the performance of his duty, but I do not think he would know how to perform the duty of changing a line of post, not being aware of the nature of the country, for it requires that a surveyor should know the nature of the country, and the lines of road; the line of road through which the post is carried may probably be further than a line which might be taken, and there may be extra expense, and he might lay down a better line; but the clerks in the dead-letter office may be better qualified than some others for that part of the duty.

Would clerks in the inland office be qualified to construct a new line of post?—Not from any thing in the nature of their duties.

Would a clerk in the secretary's office be qualified to construct a new line of posts?—I think not, unless they have taken pains to make themselves acquainted with the nature of the duties of surveyor.

The almost inevitable consequence of sending a clerk from any department of the post-office is, that the public expense would be increased, and the duty less perfectly executed?—I do not think the duty would be so perfectly executed, certainly.

Are not clerks from the secretary's office frequently sent to perform the duties of surveyor?—I have heard that they have been in one or two instances during the time I was employed; during the last quarter I heard of their being.

No reason was assigned to you for your non-employment?—The reason assigned to me by Mr. Lees was, that they were not aware that I was unemployed.

Was that in writing?—Yes; a private letter from Mr. Lees.

Whose duty is it to know whether you are employed?—It might be known in the secretary's office; it is from that office we receive our directions.

Is it not one of those acts of supervision which the secretary is called upon to exercise, and one of more importance than almost any other?—I believe the manner in which it has been done is, that the corresponding clerk, Mr. Crofton, who is at present unwell, is called upon by the secretary to furnish at stated periods the names of the surveyors on duty and those unemployed, and then of course the secretary might be aware of those who are employed or otherwise.

Was not Mr. Lyster corresponding clerk before Mr. Crofton?—Yes.

Mr. Lyster made those returns?—Yes; and to him the secretary of course looked for the information.

The whole establishment of surveyors consists of six only?—Yes; four regular surveyors and two extra. It was found that the four regular surveyors were not competent to do the duty, and the postmasters-general appointed two others. At the time I was appointed, Mr. Cupples and myself were appointed extra surveyors; and a vacancy was created by Mr. Parsons going out, and Mr. Cupples being senior to me succeeded.

The number is not such as to create any difficulty in finding whether they are employed or not?—A reference to the book I should suppose would show that in a moment.

Do you consider six sufficient for the duty?—I think six would be sufficient if they were permitted to use their own discretion.

Has it not been matter of complaint among the surveyors and the extra surveyors, that clerks in the secretary's office have been employed in doing their duty?—Certainly I have heard of a complaint. I have heard two other surveyors mention that it was hard that the duty to which we were appointed, and from which our emolument was to arise, was not confided to us. Certainly at times I have known all the surveyors to be on duty, and an extra clerk required also. One case of the kind occurred to myself; I was called upon to take charge of the office at Galway, and after that there was an account of a mail robbery of a very daring kind taking place at Navan, and I was sent to the neighbourhood of Lord Fingall's to investigate it, and a clerk was sent down from the post-office to take charge of that office. It was three weeks before I could go to Galway to relieve him; I believe all the surveyors were then actually employed.

Generally speaking, does it not frequently occur that the clerks in the post-office are sent when the surveyors are not employed?—Indeed I think so. I think if the surveyors were left more to themselves to go where they found it necessary, it could be done.

Do you think the present establishment of six is sufficient to do the duty, if they were more regularly employed?—I think so, if they were properly employed, and a proper portion of the charge of the kingdom assigned to them, where they heard of any thing wrong to proceed to it; six would be quite adequate to keep the kingdom in a perfect state.

Even supposing emergencies might arise on which it would be necessary to send out extra surveyors, would it not be desirable that the number should be increased, rather than clerks should be sent out from the post-office to perform the duty?—I should think the duty could be done if the surveyors were kept regularly employed; at present the surveyors generally have a residence in the country, to be more central, and in fact hear of nothing irregular until we get a letter from the secretary directing us to proceed so and so, and to make such and such arrangements; the officers at present have not any means of taking

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a tour through their district to see what is wrong, but it is pointed out to them, except that probably when on that tour something may strike the person himself, then he acts upon the case immediately, and reports it.

The surveyors do not on any suggestion of their own go on a survey, but wait for an official direction in all cases?—Certainly, they never go but when expressly ordered by the secretary.

Then can the secretary have a difficulty in ascertaining whether they are employed?—They certainly are never employed without his immediate orders. If, while I was on a survey ordered by him, I saw any thing irregular, I would myself act and inform him I had done so, and then get a sanction to it.

When you are ordered out on a survey, is there any record made in a book?—There is a letter written to the surveyor.

Then by reference to the letters it is seen whether a surveyor is on duty?—Yes.

Then on what ground could Sir Edward Lees or Mr. Thomas Lees state that they were not aware you were off duty?—I apprehend the book is kept by the corresponding clerk, and that they did not refer to it, and that they conceive the surveyors to be on duty when they have no return from that clerk that they are not on duty.

Were you in the post-office before you were appointed a surveyor?—Yes; for about two years I was in the inland office, and Lord Clancarty changed me from the inland office to the alphabet office; it was then in the old post-office, and was in so unwholesome a situation that I burst a blood-vessel attending there, and retired for two years, and was then in the militia waiting for a situation; my father had been a surveyor for five and twenty years, and he expected to be able to get me a situation.

Then you knew your business before you were instructed as surveyor?—I knew a good deal of it.

It is the duty of a surveyor to make arrangements for lines of road, and to take charge of an office; when you are sent down to take charge of an office, do you take charge of the revenue also?—Always.

When you leave it do you pay over the balance to the receiver-general?—We always transmit the money in the same manner as the country postmaster would do, as a remittance.

Is the account always closed when you leave the charge?—It is always closed at the end of the quarter.

So that no balance ever remains in the hands of a surveyor who has gone elsewhere?—It should not; sometimes it has been so; for instance, if we were going on any other duty and were run out of money, we would probably hold the balance we have in hand and give an order on Mr. Harrison, who (as a friend, not officially,) transacts the business for myself, and I believe one or two surveyors, to arrange the matter for us.

How soon does that arrangement take place after a surveyor has left a district, or left the charge of a post-town?—It should be done at the end of the quarter, or as soon after as possible; the extra surveyors have nothing but their payment when on duty, and the warrant may not be received for several weeks if the postmasters-general are in England; but as soon as the warrant is made out Mr. Harrison replaces it out of the money he receives; I have been two months without getting the money which was due to me for duty.

Are any long intervals suffered to elapse before the settlement of the account after a surveyor has left a town?—In some instances I believe there have been.

Do you recollect any instance in your own case, where a balance has remained in hand for any period beyond the quarter?—I believe in my own case there have been one or two instances.

Was there any reason for the account remaining unsettled?—I believe there was no reason for its remaining.

Were not you called upon to settle it?—I believe I was called on; I ought to have done it without being called upon; I believe there was a balance of 16*l.* remaining over for two quarters or three quarters; I was out of town, and unemployed during all that time.

Do you know whether it is a common practice at all for surveyors who are put in charge of towns, to let balances remain long unaccounted for in their hands?—No; I should suppose it is not a common practice; I only know as it respects myself; there was one summer where it remained for two or three quarters unsettled.

You are not aware that you had a balance in hand for two or three years unaccounted for?—No.

Were you ever sent down to Newtown-limavady?—I was in charge of that office in 1820.

When you left that district was there any arrear or balance in your hand?—I believe there was a balance of about 16*l.*, but there was an order on Mr. Harrison to pay it, and he paid it out of what he received for me; I cannot say the exact period I gave the order.

You have not had occasion to settle within the present year for any balance left in your hands?—No; I did settle an account within the present year (a small sum), but I believe there was some difference between Mr. Thompson and Mr. Harrison about that sum, that the money I ordered was not paid immediately.

That sum was not paid very lately?—No, certainly not; the money was in the hands of Mr. Harrison for the purpose of discharging it.

For how long a period?—It was, as well as I can recollect, either the quarter immediately following that, or the next succeeding quarter.

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You are not aware of this having laid over till the 6th of the present month?—I have heard within the last six weeks from Mr. Thompson, that the money had not been paid over by Mr. Harrison, but he charged it to me.

Then, in fact, if there was any advantage from the retention of so small a balance, it was Mr. Harrison who received it?—Certainly, he had the money in his hands.

Had you a dispute about the amount due to you, during the time you were in charge of a post-office?—That was at Galway; I was in charge of that office for five months; I remained in charge from April to the 19th of August following; I then gave over the charge of the office to Mr. Eyre, and I remained for some short time afterwards giving the necessary instruction, and then I reported the fact of my having given the charge over to him, and proceeded to my residence, and then went out on other duty; during that period I was not furnished with any account, and I stated the thing to the secretary, that I had not been furnished with an account during the time I was there. I was afterwards furnished with an account purporting to be an account of the entire period of my charge; on opening this account, it appeared to me there was a balance of four hundred and odd pounds brought against me, which I thought an extraordinary thing; I thought there would be a balance of 150*l.* or 160*l.* by the failure of Lord Ffrench's Bank, by which I was a considerable loser; I was trying to make the best fight I could to get paid those notes, but the bank failed and I lost the money; but the difference of that large balance I could not account for until I looked over the account and saw I was held accountable for the Galway office for a month after I gave up the charge; that was a very heavy sum; this remained a considerable time; it was a great annoyance to me, and at last I was obliged to apply to Lord Rosse to have the account settled, and there was a warrant given to me for the amount that I claimed, which I handed over to Mr. Thompson.

Was there any investigation on the occasion, by Lord Rosse, into the circumstances?—I should rather imagine that there was, but I am not aware that there was; I forwarded statements both to him and to Lord O'Neill in London, stating that it was a great annoyance to me having the business so completely unsettled, and making me responsible, when it appeared from my returns, which were minuted in the office, that I had given over charge of the office, and that I was held accountable for a longer period than I ought.

Did Mr. Eyre fail?—He is in the neighbourhood of Galway; I apprehend he resigned.

Do you apprehend that that difference between 160*l.* and 400*l.* has been lost to the public?—I believe not; I rather imagine Mr. Eyre's securities paid that, that the balance was put against him, and that he himself or his securities paid that.

Mr. Eyre or his securities would not have paid that difference, unless it was clearly established that they were liable to it?—No, certainly not; but I gave up charge of the office on the 19th of August, and the account went on a month after that; that I was not responsible for.

Had you ever written to the secretary to request that the account might be settled?—Yes, I had, and had called upon him.

What answer did he make to you?—He thought there was a difficulty, as the accounts had been closed; but he first wished me to remain accountable, and to settle the business with Mr. Eyre; I did not wish to have any private understanding with him upon the subject.

You said you got a warrant for the repayment of that money?—Yes.

Had you paid it?—No; for the transfer of it rather than for the repayment.

Do you keep a diary of your proceedings when on duty?—Always.

Is that diary returned to the secretary of the office?—I furnish an account at the end of the quarter for the duty I perform; I put in, employed so many days on such and such duty.

Do you swear to it?—Always.

Do you keep a diary of the particular places you were at on particular days?—I generally keep a diary of the actual duty I perform; at first I was not exactly so much aware of the nature of furnishing accounts, and I merely furnished it, So many days on duty, at such a place; but, latterly, I have said, So many days on duty in such a place, so many days in charge of the office, so many days instructing the deputy; and so on.

In the account you return, do you specify how you have been employed each day, or only enumerate the number of days?—I generally specify how I have been employed; So many days in charge of an office, or on any official inquiry, or whatever it may be.

When you went from Galway, did you go immediately on any other duty?—I imagine I went very shortly afterwards, I cannot say whether directly or not, to another town called —.

Would not that show that the charge upon you for that month at Galway could not have been properly made?—Very probably my return for that duty would not have come into the office when the charge against me was first made.

Would not that account have enabled them to correct the charge, supposing they had made it?—Certainly; but at the end of the quarter we are called upon for an account of the duty performed during the quarter; we charge, placing the deputy in charge, and the period when we placed him in charge, and the period up to which we are in charge; but this thing of mine went forward.

Did you prove from returns actually in the post-office that you were not in charge of Galway the month with which you were made responsible?—Certainly; if I had not, they certainly would not have been justified in taking the burthen off my shoulders.

Could



Could not they have had recourse to those documents which would have corrected their charge, previous to your application to Lord Rosse?—No doubt of it.

In what office would those documents be?—I apprehend in the secretary's office.

Then the secretary, or those acting for him, could have ascertained that you were not in charge of Galway at that time?—Certainly; probably they were not aware that I was not in charge at that time.

Have you, as surveyors, any general instructions for the government of your conduct?—No; our instructions are merely that we should act as surveyors when the surveyors are employed. On our appointment, it was supposed that we were to perform the duty of surveyors: the very first or second day after I was appointed, I went into charge of an office at Drogheda, from Dublin.

In the enumeration of the duties attached to your office, one is to take charge of such offices as may appear to be in arrear; has it frequently or ever happened to you in the exercise of your duty, to find at the same time many postmasters in arrear in the district in which you have gone to serve?—I have known a great many to be in arrear in a district, but where I was not called upon to take charge of the office; we take charge only of those that the secretary directs us to do.

Then when the postmasters run into arrear, it is known to the secretary's office?—There is an arrear-list furnished to the secretary's office once a quarter; they know the names of the persons in arrear, and the amount, every quarter; the surveyors are not aware of that unless they go into the town and visit the post-office; but they are not justified in taking charge unless it is of a very flagrant nature.

Are you aware of any regulation compelling the postmasters never to be more than one month in arrear?—There is an order to that effect issued by the secretary, to pay off their arrears within one month.

Supposing a postmaster runs many months, or a year and a half, into arrear, that must be within the cognizance of the secretary?—He must be aware of it, I presume.

Then if he sends out no direction to the surveyor to take possession of that office, he acts in contravention of his order, that no postmaster shall be permitted to be in arrear more than one month?—There was such a letter, I know, written, that no one should be in arrear more than one month; I cannot recollect the date of the letter, but I know there was such a circular, by having met with it.

Has not the result of permitting the postmasters to run so much into arrear been, that much money has been lost to the public?—I cannot say that; many of them have become insolvent, but then there are securities.

It is not known to you that there have been many postmasters who have been in arrear and who have not been able to pay the arrear?—I have known some who have been in arrear and could not pay themselves, but I suppose their securities would have to pay.

If the direction of the secretary were obeyed, could any postmaster ever fail for more than one month's receipt?—No; and if the surveyors had more power, I think they would be able to check it in some measure.

If the surveyors are not sent into charge in cases of that kind, when they occur, will not the consequence be, that there will be very large arrears?—There have been very large arrears in many cases; and in some of those instances the postmasters were perfectly inadequate to the discharge of them.

Do you give security?—Yes; I gave a bond for 500*l.* on entering into the office.

A part of your duty is stated to be, to communicate constantly to the secretary an exact account of your proceedings, founded on the instructions you have received from him?—Yes; when he directs any inquiry or any duty, we correspond with him touching that duty.

When you have completed a survey founded on his special instructions to you, do you communicate to him that it is completed?—In going to take charge, we communicate to him that we have done so, and we cease to keep charge by his instructions; a letter is generally written to us to say that we need not remain any longer. There was a limit on some former occasion, which was not acted up to; it was stated that we should not remain longer than ten days giving a deputy postmaster his instructions; that is an order that cannot be attended with good effect, for a stupid person, when there was much to do, would take more than ten days; and in a small office, and particularly if the person appointed has been an assistant or relation to the former, they would not require three days.

When you have fulfilled all the instructions given to you on taking charge of an office, do you communicate to the secretary that you have completed them?—We are generally discharged by letter from them, saying we need not remain any longer.

When you left Galway, did you communicate to the secretary that you had left, or were leaving?—I believe I did; but in that case I put in a postmaster, and I communicated to him that I had put in a postmaster, which also announced that I had given up the charge.

Would that letter of yours be preserved any where?—I take for granted it would, but I do not know that it would.

No letter of that kind appeared when you called for the documents to shew that you were not answerable for that month?—No; the document I called for was my return of the change, which was preserved; my return of the alteration showed that I had given charge of the office to Mr. Eyre on the day I have stated.

In the year 1822, on reference to an account supplied to this Board, it appears that you were employed only sixty days?—I was employed very little.

Examinations.

No. 154.

*Mr. A. W. Webb.*  
20th Oct. 1823.

Part of that non-employment was at your own special desire?—Yes.

As to the remainder, how was it?—I do not say that I was employed so much as I could wish.

Where was your residence?—In the county of Wexford.

Is it part of your duty as surveyor to take notice of the state of the roads, and the conduct of the mail-coaches and guards, as you pass along?—I should think it is our duty to take notice of the state of the coaches, and I always have done so.

Have you instructions so to do?—No, no instructions; if I saw a mail-coach in any way irregular, a greater number of passengers or luggage more than ought to be, I would take notice of it to the coach proprietor.

Do you at all know on what principle the selection of surveyors is made in the first instance?—No, I do not.

In your case of the balance at Galway, was Mr. Harrison, in your opinion, to blame, in allowing you to be charged with that 400*l.*?—No; Mr. Harrison had nothing to do with that.

Who was the person to blame?—The return was made from the secretary's office to the accountant-general's office, that I had been in charge of the office during that time.

Then the mistake was in the secretary's office?—Yes; it was not at all in the accountant-general's office; they made out the account according to the return made to them.

Though that originated with the secretary's office, the secretary stated that there was a great difficulty in opening the account?—Yes; that the accounts for the quarter had been all closed.

Would there have been any impediment to their taking a retrospective view in the next quarter, and correcting it?—I do not know how far that can be done; I am not sufficiently aware of the internal arrangements of the office to answer that.

As an extra surveyor, you have never been attached to any particular district?—No, never.

So that you cannot at all speak to whether Mr. Henry Parsons, for instance, has ever been employed when you were unemployed?—I know he has been employed, but I cannot say whether I was unemployed at the time.

Do you know whether Mr. Lyster was employed at a time when you were unemployed?—I cannot say; I could ascertain that by reference to the dates; but I cannot take upon me to state that on recollection.

Do you know whether, prior to the appointment of any clerk on the duties of a surveyor, an inquiry is made whether all the surveyors and the extra surveyors are employed?—I do not know whether that is the case; I should imagine that they must be perfectly aware whether they were employed or not.

You feel convinced that the present establishment of six is perfectly sufficient for the duties of the office, if they were kept employed?—I think they are quite sufficient; they are not at all employed in Ireland as they are in England.

The only difference between your situation and that of a surveyor is, that they have a salary?—Yes, and a district; they correspond with the postmasters on some matters as to which we are not called upon to report; the regular surveyors are known to belong to the district, and the postmasters correspond with them; but we are not known to them, and the only correspondence we have is with the persons to whom we have been sent on duty.

Do you consider it your duty to notice any irregularity that comes under your observation?—Most certainly; I should give notice of any irregularity whatever; and if I suspected a fraud, and had strong reason for my suspicion, I should take charge of an office, and inform the secretary; and if he considered that I should not remain, or an intimation of that from him, I should quit the office.

Do you know what is the regulation as to the distances the guards travel?—No; I do not think there is any regulated distance; as nearly as they can average it, they do.

What is the general distance?—I believe from thirty to forty miles generally; that is called the run for a guard.

Does that occur more than once in a day?—No; a guard who leaves Dublin for thirty or forty miles will be idle all to-morrow, and return with the following coach; the arrangement of the guards rests with the superintendent of mail-coaches.

ARTHUR W. WEBB.

Gentlemen,

General Post-office, 22d October 1823.

WITH reference to my examination before your Board on Monday, touching a transaction between the general post-office and myself, with respect to the period I held charge of the office of Galway in 1814, when, on being furnished with an account for the space of time I had charge of the revenue, I found (from some mistake in the return made to the accountant-general's office) I was charged with the receipts of the office for one month after having placed a deputy in the charge. As I stated to your Board that a considerable period elapsed before I could have the affair arranged, so as to be relieved from the appearance of owing a heavy arrear, which, in point of fact, was due by the person I had placed in charge; the circumstance having occurred such a length of time since, that I find on refreshing my recollection, by looking over the documents in the accountant-general's

office, that the postmasters-general's warrant to exonerate me from the apparent arrear (against me) was not by causing the *money* to be paid to my credit, but by a warrant to have the amount transferred from off my shoulders and debited to Mr. Eyre, who was actually the person accountable for the month's revenue, which had been incorrectly charged against me.

There was a sum of money which I at the time paid over to Mr. Thompson, the solicitor, to discharge the sum due by me, as I stated to your Board; this circumstance caused the confusion in my recollection with respect to the manner I had been relieved from the supposed sum to be due by me.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

To the Parliamentary Commissioners  
of Revenue Inquiry.

ARTHUR W. WEBB,  
Ex. Surveyor, G. P. O.

Examinations.

No. 154.

Mr. A. W. Webb.  
20th Oct. 1823.

Appendix, No. 155.

10th December 1823.

THOMAS THOMPSON Esq. called in and examined.

THERE is a man of the name of Mitchell in the British-mail office?—There was.

Sir Edward Lees has stated that there was a charge against that man for subtracting a bill from a letter?—He was out of the way on some civil process, I believe; but during his absence I got an anonymous letter stating that he had passed the half of an English bank note for 5*l.* which was taken out of a letter, and that same was in the possession of a man of the name of Moon or Mooney, in Exchequer-street, whom if taken would let me see it. I got a peace officer, and had Mooney taken, who produced the half bank note, and stated he had received the same from a man of the name of Curren, with whom Mitchell lodged; I had Curren taken, who stated his wife got said half note from Mitchell; I had Curren's wife then brought forward, who confirmed said statement. I then took the information on oath of these three persons, and wrote to Mr. Parkin, the solicitor in London, giving him the date and number, and begging him to go to the Bank and inquire. I got no answer from Mr. Parkin, and I wrote to Mr. Freeling; and Mr. Freeling in the course of a short time wrote to me that he had had inquiry made at the Bank, and that there was no stop put upon the note. The circumstances under which Mr. Mitchell passed the note, as sworn to by Mooney and his wife, appeared to me so suspicious, that I reported the matter to Sir Edward Lees, and told him that I thought Mr. Mitchell, before he was allowed to come back to the office, should account satisfactorily for the manner in which he had got this half note; I stated this to Sir Edward Lees before and after I had learnt there was no stop, as still he might have had it out of a letter. Mr. Mitchell has never come forward since; it rests upon that statement; and I think still he should account satisfactorily for the way that half note came into his possession.

Could they trace any thing at the Bank of England about it?—No; they said there was no stop; but he told the person to whom he passed it to be cautious of passing it, for that if it was passed, it would lead him into difficulty; he passed it in payment of a debt, saying, that when he had got the other half he would give it them, but he never gave them the other half; they were pressing him for money, and he at length gave them that half note, and said, when he got the other half he would give it them, but afterwards he told them not to pass it, for that if they did, he, Mitchell, should come into trouble.

THOMAS THOMPSON.

No. 155.

Thomas Thompson,  
Esq.  
10th Dec. 1823.

Appendix, No. 156.

15th December 1823.

THOMAS THOMPSON Esq. again called in and examined.

YOU are Solicitor to the post-office?—I am.

How long have you held that situation?—Going on twenty-three years; I was appointed in May 1801.

With whom is the appointment?—With the postmasters-general. I was appointed by the late Marquis of Ely.

On your own solicitation?—From my brother's. My brother held an appointment in the Castle at that time, and Lord Ely was one of the Lords of the Treasury, or had been, and it was through that interest.

You had no other reason for your appointment than your brother's solicitation?—No other, I believe; no other.

(107.)

How

No. 156.

Thomas Thompson,  
Esq.  
15th Dec. 1823.

## Examinations.

No. 156.

Thomas Thompson,  
Esq.  
15th Dec. 1923.

How are you paid for your services; have you a salary?—I have a salary of 100*l.* a year, and am paid by taxed bills of costs.

For what is the 100*l.* a year; is it considered as a retaining fee, or does it include any duty?—I write the correspondence of the office, and am in constant attendance there.

Is that included in the salary?—Yes; there is no charge for that.

What is your attendance at the office?—I am there constantly; generally from half past ten or eleven, as long as the duty requires; sometimes till half past five; sometimes earlier, of course; the office closes at four.

Have you private business?—Very little; whatever it is it has mostly grown out of my being solicitor for the post-office, for when I was appointed solicitor I had not been admitted an attorney above two or three months; and the consequence of my getting that appointment was, losing almost all my professional prospects.

Do you consider it necessary to reject private business in consequence of your situation?—I have not got much; for I am obliged to be out of town very often in the middle of term; if I had any weighty business it would be neglected, unless I gave it to my clerk to do.

In preparing your bills of costs, have you any rule that you go by as to the charges?—I prepare them according to what I do, and I prepare them to make them as high as I can, and then the taxing officers of course will reduce them, and allow me what they think right for the work done; my bill of costs is a history of the transaction, as far as the charges go.

Principally prosecutions?—Yes.

What other business is there besides prosecutions?—Writing reports, drawing mail-coach contracts. I have framed several Acts of Parliament for the post-office. A return I made to this Board has detailed the duties pretty much.

What distinction do you make between letters and reports; some letters you write are included in the 100*l.* a year; what other letters are there which you write for which you make a charge?—Memorials, for instance, are submitted to me; then I particularize the thing; I have documents to look to to enable me to answer them; those I call reports; those I allude to are letters from the country.

Do you charge for those letters?—No, unless connected with criminal prosecutions; in fact, the charges I make are before the Board, and they will speak for themselves.

What is your charge for a letter?—Three shillings and four-pence is what the officers allow for writing it; of course it goes through my books; there is a transcript of it.

How often are your bills taxed?—Quarterly.

Are they paid quarterly?—They are.

Do you receive money in advance?—When there has been a great outlay for witnesses expenses, and so on, before I could furnish the account I have sometimes got advances, but nothing more than the money I advanced myself; I have got advances so far as I expended money.

Is the public ever in advance to you?—The public account always owes me.

Then your costs are never paid in advance?—Never.

You never received money in advance on account of costs?—I never have; I have always an expenditure, and a heavy expenditure; I have always been in advance of money for the post-office.

Are there any regular counsel to the post-office?—There is one: Mr. Crofton.

Has he a retaining fee?—No; he has no salary; he is paid only in proportion to what he does.

Is he appointed counsel to the Board, or is it merely that the postmaster has the selection of the counsel for the time?—He is appointed by the postmasters-general. When Judge Vandeleur was promoted to the bench, he was counsel to the post-office; and when he was appointed a Judge, the postmasters-general appointed Mr. Crofton.

Do you charge for attendances on the examinations at the post-office?—No, I am not allowed that.

There has been an examination lately of certain officers in the British-mail office; were you present at that?—I was present one day.

You did not charge for such attendances?—I did not charge for my attendance; but when I have been present for a week I have asked Sir Edward Lees's permission to charge, and sometimes I have been allowed it, and sometimes not.

How do you regulate that charge?—This time twelvemonth there was a very heavy charge against the postmaster at Mohill; there were twenty-eight days employed in the investigation; I was every day in the post-office, I think from eleven to three or four; and I asked Sir Edward Lees's permission. I got the taxing officer to certify that I was entitled; in fact, Sir Edward Lees presided himself the whole time, and he allowed me 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per day for taking down depositions; I took down seven or eight hundred sheets of depositions.

Were you present at the investigation which took place, by Lord Rosse, of Mr. Homan's business?—I was, one day.

Did you charge for that attendance?—I do not think I did; I do not think my costs are furnished for that period; my accounts to October have not been furnished.

That

That inquiry took place in April; have you charged in respect of that investigation?— I really cannot say.

Do any costs arise to you on that occasion?—I really cannot say whether I have charged for attendance or not.

You took the minutes on that occasion?—I did.

Does any charge arise to you for those minutes?—No; if there is any thing charged it is for that attendance; but the accounts are furnished, and they will speak for themselves.

How do you regulate your account, as you cannot say whether you have charged it or not?—Because sometimes when counsel are brought there, and I am detained the whole day in taking depositions, I ask Sir Edward Lees's permission to charge, and sometimes he will allow it, according to the weight of the business and the length of it.

Then you do not consider that 100*l.* to cover your attendance upon the Board?—I do in all cases except those extra occasions.

Then the letters for which you do not charge in your bills of costs, are those you write to deputy postmasters, calling in their arrears?—Yes, those amongst others; there are various letters of the establishment.

What other description of letters are there; suppose Sir Edward Lees writes to you a letter, stating that such circumstances have come to his knowledge, and inquiring whether there will be ground for a criminal prosecution, and you write an answer to that letter, should you make a charge for that letter?—No, I should think not for that reply.

Then what description of other letters can there be, except those to deputy postmasters?—Calling on the securities to pay up the arrears; my letter book would show the various letters; I cannot charge my memory now; there are a great many written; I suppose I write from twelve to sixteen hundred letters annually, for which no charge is made.

That is little more than one letter to each postmaster and their securities?—That is supposing them all to be in arrear; but it is only to those who are in arrear, or their securities, that I write.

What examination takes place into the solvency of the securities?—I send down into the country a letter, of which I have a copy, getting the magistrate to certify.

[*The same was delivered in and read as follows :*]

“ Dublin,                      day of                      182

“ You will please to inform me without delay, and over the printed certificate on the other side, the amount of the yearly income of                      and whom you propose for your security as post                      at together with the name, parish, and county of their place of residence, and the nature and situation of their properties, as without all these particulars it will be impossible for me to report their solvency to the postmasters-general; you will also get the clergyman of your parish, or next magistrate, to sign said certificate, and you will then return this paper to me, together with £                      which is the expense of searches against those persons, and preparing your bond of security.

“ I am, your obedient Servant,

“ Solicitor to the General Post-office.”

[*At the bottom of the back page.*]

“ I certify that the particulars above mentioned, respecting the pecuniary circumstances of                      and                      are hereby set forth, so far as I have heard and verily believe, and I know the parties.

“ Please add your address.”

Do those expenses go to you?—Yes; a guinea and a half is generally the charge made by me.

Is this addressed to the postmaster?—It is addressed to the newly-appointed postmaster; he pays me that for making out his bond.

Then that does not appear in your public accounts?—No; it is no charge brought against the public; but in the return I made of emoluments that is stated.

Have you any knowledge yourself of the state of arrears of the deputy postmasters?—No, none myself; they are returned from the secretary's office to me.

Quarterly?—Yes.

Is it then in your discretion to write to them?—I write to the securities of all that are referred to me, stating that the deputy postmaster of such a place owes such an arrear, and that I am directed by the postmasters-general to make that communication to them, to induce them to use their influence with the deputy to pay it up.

What is the next course?—I do not do any thing further on those that are in the list.

You are aware that there are a great number of the deputy postmasters in arrear?—Yes.

## Examinations.

No. 156.  
 Thomas Thompson,  
 Esq.  
 15th Dec. 1823.

When you have taken that step, and the securities do not interfere to obtain any payment, what is the next step taken?—It remains with the postmasters-general whether they will remove the deputy or permit him to continue; I write to the securities of those persons, and then I return the book back again to the secretary's office; that book shows the deputies who continue in arrear the succeeding quarter by comparing that with the preceding quarter. Sir Edward Lees, or whoever uses the power of dismissing, can see whether a deputy is growing heavier in arrear or working it off.

In looking over the arrears of the deputy postmasters, you are probably aware that a great many have continued a long time in arrear?—A great number.

Then the next quarter they appear again in arrear?—Yes.

And you continue writing to them?—I continue writing to the securities.

In point of fact have you found that that mode of writing to the securities to induce the deputy postmaster to pay, has been effectual?—I think it has, except where the securities are themselves insolvent; I generally conceive that when the security does not interfere with the deputy, he is himself insolvent.

Looking to the cases which remain, would it be a fair presumption that the majority of securities are insolvent?—I cannot speak to that; if I write successively two or three times to the securities of a postmaster, and the arrears continue stationary or increase, I think it is a very fair conclusion that the securities are insolvent; because if a man is a solvent security, he will either withdraw himself from the deputy for whom he is security, or he will use his influence to make him pay up what he is indebted.

Is this you have put in a mere form, or does it lead to your getting good information of the persons proposed as securities for the deputy postmasters?—I think frequently it does not, but it is the best that a person living as I do in Dublin can get.

Would it not be more desirable to write to some person of credibility and character in the place where they reside?—Perhaps there may be no such person in it; there are various towns that have no gentlemen within miles of them. It is supposed that neither a clergyman nor a magistrate would put a signature to that improperly; it is quite different where a man is going to sell property, then he must prove his title to the property; but where a man is going security for another, his reputed circumstances in life are all which can be got at.

Have you taken proceedings against securities frequently?—When the list of dismissed deputies is referred to me, I make the best inquiry I can as to the solvency of the securities of those persons, and I write to the securities; but I only take proceedings against the securities of those whom, on inquiry, I have reason to suppose to be solvent.

That rests with your discretion?—Certainly; my instructions from the office are not to take proceedings unless where there is reasonable hope of succeeding in recovering them.

With respect to attendance, was there any attendance on the inquiry you contemplated respecting Mr. Mitchell?—I attended on Sir Edward Lees, and reported to him the fact. I believe I should correct the deposition I gave here the other day; my object was to put the Board in possession, with as little delay as possible, of the facts; but I omitted to state that Mooney, in Exchequer-street, got the half note from others, who got it from Mitchell.

Did any charge arise out of that proceeding?—I charged for taking the informations of those people, but no charge for waiting on Sir Edward Lees, and explaining the facts.

Who has charge of the bonds that are given by the securities?—I had charge of them till these last two or three years; they have been filed in the exchequer office; the chief remembrancer's office of the court of exchequer.

On the death or insolvency of a security, do you call for another security?—Certainly, when it is ascertained; but many of them die, and their principals never say a word about it. I think the surveyors, when they go round, ought to ascertain the existence and solvency of every deputy postmaster's security.

You occasionally go into the country preparatory to criminal prosecutions, do you not?—I do.

What charge do you make upon those occasions?—Three guineas a day is generally the charge allowed me; I think it is about that; the accounts speak for themselves; the distance is mentioned in my charge, and the taxing officers ascertain the charge by the distance, and the time of course that it will take to go there.

Is there a charge for travelling expenses besides the three guineas a day charged for attendance?—Yes.

When a prosecution is contemplated, you are consulted in the first instance by the post-office?—In fact it is principally myself that finds out the cases; for when a bill or a note, either taken out of the mail or embezzled out of a letter, is tendered at the Bank for payment, and stopped, it devolves upon me to trace it to the hand that embezzled or robbed it, and in general I am the person to find out these matters.

Do you submit the result to the postmasters-general with a view to their deciding whether a prosecution should be ordered?—I submit it to the counsel for the post-office. I never go out on any attendance of that kind without submitting the facts to Sir Edward Lees, and getting his orders; I never institute any prosecution without submitting the case when the informations are put together to the post-office counsel; and I am governed by his

his decision, and concurrence with Sir Edward Lees of course, when a prosecution should be commenced.

How is the direction you get from Sir Edward Lees for commencing such proceedings communicated; is it in writing?—Certainly; if I do not produce a written order for leaving town to the taxing officers, they will not allow me the charge.

Every proceeding out of the office is by direction, is it?—No; when a bill is stopped in the Bank of Ireland I trace it; if I have to trace it out of Dublin I report that to Sir Edward Lees, and state when I think it is necessary that I should attend.

In Dublin you trace the facts, and lay them before counsel, without directions?—Yes, in the city of Dublin, certainly.

Do you prepare a case, and take counsel's opinion, without any direction from Sir Edward Lees, or the postmasters-general?—I prepare a case.

On your own discretion, without communicating with the post-office?—I prepare a case for the post-office counsel, and it lies with him to say whether the prosecution should take place or not.

Do you get a previous direction to do so?—No, I do not; it sometimes occurs that Sir Edward Lees knows all about it; sometimes he may not.

Whenever a transaction comes to your knowledge of fraud or embezzlement in Dublin, do you lay that before Sir Edward Lees, and consult with him whether it is proper to prepare the case for counsel?—The course is to submit it to counsel; I have generally stated it to him; but the course is to submit the facts generally to counsel, and to be governed by the opinion of counsel, whether the case is sufficiently strong to prosecute; unless there is a substantial reason to believe that a conviction will take place, it is not pursued.

Do you charge for all those proceedings in Dublin?—I do.

Do you consider the responsibility of all prosecutions that are instituted to rest on the Board?—On the post-office counsel.

Should you go on to the prosecution on the opinion of the counsel, without the concurrence of the postmasters-general?—Certainly I would.

With regard to Dublin, you exercise your own discretion pretty much as to fraud or embezzlement?—I trace the notes in Dublin, when I have information, and collect the facts of the case, and submit them to the post-office counsel, as well as country prosecutions; every prosecution that I carry on is under the directions of Mr. Crofton; they were under the direction of Judge Vandeleur when he was counsel.

You are in communication probably with the solicitor of the Bank of Ireland?—No; the post-bill office of the Bank of Ireland, from which a bill is issued, if there is a stop put upon it, it is in that office; then they send to me to attend, and I get the bill up, and give an accountable receipt for it, and then I have it.

You communicate to the postmasters-general that you have had such a statement at the Bank?—I do to Sir Edward Lees generally; but the first thing I do is to go to the Bank and get the bill; the more quietly the bills are traced in the first instance the better.

Have you at all considered the Act under which the post-office is constituted?—Of course.

Do you consider acts valid that are performed by one postmaster-general under that Act?—The Act recognizes only a postmaster-general, it does not say postmasters; we have always considered that the office has been in commission when there have been two postmasters.

Do you conceive that the act of one is valid?—I cannot decide upon that question. I know there was an order some years ago that nothing should pass till it was signed by both; but whether that emanated from the postmasters-general themselves, or not, I cannot say.

Practically speaking, you are aware that orders signed by one have been acted upon?—I believe there is no money paid without the order of both.

Orders for the suspension of officers?—Those I have nothing to do with.

Have you been aware of any inconvenience arising from the counteraction of authority in the post-office as now constituted?—I cannot say; a delay in getting money warrants may, perhaps, be called an inconvenience, but I cannot say that it is so.

Have you known any inconvenience in the general conduct of the business?—I cannot speak to that.

You are aware probably that there is a want of harmony between the two postmasters-general at the present time?—I very much regret that it is so; certainly the inference to be drawn from that is, that where there is that want of harmony there must be a corresponding inconvenience.

In case a man loses a post bill in the country, what part of the expense is borne by the individual, and what part by the Crown?—The individual is not put to any expense at all by the tracing of the note; I do the whole of it, and charge the whole of it to the account of the post-office. If a person loses a post bill, he gets another from the Bank on passing a bond of indemnity; if it is afterwards tendered to the Bank for payment and stopped, then it comes into my province as solicitor to trace it, with a view of coming at the delinquent, whether he is a person embezzling money, or is a robber on the highway.

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Thomas Thompson,  
Esq.  
15th Dec. 1823.

The individual himself is put to no expense upon it?—Certainly not; on the contrary, if he is put to expense by being brought to the assizes, he is paid his expenses upon it.

What is the expense of registering the securities of country postmasters?—It was very heavy till the first of August last; it is now very easy under the new Act for regulating the practice of the Court of Exchequer; it will be only 10s. a bond now; it was very nearly 3*l*.

What is the effect of registering them?—It has the effect of a judgment on the property; if they are freehold in this country a search is necessary, and there is a search in that office as well as every other office of record; and a bond being filed, there is the operation of a judgment upon the property; and therefore a person, if he is security for a postmaster, cannot pass his property without this bond being wiped off; that cannot be done without the consent of the postmasters-general and the attorney-general; and before they allow the security to withdraw his bond, they will take care to make the deputy find new security.

The operation of that must have been to increase the difficulty of procuring security for the postmasters?—If they knew of the bond being filed, I think it might interpose a difficulty; though a man would wish to do a kindness to a postmaster, he would not like to give a bond which operates as a bar on his selling his property.

Do the Crown pay the expenses, or the postmasters?—The post-office pays that expense; they were never registered till a few years ago; they are now constantly registered.

Do you know what led to the registering them?—I rather think that it was finding that securities being solvent when they passed those bonds, and afterwards the deputies being found indebted, those securities turned out in the meantime to have become insolvent. I think if the established rule of the post-office was strictly adhered to, there would be no arrear grow up, and that is to write to the securities of deputies in arrear, and not to allow any deputy to go in arrear more than one or two instalments; and if on writing to those securities, the arrear was not found to be diminished, or if it appeared to be increasing, it is quite clear to my mind that the securities are insolvent, and other securities are required; and if that was steadily adhered to, and people were removed on an arrear, the postmasters of all the country would know the consequence of getting into arrear, and would not do it.

Can you give any reason why that rule is not adhered to?—I think the thing is obvious. The postmasters-general appoint to vacant offices; perhaps that friendly influence that is the cause of the appointment may interfere; I cannot say that it does; it is mere matter of inference; it may operate afterwards to serve them in various ways. As to the issuing law process in every case without inquiry, it would be more than commensurate to the money recovered, in my opinion.

Supposing you attended counsel in two or three different cases, is it your practice to charge a separate amount for each attendance in those cases?—I charge for attendance on every case.

Supposing you had two, three, or four in the same day?—If it so happened, I would; but I am sorry to say that is not the case.

Are more counsel than one usually employed?—On the circuits there are three, and on a prosecution in Dublin there are three also; there is only one employed as a consulting counsel.

Are there more briefs made than counsel employed?—No; though it may have occurred; but it is not the rule; I do not know of three instances in twenty-three years; but it has occurred that I have got orders to employ a certain person counsel on the circuit, making four; I have made briefs for four. If any one of the three regular counsel omitted to attend, I would give the person I was desired to employ the brief of the person not attending, and I would not send out the fourth brief to any body: a circumstance of that kind has occurred once or twice.

Do you mean that there are three counsel on each circuit appointed for the post-office business?—Yes, there are.

By appointment or habit?—By appointment of the postmasters-general. When I came into office I found the post-office business was very weighty; I found that my predecessor, the solicitor before me, had complete control over the nomination of counsel. I was a very young man, and found that productive of very great jealousy, and that I made no friends by it. I immediately begged the postmaster-general, I believe it was Sir John Lees, or Sir Edward Lees, to take the nomination of the counsel. The counsel have always been named by the postmasters-general.

Are three counsel invariably employed on each prosecution?—Certainly.

Do you consider it necessary that for every prosecution there should be so many as three?—I think it is for this reason that the post-office prosecutions are very difficult to conduct; there is a chain of evidence necessary, and the men employed must be men of talent, leading men. If we do not employ three at an assize town, the probability is, that when the case comes on, the judges will not wait; the man (if only one) employed may be in the next court on a record case; that is the view taken of employing them.

Do you make any difference in undefended cases?—We do it in every case. I should be most happy that the prisoners always had counsel; there is always a satisfaction in the



man convicted having the benefit of legal advice; the defence generally in the post-office cases is the difficulty of making out a case on behalf of the Crown; there is a preparatory chain of evidence to be gone through before any thing can be applied to the prisoners; if a mail is robbed in going to Cork, we must produce every person through whose hands the bank bill or note went till it was robbed, and if the remotest link of that chain is wanting, the whole falls to the ground.

Are the counsels fees included in your bill?—They are.

What is the situation of counsel to the post-office worth?—I should think from two to three hundred a year.

You prepare all contracts for mail-coach proprietors?—I do.

Is there any opinion taken on the propriety of contracts, or is that solely with the postmasters-general?—The bargain with the contractor is made first, and then, when the particulars are agreed and reduced to writing, that writing is sent to me, with instructions to prepare a contract agreeable to those conditions. It has not been the practice to submit the draft to counsel. When Lord Donoughmore was postmaster-general he ordered drafts of the contracts to be submitted to the counsel; whether that was with a view of throwing emolument into the hands of the counsel or not I cannot say now; it is some years ago.

Have you lately had any new directions with respect to the contracts for mail-coaches?—Whenever an agreement for a contract is entered into with a mail-coach contractor, it is sent to me. It was the wish of Sir Edward Lees, within this year and a half or two years, to introduce the English form, but I have reason to think it will not answer; the principal contractors we have here have told me they never could conform to the rules laid down there.

Is it your opinion that the attempt to enforce contracts in that form will be found difficult in Ireland?—I do not think we shall get contractors; if the postmasters-general held out, perhaps the others would come to them; but it has been a compliment in some instances to take a mail contract: in England it is a compliment to give a man a contract. As to the arrear in the office, I would press upon this Board the necessity of adhering to the established rule of the office, if deputies run into arrear more than a certain sum, to have them removed without preference or partiality; I think a rule of that kind, strictly adhered to, would keep down the arrears of the post-office; I am convinced that law processes never will keep it down.

THOMAS THOMPSON.

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No. 156.

*Thomas Thompson,*

*Esq.*

15th Dec. 1823.

Sir,

General Post-office, 15th December 1823.

WITH reference to my examination this day before the Board, I have the honour to inclose one of the circulars I am in the habit of sending to the securities of deputy postmasters in arrear.

I am, with great respect, your very obedient servant,

THOMAS THOMPSON,

Solicitor to the General Post-office.

T. S. Reynolds, Esq.

" Sir,

General Post-office,

182 .

" I AM commanded by the postmasters-general to acquaint you, that deputy post at for whom you are security, owes to this office months instalments of postage, amounting to about the sum of £ .

" Their lordships object in apprising you of this fact is, that you may have notice thereof, and use your influence with the deputy to have the arrear discharged.

" I have the honour to be, Sir,

" Your very obedient Servant,

" Solicitor to the General Post-office."

Since the foregoing examination, Mr. Thompson recollects that a short time ago the draft of a mail-coach contract was submitted to, and amended by, Mr. Crofton, which it was intended should be a precedent for all future mail-coach contracts. Mr. Thompson regrets extremely his not recollecting this fact when under examination.

THOMAS THOMPSON.

## Examinations.

No. 157.  
Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
1st Oct. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 157.

1st October 1823.

Mr. EDWARD JAMES BAYNES called in and examined.

YOU are at the head of the penny post-office?—I am; I am Comptroller.

When was that first established on its present plan?—In 1810.

You have held the office during the whole of that time?—I have; I was appointed at that time by the Duke of Richmond.

Will you have the goodness to state the manner in which that department is conducted?—We have about eighty-two receiving-houses in the town and country. The country occupies a space round the town of four miles; in one direction, that of Kingstown, it goes about seven miles. The carriers bring them in for the town collection six times a day; for the country twice a day. They are brought into the sorting office in bags, with a docket from each receiving-house. They are in the first instance divided into town and country dispatch, and sorted to the different districts; they are then stamped, those for the city with a penny stamp, those for the country with two-pence; those for the interior we are entitled to one penny on; they are then sorted up in seven divisions for the city, and in seven divisions for the country. The amount of each district is then reckoned by the sorters; they are then handed out to the letter-carriers, and the amount checked off and entered against them for each delivery.

Is there a different charge for those letters received to be delivered in Dublin, and those received through the penny post to be forwarded to the interior?—Upon every letter put into a penny-post receiver for the interior we charge one penny, and that is added in the inland office to those letters.

How many persons have you employed in your office?—I have twelve now.

Has your establishment increased or diminished?—It has decreased. I perform the duty of inspector of receiving-houses.

You have eighty receiving-houses?—We are entitled under the establishment to have ninety; but I think we have but eighty-two.

How many of those are in the country, and how many in town?—Twenty-six in the country, and fifty-six in the town.

Do you reckon those as in town which are in with the Circular-road?—Yes.

How is the money paid?—It is received by the letter-carriers; it is brought to the collector in our office, and by him paid to the receiver-general.

How are the accounts of the letter-carriers checked?—There is a rough account first kept; then it is checked off at every delivery, and entered in our regular charge book, and then taken out into a regular account book against each carrier, the amount of charge for each week.

Is that book checked?—It is.

By whom?—By the president of the office and myself.

With what?—With the daily book, which has each delivery in it. There is against each carrier the amount of the delivery; five shillings, or whatever it may be.

It is checked weekly, by a comparison with the daily account?—Precisely so.

That daily account in the book checks the letter-carriers?—Yes. I beg further to say, that there is always either the president or myself, or if unavoidably absent, which very rarely happens, the senior sorter on duty, present at each dispatch, to see that the charge is properly kept.

What is the use of the president?—I consider the use of the president is, in case of any absence of the comptroller, to perform all the duties, and when the comptroller is present, to assist him.

He is merely to supply the place of the comptroller in case of his absence?—Precisely so; and, in conjunction with him, to see the duty properly done.

He has no duty unless the comptroller is absent, has he?—It is his duty to make out the accounts weekly, and to assist the comptroller in opening and returning all refused and unknown letters, returned twice a week by the carriers.

What does the comptroller do?—He superintends the whole; their duty in a great degree is the same, no doubt.

Who holds the situation of president?—Mr. O'Neill.

Mr. O'Neill also holds the situation of a taxing clerk in the inland office?—Yes.

He appears to be more than usually regular in his attendance in his own office; how is that compatible with the performance of his duty in your office?—The hours are not the same; the duty ceases in my office at six; he makes out all the charges against the carriers.

What number of carriers have you?—Fifty-seven.

What is the pay of a carrier?—Eighteen shillings per week one class; 17s., 16s., 15s., and 14s. other classes.

What determines their ranks?—According to seniority.

In what way is the general delivery divided, and how many persons are appropriated to each portion of that delivery?—The city is divided into seven districts; we have six dispatches

dispatches each day in the city. One set of carriers takes three dispatches; there are two carriers on each district; two carriers go on the first, the third, and the fifth dispatch; there are two others, who take the other three.

What time does it require to perform their duty in each dispatch?—That depends in a great measure on the number of letters; sometimes more, sometimes less; I should think two hours.

That each man is fully employed six hours in the day?—Indeed, I should think so; from five to six. There are some seasons of the year when it is much later than at others.

What is the number of letters that are distributed weekly?—I should think, in the city, about twelve thousand, taking the average of the year, independent of charity letters, which are numerous, and go for one penny a dozen; at some seasons of the year a great many more than at others. This season of the year is much the least; all our great business is when the law courts are sitting, and when the nobility and gentry are in town.

Divide it by the seasons?—I should think from January to July certainly the heaviest part of the year; the other six months the lighter.

From January to July, what should you take as the average daily distribution?—I should take the average daily distribution in Dublin from January to July at from 2,400 to 2,600 letters.

From July to January, what number?—From July to January from 1,500 to 1,800, giving an average of about 2,000 or 2,100, independent of charity letters.

Are all the letter-carriers on duty every day?—Yes, they are.

How many carriers are there employed in the city?—Twenty-eight in the city, and twenty-nine in the country; there are districts in the town where it is very light, and others where it is very heavy; in this part of the town, for instance, the delivery of letters is much heavier than in the liberties, where the distance they have to go is very considerable; if they have only three or four, or six letters, they must go the distance.

How long would it take a man to walk from the post-office to the liberties and back?—About half or three quarters of an hour going, and same returning; but he may have to go through several streets in delivering his letters, which would take a longer time.

What proportion of the letters arrive by the general post, and are delivered from thence through the penny post?—There are some that arrive by the Cork mail; I should think not more than sixty or seventy. The Cork mail arrives at half past five in the evening; those are sent out that night. We generally circulate about 3,000*l.* or 4,000*l.* worth of general post letters in the year.

Is there any thing else within the Circular-road that you deliver except those brought by the Cork mail?—No, unless a mail arrives out of time, and redirected letters from the dead-letter office.

You state that you have eighty-two receiving-houses; what is the payment to them?—£5. a year each, and 1*d.* on every ten letters.

What rules do you observe in establishing a receiving-house?—If a receiving-house happens to become vacant, if applications are made, we take the opinions of persons of respectability residing in the neighbourhood.

In a district where letters are to be distributed through the penny post, on what principle do you establish the different houses; what is the distance you require between one and another?—There is no specific distance required.

You would not fix two at houses next to each other, of course?—No; it is guided according to the population of the district.

The liberties is the most populous part of the city, but is the least productive part?—Yes, just so. There is one receiving-house at the end of Moore-street, and another near the end of Mary-street, near to Capel-street.

Are there not some cases in which they are placed very near others?—Indeed there are.

Who has the regulation of that?—I generally have the placing of them.

When a receiving-house is wanted, what is the process; do you do it of your own authority, or on the application of the magistrates?—Originally it was done by an application to the postmasters-general, and not more than two or three have been added since the original foundation.

Have you any map of Dublin in which the districts are marked?—We have a map, but the districts are not marked.

How many receiving-houses are there in Dame-street, for instance?—Not one; in College-green there is one at the Arcade; there is one on Cork-hill.

Is there any one nearer to the Arcade than Cork-hill?—No, not in that direction.

Is there one in Nassau-street?—No; there is one in Grafton-street, exactly opposite, and one in Clare-street.

Which is the nearest receiving-office to the post-office?—In Mary-street.

How near is that?—I think that is about 400 or 500 yards.

Are there any in Sackville-street?—No.

Is there any account of the per-centage paid to each office?—Yes, a regular account.

[The witness was directed to furnish a map, with the districts and the receiving-houses marked, and an account of the per-centage paid to each receiving-house.]

You state that you have fifty-seven carriers; have you any supernumeraries?—Yes; they are paid by the letter-carriers.

How many have you?—I think we have eight at present.

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Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
1st Oct. 1823.

In what manner are those supernumeraries appointed?—They are appointed by the post-masters-general.

What are they for?—To do the duty in case of illness, or accident, or suspension of the carriers.

Are the duties of the letter-carriers never in any instance performed, except by those supernumeraries who are so appointed?—Never.

The duties of the letter-carriers are never, to your knowledge, performed by any persons who are not regularly appointed as supernumeraries, for the purpose of meeting casualties?—Never, to my knowledge; the duty has not been performed by any except the letter-carriers or a supernumerary.

You do not know that there is a practice among the letter-carriers of having their duty performed by other persons?—No.

You never heard a suspicion of it?—No, never. If I knew of such a thing being done, it would be my duty to have that person discharged.

Are those supernumeraries ever employed, without some ostensible reason being given by the letter-carriers for absenting themselves?—Certainly they are; if a carrier does not attend, a supernumerary is put on.

Do you not expect from that letter-carrier a reason for his non-attendance?—No, not in every instance; he is made to pay the extra while off duty.

Is it not the fact, that there are some who receive 46*l.*, but do no duty, the whole being done by deputy?—There are.

Here is Robert Naggs, for instance, who is a peace-officer?—Yes; he has 17*s.*, and he pays 14*s.* for another doing his duty; also E. Stephens.

Have there not been complaints of the loss of letters?—Yes, there have.

Have those complaints been frequent?—No, not frequent; occasionally.

When those complaints have been made, what has been the course?—An investigation has been made immediately.

Before whom?—Before me; and if the carrier is found in fault, he is punished by suspension.

What is the process?—Suppose a letter addressed to any gentleman, and he came and stated that he had not received that letter, the carrier is called to account for it; if he cannot account for the letter properly, he is put under suspension; if it is a fraudulent case, he would be dismissed; if the letter was actually lost, he would suffer severely.

What would be done if the letter-carrier said he did not receive it?—If he said he did not receive it, we should have no positive proof against him.

Suppose a person swore he put it into the receiving-house, and the carrier swore he never received it?—There are instances of that kind.

What do you do in that case?—We have made every investigation in our power.

What is the investigation you do make?—The investigation has in some instances failed, but that is very rare.

In what recent instance have you traced, and what have you done in consequence of having so traced?—I recollect one case where a letter was delivered where the carrier had not a recollection of the delivery, but it was afterwards found by a servant in the house where it had actually been delivered.

You permit an inferior description of persons to exercise functions requiring the same degree of confidence afforded to the regularly established persons?—They are appointed by the same authority, and with the same investigation.

Are they not of a lower description of persons?—No; they are of precisely the same description.

How are those persons paid?—They are paid so much from the salary of the carrier, and so much from the establishment.

How much are they paid?—They are paid 9*s.* 11*d.* from the carrier, and 4*s.* 1*d.* from the establishment.

Are they all paid alike?—Yes.

Is the pay by agreement with the person whose duty they perform?—No.

That is settled by the office?—Yes; it is paid through the office.

The payment of those supernumeraries is only while they are employed?—Only while they are employed.

The regular 4*s.* 1*d.* is a sort of retaining fee to keep them in readiness, is it not?—No; they do not get that unless they are employed.

Then persons who receive an inferior salary, and that only when they are employed, are not men standing in the same situation as those who receive the full salary always?—They are of the same description of persons.

But the placing the same confidence in them must expose you to greater risk than the employment of the regular established officers?—Inasmuch as they are receiving pay only when they are employed, certainly.

Are there any other persons who habitually employ those deputies besides the man who has been mentioned?—There are two in my department who hold situations.

Where do they hold other situations?—One in the Custom-house and another in the police establishment.

Is it with your consent and countenance that they employ regularly those other persons to perform their duties?—I have always known it, certainly, and it has been the custom.

Who appoints those persons?—They are appointed under the sanction of the postmaster-general.

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Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
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Who practically appoints them?—They are appointed by a letter from Sir Edward Lees, saying that so and so is appointed a carrier.

Do the letters import that they are written by the direction of the postmasters-general?—Yes; the letters are to the solicitor, directing him to take the security.

Do the extras give the security?—They all do.

Who appoints, in fact?—The postmasters-general; some, no doubt, on the recommendation of Sir Edward Lees.

Can you state what are the receipts and the expenditure of the penny post?—The expenditure is about 3,700*l.* a year, and the receipt last year was 3,400*l.*

The expenditure exceeds the receipt?—Yes; this year I think the receipt will exceed the expenditure.

Have the receipts been progressively increasing?—Yes, they have.

What were they three years ago?—I think about 3,100*l.*

Have the expenses of the establishment been from the first the same?—Just the same.

Who was the postmaster-general under whose authority the penny post was instituted?—Lord Clancarty; Lord Rosse and Lord O'Neill were the postmasters-general actually at the time, but it was under Lord Clancarty's regulations it was established.

Did he frame the establishment?—Sir Edward Lees, I understand, did, and it was approved by Lords Clancarty and O'Neill; it was approved before my appointment.

Have the carriers to whom the letters are entrusted any opportunity of retaining possession of them during the night?—They hold in their possession any letters that may be refused, or that they cannot find the person for whom it is, until return day.

Supposing it is impossible for them to deliver them in the day, do they return them into the office?—They return any that are refused, or the persons unknown, twice a week.

At what hour are the last given out?—At six o'clock.

Are the arrangements such that every carrier is bound and able to deliver those letters that are entrusted to him in the day, before the day expires?—Every letter that will be received.

Have you any means of ascertaining whether they are delivered?—Certainly not, unless complaint is made.

Has it ever been under consideration to employ the carriers of the general post in the delivery of the penny post letters?—Never, that I know of.

Do you think it would be practicable to make use of them?—I should think it would be impossible.

Do any persons exercise the privilege of franking letters sent by the penny post?—Yes.

Who are the persons?—I frank by the penny post; Mr. O'Neill and Sir Edward Lees. Mr. Thomas Lees has not franked, but has initialed his letters. When I saw a letter of his, once a week, perhaps, with T. O. L. at the corner, going through, I put my initials at the corner.

Do you mean to say it is confined to once a week that you do that, when you see his letters?—Whenever I see them I do it.

When Mr. Thomas Lees has been acting as pro-secretary, has he not franked?—Always.

In his own name, or that of Sir Edward Lees?—In his own name.

He has been often acting as pro-secretary, has he not?—Yes.

He acts if Sir Edward Lees happens to be absent for a day, does he not?—I believe not for a day; I know he has frequently been acting.

Then he has franked?—Yes.

How do you distinguish, when you have seen his name, whether he was acting as pro-secretary?—I never considered that matter.

Does any such privilege exist by Act of Parliament?—No; there is no privilege at all existing by Act of Parliament; but it is the usage, the same as in London; the comptroller in London franks, and Mr. Freeling.

Can letters go free, franked by other persons, without your knowing it?—No.

Are Sir Edward Lees, or Mr. Thomas Lees, or Mr. O'Neill, or any other persons, in the habit of franking any letters other than their own?—Yes, certainly; for officers in the office I have.

Do officers in the office send and receive their own letters free?—They could not send them free without my name or Mr. O'Neill's.

Do they receive them free?—They do; they are never charged.

In what way do they receive them?—If a letter came into the office directed to an officer he would receive it free.

Who opens the bags?—The sorters.

If a sorter, in opening the bag, finds a letter directed to an officer, does he give it him?—There is a box into which they are put, and they take them out.

And if that officer happened to be standing next to him he would give it to him, probably?—Yes.

And if it was for himself he would take it?—Yes, I suppose so.

How do you know that he does not put into his pocket the letters directed to others instead of himself?—If a person is a thief or a rogue he could certainly do it.

If there is a facility of taking out part of the letters, and they are not carried to account, the number of letters received, or the amount of money due for the letters received at the receiving-house, cannot be accurate?—No, certainly not. The number of letters from the receiving-house is entered in our books; certainly it would be so much the less.

Are the accounts made to agree?—No.

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 Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
 1st Oct. 1823.

Then, in point of fact, the account is no check at all?—It is a check upon the carriers; there is an account taken of the number and amount given to each carrier.

If a person in your office has his own letters free, and the letters to his friends under cover, what check is there?—I must acknowledge, certainly, I have seen a good many for the officers, and have not charged them.

Have you been frequently present at the opening of the secretary's correspondence?—I have.

Has he been in the habit of initialing or marking any of those letters that he received through that correspondence to different persons in the town?—I have seen letters that bore his initials.

Are any newspapers or publications circulated through the penny post?—There are.

What?—There are some periodical works pass through the express clerks, and the newspapers of different editors under the sanction of the clerks of the roads.

They are circulated free?—Yes.

As to general, or to particular editors?—General, I should think.

Do you know?—No. Every paper which comes in to us under the sanction of the clerks of roads is sent out.

Are they numerous?—No; not more than three or four hundred a week.

Do they comprise the provincial papers that pass through the post?—No; they are Dublin papers.

What papers are they, and how are they conducted?—I believe the different papers are Saunders's, the Dublin Journal, the Freeman's Journal, the Antidote, and the Warder; I believe those are nearly the whole.

Are there no other sanctioned?—There are others sanctioned.

Is it a written sanction?—Yes; they are sanctioned by the clerks of roads.

Have you such an order?—Yes, from Mr. Burrowes, who acts for the clerk of the Leinster Road.

[The witness was directed to furnish a copy of all written sanctions to such circulation, free of postage, received within the last five years.]

How do those newspapers which are to pass free of postage come into your office?—The editors bring the papers to the newspaper office, and some of them are brought into my own office.

Are they initialed by any body?—Some of the papers made up by the clerks of roads themselves have the marks of the respective clerks of roads on them; the others are done under the sanction of the clerks of the roads.

Do you mean that the clerks of the roads give you directions to circulate the papers of such and such editors free?—No. There came down orders to circulate such and such papers without charge; those were two, the Warder and the Antidote; we send them out under Mr. Burrowes's direction; and the Dublin Journal.

How long have you received that direction?—I should think the Dublin Journal and Antidote, as well as I recollect, about nine months; the other very lately.

Is there a specific order for each of them?—No.

When was the Warder added?—Very lately; I should suppose about two months ago, to the best of my recollection; but I can furnish the precise date.

Are they made up and directed in the newspaper office?—No; they come made up and directed.

From the editors?—Yes.

Have you any account of the number so circulated?—I can furnish it if it is desired.

[The Witness was directed to furnish such Account.]

Is this a thing perfectly known in the trade, that the papers you have mentioned are so distributed freely?—Perfectly, I believe, as applications were made by others.

Have you had applications to distribute no other papers in the same way?—Yes.

Founded on the practice of your distributing those papers?—Yes.

For what paper have you had an application?—The Weekly Register; and they sent one only, and I believe the paper ceased.

You have had no applications from any other editors?—There was an application from the Evening Mail; but it was considered that the number would be too heavy; that it would delay the correspondence.

You have had no other application?—No.

Is such delivery sanctioned by any law?—No, I am not aware of any.

What consideration has induced you to give this indulgence?—I understood it was carried to the account of the clerks of the roads with Government; they receive a certain sum.

Do the letters from the clerks of roads go free through the penny post?—If a letter marked or in the name of clerk of road came into my office, I would free it.

Supposing you were to see a letter with a stamp upon it, "Leet and De Joncourt," what should you do?—That would go free.

Whatever the nature of the letter was?—Yes.

Do you send many letters of that kind through the penny post?—No.

On what principle do you send those free?—Merely on the principle which has been acted upon, that all the papers of the clerks of roads went free; if I saw a letter of a clerk of roads marked by him with "G. P. O.," I have allowed it to go free.

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Supposing you saw a letter directed to any private individual in this town, and there was a stamp, "Leet and De Joncourt," upon it, would you let it go free?—Yes, certainly.

Does that go to any extent?—No, very trifling.

If you saw any letter from the clerk of the roads with his name and "G. P. O." you would let it go free?—Yes.

Have the clerks of the roads had the privilege of franking with putting the letters "G. P. O."?—I certainly have suffered them to pass; I considered them to belong to their newspaper business.

Is there not a box in your office for what are called free letters?—There is.

Those letters which are to be sent free are put into that box?—Yes.

You have taken those letters and marked them in some way or other, and they have gone free?—Yes. An officer who brought in a letter would, if I was not there, leave it there.

Do not you as a matter of course take the letters out of that box and frank them?—Yes, that is really the case.

Does not it daily happen, that from particular receiving-houses the letter-carriers come without bringing any thing?—Yes, at some collections, from a few receiving-houses.

Is there a day passes in which several messengers do not come in, bringing in bags containing nothing?—From the country districts it is the case, certainly.

From Dublin is it not the case?—From some, certainly.

There will be some receiving-houses from which there are no letters?—Yes, certainly.

To some districts there may be no letters to send; does the messenger go round in that case with an empty bag?—Yes; he has nothing to do in that case. I never knew it to happen in the town; it has happened in the country.

Has it not happened that he had nothing to carry but free letters?—No; I do not recollect any such circumstance. We circulate a great number of charity letters.

Do letters go under cover to any officers of the Government free?—To the Lord Lieutenant and to Mr. Johnson.

Do they not go to Mr. Mangin free?—No.

Do not you consider the letters to Mr. Mangin on public business?—Every letter directed to every officer of the Government, except the Marquis Wellesley and Mr. Johnson, is regularly charged.

Are they paid?—Yes.

How are they paid?—To the letter-carrier.

Are they paid to him at the Castle, when he delivers them?—Certainly. It is only lately that the Lord Lieutenant's have not been charged, in consequence of particular circumstances.

What were the circumstances which occasioned that?—In consequence of some occurrences which took place about six or eight months ago; there were some scandalous letters passed through the post-office, addressed to the Marquis Wellesley and Mr. Johnson, and I received the sanction of Sir Edward Lees to putting under cover every letter directed to them.

What was the intention of that?—To prevent the public seeing them; the addresses of many of them were very insulting; and since that period I have so acted.

[The witness was directed to make a return of all persons in the office under his control holding situations in any other department of the post-office, or any office under Government, or under private employers, distinguishing each.]

Have not a great many letters lately been sent back from the Castle for the purpose of being charged with postage?—Yes, there have.

Has not the postage upon them amounted to a considerable sum?—I am not aware exactly of the amount; they have not come entirely through the penny post-office. I know that some letters coming under cover to officers at the Castle have been sent down to be charged and delivered, and some of them have come through the penny post.

You stated that the post-office made good part of the pay of the extras; is that so in all cases?—No. The persons who have been referred to, Naggs and Stephens, are absent with leave, and they pay to the extra who performs their duty the whole 14s. a week. Government is at no part of that expense.

Naggs and Stephens receive 17s. a week, and pay their substitute 14s., pocketing the difference?—Yes.

Does a person who performs his duty by deputy in this way, but keeps his name upon the books, rise in the gradation from 14s. to 18s. a week, the same as if he were actually performing his duty?—He does, certainly.

Do such persons ever return to do their duty?—Yes, they have done.

Having employed themselves in some other office, or under some individual, during the active part of their lives, when they are unfit for the duty of letter-carriers they come back to perform that duty?—No; my department has not been so long in operation as for that to be felt.

Will not that be the effect of it in future years?—Certainly it may be.

The Commissioners have had furnished to them various dockets from different offices: "Pill-lane, no letters;" "Sir John Rogerson's Quay, no letters;" and so on?—There are some offices, no doubt, on each day, from which there are no letters on every call, but there will be letters most probably, certainly in the course of the day, from each city receiving-house.

Examinations.

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Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
1st Oct. 1823.

What was the reason of the delivery six times a day being established?—For the purpose of trying whether it would increase the revenue establishment.

Has it had that effect?—It has.

To what extent?—I think within the last six months it has increased 300*l.* more than it was at the corresponding period of the last year.

When were the six deliveries established?—In April 1822.

EDW. JS. BAYNES.

RETURN of NEWSPAPERS sent free through Penny post-office, under the privilege of the Clerks of Roads, from January 1810 to 1st October 1823.

January 1810 to October 1823,	} Saunders, Carrick, Freeman, Evening Post, Correspondent, in all, about - - - - 40 daily.
January 1823 to October 1823,	} Antidotes - - - - - 38 weekly.
Jan. 20, 1823, to October 1823,	} Dublin Journals - - - - - 160 weekly.
July 19, 1823, to October 1823,	} Warders - - - - - 135 weekly.
June 6, 1823,	Evening Herald, sent only once - - - 32.
June 7, 1823,	Weekly Register, sent only once - - - 16.

EDW. JS. BAYNES,  
Comptroller.

2d October 1823.

P. S. The above sent under privilege Leinster road; the profits on which go to the credit of the public.

E. J. B.

RETURN stating the NUMBER of LETTERS put into the Penny-post Receiving-houses for Six Months, from 6th January to 5th July 1823, and the TENTHS receivable by each Keeper.

Street or Place.	Number of Letters.	Amount of Tenths.	Street or Place.	Number of Letters.	Amount of Tenths.
		£ s. d.			£ s. d.
Clare-street - -	6,019	2 10 1½	New-street - - -	1,725	0 14 4½
Townsend-street - -	1,444	0 12 0	Meath-street - - -	1,037	0 8 7½
Sir John's Quay - -	927	0 7 8½	Cork-street - - -	1,048	0 8 8½
Holles-street - -	2,520	1 1 0	Cross-Paddle - - -	960	0 8 0
George's Quay - -	1,117	0 9 3½	Frances-street - - -	1,242	0 10 4
Baggot-street - -	3,230	1 6 11	Echlin-lane - - -	1,529	0 12 8½
Molesworth-street - -	5,081	2 2 4	Thomas-street - - -	3,980	1 13 2
Merrion-row - -	9,000	3 15 0	Royal Hospital - - -	1,069	0 8 10½
Stephen's-green - -	2,861	1 3 10	James's-street - - -	2,738	1 2 9½
Anne-street (South) - -	6,076	2 10 7½	Bridge-street - - -	5,133	2 2 9
Harcourt-street - -	5,231	2 3 10	Queen-street - - -	6,341	2 12 7
Grafton-street - -	9,781	4 1 6	Manor-street - - -	978	0 8 1½
King-street (South) - -	2,636	1 1 11½	Barrack-street - - -	1,182	0 9 10
Leeson-street - -	3,883	1 12 4	Brunswick-street - - -	941	0 7 10
Digges-street - -	4,261	1 15 6	Inns Quay - - -	5,197	2 3 3½
Essex-street - -	1,472	0 12 3	Green-street - - -	1,775	0 14 9½
Cork-hill - -	3,731	1 11 1	Ormond Quay (Upper)	3,821	1 11 10
Essex Bridge - -	4,679	1 18 11½	Church-street - - -	697	0 5 9½
Royal Arcade - -	16,320	6 16 0	Pill-lane - - -	2,225	0 18 6½
Werburch-street - -	3,151	1 6 3	King-street (North) - -	2,917	1 3 5½
Stephen-street - -	6,918	2 17 7½	Bolton-street - - -	4,493	1 17 5
Kevin-street - -	1,228	0 10 2½	Dorset-street (Lower)	6,554	2 14 7
Camden-street - -	4,657	1 18 9½	Dorset-street (Upper)	4,957	2 1 3½
Bride-street - -	1,943	0 16 2	Capel-street (Upper)	3,519	1 9 3½



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Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
1st Oct. 1823.

Street or Place.	Number of Letters.	Amount of Tents.			Street or Place.	Number of Letters.	Amount of Tents.		
		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
Ormond Quay (Lower)	2,088	0	17	4½	Black Rock - - -	2,398	0	19	11½
Mary-street - - -	4,113	1	14	3	Kingstown - - -	2,055	0	17	1½
Great Britain-street (Lower) - - -	5,930	2	9	5	Stellorgan - - -	203	0	1	8
Capel-street (Lower) -	5,069	2	2	2½	Dundrum - - -	379	0	3	1½
Great Britain-street (Upper) - - -	8,966	3	14	8	Harold's Cross - - -	185	0	1	6½
Mecklenburgh-street -	2,698	1	2	5½	Rathfarnham - - -	374	0	3	1
Summer-hill (Upper) -	5,797	2	8	3	Roundtown - - -	114	0	0	11
Summer-hill (Lower) -	1,897	0	15	9½	Chapelizod - - -	110	0	0	11
Ball's Bridge - - -	203	0	1	8	Kilmainham - - -	603	0	5	0
Sandy Mount - - -	328	0	2	8½	Castle Knock - - -	290	0	2	5
Donnybrook - - -	328	0	2	8½	Glassnevin - - -	75	0	0	7½
Ringsend - - -	288	0	2	4½	Finglass - - -	106	0	0	10½
Ranelagh - - -	647	0	5	4½	Drumcondra - - -	393	0	3	3
Porto-bello - - -	569	0	4	8½	Douyncarney - - -	44	0	4	0
Rathmines - - -	260	0	2	2	Ratheny - - -	125	0	1	0½
Boosterstown - - -	1,066	0	8	10½	Coolock - - -	78	0	0	7½
					Clontarf Sheds - - -	171	0	1	5
					Windsor Avenue - - -	588	0	4	10½

2d October 1823.

EDWARD J. BAYNES,  
Comptroller.

City Penny Post Receiving-houses.

No. 1 District.

Clare-street.  
Townsend-street.  
Sir John's-quay.  
Hollis-street.  
George's-quay.  
Baggot-street.  
Kildare-street.  
Molesworth-street.  
Merrion-row.

No. 2.

Stephen's-green.  
Anne-street (South).  
Harcourt-street.  
Grafton-street.  
King-street (South).  
Leeson-street.  
Digges-street.  
Essex-street.  
Cork-hill.  
Essex-bridge.

No. 3.

Royal Arcade.  
Werburgh-street.  
Stephen-street.  
Kevin-street.  
Camden-street.  
Bride-street.  
New-street.  
Meath-street.  
Cork-street.  
Cross-Paddle.

No. 4.

Frances-street.  
Echlen-lane.  
Thomas-street.  
Royal Hospital.  
James's-street.  
Bridge-street.

No. 5.

Queen-street.  
Manor-street.  
Barrack-street.  
Brunswick-street.  
Innes-quay.  
Green-street.  
Ormond-quay (Upper).  
Church-street.  
Pill-lane.  
King-street (North).

No. 6.

Bolton-street.  
Dorset-street (Lower).  
Dorset-street (Upper).  
Capel-street.  
Ormond-quay (Lower).  
Mary-street.  
Great Britain-street.  
Capel-street (Lower).

No. 7.

Great Britain-street.  
Mecklenburgh-street.  
Summer-hill (Lower).  
Summer-hill (Upper).

EDW. J. BAYNES,  
Comptroller.

## Examinations.

No. 158.  
Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
2d Oct. 1823.

## Appendix, No. 158.

2d October 1823.

Mr. EDWARD JAMES BAYNES again called in and examined

THE Commissioners understand you are desirous of correcting a part of the evidence you gave yesterday?—I am.

Will you state to what part of the evidence that applies?—To the part where I was asked whether it had ever come to my knowledge that any person but a regular carrier had been employed.

Your answer was, that you had never known it?—Yes. I have found since, that about nine years ago a carrier actually in my office was put off duty for employing his brother, and after being many months off, was reinstated by the postmasters-general.

You do not know that any such circumstances take place now?—The only thing I have a suspicion in my mind of is, towards the Black Rock, of a carrier, that I did understand had got a person to deliver some newspapers; but I rather believe that the practice has been discontinued, if it ever did occur. I remember also a carrier getting his brother, who was in the general office, about two years ago, to do some duty for him; those are the only circumstances I can bring to my recollection.

Have you made any inquiries since yesterday on the subject?—I have; and I have not heard of any other instance.

You did not discover any suspicion being entertained of any of the carriers occasionally or habitually employing other persons to deliver their letters?—None but those I have mentioned; I should be most happy to discover it if it is the case.

EDWARD J. BAYNES.

## Appendix, No. 159.

Tuesday, 9th September 1823.

Mr. JOHN LEE called in and examined.

YOU are in the writing office in the post-office?—I am.

What is your situation in the writing office?—First Clerk.

What is your duty as first clerk in the writing office?—Principally to keep a check on the printers of different forms used by the establishment, and the writing in such books as are used in various offices; books that were heretofore printed that are now written in.

Do you mean heading the books that are to be used in the offices?—Yes.

Why have they ceased to be printed?—Because the expense of printing them was so excessive.

Was it much more than that of writing?—Yes.

How long has that alteration been made?—Since the year 1820.

What other situations do you hold besides that of first clerk?—No other.

Neither in nor out of the post-office?—No.

Are not you a clerk to Sir Harcourt Lees?—No, I am not.

Do you hold no situation from him?—No, none at all.

Are you a friend of Sir Harcourt Lees?—I have had the honour of a long friendship with Sir Harcourt Lees.

Have you the privilege of sending things free through the office?—No.

Are you upon the same footing as the other clerks, and are your letters sent free by Sir Edward Lees?—Yes.

Have you been in the habit of sending things through Sir Edward Lees?—Certainly he has franked my letters occasionally.

Have you been in the habit of sending any thing besides letters?—Only some parcels.

Have you ever circulated any pamphlets?—No.

You are not conscious of any pamphlets having been sent in that way?—I am not.

Do you serve any newspapers?—None.

Do you know whether any newspapers are circulated through Dublin through the penny post-office?—The clerks of the roads newspapers are, I believe.

Do you know of any others?—No.

Do you mean that those which are taken from the clerks of roads are circulated through the penny post free?—I conceive so.

Is that confined to any particular papers?—I believe not; it extends generally.

You are sure it is not confined to the Antidote and the Warder?—I never heard that it was, nor do I know it; I always understood that the clerks of the roads circulated their papers indiscriminately.

Did you ever hear of any paper having been refused to be circulated through the penny post?—No, I do not know of any.

You are sure you have never yourself, under the directions of any body, been accessory to the circulation of any pamphlets through the office; you have never made up any pamphlets to be directed by Sir Edward Lees and sent into the country?—No, I have not.

Is your appointment that of clerk in the writing office?—That is my appointment; I am not on the permanent establishment of the office.

What is this writing office?—It was established in 1820 as an experiment; and on contrasting the stationer's account for the year previous to and subsequent to our appointment, we effected a saving of 1,698*l.* 9*s.* 7½*d.* in the latter year.

Do you mean that there is that difference in the accounts?—Yes, in consequence of the establishment of that office.

Do you know that the same things were prepared in each of the years?—The various forms were not supplied to the same extent in the year 1821 as they were the preceding year; it was not necessary.

You found that there were a great many more forms sent than were required?—We did; it arose from that, and the difference between the charges for printing and writing; the establishing a check in the use of the forms was what occasioned this office to be established.

The check was on the number used?—Yes; and in circumscribing the quantity required.

Are the forms used invariably the same?—Generally.

Can the forms printed for one year be used in the next?—No, not without altering the date.

Were not you employed as a secretary or writer or copier by Sir Harcourt Lees?—I have copied several things for Sir Harcourt Lees before I came into the post-office.

You have copied works for publication, perhaps?—Yes.

Were you employed pretty constantly in that way?—No.

Was he in the habit of employing other persons?—I cannot say. When I have gone to dine at his house, I have sat down in the evening and copied for him, but never in the light of a clerk.

Only as a friend?—Just so.

Are you in the habit of copying for him now?—I have not done so latterly.

How long a time have you ceased to do so?—About six months.

Where is the business of your office conducted in the post-office; is it in a separate room, or a room with other persons?—It is in a separate room.

In that room, has it ever happened to you since you have been in the post-office, to copy any work for or connected with Sir Harcourt Lees?—It has.

What were those?—I have copied some letters for Sir Harcourt Lees; some that were intended for publication.

When did that happen?—At sundry periods after I came into the office.

Did it happen shortly after you came into the office?—It did.

Did that continue from time to time till within these six months?—Very seldom; but I arranged so that it should not interfere with my business. I attended morning and evening, so that the business should not be interrupted by what I did for him.

Can you describe the works you copied for him?—Works that have been printed.

Can you state their names and titles?—I do not remember them. I have copied no pamphlet for him since I came into the post-office; I copied the first of Sir Harcourt Lees's manuscripts before I came into the post-office.

And for that you received no pay?—No sort of remuneration whatever.

Did you connect your appointment to the post-office in any degree with your having worked for Sir Harcourt Lees gratuitously?—It was not; for I resigned a much more beneficial situation in Sir William Burdett's office.

You were not given to understand that your appointment in the post-office was at all in consideration of your having worked gratuitously for Sir Harcourt Lees?—Upon my oath, it was not.

And you did not so understand it?—I did not.

What led to your appointment; who recommended you?—It was Sir Edward Lees, conceiving me an efficient officer, writing a fair hand.

How came he to be acquainted with your hand before you came into the office?—He has seen my writing; he might have seen something I had written for Sir Harcourt Lees.

And you really believe, that without any influence from your connection with Sir Harcourt Lees, because he saw your hand was a fair one, he recommended you to the office?—Yes, I really believe so.

What office did you give up, which you say was more beneficial?—I was cashier in Sir William Burdett's office, who is general agent to the recruiting service in Ireland.

Can you remember any thing further respecting that pamphlet you referred to?—I cannot.

Was it long or short?—It was a long pamphlet; there was a good deal of manuscript; it was published by Underwood in St. Andrew's-street.

Did you fold any copies of that pamphlet up to send about?—I might have done so.

Did you, or did you not?—I think I did.

What was the last connection you had with them in circulating them; did you direct them?—I think I directed some of them.

By what conveyance were they transmitted; will you undertake to say, upon your oath, that the covers enclosing them, when directed by you, did not receive Sir Edward Lees's or

## Examinations.

No. 159.

*Mr. John Lee.*  
9th Sept. 1823.

Mr. Thomas Lees's signature upon the corner, and that they did not go free in consequence?—I do not know; that was previous to my appointment in the post-office: it was a work sold by booksellers in Dublin.

How were those you prepared for transmission directed; they were not directed to the booksellers in Dublin?—No; there were some directed to His Majesty, and there were others addressed to official men in England, who were authorized to receive them free.

Were you concerned in the transmission of any others but those?—I was not.

Of those that you directed, will you undertake to say there were none directed to persons residing in Ireland and out of Dublin?—I am sure there were.

Directed by yourself?—Yes, I think so; at this distance of time I cannot well charge my memory with what I directed.

Did you insert the names on any covers on the corner of which Sir Edward Lees or Mr. Thomas Lees were to sign their names or initials?—I did not.

Have you transmitted any in that manner?—Not that I recollect.

Can you recollect that you did not?—I do not know that I have.

You never received covers from them with their names written at the corner, for you to insert the directions?—Not for any pamphlets of Sir Harcourt Lees.

Did you transmit them to any person in the post-office for the purpose of their inserting any name upon them?—I did not.

This was previous to your appointment in the post-office?—Yes.

What have you written for publication, since you have been in the office, of the works of Sir Harcourt Lees?—I have written various letters that were intended for publication.

Have you written pamphlets that were intended for publication?—No.

You state positively that you have written nothing so large as pamphlets?—No, I do not think I have.

How do you distinguish between a letter and a pamphlet?—That any thing that appears in the shape of a pamphlet bound, is a pamphlet; that any thing which appears in the columns of a newspaper, is a letter.

Have you written any thing which has filled up columns of newspapers?—Some of his letters have appeared in columns.

Those have been copied by you for publication in that office?—Some of them have.

Can you state what number since you have held a situation in the office?—I fear it is quite impossible for me; I do not think I have copied twenty letters for Sir Harcourt Lees.

Are you in the habit of seeing those letters after they are printed?—I am not.

Do you know any thing of the manner in which they are circulated?—I do not; some of the letters he addressed to England. I have directed letters that appeared on a sheet of paper, or a single letter.

Do they go free?—They do; they are addressed to members of Parliament. I think I have some of them.

Is there any body that assists you in this business for Sir Harcourt Lees, or do you do it with your own hand?—I do.

What was the last occasion on which you were thus employed?—The last occasion was, I think, about two months ago.

Can you recollect what the paper or letter was about?—It was a short letter to the Antidote.

Are you at all connected with the Antidote; have you an interest in it?—None whatever.

Are you in the habit of writing for it?—I am not.

Are you in the habit of writing for any newspaper whatever?—No.

Have you been at any time?—I never was.

Did this form a supplement to the Antidote?—No; it was a short letter.

Since you have been in the post-office, have you received no remuneration for this work done for Sir Harcourt Lees?—None whatever; my services were always gratuitous.

Do you consider it to be a part of your post-office duty?—No; mere private friendship, as for any other gentleman.

What was your motive for accepting a situation in the post-office if you had a more lucrative one under Sir William Burdett?—That under Sir William Burdett was not a permanent situation. I considered that if I got into the post-office, that would be permanent, with the prospect of a gradation of rank and increase of salary on the establishment.

Then you considered that it would be to your advantage?—I did.

Did you say you had assisted other persons in writing in the same way as you have assisted Sir Harcourt Lees?—I have assisted Sir Edward Lees.

For publication?—No; no individual for publication.

Have you acted as copying clerk for any individual out of the office?—No.

It appears that the duties of your office leave you a good deal of time to employ in the service of other people?—They do not during office hours.

What is your attendance at the post-office?—From ten to four.

Do you attend during those hours?—I am sometimes not there till after ten, but I very seldom leave until five.

When you are so detained, are you employed in your official duties, or employed in gratuitous services for other persons?—Both.

Do you mean that you are detained by the one or the other?—Sometimes by the one, and sometimes by the other.

Do

Do you mean that the duties of your office detain you beyond those hours, or not?—At certain periods they do.

At what periods?—At the periods when we have a general supply of forms to furnish to the deputy postmasters.

Is that book in your hand-writing—[*The book containing the minutes of the examinations before Lord Rosse*]?—It is.

Under whose instructions did you write it?—Under those of Sir Edward Lees.

Did he give you every thing you transcribed into it?—He did.

Not Mr. Thomas Lees?—No; himself.

In whose writing were they?—They were original documents.

In whose hand-writing were the examinations?—Mr. Burrowes, the minute clerk.

Are you Sir Edward Lees's confidential clerk?—I never considered that I was.

Are you, or are you not; is that the duty which you perform?—I am not his confidential clerk.

Is there any confidential clerk?—I consider the minute clerk the confidential clerk.

The question refers to those minutes that, though connected with the duties of his office, are not official; do you write those notes or letters, or any thing of that kind, for him?—Some of them I do.

Is any other person employed by him in that capacity?—There is.

Who?—Mr. Irvine.

Is he in the writer's office?—He is. He has been latterly employed by him to copy for him.

Do you copy all the orders that he makes?—I do not.

Who does?—The clerks in the secretary's office.

[The witness was directed to produce the forms which he was in the habit of writing for the offices, with copies of the same as formerly printed. After a short time the witness returned with several books.]

How many of those books are printed in the course of a year?—This is the book of the inland office; four of these are printed for a year, one for each quarter.

Who rules them?—They are ruled by the printer.

What is it which you write in the other book which you have with you?—The heading, and the names of all the post towns are written.

Is each page a duplicate of the former?—No.

How long does that book last?—A year. This book was particularly expensive, for this reason: here is the first division for the quarter, then on the next page the second division for the quarter, and so on through all the divisions.

By putting in the list of the post towns, could not a sufficient number of those books for ten years be printed, so as to avoid the expense of setting the press each year?—Then the book would be rendered useless in case of any alterations, by a reduction of post towns, or establishing of new ones.

In what state does this book go out of your hand?—The number of the division, the word cash, the quarter, and the names of the post towns, are written in.

[*The witness produced a paper.*]

How many of those are used in a year?—One each day.

Would not that be cheaper printed than written, if there is so large a number used?—That particular thing might be. Here is another for the British-mail office; one of these also is used each day; we write the words "London, Liverpool, Manchester," and so on.

You write the names of the places for which bags are made up?—Yes.

Those admit of no alteration probably?—There has been an alteration in them since they were begun, but not lately.

How many forms of books and papers do you prepare?—I cannot state the exact number.

Are there thirty or forty different forms?—I dare say there are; there are eight divisions, and there are different towns in each division.

Are the forms the same, only inserting the particular town in the column?—Yes.

Would it not be much cheaper to print some of those papers than to write them?—It was found that it would be cheaper to write them than to pay for the printing.

That is, that it would be cheaper to write them than to print them on the terms on which the contract had been made with Alderman Exshaw?—Yes.

This book [*containing the minutes of the examination before Lord Rosse*] you state is in your handwriting?—It is.

From what did you copy it?—From the original documents.

Was the copy compared with the original documents?—It was.

Can any body certify that it is a faithful copy of the original documents?—I believe it is correct; I have the originals.

There was not in any part any intentional omission or alteration?—There was not.

Was it from the entry in that book [*the book of the British-mail office*] that you made the copy of Mr. Homan's report to the secretary?—No; that, which I presume is a duplicate of it, signed by Mr. Homan and sent to Sir Edward Lees.

This states that the British-mail letters were not forwarded, and that the newspapers were returned

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 Mr. John Lee.  
 9th Sept. 1823.

returned from the inland office to the British-mail office; but that the express newspapers were sent forward?—That was not in the paper which I had, and from which I made the copy. I recollect perfectly that the latter part was not in it.

JOHN LEE.

Writing Office, General Post-Office,  
 3d February 1824.

Sir,

IN our examination before the Parliamentary Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, we stated, that the office had been established to control the accounts of the printer; to check the consumption of the printed papers used by the country postmasters, which, previous to our appointment, had been supplied by the *printer himself*, but are now forwarded by us; and

A STATEMENT showing the saving to the Post Office in Printed Works effected by the establishment

Quarters ended	Amount paid for printing in the three years immediately preceding the establishment of the Writing Office.			
	1818.	1819.	1820.	TOTAL.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
January 5 -	1,491 13 9½	1,200 18 2½	1,212 19 10½	3,905 11 10½
April 5 -	1,239 11 10	1,014 5 4	1,039 4 3	3,293 1 5
July 5 -	1,000 9 11½	1,039 8 0	1,094 7 7½	3,134 5 7
October 5 -	991 13 8½	1,084 4 7	1,060 18 0	3,136 16 3½
TOTAL - £	4,723 9 3½	4,338 16 1½	4,407 9 9	13,469 15 2

General Post Office, }  
 3d February 1824. }

### Appendix, No. 160.

10th December 1823.

Mr. GEORGE IRVINE called in and examined.

No. 160.  
 Mr. George Irvine.  
 10th Dec. 1823.

WHAT situation do you hold in the post-office?—I was attached to the writing office at first; I am still there; and in addition to that, I do duty in the British-mail office.

Are you appointed to any particular duty in the British-mail office; or are you acting for another?—Both; I was appointed to the registering double letters; letters containing inclosures.

Is that a place on the establishment?—It is not.

It is an experiment?—Yes.

What is the amount of your salary from the post-office?—70*l.* from the writing office; 2*s.* 2*d.* each day from the British-mail office; in addition to that, I do the duty of an officer who is under suspension in the British-mail office, so far as regards the outward mail.

Who directed you to do his duty?—It was at the request of Mr. Leet, and the other officers of the British-mail office, who were anxious that his substitute should be a person acquainted with the business; I had previously done duty in that office.

What is your duty in the writing-office?—The principal part of my duty in the writing office consists in receiving the papers prepared by the printer, and supplying the deputy postmasters in the kingdom. The printer himself formerly was in the habit of sending to postmasters on their own application, without keeping any check on the quantity used;

and to write and prepare various documents, the printing of which would be difficult and expensive. And we now take the liberty of requesting you to lay before the Commissioners the accompanying statement, exhibiting the expense of printing for this department for the three years immediately preceding our appointment, and for the like period we have been in office. We also beg, through you, to apprise the Parliamentary Commissioners, that though two gentlemen have lately contracted for furnishing the printed work at *half the prices* of their predecessor, our check on the deputies has prevented their account from reaching even that amount. Their demand for the last quarter, ended the 5th January of this year, was only 296*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.*, being less than one fifth of the charge for the same service for the corresponding quarter of 1818.

T. S. Reynolds, Esq.  
&c. &c. &c.

We are, Sir, your most obedient servants,  
JOHN LEE.  
GEO. IRVINE.

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—  
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Mr. John Lee:  
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of the Writing Office in *three* years ended 5th October 1823, as contrasted with the three preceding years.

Amount paid for printing in the three years subsequent to the establishment of the Writing Office.				NET SAVING.
1821.	1822.	1823.	TOTAL.	
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
864 15 7½	866 12 11	471 12 4½	2,203 0 11	1,702 10 11½
564 8 11	848 3 9	409 2 8½	1,821 15 4½	1,471 6 0½
694 0 5	525 6 0	518 14 8	1,738 1 1	1,396 4 4
585 16 2	324 14 3	455 4 5	8,365 14 10	1,771 1 5½
2,709 1 1½	2,564 16 11	1,854 14 2	7,128 12 2½	6,341 2 11½

GEO. IRVINE.  
JOHN LEE.

in addition to that, we write a number of books, the printing of which is difficult and expensive.

Have you any writing of any other kind?—Yes; in fact, I have prepared almost all the returns which this Board has called for.

Are you employed to write for any other persons besides those connected with the post-office?—I was; I had an employment yielding me 20*s.* a week for doing a little duty in the evenings, and I gave up that, expecting to be better paid in the post-office.

In the post-office do you write for any other persons, or do any other writing, besides that you have already described?—No, I really do not; I have, however, written a number of things; I have written some letters for Sir Harcourt Lees.

How long since?—He has not asked me to write any thing for him lately.

If he were to ask you, you would write them?—Certainly; but when I do, it is not in my regular office hours; in fact, Sir Harcourt seldom or never comes to town till I am about to leave the office for dinner.

Did he pay you for doing this?—I certainly would not take any payment from Sir Harcourt Lees.

Why not?—I believe he did not tender me payment; but if he had, I certainly would not have taken it.

Were those letters intended for publication?—Yes.

Did he bring the paper on which you were to copy them?—He has; sometimes he has followed me to my lodgings; I believe in a few instances he has also brought the paper with him to the post-office; I should remark, however, that I was not the person usually employed by him to copy his papers.

Mr. Lee was the person whom he employed usually, was he not?—Yes; and it was when he was out of the way I was applied to.

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Mr. George Irvine.  
10th Dec. 1823.

## Examinations.

No. 160.

Mr. George Irvine.  
10th Dec. 1823.

Have you often known Mr. Lee employed in the office in writing for Sir Harcourt Lees?—I have known him stay till eleven at night.

Do you know from whence the stationery was drawn which was used on those occasions?—Yes; I must say I have taken the stationery in the office; at the same time Mr. Thomas Lees cautioned me against it; it was when Sir Edward Lees was in England he came and resided in his house, and about eight one evening he came into the office, and he cautioned me not to use the post-office paper for his brother's purposes.

When you and Mr. Lee were so employed till eleven o'clock at night in copying those papers, the writing office remained open till that hour?—The office was not shut.

In the ordinary course of business, at what hour does that office shut?—At four o'clock.

Then every body goes away?—Yes.

Mr. Lee, on those occasions, remained till eleven o'clock?—Yes.

Then the office remained open till that time?—Yes, certainly.

The lights and fire, and so on, of course, were provided till eleven o'clock?—Yes, certainly.

Have you ever received payment for any extra duty in the post-office?—Yes, I have.

Who pays you upon those occasions?—The treasurer, by warrant from the postmasters-general. I made up a regular account, and submitted it to the postmasters-general for their approval.

What is the nature of that duty generally?—I prepared, last year, a number of the returns called for by Parliament; I attended early in the morning, and staid late, and for that I expected and was paid at an additional rate. I have remained in the post-office the whole night, doing duty, very frequently.

Were you ever employed at any of the offices in the post-office on any private business?—No; I have done duty in the room of an officer who was absent.

Have you ever been employed on any private concerns of officers in the post-office in procuring money, or any thing of that kind?—No; I am dependent on my exertions, and have no means of procuring it.

You have not been employed in getting bills discounted for any persons in the office?—No, positively not.

Are you acquainted with a person of the name of Mitchell in the post-office?—Yes; I do part of his duty now in the British-mail office.

Do you know at any time of any proposal being made that you should be appointed in his place?—I made the request myself; I addressed a letter to Lord O'Neill upon the subject.

What was the purport of that letter?—Begging him to give me the appointment to that office, in case of Mr. Mitchell's retirement or removal from office.

What reason had you to suppose Mr. Mitchell would retire?—I understood Mr. Mitchell would come into the possession of some property on the death of an uncle. He had stated that he would retire on the death of that uncle. I had also another reason; Mr. Mitchell's conduct had been reported as so irregular, as to make it probable that his removal would be the consequence.

Did you ever apply to Mr. Mitchell himself on the subject of his resignation?—I did.

What was the nature of that letter?—He was then at Ballymena, in the north of Ireland, where this property to which he has since succeeded was. My situation in the writing office, I should premise, is but a temporary thing. I was anxious to procure a permanent establishment in the post-office, and Mr. Mitchell having stated that in the event of his uncle's death, or his succeeding to this property, he would leave the post-office, if I remember right, said that I would, for the period of his uncle's life-time, give him the greater part of the salary, provided he would resign, and procure the situation for me.

Have you a copy of that letter?—I rather think not; I have no copy of it, certainly.

Do you know the date of the letter?—No; I could know very nearly from the post-office books, for I did Mitchell's duty during the time he was absent.

About what time was it?—I dare say it is about a twelvemonth ago.

Did Mitchell make any answer to that letter?—He did.

Have you his answer?—No; he declined the proposal, and I threw the letter into the fire.

There was no specific sum mentioned in your letter?—I do not know; but there might, but I cannot speak positively. I recollect that I proposed to give the greater part of the sum during his uncle's lifetime. The salary to me would have been 70*l.*, and, if I remember right, I said 50*l.* to him, but I cannot speak positively as to the fact.

Did you propose any persons as securities for this management?—I do not know that I named any person. I certainly said, that in the event of his wanting security, I should endeavour to find it for him.

Did not you mention two individuals?—It is probable I might.

Do you think if you heard the names you could recollect?—If I named them at all, I had them in my mind; and I think I should name Mr. Lyster for one.

And Mr. Thomas Lees?—I do not know, but I might; I certainly think, if I named any, I would mention Mr. Lyster, for I think I mentioned the subject to him.

Have you any recollection about mentioning Mr. Thomas Lees?—It is probable that I might; but I am convinced of this, that I never spoke to him upon the subject; a conversation with Mr. Lyster I certainly had.

Should you have ventured to propose either of them without their sanction?—I think, if I mentioned Mr. Lyster, I had his sanction.

With



Examinations.

No. 160.

*Mr. George Irvine.*  
10th Dec. 1823.

With regard to Mr. Thomas Lees, what was the fact?—I never spoke to him upon the subject.

And yet you mentioned his name?—I am inclined to think that I might; but I am perfectly satisfied that I never mentioned the subject to him.

You never directly or indirectly stated to Mr. Thomas Lees, that your object was to obtain Mr. Mitchell's situation in the British-mail office?—I certainly did not.

Try and recollect whether you did not also communicate to Mr. Thomas Lees the proposition you were likely to make to Mr. Mitchell?—The impression upon my mind is, that I never did.

Are you positive you never did, or is it only a loose recollection?—I certainly never recollect mentioning any proposal to Mr. Thomas Lees further than that I wished to get Mitchell's situation, either on his retirement or his dismissal.

Do you recollect mentioning the proposal to Mr. Lyster?—I do.

You think you stated to Mr. Mitchell that Mr. Lees, as well as Mr. Lyster, would be your security for the payment of the 50*l.* a year?—It is probable I might, but of that I am not certain; Mr. Lyster's name I certainly did mention, and I had his authority for so doing.

You mentioned Mr. Lyster's name in the letter you wrote?—Yes.

Are you quite sure that in that letter you did not mention Mr. Thomas Lees's name as joint security with Mr. Lyster?—I am not certain that I did not.

Do you think you did?—It is probable that I may.

The letter is probably in existence?—If the letter is in existence, it will be I am sure analogous to what I have stated.

You are certain you mentioned Mr. Lyster's name as one security, because you had the authority for it, and you think it is probable you mentioned Mr. Thomas Lees's?—If I mentioned any names at all, I mentioned Mr. Lyster's, for I remember a conversation with him upon the subject.

Had you his authority for saying he would be your security?—In the conversation with Mr. Lyster he desired me to say, I would give him security if he wished it, and I think I conjectured from that that he would be one of them himself, and named him.

Are you quite sure you never stated to Mr. Lees the nature of the proposal you meant to make to Mr. Mitchell?—I have no recollection of ever having done so.

Have you a recollection that you stated to Mr. Lees your intention of applying to Mitchell for a recommendation to the place?—Yes.

At the time you did so, did you not state to him the terms which you proposed to offer?—I think I did not; I cannot remember with certainty; but I have not the most distant recollection of ever having stated it to Mr. Thomas Lees.

What do you think was the purport of what you did state to Mr. Thomas Lees?—That Mitchell had frequently stated, that on his uncle's death he would succeed to a considerable property, and be able to live independent of the office; the uncle was very ill, and Mitchell went to the north of Ireland to visit him; I did his duty, and I wrote to Mitchell.

The question is what you stated to Mr. Lees?—I showed the letter that I prepared for Lord O'Neill to Mr. Lees, before I sent it to his lordship.

That was all?—He approved of it; I prayed his lordship, in the event of Mr. Mitchell's resignation or removal from office, to appoint me in his stead; I have since learnt it was quite vain for me to do so, for there was a certain distinction as to age; no officer could be appointed to that office above the age of twenty, so that I could not have been appointed.

Did you tell Mr. Lees you intended to apply to Mitchell?—I do not know that I did.

If you had no difficulty in stating the nature of the proposition you made to Mr. Lyster, why did you hesitate in stating it to Mr. Thomas Lees; had you any notion that it was wrong?—No, I had not; but I did not think it necessary till I knew whether Mitchell would assent to my terms.

Part of your terms were, that there should be a security?—I think I mentioned to him, that if he wished for a security he should have it.

Do not you think you mentioned the names of the securities?—Yes, I did; I mentioned Mr. Lyster for one.

Whom did you mention for the other?—If I mentioned another, it was Mr. Thomas Lees; I am not certain that I mentioned any.

If you mentioned Mr. Lyster's name for one, it must be on your mind that you mentioned more than one?—I am not certain of that; there is a probability that I might have mentioned both of the gentlemen who are named; I certainly conceived at the time that there would have been nothing imprudent in my asking Mr. Thomas Lees to become security for me, and I flattered myself that I stood so well in his estimation, he would have no objection to be bound for me.

Have you had within the last few weeks any communication with Mr. Lyster upon this subject?—None.

Have you had any communication with Mr. Mitchell on the subject?—No; I saw Mr. Mitchell, but did not speak to him; I have had no communication from Mr. Mitchell for the last five or six months, I think.

Have you had any communication with any body?—None; I was perfectly ignorant of the nature of the business on which I was to be examined.

How many hours is your attendance in the writing office?—From ten to four. I begin business

Examinations.  
 No. 160.  
 Mr. George Irvine.  
 10th Dec. 1823.

business at six in the morning, and it is frequently nearly twelve before it is done. I must be out of bed before half past five, to be in the office in time.

Have you apartments in the post-office?—I have not; I occupy a bed-room just now that belonged to Mr. Mitchell; in addition to that, I have made out the greater part of the Returns which have come before this Board.

Does Captain Burke often come into your office?—I have not seen him in the office these last four months; he was frequently in the habit of coming in.

For what purpose?—He was the editor of the Antidote newspaper, in which Sir Harcourt's letters were published, and he has frequently come about three or four in the afternoon, when he might expect Sir Harcourt, inquiring for him; and has also frequently come inquiring for Mr. Lee. I cannot recollect that he ever paid a visit to myself; I think not.

Was there any writing or copying done for him in the office?—None, that I recollect, further than Sir Harcourt's letters formed part of his business. Mr. Lee wrote a good many more than I did; if I had been asked to write more, I certainly would have done so.

There have been none written lately, you say?—None by me; and, I rather think, Mr. Lee has written none lately. I have seen nothing in preparation in our office for Sir Harcourt Lees for a number of months.

Was Sir Harcourt in the habit of being frequently in the office?—Yes; and is still, almost daily. Mr. Lee and he appear to be on a very intimate footing.

Does he stay long there when he comes?—No.

Does he come merely for the purpose of seeing Mr. Lee, or to superintend the copying of letters?—I have copied nothing for a long time past.

Do you mean three or four months?—I dare say I have copied nothing for Sir Harcourt for six months; I was sick for a considerable time; I may say, I have copied scarcely any thing for Sir Harcourt for the last twelve months.

Has Mr. Lee?—Probably he has; but I was absent from the office the beginning of the year.

GEORGE IRVINE.

### Appendix, No. 161.

Friday, 19th September 1823.

CHARLES JOHNSON Esq. and JOSEPH HUME Esq. called in and examined.

No. 161.  
 Charles Johnson  
 and  
 Joseph Hume,  
 Esqrs.  
 19th Sept. 1823.

SINCE your arrival in Dublin you have been under the directions of the Commissioners employed in examining the detail of the management of the post-office?—(Mr. Johnson—) We have.

Will you have the goodness to state, going through the different parts of it, what observations have occurred to you, of what improvements you think it capable, and how far the practice here resembles that in England in the conduct of the same department?—I believe the most satisfactory mode of answering the question would be to go through the several departments, and to point out the particular heads which have engaged our attention. We found the constitution of the office to be very much the same as in England, conducted by a joint postmaster-general; the manner in which the postmaster-general executes his functions is described to be very similar to the English mode, but in the course of our inquiries we have had every reason to believe that the actual practice has fallen short of that regular daily systematic course of business by which in England all matters relating to the expenditure of the department, the collection of the revenue, and the accommodation and security of the public, are submitted to the postmasters-general, in the reports and statements of responsible officers, through the medium and responsibility of the chief secretary, and are decided and acted upon without delay. It does not appear that in Ireland a similar steady course has been pursued, as there are subjects of importance which have been long under discussion, but which appear to have been brought to no conclusion.

Will you explain a little more in detail what you mean by the practice having fallen short of the regular daily systematic course of business which is pursued in England?—It does not appear that the secretary has been in the same constant communication with the postmasters-general; it appears that his acts and those of the chief clerk have been more independent, and one must say, in many respects, irregular. Many matters seem to be decided in the secretary's office, without any direct authority from the postmasters-general, in a manner to which we are not at all accustomed in England.

In England there is a daily report of every proceeding in the post-office to the postmasters-general, and every question which arises, and upon that his opinion and decision are taken?—On all matters that are not in the ordinary course of business the postmaster-general is consulted, and his decision regulates the answer.

Are the reports and the statements of the officers laid before the postmaster-general in England, or does the secretary himself give his directions on all those reports?—Every report that involves an expenditure of money, or an alteration of a post, is invariably laid before

before the postmaster-general; other reports are laid before the postmaster-general, or not, according to the circumstances of each particular case, not unless they are considered to be of sufficient importance.

Have you had occasion to see any of the daily reports that are stated to be sent habitually to the postmasters-general from the post-office in Ireland?—I have.

Can you state in what respects those reports differ from the species of reports that are usually made in England?—I have seen some reports of the district surveyors, for instance, which appeared to me remarkably well drawn up, and I understand it is the practice to send such reports to the postmasters-general; but in the particular case to which I allude, I found that the report had remained in the office, and no regular decision appeared to have been come to upon it; the subject was still pending, namely, an application for the establishment of a mail-coach to Enniskillen.

The question alluded to the daily report said to be made by the secretary to the postmaster-general of the general transactions in the office; have you seen any of those?—I have not seen those.

It appears in the establishment, that it is the duty of the secretary to transmit the various daily reports of all branches of the business?—I considered that to refer to such as the day produces, not that he sent daily a brief journal or *precis* of all proceedings.

Did not you find this difference in the execution of the duties of the postmasters-general, that whereas in England the postmasters-general must act jointly on all subjects; in Ireland they have the power of acting separately?—It has been stated to me by Sir Edward Lees, and certainly very much to my surprise, that either postmaster was competent to do any act he thought proper.

In observing the practice of the office, did you remark that considerable inconvenience had arisen, or was likely to arise, from the circumstance of their being able to act separately, and of course its being possible that they should entertain adverse opinions on various points, the effects of which would be to prevent any proceedings at all, unless it was taken by Sir Edward Lees, on the authority of one of the other?—I did observe that there had been a great diversity of opinion on some subjects, very much to the detriment of the public service, inasmuch as the subjects themselves had never been decided upon at all; and if there had been any proceeding, it must have emanated from the secretary alone.

The next office to which you come in point of importance is that of the secretary; will you have the goodness to state what is the result of your observations upon the secretary's office?—It of course especially rests with the secretary under the postmaster-general to conduct the whole business of the office; this will require great attendance and laborious exertion, as much as can be fairly expected from any individual; but it is impossible for the secretary to perform his duties with effect, unless he has the most easy and regular communication with his principals.

How is the business conducted by the secretary in London, when the postmasters are absent?—It is conducted by that daily communication which he has with the postmaster-general in reports and letters.

In England, the secretary is in daily and close confidential communication with the postmasters-general?—Undoubtedly, in close and confidential communication.

Did that appear to be the case here, as far as you could judge?—That did not appear to be the case in Ireland.

You hold that to be quite essential to the efficient conduct of the business?—I hold it to be quite essential.

Great benefit is derived from that in the conduct of the business in the English office?—Great benefit; there are advantages which would not be found in any other mode, inasmuch as those reports contain such ample reasons for the measures proposed.

Those reports in the English office lead to a prompt decision on the matter?—To a prompt and regular decision.

Do the emoluments of the secretary appear to be derived in part from salary, and in part from the privilege of sending newspapers as clerk of the Leinster road?—It appears to have been an old regulation of the office, that the secretary should possess the emoluments of clerk of the Leinster road. In England the clerkships of the roads are confined exclusively to the senior officers in the inland department.

Is any part of the emoluments of the secretary in England derived from a privilege connected with the transmission of newspapers?—Far the largest portion of his emoluments is derived from the franking of newspapers to the colonies.

Does he exercise any privilege from the transmission of newspapers free within the United Kingdom?—None whatever, except in the receipt of provincial newspapers to be forwarded to the colonies.

The privilege with respect to England and Scotland is exclusively confined to the clerks of the roads?—It is exclusively confined to the clerks of the roads.

Had you occasion to make any observation on that part of the secretary's office which was personally executed by Sir Edward Lees?—I made no particular observation on the performance of the duties by Sir Edward Lees, conceiving that he was in daily attendance, and that his attention was of course daily given to every part of the duties of the office.

Did it appear to you that, practically, Sir Edward Lees exercised the same personal superintendence over the conduct of the office that was exercised by the secretary in London?—I think that Sir Edward Lees was exercising, or professing to exercise, the same superintendence over the office.

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Do you conceive that the secretary, according to the practice of the English office, is responsible for the general good conduct of the office throughout all its departments?—I have no doubt that he considers himself so responsible, as far as any officer can be responsible for superintendence in that general way.

Then if Sir Edward Lees has stated that he conceives himself not to be responsible, but that the heads of the departments in the office are the persons that are responsible to the postmasters-general for the conduct each of his separate department, is not that in itself an essential practical difference between the English and the Irish officers?—I conceive it is a very striking difference, for I should certainly conceive the secretary responsible, without taking away the responsibility of the subordinate officers themselves.

Have you ever known, in case of particular circumstances of difficulty occurring, or with a view to the execution of any particular purpose, that Mr. Freeling has come into the office and seen to or directed the execution of particular things?—I cannot recollect any particular occurrence which may have brought the secretary into the inland office, but there is hardly a day in the year in which he is not consulted by one or more departments upon their own business.

In case of an interference between the duties of any of the principal officers under him, and a difference of opinion existing with respect to the execution of any particular measure, would he not, as far as you have observed the practice of the office, conceive it was his business personally to interfere and give his directions?—Undoubtedly he would in such a case consider it incumbent upon him to interfere and give directions, as representing the postmaster-general, whom all the officers consider him to represent, till the directions of the postmaster-general can be obtained.

The next officer in rank is the chief clerk; is there any office corresponding with that in England?—There is no officer in England exactly corresponding with the chief clerk in Ireland, because there is the intermediate office in England of assistant secretary.

The chief clerk in Dublin unites, in some degree, the office of chief clerk with that of assistant secretary?—In the establishment he is called nothing more than chief clerk, but in that capacity, there being no assistant secretary, he of course must act in the absence of the secretary as his assistant, and also in the daily details.

What power does the assistant secretary in England exercise in the absence of the secretary?—In the absence of the secretary he would exercise precisely the same power as the secretary himself.

He is appointed assistant secretary by the special act of the postmasters-general, is he not?—The great pressure of the business led the postmasters-general some years since to apply to the treasury for authority to appoint an assistant secretary, and under that appointment he exercises the same authority as the secretary whenever he is not present.

In the appointment itself the powers he was to exercise were probably distinctly described?—I am not aware that there is any deputation or instructions defining what he is to do. I believe there is nothing but the treasury authority for the appointment of an assistant secretary, in which Mr. Henry Freeling was probably named, but I do not recollect the circumstances with accuracy.

Does the secretary in the post-office in England, or the assistant secretary in his absence, exercise the power of imposing fines on the different officers in the department?—There is no regular practice in England of levying fines on any of the officers; if there be any fines now levied they are very small in amount, and of every rare occurrence. Mail-guards, for instance, are not fined but suspended; I believe it is the same with respect to the inland letter carriers.

(*Mr. Hume.*)—There are some fines imposed, but very small in amount.

The fines which are imposed are old established fines, and not at the will of the secretary on particular circumstances?—No, certainly not.

On the 16th of May 1821, a letter of this description was written, signed "Thomas Orde Lees, pro-secretary. In reference to the report of this morning, I beg to inform you, that for every minute after two minutes that the coaches shall be too late, I shall fine each officer in your department one shilling;" addressed to "Mr. Donlevy, head of the inland office." In a letter of the 22d of August 1822, signed "Edward S. Lees, secretary," addressed "to the head of the inland office," there is this passage: "The English mail arrived yesterday very early; there were only six thousand letters to be assorted for the entire kingdom, and the Clonmel coach was not dispatched till twenty-five minutes after seven, though it appears by the report that the mail was dispatched as early as ten and fifteen minutes after seven, when the letters exceeded nine thousand; the president is therefore fined 5*l.*, and every officer under him connected with the Cork road, 20*s.*; the same will be repeated at any time when the dispatch exceeds a quarter after seven, unless where it can be justified." Do you recollect any such orders ever having been issued in the London post-office on any occasion, or any such power assumed by the secretary?—

(*Mr. Johnson.*)—Never, on any occasion whatever.

Is it the practice in England to impose any fines on the contractors of the mail-coaches? None whatever.

In case of their not performing their contract, what is the course?—In case of non-performance of the contract, and remonstrance not having the right effect, it has been the course in England to issue an Exchequer process for the penalty.

But the first process is a representation to them upon the subject?—Yes; it is merely a letter to them from the superintendent upon the subject.

In case of any of the subordinate officers, the sorters or taxing clerks, absenting themselves,

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selves, or being dilatory in the performance of their duties, in what way is the observation of the secretary or the postmaster-general brought to it, or on whom does it depend to correct and punish it?—The principal officer of each department being, of course, responsible for the accuracy of those under him, would, in any case of that nature, make his report to the secretary, and the secretary to the postmasters-general; each officer has, of course, a power of immediate suspension in his own department; but it is equally incumbent upon him immediately to communicate the fact and the reasons of it to the secretary, for the information of the postmaster-general.

The postmaster-general either continues or takes off the suspension?—Such a suspension, of course, would not continue without the postmaster-general's authority, and the duration of it would depend upon the nature of the offence.

Supposing an officer was put under suspension, would that suspension ever be removed without reference to the postmaster-general?—I do not know that a suspension might not be removed on the authority of the secretary, but still both the suspension and the removal would go before the postmaster-general. Very probably, before the secretary could obtain the directions of the postmaster-general, the suspension might be removed, the secretary acting in such cases on his own discretion and his own responsibility.

The chief clerk is also one of the clerks of roads?—He is.

Are you acquainted with the privileges the clerks of the roads in Ireland have been in the habit of enjoying?—Yes.

You are acquainted also with the privileges that are exercised by the clerks of roads in England?—Certainly.

Will you have the goodness to state in what respect the exercise of the privilege in the one country and in the other appears to be different?—The clerks of roads in Ireland, as well as in England, have a privilege of franking stamped newspapers throughout the country; but in Ireland they appear also to have considered themselves entitled to a privilege of franking periodical publications, which has been withdrawn from the English clerks of the roads for a great number of years; they have also considered themselves entitled to send and receive letters free on the business of their respective roads; and they state that they have not considered themselves as practising any irregularity by receiving and sending, free of postage, letters on any subjects whatever, without limitation either as to the number or weight.

No such privilege is assumed or permitted to the clerks in England?—No; nor can be practised without a violation of orders and some secrecy, if practised at all.

The succession to the situations of clerks of roads in England is strictly regulated by the constitution of the office, and they are succeeded to by the senior clerks without question, except as to their previous good conduct?—Always.

They are none of them given, as that of the Munster road in Ireland, by favour?—None.

Did you make any observations upon the attendance on the part of the chief clerk?—The chief clerk professes to attend the duties of his office from ten in the morning till four, and as much longer as may be necessary. It is not in our power to state whether, in point of fact, he does give that attendance.

Did it appear to you that such regular attendance was necessary on his part to the due performance of the duties of that office?—Most undoubtedly.

Will you state whether the duties of the senior clerk in the office are the same as those of the senior clerk in the office in England?—The duties of the senior clerk are the same as the duty of one clerk in the secretary's office in London; to enter all remittances made by the country postmasters, which come up monthly, or twice a month, according to the scale of the office. The secretary's office is merely the medium of transmission for those remittances into the hands of the treasurer, and affords at the same time, for the accountant-general, a check upon the treasurer's receipts. It is contrary to this clerk's duty to detain any thing so received a single day in his own possession, but on the day on which the remittance is received it is to be recorded in his book, and made over to the treasurer.

Is the practice in that respect similar to that observed in England?—Exactly.

All the remittances from the postmasters come in the first instance to the remittance clerk?—They do, under the secretary's care; but in England it occasionally happens that a postmaster will order a sum of money to be paid directly into the hands of the receiver-general.

There did not appear to be any such practice in Ireland?—It did not occur to me to inquire.

Does the remittance clerk, as such, acknowledge the receipt of those remittances to the postmasters, or are they acknowledged by the treasurer when passed over to him?—They are acknowledged by the remittance clerk for the secretary.

Did any thing come under observation as to whether the acknowledgment was made when half notes were sent up by the deputy postmasters in the way of remittance?—We did not hear that any complaint had been made, but certainly took it for granted that every remittance was acknowledged by the first post, whether consisting of half or of whole notes.

You state that it is the duty of the clerk to pass over on the same day to the treasurer whatever he receives?—It is undoubtedly his duty so to do; he only keeps a pay book for the use of the accountant-general and receiver-general, and to enable himself to acknowledge the remittances.

Have you any reason to believe that any irregularity had taken place in this respect?—We received the strongest assurances from the remittance clerk that his practice was such

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as he described, and nothing occurred which induced us to suppose that he neglected it; it did not, however, appear that he was quite so active as he ought to be in applying to the postmasters who had not remitted their instalments with punctuality, which is also a part of his duty.

Was the correspondence with the postmasters on the subject of their arrears a part of his duty?—When a postmaster fails in making his remittance monthly, it is the duty of the remittance clerk to apply to him, in a circular form, reminding him of the neglect, and calling for the remittance immediately.

It appears that the salary of this situation is in part made out by the salary of a clerk in the inland office, the duties of which, of course, from the attendance it would require, must be incompatible with his efficient discharge of his duties in the secretary's office; does not it appear to you that it would be infinitely more desirable he should be paid for his services by a direct salary than by an appointment in the inland office, the duties of which must in consequence be performed by some inferior person?—Undoubtedly; he ought to belong to one department, and to be paid for his services in that department to which he belongs.

Is it the duty of the remittance clerk to bring under the notice of the secretary, or of the postmasters-general, the state of the arrears of the deputy postmasters?—It is his duty to bring under the notice of the secretary every deputy postmaster who has not remitted his instalments consistently with the regulations.

Do you know whether that is done periodically, or only when it is called for?—I conceive that it is the duty of this clerk to submit to the secretary at some interval between every month the state of the arrears, and that it should be an object of the secretary's own attention to inquire into it.

In the course of your inquiries in the office, did you find that that was the fact?—It was stated by the remittance clerk that he did apply to all such deputies as were in arrear; but we did not understand that it had been done with all the punctuality which so important a matter requires; the excess of the deputy postmasters balances on the last quarter day is a proof that sufficient attention has not been paid to this matter.

What is the practice in England on that subject?—In England the practice is somewhat different, as the check is now placed in the accountant-general's office itself, and every postmaster who omits to remit at the time required receives an application before the recurrence of the next instalment day.

If the arrear should continue without a satisfactory explanation for a certain time, what is the proceeding taken in the English post-office with respect to such deputy?—If the deputy postmaster on such an application does not remit, or give a satisfactory reason for not doing so, he very soon is placed into the hands of the solicitor, and process is issued against him; if it becomes frequently necessary to have recourse to such proceedings, the postmaster is invariably removed. I believe latterly if a postmaster gets into the hands of the solicitor a second time, he is, *ipso facto*, dismissed.

Have you any observations to make upon the second senior clerk and the junior clerk in that office?—No particular observation; their duties are general, and performed under the immediate direction of the secretary.

There is in that office what is called a minute clerk; what are the duties which he performs, and is there any corresponding situation in the English office?—The duties he performs are fully described in the establishment, and are very necessary; there is no similar officer now in England, but the same duties are performed by other officers. The suspension fund seems to be under the care of the minute clerk in Dublin, a fund which of course does not exist in England.

The next office in point of order is the letter-bill office?—That is the next in the establishment book.

Have you any observation to make upon the manner in which the duties of that office are performed?—We have no particular observation to make upon the letter-bill office, the duties of which appear to be very accurately performed; in fact they are of a very simple nature, but require a strict attention, inasmuch as any frauds by short returns of the letter bills cannot be discovered except by a report from the observation of the clerks employed here.

This office, as it appears, makes up the monthly charges on the deputies for unpaid letters from, and paid letters to, Dublin, which charges are signed by the secretary before they are transferred to the accountant-general; is that signature of the secretary considered as a certificate of the accuracy of those charges; or what does the signature of the secretary, before they are transferred to the accountant-general, mean to convey?—It is impossible that the secretary can have any actual knowledge of the accuracy of those voluminous accounts, and I presume that his signature can go for nothing more than a satisfaction to the accountant-general that the secretary believes the duties of this office have been regularly and properly performed.

In London do they pass through the hands of the secretary at all?—Not at all; nor do I conceive it at all necessary that they should.

You conceive that that practice is a preferable one in which they go directly to the accountant-general with the signature of the chief clerk of the department, who is responsible for the accuracy of what he states?—I think it is the preferable mode; for the signature of the secretary can in fact give very little security on the subject.

The first clerk in this office appears to hold also the situation of an inland sorter: the same observation, as applied to the remittance clerk in the secretary's office, also in some degree applies to this; do you think it would be preferable to pay him for the more important

portant duties he performs in this office directly by a proper remuneration, rather than by giving him a salary of another office, the duties of which must be performed by a deputy?—As it is stated that his duty in respect of the letter bills employs him six hours a day, the same observation would apply to him as to the remittance clerk.

Is it not the practice of the deputy postmasters in the country to send up a bill in the bag with the letters which they send up to Dublin?—Yes.

The Commissioners understand it has long been the practice with the Dublin officers for every officer in the department to receive his letters immediately upon the opening of the bags, or in their progress through the different operations in the post-office, free of charge, and that those letters are therefore not in any shape carried to account; do you understand in what manner in such a case the charges of the post-office can be made to tally with the bills that are made up by the deputy postmasters?—If the report of the morning did exhibit a real balance, it would not be possible to take any letters out of the office without immediately disturbing the account; but, in point of fact, the balance must be considered a fictitious one. The only thing that is considered essential on the part of the clerk who opens the bag, is to ascertain the correct amount of the paid letters, in order that the postmaster may not under-debit himself with them: the amount of the unpaid is a matter of very little consequence, provided that the duties of the inland office are correctly performed; it is the president who is responsible for that. The object is, that every letter shall be told up against the letter-carriers; if that is done, the revenue is perfectly safe, and the balance is a matter of no sort of importance; and perhaps it would be better not to attempt to make a balance, which will always, with those who are not well informed of the practice, give rise to doubts and difficulties.

Then that account sent up by the postmaster does not, in fact, operate as a check?—As to the unpaid letters it is hardly any check at all; it may afford information of the amount supposed to be sent on any day when required, but it is not an actual article in any account; it is more a matter of form than any thing else.

Then, with reference to this matter of form, does any process take place on the account which is returned to the president of the inland office, by which the two accounts are at all made to tally?—(*Mr. Hume*)—It is a check for a large amount withdrawn, but not for a small one.

Do you not find that a sum has been written off from the bills returned to the president of the inland office with a view to covering the amount of the letters withdrawn?—(*Mr. Johnson*)—As they make their account tally with the amount of all the bills received from the country, which they do not take the trouble to correct, it follows that they must on the one side or the other of the account enter something which is fictitious.

How do they cover the letters so taken?—They enter it under the head of either over-charges or under-charges, which appear in most of their daily returns.

The Commissioners understand that the clerks in the London post-office also receive their single letters free of charge; will you state the manner in which those letters are brought to account and given to them, and whether they have any power of taking them themselves, or whether they are passed on into the general account, and then returned to them, deducting the postage?—(*Mr. Hume*)—When a letter is addressed to any officer of the department it is sent with the other letters to the alphabet; the officer to whom it is directed pays for that letter at the alphabet; and at the expiration of each quarter, on producing those letters which are registered in a book, he is allowed the postage; provided it be a moderate sum, it is refunded to him; perhaps some officers may receive a guinea or a guinea and a half, or two guineas a quarter; I should apprehend no officer receives more than twelve or fourteen pounds a year; some not many shillings. Outwards the officer brings his single letter to the president, the president signs his initials on the letter, the clerk pays the postage of it, the amount is entered in this book, and the postage is allowed at the expiration of the quarter; every letter is thus brought to account.

The material differences between the practice in London and Dublin are, that in the first place, in London it is confined entirely to single letters, whereas in Dublin it has been the practice to extend the privilege to any letters; and that in London every letter is carried to account, whereas in Dublin those letters which are taken out for the officers of the department are never carried to account at all?—I believe so.

Of course there is a great check in the one instance, and none in the other?—There is.

Do any observations occur to you upon the office of receiver-general or treasurer, which is the next in succession?—(*Mr. Johnson*)—We have not much to observe on this department, the proceedings of which appear to be properly checked by the accountant-general; and the receiver gives large security for the money passing through his hands, keeping his account at the Bank of Ireland. In the weekly check there is a considerable sum stated, as a balance due from the alphabet; it arises, as we are told, from giving credit to the merchants, to the custom-house, &c. It seems a bad principle to allow a public officer to hold money for such a purpose, and the practice is very liable to lead to irregularity. Some arrangement, we conceive, could be easily made for reducing this balance.

What is the duty of the receiver-general; is it more than merely to receive from the remittance clerk the remittances which he receives, and to transfer them immediately to the Bank of Ireland?—The receiver-general, or treasurer, as he is called, has the receipt of every branch of the post-office revenue, and also to make all payments; he is the cashier of the office.

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The office of receiver-general in Ireland is practically executed much in the same manner as it is in England?—Very much in the same manner as it is in England.

Has not the receiver-general a fee of one per cent. on remittances to the English post-office?—The emoluments which are stated in the return, as attached to his office, are said to be produced by this fee.

The treasurer has the privilege of franking?—He has.

Do you see any reason why that privilege should be continued to the treasurer?—None whatever.

Will you state the irregularity which you apprehend may arise from the practice of permitting the balance due from the alphabet to remain as long as at present?—The principal objection to it, independently of a large sum of public money being constantly out, is, that no check officer can tell whether the money is or is not in the hands of the alphabet keeper; it affords to him an opportunity of stating a fictitious balance, that sums are due to him to the amount, say of 1,000*l.*, when perhaps the greater part of the money has been received by him. We do not state this as any suspicion against the present officer, but as what might be from such a practice.

He is permitted to retain only the amount of a week's receipt as the balance, is he?—I believe it is only a week; but in England our principle is to obtain payments as speedily as possible, and to allow no balances on account of giving credits. The window-man in England, for instance, pays in his money three times a week; he has never more than one day's charge in his hands.

Did you apply any particular observation to the details of the office of the accountant-general; and will you state what was the result of your observations on that office?—We went carefully through the office of the accountant-general, and found the books modelled very much after those used in the accountant-general's office in England, and they appeared to be kept with great care and accuracy. We saw no reason to doubt the industry or vigilance of this department, and there appeared to be a sufficient authority for every article of charge and discharge in all the accounts; but of course the accountant has no sort of control over the expenditure or collection of the revenue; he has merely to see that each account comes to him in the mode ordered by the postmasters-general, to check the calculations, and to enter the articles properly in his own books.

Did it appear to you that there was any excess of clerks in that department?—It did not occur to us that an accountant and three clerks were more than enough for the business of this department; there are 433 quarterly accounts current to keep with postmasters.

Did you examine any of the accounts?—I went over many pages of the ledger.

Did they appear to be kept with accuracy and regularity?—They appeared to be kept with great accuracy.

With respect to the amounts of the bye-letter charges, and credits for dead and redirected letters, did there appear to you an objection to the manner in which they were kept, or that that admitted of considerable improvement?—There appeared to be an objection to the accountant-general ever parting with an account or vouchers once delivered to him, and therefore we thought it better that the bye-letter charges and credits for redirected letters, &c., delivered to the accountant-general, should be made out in monthly sheets, and remain in his office after his first receipt of them, instead of being entered, as at present, in a book which passes backwards and forwards.

Was not some improvement also suggested to you with respect to the account of the alterations which may affect the deputy postmasters?—It was suggested by the chief clerk in the accountant-general's office to have quarterly a complete account of the deputy postmasters credits for salary and horse-posts, and we certainly are of the same opinion.

You think the suggestion of the chief clerk would be an improvement?—We think that it would be an improvement.

In referring to the accounts of the balances due by the postmasters, did not you understand that they were considerably increased by a credit which was really due to them for payments made under several Acts of Parliament not having been given to them?—We understood that the balances due the 5th of July last were increased probably 2,000*l.* by the postmasters not having credit for sums actually paid by them to soldiers families, the receipts or certificates not being converted into cash in Dublin in consequence of some informality.

Upon the subject of this inconvenience, which appears to be a considerable one, and to press very hardly upon the postmasters, have you any arrangement to suggest by which it can be obviated?—It not only presses on the postmasters, but on the revenue, inasmuch as the postmasters themselves are not compelled to pay up any more money on this account; the inconvenience to them is merely that of not having the sums credited to them; but it is altogether so great an irregularity, and so likely to produce still more embarrassment if neglected, that we conceive there ought immediately to be some arrangement between the post-office and that department of government which it concerns, to cause those certificates to be paid in some mode or other.

Does there not appear the want of an additional check on the remittance clerk, with respect to the receipt of money from the deputies?—It certainly seems desirable that there should be some mode of checking this officer, but there appears at the same time to be great difficulty in devising one. The best that has occurred to us is, that the deputy postmasters might be directed to send a letter of advice at the time of making every remittance; such advice, if addressed to the secretary, would go to the same office as the remittance, and that might not be considered a check; the accountant has no franking privilege; it might



might be addressed to the postmaster-general, and being a printed form, the president of the inland office might be ordered to select and send such forms direct to the accountant-general: this operation we fear might form a ground for applying for another clerk in that department.

Do you think that those letters, being in a printed form and distinguishable from their appearance, would add so much to the labour of that office as to require an additional clerk for the purpose?—If those letters are to form an effective check by the accountant-general upon the treasurer, it will be necessary for the accountant to have them all regularly posted in a book; such an operation certainly must add very much to the duty of some clerk now in that office, if another were not allowed for the purpose.

Do you think the advantage that would arise from such a check being instituted would be a sufficient reason for the employment of an additional clerk for that purpose?—We hardly think it would; for it is greatly to be feared, from the illiterate and careless habits of many of the Irish postmasters, that they might neglect to send those letters of advice at all, so that in many cases the accountant-general would still have to depend upon the remittance clerk's book; and if the remittance clerk is considered as performing his duty immediately under the eye of the secretary and the secretary's chief clerk, and as he has merely the custody of the remittances for a few hours, it being his duty to transfer them on the same day to the treasurer, it does not seem likely that any irregularity should take place; if it did, we conceive it would at once become the subject of criminal process. The same mode has for many years been practised in England without any irregularity taking place. The remittance clerk gives a larger security than the others in the secretary's office.

Has the accountant-general the privilege of franking?—No.

He exercises it?—Only in common with the inland office, receiving his own letters free.

In this office the parliamentary accounts are prepared?—They are.

Is there any charge for the preparation of the parliamentary accounts?—We observed in the incident some charges for making out the parliamentary accounts in this department. We conceive this is a part of the regular duty, and that means should be found for performing it with the present establishment.

It appears that there is in the weekly account of the accountant-general a balance due from the alphabet; does there appear any reason for that balance?—The balance is formed partly of sums said to be due from the customs, and partly from the merchants; of course the accountant-general does not know the proportion; and with respect to the customs, we conceive there could be no inconvenience in their paying at least every other day; as to the merchants, if they receive any accommodation in the way of credit, it should be from the alphabet keeper personally, and not from the office.

Are there any accounts kept with any bodies of persons in London?—The window-man keeps accounts with merchants; and there are accounts kept with various public offices which pay the postage of their letters under particular regulations. The accounts between the window-man and the public offices are of an official nature; with the merchants they are private.

The office knows nothing of the account between him and the merchants?—No.

But it does recognize the accounts between him and the public offices?—Yes.

What length of time are the public departments allowed for the settlement of their postage accounts?—I think they all pay three times a week; I think we give them credit for one charge, so as to allow them an opportunity of checking their account.

Does it appear to you that this may, in certain instances, with respect to the customs and excise, lead to frauds upon those offices?—It has appeared to us that there might exist a collusion between the persons in the alphabet department and the postage clerk in the customs, because the commissioners of customs have no means of knowing the exact sum to which their outward letters amount, therefore they might be overcharged by collusion between those parties.

Are you aware that something of that kind did occur some years ago?—I think I have understood that something of the kind did occur in Ireland, and I know that it once occurred to a considerable extent in Edinburgh.

The next in order is the inland department; that is divided into the inland office, the British-mail office, the alphabet, and the paid window; those are all separate and distinct departments; in England they are all one department, are they not?—All, except the British-mail office, which does not exist there.

Does it appear to you that the business would be better done by the same consolidation in Ireland as has taken place in England, and that it should be all done under the direction of the president of the inland office?—We conceive that there should be but one department. Neither expedition, regularity, security, or economy appear to us to be obtained by such a division of the business, all and every part of which, inland clerks and sorters ought to be able to perform.

What advantage does it appear to you would be derived from that consolidation?—The advantage of simplicity, of a more efficient control, and of economy, inasmuch as if you make separate departments, it seems necessary to allot higher salaries to the comptrollers than would otherwise be requisite.

With respect to the general conduct of the business in the inland office have you any observations to make?—The inland mails average about 6,000 letters in the morning, and 6,000 in the evening. The number of post-towns is 433. The operations are much encumbered by the registry of paid, and of all double, treble, and weight letters. Still there are twenty-nine regular officers, and fourteen probationary, out of fifty-five persons in the establishment,

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establishment, in constant attendance; and we do not hesitate to say, that thirty-three persons employed with the same activity as in London, and in the same method, would easily perform the duties of all these departments, and probably be equal to a considerable increase. This number is meant to be adequate to proper reliefs, for it is out of the question that all the officers should be compelled to a daily attendance, morning and evening.

Do you observe that there is a great difference in the manner in which the inferior officers here, and in London, perform their duty?—(*Mr. Hume*)—There is, no doubt, a very considerable difference.

In what particulars does the difference most appear?—They do not appear to have been properly instructed; they sort more slowly, and tax the letters more slowly.

The calculation that this answer includes, of thirty-three persons being able to do what fifty-five persons do at present, is formed probably on the presumption that the thirty-three persons are to be well instructed, and to be made as expert in the performance of the duty as the generality of persons are in London?—Certainly.

You state the business to be a good deal incumbered by the registry of paid and double letters; will you explain a little more in detail how those operations are encumbered by that practice?—It is a great loss of time to register the directions of all the double letters, &c.

Is not that loss of time compensated by additional security to those letters?—If the money letters could be selected from the rest it would be an additional security; perhaps it would be a complete security; they not only enter all the money letters, but every double and treble letter, and also letters which weigh above an ounce. Perhaps out of 200 letters which are registered, there is not one which contains any money.—(*Mr. Johnson*) We are of opinion that the registry can never be more than a very partial security for letters of value; that the true principle is to consider all letters of equal importance, and that the registry is impracticable where there is any press of business, and not an undue proportion of hands.

Would not some registry be very desirable if it could be applied to letters with money?—Certainly, if it could be so applied.

Could you suggest any means of giving additional security to the money letters, without the practice of a general registry, or, in fact, any thing that would add materially to the delay or the difficulty of carrying on the business of the office?—(*Mr. Hume*)—I should presume only by delivering the letters at the post-office, and mentioning that they contain money.

Supposing that the postmaster had a printed letter to send up to the office, including the money letters; that those letters only should be registered which were paid for additionally, in consequence of their containing money; that no man who put in money, and did not choose to take that precaution, should be entitled to have his loss made good; and that in all cases where that precaution was taken, the post-office itself should be considered as responsible; do you conceive that would be attended with benefit?—(*Mr. Johnson*)—This is a subject of very great importance, which has been more or less under consideration in London for many years past; and I should submit with great deference to the Commissioners, that it would be right to postpone the consideration of it to some future stage of their inquiry.

When you mentioned the number of thirty-three persons, did you reckon for the necessary relief?—(*Mr. Hume*)—We did.

Does not it appear to you, that the attendance which is exacted in the Irish post-office is very great?—It is a very severe attendance.

Does it not appear to you that that attendance is more severe than is necessary?—(*Mr. Johnson*)—Of course we consider that the attendance of fifty-five persons, or of any number of persons constantly, is out of the question; fifty-five persons are more than are enough, in our opinion, to perform the duties of the whole office; we consider thirty-three persons might perform the duty, and that this is a sufficient number to provide for a relief in rotation. Of course the attendance of the fifty-five is only nominal, for their attendance has been supplied by the extra probationers, who have been called on duty so often as the regular clerks desired to be absent.

As your examination extended also to the British-mail office, what observations did you make as to the mode of conducting business in it?—We did not consider that the manner of performing the duties in the British-mail office was itself particularly objectionable, but it was not near so rapid as we thought it possible to make it, and the delivery was very much retarded by the registering of the double and other letters, as I have already explained. Considering it an object of so much importance, after all the arrangements made for expediting the conveyance of the mails to Dublin, to expedite by all possible means the delivery of letters in Dublin, arriving as they frequently do so nearly on the 'Change hour, we applied ourselves to this point, and requested an experiment to be made for a week of sorting the mail by six instead of four persons, and by an omission of the registry of double letters; the result was, a delivery effected in about forty minutes, sometimes forty-five, and at most fifty. Since that it has been suggested to put what are called the state letters in a separate bag in London, to save the time consumed in picking them out from the bulk of the mail; we have also dispensed with the re-taxing of the letters in Dublin, having suggested to the secretary in London the possibility of their being taxed with sufficient accuracy there; in point of fact, we found they had been very accurately taxed. The secretary, not being willing to dispense with the principle of re-examination, has caused them to be re-examined in London; therefore, the sorters have nothing to do in Dublin now but to select the state letters, and to tell up the remainder of the mail in correct charges against the

letter-carriers; the consequence has been for the last two or three days a dispatch of the letter-carriers in about thirty minutes only after the receipt of the bags, instead of an hour and three quarters or two hours, which it very frequently took. In the old practice there was a very objectionable mode, as we conceive, of giving the merchants letters to the alphabet, to be delivered from thence before the letter-carriers were dispatched; this is now done away, but still the letters to the merchants are delivered through the alphabet a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes sooner than they were upon the old plan.

Has this been effected by a sudden and overstrained exertion, or is it a thing that can be done in the post-office constantly?—(*Mr. Hume*)—It can be done constantly.

Without much difficulty?—In my opinion, without difficulty.

Is there any thing which resembles a delivery by the alphabet in England?—(*Mr. Johnson*)—No partial delivery, either in London or in any post-town; the principle being not to deliver from the window until the letter-carriers are ready to go out.

Is there any thing here like the delivery by the early letter-carriers in London?—No, there is not.

Do you conceive that would be attended with benefit here?—I do not think it would be applicable to a place of the size of Dublin.

Were not some arrangements made in the letter-carriers office, as well as in the British-mail office, to effect this delivery?—The secretary of the post-office has co-operated with us very cheerfully in this experiment; and in consequence of hints from us (for he was not desired to do so), he selected for sorting letter-carriers as many men as could be found of the greatest intelligence and activity, instead of their being sorted, as they were before, indiscriminately by the whole body of letter-carriers; this has very greatly facilitated the performance of the business, inasmuch as the letter-carriers during the last days did not find it necessary to take more than fifteen minutes for their operation, making one half hour for the whole operation from the receipt of the bags into the office.

If this alteration were carried permanently into effect, what number of persons would be necessary for the performance of the business?—In reckoning six in the British-mail office, we include them in the thirty-three whom we consider as necessary for the general conduct of the business.

Of the fifty-five persons at present employed, what number are probationers and extra probationers?—There are fifty-five presumed to be in constant attendance, and about twenty-two extra probationers, out of whom the relief is obtained.

Do you see any objection to the employing extra probationers in the performance of that duty?—We consider it very objectionable to employ extra probationary sorters, that is, persons not on the establishment at all, and who are only paid by the officers whose absence they supply. We conceive that every person admitted into the office should be on the establishment, should receive a regular salary, and should not be exposed to the temptations that persons might be supposed liable to who have only a casual employment; besides that, they can never be so well acquainted with their business, or so expert in the performance of it, as those who are in the daily habit.

Is the manner in which the business is performed in the inland office, and the sort of check which is established, like that in practice in England?—The general mode of performing the business, and the different sorts of check, assimilate so much to those in England, that we are not able to suggest any improvement therein, except that the letters from the paid window should not be counted by one, but by any promiscuous person whom the president may call for that purpose; and that no docket of the amount should be given to such officer, but to the president, who should compare it with the amount, as told by the person taking the check.

Was your attention at all directed to the bye, dead, and mis-sent letter office?—The accounts are nearly all on the same principle and in the same form as in London; and, with proper vigilance on the part of the superintendent and his clerks, but more especially of the district surveyors, are equal to the prevention of any continued fraud. The books made up in this office constitute the charges, by the accountant-general, on all the deputies for bye letters, and their credits for dead, mis-sent, overcharged, and re-directed.

It has been stated that the newspapers sent to the East Indies are charged with a postage of 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, and that they are generally returned and sent to the dead-letter officer?—I do not know how they can avoid charging them, our principle being, that whatever is received into the office must be sent and charged.

Newspapers sent to the East Indies are not charged by weight?—They are charged at the mitigated rate of 3*d.* per ounce; but I doubt whether the Act applies to Ireland.

Is not the number of letters brought into this office, as dead, mis-sent, and overcharged, far greater in proportion to the whole number than in England?—I apprehend it is.

Can you account for that?—We cannot give a very satisfactory explanation of it. I believe that a great deal is owing to the importance which the individuals appear to attach to the rates of postage.

Are the number of persons employed in that office more than equal to doing the business?—We do not consider that they are.

Have the forms by which it is intended to check the claims of the deputies for redirected letters, by cross posts, been sufficiently examined?—It is admitted that those forms have not been sufficiently examined; but it is stated that it is intended to have them examined very accurately in future.

Will the existing regulations be sufficient, in your opinion?—The check must be sufficient for the purpose, provided it is properly attended to.

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The attendance of the junior clerks in the morning, to take away Dublin redirected letters, has been represented as insufficient; did that fall under your notice?—It did come under our notice that the two junior clerks have not, as it was their duty to do, attended the inland office alternately every morning, for the purpose of taking away the Dublin redirected letters. This neglect, on their part, ought to have been reported by the superintendent of bye letters, and also by the president of the inland office, who should have seen that this matter, in which the public were so much interested, was not neglected. It has led to a delay in the delivery of those letters; and they have also been charged with the penny postage, which they ought not to have been. Letters of value, and others which are returned to this office as dead, are delivered from thence, if subsequently applied for, and the postage is then received in this department; it does not amount to much, but has not been under sufficient check. The time allowed for the delivery of these letters is from ten to twelve o'clock, which is not sufficient, and ought to be extended as long as the clerks are there.

Is the superintendent of mail-coaches in the habit of travelling through the country, for the purpose of obtaining information with a view to the negotiation for contracts, or of seeing in what manner the contracts are executed?—The superintendent travels very little, but that has been in consequence of some remarks made in the Ninth Report of the Commissioners in Ireland in 1810; his salary, after that, was increased. The usefulness of such an officer appears to be much lessened in this way; and we think the public ought to have been greatly benefited, if he had retained the original salary, and travelled more.

Has he any assistants or subordinate officers who travel under his directions?—There are no subordinate officers to travel under the directions of the superintendent of mail-coaches; and such officers are really essential to the regularity of any mail-coach system.

Does the charge of the horse-post way-bills fall under the superintendence of this office?—Yes.

Is that a desirable arrangement?—I do not think the arrangement so good as that of making the district surveyors responsible for the regularity of the horse-posts, which is the practice in England.

Does this officer make any distinct agreements for the rides?—He does not make any distinct contracts or agreements for the rides. It appears to be the rule of the office to allow every postmaster at the rate of 5*d.* a mile for the conveyance of the horse-posts, requiring him to get the service performed, whether it costs him more or less.

What is the practice in England?—The practice in England is to make an agreement for every particular ride, in consequence of which the prices vary very much; some high, some low, and some intermediate.

Does any reason occur to you why that practice might not be advantageously adopted in Ireland?—We think it might be advantageously adopted in Ireland; but it is not possible to say whether it might produce any general economy, for there might be an excess in some cases, as well as a diminution in others.

Is the present system of contracting for the mail-coaches in Ireland objectionable?—I should think it is very objectionable, inasmuch as the contracts have been so exceedingly expensive, and the rate of travelling, till very lately, so slow, and as at this moment they are obliged to maintain one mail-coach, which is almost useless. In other cases they are impeded by the length of their contracts from making any improvements whatever, and they never can effect an improvement without the consent of the parties.

In what manner have the contracts been made; have they been made by open competition?—They seem to have been made only by advertizing for a contract, or for the most part taking what they call the lowest offer, which seldom was more than a single one.

Has any previous examination been made into the situation and circumstances of the line of road?—It does not appear that any previous examination has been made, or any attempt to find out persons willing to work the mails for particular distances; but they have contracted in this wholesale manner with one or two persons for an entire line of road.

Do they differ in their rate per mile materially?—Not very materially; the mails from Dublin to Limerick, to Cork, to Waterford, and to Belfast, are nearly at the same rates; some others, such as Galway, &c., are slower.

What is the rate of expense per mile upon the principal roads; is it nearly the same, or does it differ materially on different lines of road?—It differs materially; it varies from 6*d.* to 1*s.* 3*d.*

Is it much greater than the price given in England?—In some cases it is five times what we consider the regular allowance in England.

Is the allowance in England uniform throughout?—Not invariably; but the great bulk of the mails are conveyed at the rate of 3*d.* the double mile. At the original establishment of the mail-coaches it was only 1*d.*, at which time I believe the duty was the same; it was afterwards increased to 2*d.* and finally to 3*d.*, the duty being in the meantime augmented to 5*d.*

How many subordinate officers do you think there ought to be to travel about the country?—I should apprehend that two persons well selected might be found sufficient for the service in Ireland; each of them probably should travel not less on the average than three times a week.

What number of such subordinate officers are there in England?—There are seven such officers; two of them being in Scotland, who are fully employed.

Are the district surveyors efficiently employed in Ireland?—We have not had an opportunity of conversing with any of the district surveyors; and I should fear that if the practice of

of some of them were compared with the English surveyors, it would not be very advantageous to the former.

Does not the efficiency and regularity of the post-office depend very much upon these officers?—Very greatly indeed upon these officers.

What is the duty performed by these officers in England?—They are employed generally in examining the state of the country post-offices, and giving their attention to every point in the business, great and small.

Ought not those persons to exercise a check upon the country officers, and examine the country letter bills?—When a surveyor enters a country post-office, he should examine the deputy's accounts, and report any arrears; he should look to the dead and returned letters to see whether due diligence has been used for their delivery, or whether any of them have been opened before they were returned; he should frequently open bags himself, sort and examine the letters, and ascertain if the letter bills are correctly charged; these sort of examinations being the surest method of preventing frauds between the postmasters or their clerks. The surveyors have also the means of ascertaining whether the letters have been taxed correctly, and probably may make considerable advances upon them; they also can correct any irregularities of franking through the cross-posts, or any mistakes or neglect of the Dublin office. They should take every opportunity of considering whether public accommodation in the neighbourhood he visits, has been carried to the just extent, and report whether any and what arrangements can be made for the improvement of the posts. They have also to regulate the circulation of bye letters between the numerous post-towns, and to keep every part of the great chain of correspondence in order.

There appears to be on the establishment in Ireland a resident surveyor; has it come to your knowledge what duties he performs?—We could not learn that the resident surveyor had any duties to perform, or was willing to perform any. There is no such officer at present in England; the duties of the resident surveyor having merged in the secretary's department. In Ireland the secretary is in fact performing the duties of resident surveyor.

Supposing the duty of riding surveyors to be performed in Ireland as in England, how many would be sufficient to perform it?—I should think four efficient surveyors would be quite equal to the business in Ireland.

What number of riding surveyors are there in Scotland?—There are only two riding surveyors in Scotland.

What number in England?—Seven.

Are they strictly confined to different districts in England, or have they a roving commission?—They are considered as attached to a particular district, and make their surveys in that, but on receiving orders proceed to any part of the country; they have a certain number of postmasters under their regular inspection.

There appear to be sixty letter-carriers on the establishment; is it necessary, in your opinion, to employ so great a number?—After the fullest consideration on this subject with the officers in Dublin, we have come to the conclusion that thirty instead of sixty would be quite sufficient for all the mails, including those from England; of the number at present employed, many are very inefficient. The town might be divided into thirty walks, and if those were served with young and active men, there is no doubt that the reduction might be made without any inconvenience whatever to the population of Dublin.

Are the wages paid to those persons adequate?—We do not know that they are inadequate; but upon a reduction of the number, and making two deliveries per day, it might admit of a question whether some increase of wages to a portion of them might not be necessary.

Did it come to your knowledge that they were in the habit of receiving fees or gratuities?—They receive Christmas presents; the elder letter-carriers to a considerable extent: the senior letter-carriers getting the best walks, and they have also gratuities from ringing the bell in the evening.

CHAS. JOHNSON.  
J. HUME.

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### Appendix, No. 162.

Monday, 22d September 1823.

CHARLES JOHNSON Esq. and JOSEPH HUME Esq. again called in and examined.

IS the privilege of members of Parliament and of the public officers, which enables them to send letters free, regulated in the same manner in Ireland as in Great Britain?—There is a peculiar Act applicable to Ireland, the 43 Geo. 3, chap. 28. In the 12th, 14th, 15th and 22d sections of that Act there are restrictions altogether different from any in preceding Acts passed in England, which are applicable to members as well as privileged persons. By section 12 it seems, that in Ireland public officers are precluded from sending or receiving letters which are not on the business of their respective offices or their own private concerns; and members also are restricted by the 15th section from receiving any letters under their cover not intended for themselves, families, or persons resident in their houses; those regulations do not appear to have been at all acted upon.

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Joseph Hume,  
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and

Joseph Hume,  
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22d Sept. 1823.

Are those regulations, as far as they regard members of Parliament, such as could with any degree of propriety, consistently with the limitation of the number of their franks, be put in force?—I conceive it would be found very objectionable to place members of Parliament in Ireland under any restrictions to which they are not subject in England.

What restrictions does that Act place members of Parliament under, in Ireland, to which they are not subject by the law in England?—In Ireland it seems to preclude them from the power of giving away franks or receiving letters under their cover; whereas, by the English Acts, the post-office does not consider itself entitled to inquire into the contents of members covers, but merely to restrict them to the regulated number and weight.

In what way do the regulations under which official persons frank in Ireland differ from those which are carried into effect in England?—In England, public officers who have the extended privilege are not under any restrictions at all, except that of subscribing and dating their letters in the same manner as members of Parliament; of course, the giving away of covers, or receiving letters under their covers, rests entirely upon their own discretion. In Ireland public officers are, as before stated, precluded from giving or receiving free any letters which are not official or upon their own private concerns.

Are the regulations which apply to Ireland strictly complied with in practice?—Those regulations do not appear to have been acted upon at any time since the passing of the Act.

Although the regulations in Ireland appears to be more strict, have not official persons practically exercised a far greater license in Ireland than in England in respect of franking letters?—No officer of whatever rank in England, with the exception of some few exempted by law, are allowed to send any letters free unless subscribed in their own hands in the exact manner which the Act requires. In Ireland, privileged officers have franked, and to a very great extent, by merely signing their names at the corner of the envelopes, and have been also in the habit of receiving a much larger proportion of letters under cover than officers of the same rank in England.

By privileged officers do you mean officers of the post-office only?—Generally all privileged officers in Ireland.

Referring to the Ninth Report of the Commissioners on Fees and Gratuities, it appears by a return in the Appendix, Number 47, that the officers of the general post-office who frank by virtue of their offices, are, the two postmasters-general, the secretary, the treasurer, the comptroller, the resident surveyor, the four riding surveyors, and the surveyor and superintendent of mail-coaches; have you found that persons other than those included in this list have been in the habit of exercising the privilege of franking in virtue of offices held by them in the post-office?—Persons in the post-office who have no privilege of franking by any Act of Parliament have certainly assumed the license of sending and receiving letters free of postage, which they do not appear to have thought it necessary to confine to their own concerns; the clerks of the roads have considered themselves entitled to send and receive letters, and I believe it may be stated generally, that every officer in the department has more or less considered himself entitled to the same privilege.

Does it appear to have been the practice of the clerks of the roads to frank without restriction or limitation as to weight or number?—Without any limitation as to weight or number.

Have they only signed their names at the corner, or have they also dated?—(Mr. Hume) —They have signed their names and sometimes only their initials at the corners, and have sometimes dated.

Did it appear that they exercised their privilege largely for letters to persons unconnected with the office, and wholly unconnected with business?—Certainly many private letters have been sent and received by the clerks of roads.

Not only their own but for other persons?—Yes.

Is there any regulation in Ireland which makes it necessary for an official seal to be attached to letters that go free under office privilege?—I have not remarked that.

Is not that so in some of the offices in England?—In some of the offices in England (not in all) it is necessary that the official seal should appear on the letters.

Is that regulation in England strictly enforced where by law it is rendered necessary?—It is.

By the inspection of the correspondence, are you enabled to judge what letters are from private persons and what portion on public business?—We could distinguish the private letters from the public, but the proportion I am not able to speak to; I can only say, considerably more than half appeared to be private.

In what manner was the correspondence of the clerks in the office sent and received; was it free, or was it subject to postage?—They received their letters free, but without any authority to do so; they received them generally in the inland office, without their having ever passed to the alphabet. Their letters outwards, we believe, were franked by the clerks of the roads chiefly.

There was an established regulation in the office, by which any letters which were directed to them were to go to the alphabet, and an arrangement was there made for the payment of the postage, which was ultimately to be repaid to them?—I understood from the secretary, that there was such an order.

Did it appear to you that this regulation was strictly complied with?—It did not appear that it was complied with at all.

In what manner were the letters received?—The letters directed to clerks were given in the inland office to the persons to whom they were addressed.

Has the standing regulation of the office been enforced lately?—It has been enforced lately.

Has it fallen within your notice, that the clerks have had letters directed for others under cover to them?—I have no doubt that is the fact. I have examined their letters, and found that almost all of them contained letters directed to persons residing in different streets in Dublin. Many of the letters were refused on account of the charge of postage; those letters were sent to the dead-letter office; from the dead-letter office they reached my hands, having been opened in that office. I consequently had an opportunity of examining their contents, and I found that they all contained letters for private persons in different streets in Dublin, or letters to be franked from Dublin into the country.

It has come to the knowledge of the Commissioners, that some of the clerks in the post-office are engaged in business on their own account; did it appear to you that any of those persons were in the habit of transmitting and receiving the correspondence connected with their own business free of postage, under privilege?—It did.

Will you state what persons, and to what extent?—It appeared that they were receiving letters on their own business to a considerable amount. The treasurer was one; he has the privilege of receiving on his own concerns; but one of the clerks of the roads, who has no privilege of receiving letters free, and is only authorized to frank officially, is a general agent; he has received and sent letters on his own account, to a considerable amount, free, and on account of other persons.

Did it appear to you that any of the persons in the office, who are attornies, were in the habit of receiving letters on their own private business, free of postage?—It did.

Did it appear that any persons connected with banking houses were in the habit of receiving their letters free?—I did not observe that.

Have you any reason to believe that any of the established army agents were by any means enabled to carry on and did carry on their correspondence through the post-office privilege?—It appeared that they received the greater part of their correspondence addressed, not to the officers in the post-office, but to privileged officers in other departments.

In what way is the correspondence of the barrack office and the audit office in Ireland carried on; is it subject to postage, or does it pass free?—It has passed free until within this month; it does not pass free now.

Was it by any Act of Parliament, or the misinterpretation of any Act of Parliament, that it passed free?—I take it by the misinterpretation of an Act of Parliament.

In what manner does the correspondence of the barrack office and the audit office pass in England?—They are limited entirely to official letters; but in Ireland they have no power of that kind by Act of Parliament, and they used the assumed privilege largely for private purposes. Similar officers in England are restricted, under a penalty of 100*l.* for each offence, that is, for sending private letters under official covers.

Is that restriction by Act of Parliament?—It is.

Does the deputy adjutant-general or the deputy quartermaster-general exercise the privilege of sending and receiving letters free in Ireland?—They send and receive their letters free, but there does not appear to be any Act of Parliament authorising them to do so.

There was a privilege under Act of Parliament, when there was an adjutant-general and quartermaster-general here, and they have continued there, being now only deputies?—Yes; but instead of confining themselves to the franking of official letters merely, they have used it very largely for private purposes; that is to say, for the sending and receiving of letters not on their own private concerns.

Do they continue to exercise that privilege?—They do.

Has the secretary for population returns the privilege of franking?—He has the privilege of franking on official business only.

Is his privilege limited to official business?—It is; but he has franked also on private business.

Has the secretary for the issue of money out of the consolidated fund the privilege of franking?—When I came here, he used what we term the large privilege, but now he and the secretary for population returns confine themselves strictly to official franking.

Has it been the habit of the Irish post-office to comply strictly with the regulations of the Act of Parliament, and enforce the payment of postage where it appeared that letters were not legally freed by any direction upon them, or have they exercised a discretionary power of their own, and permitted any letters which they thought fit to pass free?—(*Mr. Johnson*)—The Irish post-office does not appear to have felt that the law imposed any duty on that department of examining and charging such letters of public officers as were not conformable to the restrictions of the Acts.

In what way is that duty exercised in England?—In England, the post-office feels itself bound to adhere in the strictest manner to the regulations of every Act of Parliament on the subject of franking.

Are not letters, books, and papers sent and received free by various religious and charitable societies, without any authority or direction by Act of Parliament?—(*Mr. Hume*)—A great many are certainly sent and received free without authority by Act of Parliament.

Does that take place to such a degree as to produce trouble and inconvenience in the post-office?—It produces a great deal of trouble and inconvenience to the post-office, and is attended with loss to the revenue; a great number of the letters are manuscript, and are double and treble; some of them weigh an ounce; and in order to prevent private correspondence from being sent in those letters it is necessary to read as many of them as it is possible,

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possible, and in the examination it has been found that some contained private letters; but it is impossible to read them all without delaying the business very much, or without an increase of the number of clerks; it is impossible to keep a sufficient check on a matter of that kind.

Whose duty is it to read and superintend this correspondence?—It is the duty of the clerks in the secretary's office.

Does it appear to be fully executed, or is it neglected?—It appeared to me impossible to read them all without producing great inconvenience.

What check is there upon the transmission of printed papers and books; in what way is it seen that they are confined to the different objects the charities embrace?—It is necessary to examine them for that purpose, but they cannot be all examined accurately without delaying the business.

Are they considerable in number?—They are.

Does any inconvenience arise from transmitting parcels of that bulky nature?—I understood from the secretary, that inconvenience does arise.

To what number of societies is this privilege extended?—To about twenty-five.

Is there any privilege of a similar description exercised in England?—No religious society receives or sends its letters free in England. I recollect no other charitable institution but the Waterloo fund, and there are not more than three or four letters for it in a morning, and perhaps a small number sent at the expiration of each quarter; and the Kinloch bequest, a Scottish society, the letters for which come directed to Mr. Freeling; there is a very small number for it in a quarter. The letters of the Vaccine Institution were sent free for a time by orders of Government.

Did that give rise to abuse?—(*Mr. Hume*)—It was discontinued, but for what reason I do not recollect.

Has it occurred to you, that any limitation might be applied to this privilege, which would secure it from abuse?—I am doubtful whether any could; if it were confined to pamphlets correspondence might be still sent in them; that limitation would, however, afford a very material check.

Are the letters sent open and in such a state as to be liable to inspection?—The manuscript letters are not all sent open; the pamphlets are sometimes sealed.

Have you seen those containing money sealed?—Sometimes sealed, sometimes not, but generally sealed.

Are not the clerks of roads in the habit of transmitting periodical papers as well as newspapers?—They are.

Is not that practice materially on the increase?—I do not know.

Does any corresponding privilege exist in England?—No such privilege exists in England.

Do they in England transmit any other papers than those subject to a stamp duty?—There are a few exceptions; the clerks of roads are permitted by the postmasters-general to send Lloyd's List, and I think some other such lists; there is one in Scotland called the Clyde List, sent by the secretary there; it must have his name to it, but neither he nor any other officer derives emolument from franking that list.

Did the privilege of transmitting periodical publications free of postage ever exist in England?—It existed, perhaps, five-and-twenty or thirty years ago.

It was at that time put an end to?—It was, by a Treasury regulation.

In the list of persons in the post-office who have been stated to possess the privilege of franking, does it appear to you that there are any who, for the benefit of the office, need not have that privilege continued?—(*Mr. Johnson*)—It of course is wholly unnecessary for the treasurer to have the franking privilege, as he has no correspondence whatever of an official nature; the receiver-general in London has no such privilege. It is, of course, necessary that the secretary, the superintendent of mail-coaches, and the district surveyors should all have the privilege of franking, as they are all corresponding officers; but it cannot be necessary in Ireland, any more than in England, that the district surveyors should have the privilege of sending and receiving private letters under their covers.

In England do the district surveyors strictly confine their privilege of sending and receiving letters free to their official business?—Not strictly to their official business; they are permitted to frank and receive their own letters.

They are not in the habit of franking for other people?—I believe they are not in the habit of franking for other people, and they are strictly forbidden so to do. In Ireland the resident surveyor exercises the franking privilege, though professedly holding a sinecure office. In England there is no resident surveyor. The comptroller of the sorting office has the privilege by the Irish Act, but there is no such office now existing.

In what way is the correspondence of the clerks of the roads in England transmitted, and to what extent?—(*Mr. Hume*)—All their letters on the newspaper business are charged with postage, and are paid for; those on their domestic concerns are charged also, but the postage is refunded; the amount of the postage is very small.

What is the value of the exemption from postage on all letters received by a clerk of the roads in England, having reference to his domestic concerns?—£10 or 12*l.* a year, probably, to each individual.

Can you form any estimate with any probable degree of accuracy, with regard to the clerks of the roads in Ireland?—I am persuaded that they have been in the habit of receiving and sending letters, probably to the amount of 300*l.* a year each, some of them considerably more, without doubt.

In



In what office is the business of the clerks of roads carried on in Ireland?—Some of them, I think, are carried on within the building.

In an office separate from any of those for the public business?—The offices I have seen are not connected with the sorting office; they are in rooms detached from the offices.

Is their business transacted by persons employed and paid by themselves, or by clerks employed and paid by the public?—By clerks paid by the public, I understand.

Are the offices in which the newspaper business of the clerks of roads in England is carried on situate in the public building, or private by themselves?—In England the clerks of roads pay for the offices themselves.

In what way does the Irish mail-coach system differ from that of England?—(*Mr. Johnson*)—Some of the chief differences are, that in Ireland the contractors are one or two persons for a whole line of road, whereas in England a contractor seldom has more than one or two stages; the contractors in Ireland find their own coaches; in England they are supplied under a government contract, the mileage for which the contractors are bound to pay to the builder.

Has it appeared to you that the consequence of the practice in England is, that of producing better mail-coaches, or that they are kept by that means in better repair, or more commodious?—I think in England it is almost essential that the coaches should be provided in that way, and I think it desirable in Ireland; but from the smallness of the scale of business in Ireland, I do not consider it to be of nearly the same importance.

In what way is the principle affected by the smallness of the scale?—Because I conceive it would be more easy for the superintendent to inspect the factories or workshops in Ireland, than it would be if the business were subdivided over so great an extent as England, Wales, and Scotland.

Does the post-office in Ireland exercise any superintendence or control over the state of the mail-coaches?—I should conceive that the Irish post-office considers itself entitled to inspect the coaches, and does in fact require them to be built after their own directions; but there is, as is obvious to every person, a want of uniformity both in the dimension of the coaches, and the manner of fitting them up, which is left more than it would be (according to our English system) to the fancy and judgment of the contractor.

Do the contracts contain any specification of the weight, or the size, or the manner of fitting up?—Not at all. There is a sort of model, which does not appear to be strictly adhered to.

They are not all made by one builder?—No; some of the contractors build for themselves, others supply themselves from builders in England.

In what way are the coaches inspected with a view to ascertaining whether they are or not in perfect repair?—They are subject to no other inspection, that I am aware of, but that of the superintendent, and he does not appear to consider himself possessed of much authority in that respect. They are not precisely of the same dimensions, the same weight, or exactly the same colour and ornaments. The wheels are of various construction.

Did you observe that at a distance from Dublin the coaches were of an inferior description to those used near Dublin?—I am not aware that the coaches at a distance from Dublin are inferior to those which go in and out. I travelled in an uncomfortable carriage from Cork to Waterford; it was exceedingly narrow inside, and low in the roof; in other respects not to be complained of. I suppose the intention was to build it light.

Have you any reason to believe that accidents from breaking down or otherwise are frequent?—I have not heard any thing that induces me to consider that accidents are much more frequent in Ireland than in England. The great advantage of having the coaches built by one contractor would be, simplicity and uniformity, and a facility of controlling and inspecting them, with greater certainty of having them well built.

Do the mail-coaches in Ireland pay any stamp duty?—They are not liable to any stamp duty; in England they pay 5*d.* the double mile.

By whom is that duty paid?—By the contractors themselves.

What is the ordinary rate at which the mails in England are conveyed?—The ordinary rate is 3*d.* the double mile.

Amounting to three fifths of what they pay to the revenue in duty?—Exactly so.

Are the stage-coaches in England subject to a similar duty?—They are.

Is there any stamp duty on stage-coaches in Ireland?—There is not.

Have you the means of forming any estimate of the comparative expense of mail-coaches in Ireland with that of England?—It is quite out of my power to state the actual difference, but there is no doubt that a mail or stage-coach might be worked cheaper in Ireland than in England, on account of the cheapness both of provender and of labour; but then I mean that it should be worked on the same plan as in England, and not as the mail-coaches are, by one or two persons of opulence taking a contract for a whole line of road, having all the horses upon it probably their own property, and employing salaried agents at almost every stage to look after them.

Have you reason to believe that the expense of managing the mail-coaches in Ireland is greater than it need be?—I think it is far more expensive than in England, and must require greater profits to the contractors, although it is in some degree compensated to them by the cheapness of horse provender and of labour.

Have you examined any of the contracts, so as to be enabled to judge at what rate of expense per mile any particular mail-coach in Ireland is worked?—It is not in my power at all to state at what rate of expense per mile any coach is worked in Ireland, but I have reason to think that the competition has brought the earnings of the coaches nearer to

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the sum considered necessary to remunerate the contractors in England than they were some years ago.

Is there not an extra allowance in Ireland for the carriage of the English mail on Sundays?—There is usually 1*l.* per mile per annum.

Is there not also an allowance for the second guard?—There is also an allowance for the second guard.

Is there in all instances a second guard?—All mail-coaches from Dublin, I believe, have a second guard, but not for the whole of their distance; the Limerick coach, for instance, has its second guard no further than Mountrath, and some of the others about the same distance. The necessity for having a second guard is supposed to cease there, as the coach is then getting into day-light.

Are the mail-coaches in Ireland subject to the payment of toll?—The mail-coaches in Ireland are by law subject to the payment of toll.

In what manner are those tolls paid?—They are paid quarterly by the postmasters-general to the treasurers of the trusts or to the lessees of the tolls.

What number of passengers do the mail-coaches in Ireland carry?—They have varied; but usually of late the outsides have been three or four; four seems now to be considered the regular number.

Are the contracts in Ireland voidable for any non-performance of the duty or on any other ground?—In England the contracts may be put an end to by three months notice on either side, such notice to be given on the 5th of January or the 5th April quarter in each year. In Ireland the contracts are made for a term of years, seven, fourteen, and in some instances nearly thirty.

If a contractor does not strictly fulfil the conditions of his contract, in what way is the object of the contract enforced?—I presume that he might in that case be proceeded against for the penalty of the contract.

Have you heard of any instances of their being proceeded against at law for the non-fulfilment of the contract?—I do not think that any process has ever been issued against them.

In what manner are the contracts in Ireland renewed?—The mode seems to have been, previous to the expiration of any contract, to advertise for fresh offers; and I believe it has rarely happened that the postmaster-general has received more than one.

To what do you ascribe that?—I should ascribe it to the want of competition, there being few persons in Ireland of capital sufficient to contend against the present parties in their own way.

Judging by the present state of the country and its difference from England, do you think the present mode of contracting for mail-coaches in Ireland is the best which can be resorted to, or that it is capable of any improvement?—I think the mode itself is exceedingly objectionable, and that unless the Irish post-office should find itself able on the great lines to make more satisfactory terms, means ought certainly to be used to form mail-coach companies on the English principle; that principle is to engage innkeepers or any persons accustomed to horses, to take one, two, or more stages, as the case may be, on a certain line of road.

Does it appear to you that the establishment of such a system would be possible, consistently with the existing state of Ireland?—I believe that on some roads it would be quite impracticable to form contracts upon that principle; on others it is doubtful whether it could be effected; and I should think that the office would certainly do well to renew their contracts with the present parties, wherever they can do it upon fair and reasonable terms; as I apprehend, although contracts on the English principle could be made on various roads, it would be attended with very great difficulty and perplexity to the office, and would inevitably produce oppositions, the result of which it would not be very easy to calculate. It would be a contention of the weak against the strong.

What number of mail-coaches leave Dublin each evening?—Eight mail-coaches leave Dublin every evening; the total amount of double mail-coach miles is 1,450.

Do you include the second Cork mail?—Yes.

Are the letters sent on cheaper terms where they are sent by horse-post?—Undoubtedly, the horse-post being paid for only at the rate of 5*d.* the double mile.

Is not the insecurity of horse-post such as to render it inapplicable to Ireland?—In many parts of Ireland I conceive the substitution of a horse-post for a mail-coach would be next to impossible, as there would be danger of robbery every night.

Where a mail is large, would it be possible to transmit it by horse-post?—A pretty considerable mail can be transmitted at the rate of seven and a half English miles an hour or more by a horse and light cart; but I apprehend that the expense would in that case be something more than the 5*d.* per mile now usually allowed; the horse-posts or carts are allowed by the Act to go free of toll.

Can you state the total expense of the several mail-coaches in Ireland, as compared with the expense in England?—In Ireland there are 1,450 mail-coach miles worked at a total expense for mileage, guards, and tolls, of 30,438*l.* Irish per annum. In England the expense of the same number of miles would be about 7,500*l.* British; but the Irish mile it should be recollected is of greater length than the British.

What number of post-towns are there in Ireland?—Four hundred and thirty-three.

Are the bags which are transmitted to many of those post-towns, nearly empty?—I believe that the bags to many of the post-towns do frequently go and return empty; but with a very few exceptions there is a collective revenue of not less than 50*l.* per annum at even the smallest class of those towns.

Is that sufficient to pay the expense of each of them?—It is impossible to state whether each post-town pays its expenses, without a particular inquiry into the circumstances of the case; there is no post-town, I believe, that does not return more than the expense of what one would call its establishment, namely, the salary of the postmaster.

Is it possible that in many instances an arrangement of a different nature might be made, namely, that of a head office, with certain sub-offices attached to it, and that that would afford the same accommodation to the country, and at a less expense, than the having the number of principal offices there now is?—I am not aware that it would be a saving of expense; it might have been desirable to have made many of the towns sub post-towns; it would have relieved the inland office of some trouble; but the salaries being very small it is not very material in that respect whether a place is called a post-town or a sub post-town.

In one case is there not an especial bag sent to the town, and in the other a bag made up in the principal office in the district?—Yes; a post-town always has a bag from Dublin; a sub-office would be under some post-town.

As the present arrangement is made, would it not be attended with considerable inconvenience to change it?—I apprehend that it would now be found very inconvenient to make much alteration, and at all events I do not conceive that the accommodation of any place now existing for the delivery and receipt of letters could be well withdrawn, let it be called by whatever name it might.

Does not the superintendent of mail-coaches in England report upon and advise the post-office on the subject of contracts for mail-coaches?—It is the duty of the superintendent of mail-coaches in England to report upon and give his advice to the postmasters-general on all such matters; he negotiates with contractors, and makes the agreements subject to the confirmation of the postmaster-general.

Is not the case in Ireland wholly different?—It is. The superintendent seems not to be employed in negotiating for a contract at all. The contracts have sometimes been made by the secretary, sometimes by the chief clerk, and, it appears, in some instances, by one of the postmasters-general, without consultation with any other officer.

Have you had any opportunity of examining into the state of the arrears of the deputy postmasters?—I did examine into the state of the deputy-postmasters arrears, and found that, on the 5th of July last, the outstanding balances were 16,000*l.*, which, upon an estimate, exceeded by 5,800*l.* the sums which those deputies ought, by the regulations of the office for the remittance of instalments, to have had in their hands; it is therefore to be presumed that a more strict attention to those who neglected to remit their instalments might have prevented a considerable portion of this excess.

What is the amount of the outstanding arrears from dismissed and deceased deputies?—There is a list amounting to more than 14,000*l.*, which the solicitor states that he is using every possible means to recover.

What is the amount of arrears which are returned from persons who are stated to be insolvent?—The list of the arrears declared to be irrecoverable amounts to more than 12,000*l.*, and they are so declared upon the authority of the solicitor; there are arrears of about 1,700*l.* from late letter-carriers, which are not yet declared to be insolvent.

Had you any opportunity of making yourself acquainted with the details of those balances, or forming any opinion upon them?—My opinion was, that of the list amounting to 14,000*l.* (and the solicitor confirmed it) many might be recovered; the other list, amounting to 12,000*l.*, was declared by himself to be irrecoverable.

Would it not be desirable that that sum of 12,000*l.*, which is acknowledged to be irrecoverable, should be struck altogether from the account?—I conceive it should be struck from the account by some order from competent authority, as, besides other objections, the effect of it is to show a total receipt in the accounts beyond the actual receipt.

Does it appear that surveyors, when they were placed in charge of a vacant office, have left balances unpaid?—There have been such instances.

Is not that practice highly reprehensible?—Such a practice I conceive to be highly reprehensible, as the surveyor is not only to instruct the postmaster, but to set an example.

Does it appear to be more difficult in Ireland than in England to obtain the remittances from the deputy postmasters?—I conceive it is more difficult, from the number of small offices, and the sort of persons who hold them.

Have your examinations extended into the penny post-office?—We have inquired into all the details of the penny post-office in Dublin.

Does the gross annual expense of this establishment exceed its receipt?—Formerly the expense considerably exceeded the receipt. In the spring of 1822 the deliveries, which had been previously four, were made six; they had stood at four since 1810, when the penny post was new modelled, and fifty-seven letter-carriers were then appointed. The expenditure has till very lately exceeded the produce, though the produce has greatly increased. The six deliveries were made without the appointment of any additional number of letter-carriers, and this alteration has produced an increase which appears to be regularly augmenting. For the half year ending the 5th of April 1823 the produce was 1,989*l.*, the expense 1,921*l.*, showing for the first time a small profit. In the second quarter of 1822 the gross receipt was 799*l.*; in the third quarter, 853*l.*; the fourth quarter, 891*l.*: the first quarter of 1823, 975*l.*; the second ditto, 1,017*l.* This consecutive increase shows that the public value and make use of the additional convenience of the penny post; and though a more moderate establishment might yield a greater net gain, yet finding the Dublin penny post constituted as it is, and affording so great a public accommodation, apparently also containing the elements of greater profit to the revenue, we do not think it would be wise to contract the number of

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deliveries or of letter-carriers. The penny post also affords a great facility to the delivery and collection of general post letters beyond the Circular-road, and of course has a tendency to increase the general post revenue.

What is the establishment for conducting the business of this office?—The establishment consists of a comptroller, a chief clerk, four sorters, two window-men, and a collector, which is rather an onerous charge, but as the sorters and window-men ought always to act under the inspection of a superior officer, the comptroller must be constantly present were there no chief clerk to supply his place. The window-men have little to do, but an attendance throughout the whole day is too much for one person; for the same reason four sorters are necessary, though two are enough at one time. We cannot, therefore, venture to propose a reduction of officers at present; but the progress of the penny post should be carefully watched.

Do the secretary, or the comptroller, or any of the clerks of the office, exercise a privilege of sending or receiving letters through this department, free?—It is stated that the secretary, and comptroller, and his chief clerk, all send and receive letters free through this department.

Is there any similar privilege in the penny post in London?—Yes; the secretary, the assistant secretary, and the comptroller of the twopenny post, send and receive letters free in London, by usage of course, there being no Act of Parliament on the subject.

Have you any reason to believe that the exercise of this privilege is abused in Dublin?—I am not aware that it has been used for any improper purpose.

What is the fund which is called the Messengers Fund?—It is formed of the fees taken for letters after time.

Is it well regulated?—I should conceive that it ought to be distributed according to some fixed rule or scale, and not at the discretion of the secretary or any other officer.

Did it appear, in your examination of it, what was the rule by which it was professedly distributed?—It appears to be distributed partly in rewards for good services judged of by the secretary. In London, the sum received for late letters is carried to a fund, from which the messengers are paid and pensioned according to a certain scale, but they cannot be placed upon it for pensions without a report to the Lords of the Treasury.

Have you any reason to believe that the illegal conveyance of letters is much practised in Ireland?—From what I hear I should greatly apprehend that it is practised to a considerable extent.

Have the office power to search for letters?—The Irish officè has power to search for letters on information on oath, which the English office has not; but the Irish office has no power to search in any other way.

There appears to be a privilege which certain clerks possess, of supplying what are called express papers and lottery lists; is there any similar privilege existing in England?—No privilege of this sort exists at all in England; the newspapers furnished by the clerks of roads are not delivered at any of the country offices till the moment when the window opens for the delivery to all. The practice in Ireland militates against one of the first principles of the English office, namely, that there should be no partial delivery whatever.

In what manner are the rebates or repayments for the overcharged letters obtained in the office in Dublin?—When we first came to Dublin all the claims for rebates were made to the secretary's office, and were not obtained without the order of the secretary or his clerks; it appeared to us that this might be done by a responsible person, the window-man, without encroaching on the time of persons who had a superior duty to do in another office.

What is the practice now?—The practice for the last three weeks has been to allow them, on application at the window.

Is there a separate account kept of the rebates?—There is a book called the Rebate book kept at the paid-letter window.

Has it been the practice to order other payments to be made and inserted and charged in that book?—Some small incidental payments appear to have been made from that book by order of the secretary.

What description of payments?—One instance was for bringing up a mail or bag of letters from Howth, and things of that nature.

Is not that highly objectionable?—It is highly objectionable, as it might go to place articles of expenditure under an account where they could never be inspected or revised.

By whom is the duty of examining and certifying the quarterly credits of the postmasters performed?—By the secretary.

In what manner?—All the incidental payments made by postmasters of course come under his examination, and as the account is allowed on his certificate, he is to judge whether the expense has been rightly or not incurred.

Does that appear to be the proper mode in which the check should be made?—That does appear to be the proper mode, the whole account subsequently receiving the warrant of the postmaster-general.

Does the chief clerk in the secretary's office receive any fee on mails which arrive too late at Waterford or Belfast, or at any other place?—He continues to receive a fee for what are termed too late mails at Waterford and Belfast; but we do not find that he has now any duty to do with respect to those mails, or that there is any object for the fee at present.

Are the rates of postage, whether British or Irish, collected in Irish or English currency?—The rates of postage on British letters delivered in Ireland are collected in Irish currency, and the postage of Irish letters for England is collected in British money.

Is

Is there an allowance made for this difference in the adjustment which takes place of the account between the two countries?—No, it is not considered in the account.

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C. JOHNSON.

J. HUME.

## Appendix, No. 163.

Thursday, 4th September 1823.

Mr. RICHARD MILLIKEN called in and examined.

YOU carry on the trade of a bookseller in Dublin?—I do.

How long have you carried on your trade in Dublin?—Sixteen years.

Have you been in the habit of supplying various literary societies in town and in the country?—I have.

Have you felt recently any interruption in your business from any cause as applying to the supply of those societies?—I have.

Will you state the nature of it?—In April 1822, I received a circular letter signed by Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt of the post-office, stating that they had reformed their establishment, and that in future they would transmit British and foreign newspapers, lottery, commercial, army and navy lists, periodical and other publications.

[The witness produced the same, which was read as follows:]

“ British Newspaper Office, General Post-office.

“ The clerks of roads and clerks of express newspapers having, under the authority of the postmasters-general, reformed their establishment in this department for the transmission of British and foreign newspapers, lottery, commercial, army and navy lists, periodical and other publications, the nobility and gentry of Dublin are respectfully informed that they can be supplied with those articles either by an express delivery (which is made by special messengers immediately on the arrival of the packets) or by the regular course of post.

“ Country correspondents will have a peculiar advantage, as upon all occasions when a packet arrives before the dispatch of the inland mails, but too late for general transmission, their newspapers, &c. will be forwarded at the last possible moment.

“ Newspapers exchanged at pleasure any time during the period of subscription.

“ Subscriptions to be paid in advance.

“ \* \* \* Further particulars known by application to Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, General Post-office, who will receive subscriptions.

“ ~~6~~ Daily attendance from 12 till 4 o'clock.

“ N. B. — London daily newspapers to Dublin by general delivery, 10*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* per annum.”

(Addressed)

“ R. MILLIKEN, esq.

“ Grafton-street.”

“ General Post-office,

“ Leet and De Joncourt.”

(Stamped in red ink.)

Did that letter come to you by the penny post?—It did.

Does the mark which appears upon it, carry letters free by the penny post?—It does. In consequence of this I went over to the post-office. I was not known, and I inquired from a clerk, of the nature of this new arrangement, whether I could get any books that I might want; I was told any book that I might order should be procured from London. This was at a time when I paid duty for books; before the duties were taken off; and every pound weight of books which I imported by Holyhead, I considered cost me 11*d.* per pound, British, in the duty, the land carriage and the expenses in the custom-house of entry, and so on. I considered that as an interference with my business, and in consequence I wrote to Lord Rosse and to Lord O'Neill.

Have you copies of the letters you addressed to Lord Rosse and Lord O'Neill?—I have not; but the following is the substance: That I had received a circular letter from Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, of which I sent a copy; that I considered such an interference to be unjust, as it enabled them to import an article duty free which was liable to a duty of 3*d.* per lb.; that I had a large establishment with sixteen children to support; and praying their lordships to afford me relief from such an intervention with my business. I received an answer from Lord O'Neill sometime after, stating that he had made inquiry into the

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matter of my complaint, and could afford me no relief, as the matter was sanctioned by the Government and by Parliament. This is the letter.

[The witness produced the same, and it was read as follows:]

“ Sir,

“ London, May 13th, 1822.

“ I have made inquiry into the circumstances alluded to in your letter of 15th ultimo, and do not find that any *new* regulations have taken place in the Irish post-office on the subject. Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt seem to be only exercising a privilege which has been long considered as their right, and sanctioned by Government and Parliament. Under these circumstances it is not in my power to afford you any relief.

“ I am, &c. &c. &c.

“ O’NEILL.”

“ Mr. Milliken.”

Did you receive any answer from Lord Rosse?—I received an answer from Mr. Thomas Orde Lees, the pro-secretary.

[The witness produced the same, and it was read as follows:]

“ Sir,

“ General Post-office, 26th April 1822.

“ I am directed by my lords the postmaster-general to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, adverting to one which you state to have received from Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, upon the subject of supplying newspapers, lottery, commercial, army and navy lists, periodical and other publications; and you inform their lordships that you feel such interference will injure you as a trader. Their lordships, I am directed to observe, do not see upon what grounds you apprehend such consequences, inasmuch as the privilege of circulating newspapers, lists, and periodical publications by the clerks of roads, has been enjoyed by them from time immemorial; and the single fact of their furnishing them at a higher rate than you state you supply them at is of itself sufficient to show that they are not taking advantage of their official privilege to monopolize or to injure the fair trader. Upon the subject of that particular part of the allusion to “*other publications*” I am instructed to say, what I already communicated to you in person, that it has no relation whatever to *any* but periodical publications, the words AND OTHER having been by mistake misplaced in the printed letter in question.

“ I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“ T. ORDE LEES,

“ Pro-Secretary.”

After you received this letter from Mr. Orde Lees, did you take any further steps?—No; I considered that I could not proceed any further, and must submit; at one time I did intend to take the liberty of troubling the president of this commission upon the subject, but I thought it might be out of place.

What do you calculate the weight of an octavo volume?—An Edinburgh Review weighs a pound.

Taking a parcel of books, consisting of octavos and others together, do you think they might be taken at a pound weight each?—I think that would be under the mark, especially as we get them wet.

Had you been in the habit of supplying, before, those publications to any of the literary societies or to many individuals?—To the principal literary societies in Dublin I had, and after that period they nearly all discontinued.

Have you any communications from any of them upon the subject of that discontinuance?—Yes; here is an order from the Dublin Lending Library, with a list of periodicals to be received through Mr. Leet.

[The same was delivered in, and read as follows:]

“ A list of periodicals to be received through Mr. Leet, of the post-office:

“ Gentleman’s Magazine,	London Magazine,
Monthly ditto,	Blackwood’s ditto,
New Monthly ditto,	Scot’s ditto,
Lady’s ditto,	Monthly Review,

London Medical Journal.

“ Dear Sir,

“ The above-mentioned periodicals are to be got by post; with respect to the rest of the periodicals I can give you no directions till I consult the committee.

“ Yours, &c.

“ GEO. RANKIN.”

(Mr.

(*Mr. Milliken.*)—I have another letter from the same institution.

[*The same was delivered in, and read as follows :*]

“ Dublin Lending Library, 5th August 1823.

“ The following resolution has passed the committee.

“ Resolved,—That in future the periodicals be received through Mr. Leet, of the post-office.

“ GEO. RANKIN.”

(*Mr. Milliken.*)—I have a letter I have received from another society.

[*The same was delivered in, and read as follows :*]

“ Sir,

“ Dublin Library, D'Olier's, 1st August 1823.

“ In consequence of Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, of the post-office, having undertaken to furnish the periodicals by post at the London prices, the committee at their last meeting have ordered them to be received through the post-office after this month; I shall send a list in the course of the day.

“ I remain, Sir, your very obedient servant,

“ JOHN RAPER,

“ Librarian.”

“ To R. Milliken, Esq.”

What is meant by the London prices?—The public prices in London. Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt set out, in this bookselling speculation, by charging an advanced price, by charging for a review, say the Quarterly, 7s. British, instead of 6s. British; but as soon as the duties were taken off, and the libraries found I had my periodicals perhaps on the same day, at all events on the following day to that at which they could be received at the post-office, they were anxious to save this additional shilling, and they came back to me; but as soon as those persons heard that they had reduced their prices to the London prices, they left me again; and here is a very long list which we received from the librarian of the Dublin Institution, in Sackville-street, to which I am bookseller; a list of periodicals to be discontinued, which I had been in the habit of supplying before, and amongst those there are some that are octavo volumes; the Medico-Chirurgical Transactions, for instance; I have other lists of the same nature.

[*They were delivered in, and read as follows :*]

“ List of periodical works to be discontinued :

“ Monthly Magazine, New Monthly, Gentleman's, Philosophical, Farmers, Blackwood, Thompson's Annals of Philosophy, Repertory of Arts, Monthly Review, Quarterly, Edinburgh, British Critic, Quarterly Journal of Foreign Medicine, Johnson's Medico-Chirurgical Review, Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Review, Brand's Journal, Pamphleteer, Medico-Chirurgical Transactions.”

(*Endorsed*) “ Received from Mr. Ellis, Librarian, Dublin Institution, Aug. 23, 1823.”

“ List of periodicals to be henceforth received by the Dublin Library Society, through the post-office.

“ British Critic, Philosophical Magazine, Monthly Review, Gentleman's Magazine, Monthly Magazine, Repertory of Arts, London Medical Repository, New Monthly Magazine, London Magazine.”

(*Endorsed*) “ Received August 1st, 1823.”

(*Addressed*) “ Mr. Milliken.”

What are the advantages which persons who receive those publications derive from receiving them through Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, instead of receiving them through the regular course of trade?—On my receiving the Edinburgh Review I perhaps made up that night from 50 to 100 small coach parcels; sometimes I had to send the reviews separate; in general I held back any other books I had for my customers, waiting a few days for the reviews or the monthly periodicals, and always retained any orders I had to save the carriage; but at all events when the reviews arrived I sent them off that night by coach, in the regular way. Of course it cost my customers from 1s. 8d. to 2s. 6d. in some instances. They can now get those same publications a day or two sooner from Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, and they can get them free of carriage by the post.

What advantage have those persons who are supplied by them within the town of Dublin over those supplied by the common booksellers?—The advantage now is very small, for we exert ourselves to get those things over early, and I think it rarely happens that we are more than one day behind. I presume their periodicals arrive by this day's mail; whereas mine would arrive to-morrow, which left town on Monday night.

(107.)

Do

Examinations.

No. 163.

Mr. R. Milliken.  
4th Sept. 1823.

Examinations.  
 —  
 No. 163.  
 Mr. R. Milliken.  
 4th Sept. 1823.

Do they derive any advantage in price from being supplied through Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—No, they now charge, as appears by those documents, the London price. I have invariably charged the London price for my books for many years.

Then the expense of bringing them here they are exempt from to a certain degree, while you are obliged to pay it out of the allowance made by the publishers to the trade?—Yes.

Have you any reason to know whether their publications come free to them from London to Dublin?—I do not of my own knowledge know that; I have always understood that they come by post, that they have a bag, but I have no opportunity of knowing that.

They possibly would get them at the trade price?—They would, no doubt.

What do you calculate to be the charge on a packet of books consisting of a certain number, for their carriage from London to Dublin, if they come by the mail coach, so as to compete with Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—A good deal depends upon the size of the parcel.

Supposing you had a parcel of twenty Edinburgh Reviews, and that for the purpose of meeting them by early distribution you had them in the quickest way in which they could be sent; what charge would that entail upon you?—About nine-pence a review.

That would be applicable to any volume of the same size?—Yes, to any volume.

Did the supply of those publications previously through the booksellers go to a considerable extent?—Undoubtedly; the supply was in the hands of the trade. I can mention that the person who had that situation prior to Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, I think his name was Hill, got his reviews from me; he called on me some years ago with a Mr. Steele, who is clerk of the postage of the custom-house; several of the commissioners of the custom-house at that time took reviews and periodicals. Mr. Hill said he did not consider it part of his business, and he ordered, I think, six-and-thirty reviews, which we supplied to the custom-house for years.

Have they been latterly supplied through Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—No; about the period that Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt reformed their office, they were discontinued; the Commissioners took those reviews in lieu of newspapers; some allowance they were entitled to; I believe that allowance was done away just about the same time that those gentlemen commenced this business.

The same effect has probably been produced upon others which has been upon yourself, and individuals as well as societies in the country and in Dublin are principally supplied through Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—I am sure they are. I believe I have a larger portion of that kind of business than any other bookseller in Dublin, so that others may not feel it to the same extent; a great portion of my business is with gentlemen of the law; I am a law-bookseller; and I did think that those gentlemen would import in the same way the reports of the English courts, which would certainly have been very annoying to me, for I have got these things down by the coach, and the profit was consumed by getting them down in that way, but it kept my customers together, and brought the judges and professional gentlemen to my shop, who would not have come so often if they had been supplied by other persons.

Has that supply got into their hands in any degree?—I am not aware that it has; I have not had any falling off in my business in that way. I will beg to mention another circumstance. There is a work published in London weekly called the Literary Gazette; it is a stamped publication, and is transmitted through the post-office as a newspaper free of postage; but they publish an unstamped copy for 8*d.*; this can only be got over by our parcels along with books; it cannot be got through the post-office; but in opposition to this Literary Gazette a work is brought out, published in Liverpool, called the Kaleidoscope, price 6*d.*; by an advertisement in the newspapers I perceive Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt have become agents for this Kaleidoscope; they sent me some numbers, which I declined receiving; I presume that they receive and transmit those through the country in the same way that they do newspapers, which is not regular, for it is an unstamped paper. The circumstances I mention I know only from a circular letter they have sent round, and newspaper advertisements. If they are agents to that publication, I take for granted that is the way in which they are circulated.

Have you any means of knowing what was the whole number of the periodical publications that used to go through the trade?—I cannot state the number supplied by others.

How many did you supply yourself in Dublin, or elsewhere?—Of the Quarterly Review between 300 and 400, and of the Edinburgh Review nearly 300, say 250; the London Magazines have not a large sale in Dublin.

They went to a considerable amount?—A very large amount.

Up to what time had you a general supply; did a great alteration take place on the arrangement which Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt announced in their paper?—The alteration has been gradual since that time; it was not instantaneous, for persons are discovering these advantages every day. I was in the habit of supplying the principal parts of regiments in Ireland with army lists and reviews, but they have got circular letters into almost all the regiments, saying that other arrangements were made.

Have you yourself ever at any time been in the habit of receiving either books or publications through the privilege of the post-office, or through the privilege of any other persons who are permitted to frank?—I have.

Books?—Army lists, books, and occasionally pamphlets.

Has that been through individuals in the post-office?—No.

Has it been up to a late period?—No; I think immediately after Lord Wellesley came here Mr. Goulburn issued a circular letter.



It has not been continued since that?—It has not.

Have you reason to believe that other booksellers have received those things in the same way?—I do not know of any thing recent; there was a time when several of the trade had their friends in that way, and they all got a share of those advantages; at one period I had as much of that as any one else.

It went to any books you wanted?—To any books; it was only for the last two or three years that we could get over any thing except once a fortnight or three weeks; there was a vessel called the *Henrietta*, that came over with goods once in a fortnight or three weeks; it was at that time a great object for me to get a dozen copies of a work of Lord Byron's, or any publication of the day quickly, but that ceased as soon as the packets were allowed to carry parcels; it was not to save money or defraud the revenue, but for the expedition; goods used to remain in Holyhead for nearly three weeks, and we could not get them across.

Have you ever known any public officers exercise their privilege of franking for the purpose of supplying books, either through the trade or otherwise, except Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt?—No, never.

Was it through Mr. Mangin you received the benefit of this privilege?—It was through Mr. Taylor, who was Mr. Mangin's predecessor, in the first instance.

Afterwards through Mr. Mangin?—Yes.

Were you at all in the habit of sending things over to England through the same privilege?—No.

You have never had books through the privilege of the clerks in the post-office, have you?—Never.

RICHARD MILLIKEN.

Examinations.

No. 163.

Mr. R. Milliken.  
4th Sept. 1823.

### Appendix, No. 164.

5th September 1823.

Alderman CHARLES PALMER ARCHER called in and examined.

IN the course of your business, have you been in the habit of supplying to any of the societies, or to any individuals, periodical publications?—Yes, constantly.

Have you, within a certain period, found that business taken from you, or diminished?—It has greatly diminished.

To what cause do you attribute that?—In consequence of a privilege allowed to gentlemen in different public departments, of getting those works over free of expense, and being enabled to transmit them to the country in the same way, without being liable to any charge.

Will you look at the advertisement prefixed to the Dublin Calendar; have you seen that before?—I have seen what I suppose to be a fac simile of this, a copy.

Do you know at what time a paper of that kind was first printed, and issued to the public?—I do not recollect.

Do you recollect in how many of those calendars it has appeared?—I really do not.

Have you had any communication from those individuals, that they were prepared to supply you with any books if you wanted them?—I have had a communication of that kind, and get some periodicals through Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt; the Army Lists and Navy Lists.

How long have you done that?—I should think for the last two or three years; I am not quite certain.

Why did you get them through them?—In consequence of not being enabled to get them over myself without considerable expense.

In consequence of their privilege, you got them through them on better terms than you could in any other way?—Yes, and more expeditiously; that was the principal object.

Did you receive those books on the same terms as any other individual, or had you any advantage and allowance in consequence of your being in the bookselling trade?—There was an allowance made to me in consideration of my being a bookseller.

What was the nature of that allowance?—I pay Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt 1s. 8d. for each Army List, getting perhaps a dozen or two dozen, according as I have a demand for them: I perceive the price stated here (*in the advertisement prefixed to the Dublin Calendar*) is 1l. 10s. per annum, or 2s. 6d. each; it is published monthly. They make to me a reduction of one third of 2s. 6d. Irish; the price in London is 1s. 6d. British: the price they charge me is 1s. 8d. Irish, which is a halfpenny more than 1s. 6d. British; I charge 2s. British only; I have never been in the habit of charging more than 2s. 2d. Irish.

Is that allowance the same as would have been made to you by the publisher, in consideration of your being in the trade?—No, there is an allowance. As well as I recollect, the price charged by my correspondent in London was 1s. 1½d. British, besides allowing me one copy in every twenty-five. I formerly received thirty to forty copies monthly; latterly I get but ten: some few years ago, previous to my taking them from Leet and De Joncourt, I used to take about treble the number I now take; at that period I paid 1s. 1½d. as well as I recollect, for each. The publication price was the same at that time as it is at present.

Examinations.

No. 164.

Alderman

C. P. Archer.  
5th Sept. 1823.

Were those Army Lists for regular purchasers, or generally for your trade?—Both for casual sale and for orders that I was in the habit of supplying regularly.

How many orders were you in the habit of supplying regularly?—I cannot recollect.

Were they supplied in Dublin or the country?—Both in Dublin and the country, principally to gentlemen in the army.

Had you any facility of dispatching those into the country which were to be supplied there?—None whatever; I generally sent them by the mail, paying the carriage.

Can persons be supplied with those publications by Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, in Dublin, on better terms than you can afford to supply them?—Leet and De Joncourt have a much larger profit than I should have. I presume they get them on the same terms that I, as a bookseller, can procure them in London; they have the allowance, and get them over, as I suppose, free of any expense whatever; and it appears by this list that they charge considerably more for them than I have ever been in the habit of charging; of course, their profits must be considerably larger, and they can transmit to any part of the country, free of any expense; in fact, any works whatsoever, Quarterly Reviews, and works of considerable size (I believe) even to the extent of quarto volumes.

Have you any reason to believe that works, other than those which come distinctly under the character of periodical publications, are or have been supplied through that medium, either to the trade or to individuals?—I have no reason to know it.

Have you any reason to believe it?—I cannot say that I have; some of those periodicals are of considerable size.

Do you know whether, by the trade or any persons in the trade, books or publications have been received through the privilege of any individuals besides those in the post-office?—I have frequently heard that it was the case, and I do believe it to be so; I have strong reason to believe it.

Can you point out through whose privilege, and by whom they have been received?—I have understood it was through gentlemen in the post-office who had that privilege.

The question refers to persons besides those in the post-office?—I have heard public officers mentioned, but I do not know that it is the case; from circumstances I have every reason to believe that it is so; I will give my reason: I have been anxious to get over any works of interest as expeditiously as possible; notwithstanding all my exertions to do so, getting them by mail, which is the most expeditious mode, I have been anticipated by other persons in the trade; I understood they had them sooner than I, notwithstanding I had gone to considerable expense to get them as expeditiously as I could; I therefore conclude it must have been through some favour in the public offices.

Have you ever, in your competition with other booksellers, found that any advantage appeared to have been derived by them beyond that of superior expedition?—Considerable advantage, I conceive, has arisen from it; formerly, when the booksellers of Dublin imported new works by the mail, there was advance usually made on the publication prices of about ten per cent, in order to cover the extra expense that the importer went to in getting them; latterly, within the two or three last years that has not been the custom, in consequence of some of the trade supplying the public at the London publication prices, which I conceive they have been enabled to do only in consequence of getting them over free of any expense; that has been, consequently, injurious to the trade generally, because those persons who imported them by mail paid the duty to which they were subject previous to the 5th of July; since that the duty has been removed; the person importing them by mail was under considerable disadvantage in consequence of the great expense, and the duty; but still he was obliged to sell books at the publication prices, notwithstanding all the expense that he was at, in order to hold a competition with the other persons. I could not expect to get a larger price for a new work than a bookseller living in the same or an adjoining street.

Are not you bookseller to the King?—Yes, I have the honour to be His Majesty's bookseller in Ireland.

How long have you been bookseller to the King?—That appointment I received in the month of March 1821, communicated to me by Sir Benjamin Bloomfield by order of His Majesty, in a letter from Brighton.

Do you recollect on what day you received that letter of appointment?—I do not recollect exactly, but I could ascertain by the post-mark.

Did you receive it in the regular course of post, or was there any delay or any particular circumstance belonging to that letter?—I think there was a delay of one day, and some peculiar circumstances attending that letter.

Will you have the goodness to state them?—On the receipt of the letter, on opening it I perceived it quite different from letters that I ever have been in the habit of receiving; I never received a letter in a similar state; the communication from Sir Benjamin Bloomfield was written on a sheet of note paper folded in an envelope; there was a large seal, I think, with the royal arms on the letter: the envelope appeared to have had one of the foldings-in torn off; it was not cut, but torn with much care; the end from which the folding was torn off was fastened with a little sealing wax, as if to prevent the inclosure falling out. This appeared strange to me at the time, but I did not much mind it, pleased with having received the appointment, yet I thought it rather strange. In a few days afterwards I saw an announcement in the newspapers stating that another person had been appointed bookseller to His Majesty; this surprised me a good deal: it then occurred to me that there was something not fair in the transaction. I had made application for the appointment in the month of January preceding, when in London as one of the deputation with the address

of the corporation of Dublin to His Majesty; it then occurred to me (it being strongly rumoured that the King intended paying a visit to Dublin) to make application for the appointment of bookseller to His Majesty; which I did in a letter to Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, about the end of January 1821; to that letter I had not received any answer whatever, although I remained in London (I think) for ten days or a fortnight afterwards. In the month of March (I am in the habit occasionally of going into the secretary's office in the Castle) a gentleman with whom I was acquainted there asked me whether I had received any pleasing intelligence, or something to that effect; I said "not;" he replied, "I think you soon will:" in the course of a few days afterwards I received this letter to which I have alluded; on seeing the announcement in the newspaper of another appointment, I looked at the letter again; my surprize at the state in which it reached me (having one of the foldings removed) made still a stronger impression upon my mind, and I went over to the post-office to Sir Edward Lees; I showed the letter; they saw evidently that there was something unusual in the appearance of it, and Sir Edward Lees wrote, I believe, to Mr. Freeling, of the post-office in London; there were communications for some time respecting the letter, but we could not discover any thing whatever relative to it. Sir Edward Lees appeared to me to have taken every pains to discover it, but could not.

You had no suspicion that the infidelity had taken place in the post-office here?—From various circumstances which came to my knowledge during the investigation, I am decidedly of opinion that the letter was opened previously to its arrival in Dublin.

Did you examine the date of the London post-mark?—The letter appeared to have been written at Brighton on Sunday, and put into the post-office (as appeared by the post-mark) on the Monday evening; it probably remained for a day, or the greater part of a day, in London.

Did you mark the day on which you received it?—I am not certain; on going to the post-office I told the secretary, or Mr. Thomas Lees, all the circumstances.

What was the interval before you heard of the other individual being appointed bookseller to His Majesty?—I think about five days after.

When you received that letter, announcing to you the appointment, was that individual, who was afterwards appointed bookseller to the King, in Dublin or in London?—In London, as I was informed.

He could not have set off from Dublin after your letter came?—No; I have reason to suppose that he was arrived in London; he set off from Dublin about the 13th or 14th of March; he travelled as expeditiously as possible, and he arrived about Friday the 16th; and the letter from Sir Benjamin Bloomfield to me was dated, Brighton, Sunday the 18th.

Have you reason to believe that that individual knew you were making application for the appointment?—Yes; a gentleman with whom I was acquainted assured me that that individual asked him as to the mode of accomplishing his object; on which he told him that I had made the application, and that I had got or was about to get the appointment, and that it was useless for him to apply.

What are the suspicions which this circumstance raised in your mind, to which you referred in the former part of your evidence?—My suspicions are and were, that the letter conveying to me the appointment had been opened from the time it left Sir Benjamin Bloomfield's hands till it arrived with me; that was strongly impressed upon my mind, and is so still, by the manner in which I received the letter, and the immediate announcement of another appointment.

You think that took place at Carlton-house?—Yes; Sir Edward Lees assured me that it could not have taken place in the post-office here.

Were you led to suppose any thing had been done to the letter in this post-office?—I thought something had been done to the letter in its transmission. I naturally applied to Sir Edward Lees as the proper person to ascertain where the letter I received had been opened.

You are quite confident that the individual bookseller to whom you alluded was not in Dublin at the time of its arrival?—Quite confident.

What is your opinion of the extent of the interference of Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt with the booksellers of Dublin?—My opinion is that it has interfered; a number of persons who were in the habit of getting their periodicals from me discontinued them, and now, I understand, get them through persons privileged in the public offices.

When they discontinued taking them from you did they give you any reason?—That they could get them with more regularity, and get them in the country free of any charge of carriage.

What was the charge of carriage into the country of one of those works?—On a small periodical work it was nearly as much as on a tolerable large parcel.

On an Edinburgh Review, for instance?—According to the distance; perhaps 2s. to 2s. 6d., 1s. 10d.; the proprietors of the coaches charge more in proportion for small parcels than for large ones; for an Army List, perhaps they would charge 1s. 6d. or 1s. 8d. if it was to be sent a distance into the country.

Did you feel the effect particularly at any given time?—No, it has been progressive: I do not supply any thing like the quantity of periodical works which I formerly did; my number of Edinburgh Reviews, Quarterly Reviews, and other periodicals has decreased considerably.

Do you attribute that entirely to that traffic that is carried on by Messrs. Leet and De Joncourt, or do you believe that it is done to a considerable extent through any of the other offices

Examinations.

No. 164.  
Alderman  
C. P. Archer.  
5th Sept. 1823.

offices of the government?—I rather think it is principally through the general post-office; that is the impression upon my mind; but I cannot say.

Have you reason to believe that other publications besides the periodical ones stated have been supplied through that channel?—I have no doubt whatever that there have.

Have you ever known any particular instances of that?—Gentlemen have told me that they got them by post.

Have you heard any complaints from any other booksellers on the same subject?—I have heard booksellers speak of it.

Have they spoken of it as a grievance?—Yes; I do think the trade consider it a very great grievance.

Did you ever write any thing upon the subject?—Never, that I recollect.

You never wrote to the postmasters-general, and stated that it appeared to be an abuse of the privileges of the office, and interfering with the fair trade of the country?—Never; I considered it the privilege of those gentlemen in the office, and that any interference with it on my part would be improper.

How long has it been exercised to an extent which you think has affected the trade?—I rather think it has been increasing considerably for the last two or three years; considerably of late.

Had you any communications from any parties who have ceased to take those works from you, of the reason of their being supplied through the post-office rather than by you?—Several gentlemen have told me; one gentleman who took half a dozen publications from me, stated that he could get them more regularly and expeditiously, and with more satisfaction, through the post-office; that was the Rev. Mr. Gore, who lives near Wexford; and there are many others.

What diminution has your supply undergone within a given time; what is the largest number you once supplied, and how many do you supply now?—I think my supply was from 150 to 120 Edinburgh Reviews; my supply now is, I think, seventy-five; and of the Quarterly Review in a similar proportion, as nearly as I can recollect.

Do you think they are continuing to decrease?—I rather think that they are on the decrease; the number is not increasing, certainly.

Have you any reason to believe that the general supply of those publications to Dublin is on the increase, or that there are fewer of them come to Dublin than did before?—My opinion is that fewer come through the Dublin booksellers; but as to the quantity which come through other channels I cannot form any opinion.

CHARLES P. ARCHER.

Appendix, No. 165.

Monday, 27th October 1823.

Mr. ALEXANDER JOHNSTON called in and examined.

No. 165.  
Mr. Alex. Johnston.  
27th Oct. 1823.

ARE you engaged in business as a newspaper vender?—A son of mine is as an agent for newspapers.

Are you not yourself?—I am in fact; my family is; I am of course at the head of it.

How long have you been engaged in that business?—Since June 1819.

Was there an establishment of the kind you now conduct in existence before you took it?—No, there was nothing of the kind; I established it on the plan that Messrs. Newton and Co. of London conduct theirs.

Are you connected with newspaper editors in England?—Yes, in correspondence; constantly receiving advertisements.

You have no connection in the nature of partnership?—No, not with any persons.

Are you a vender of Irish newspapers as well as English?—Yes, and Scotch also.

Have you any concern in any Irish newspaper?—No, not in any paper; nothing except as agent.

Will you have the goodness to state what charge you make to your customers for an English daily paper?—We have a printed list with the prices; I think it is 10*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* Irish for a daily London newspaper.

Do you sell periodical publications of any kind?—No; we do not supply any periodical publications, except such as are stamped.

What privilege have you in sending newspapers?—No other privilege, but we order them of a newsvender in London, and he addresses them to the different persons to whom they are to go; they are addressed by him in London.

If a daily paper is ordered at your office, in what way is it transmitted through the Irish post-office, from London, to a customer in the country?—We write to our correspondent in London, giving him the address of the person and the period, and he sends them direct from London, without their coming through us.

The paper does not come into your hands at all?—No, it never comes to us; it goes from London to the person to whom it is addressed.

The commissioners have before them a paper with the names of Leet and De Joncourt, clerks of British newspapers, at the bottom of it, which appears to be issued from the British newspaper

newspaper office, in the general post-office in Dublin, by which they offer to supply London newspapers at prices which are here stated; and it appears that they offer a daily paper at 11*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes; that is just ten shillings more than we have.

Is 11*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* the price at which they now supply them?—That was the price a little while ago, I know.

Have they increased or diminished it since that time?—I have not heard that they have.

Are all the newspapers supplied by the express clerks, supplied at the same rate?—£11 7*s.* 6*d.* Irish is what they used to charge; but for what they called the express papers, a person who wished to get his papers in five minutes after the arrival of the mail, there is an additional five guineas; it would take an hour perhaps after the arrival of the mail to get the papers out in the ordinary way.

Those who pay the five guineas probably obtain a great advantage in point of time of delivery?—Yes; but this is felt as a grievance by others; the merchants who cannot afford to pay that extra five guineas feel that those who can obtain a great advantage over them in getting the newspapers and price currents.

Are their newspapers delivered before those which pass through the alphabet?—Yes, by half an hour; I think on an average twenty-five minutes; those who do not pay the five guineas frequently do not get their newspapers for an hour, whereas the express papers are out in five minutes after the arrival of the mail; they come all tied together, and are immediately sent out.

Is the profit upon them considerable?—It is understood that it is worth from 800*l.* to 1,000*l.* a year.

That gives to the merchants who can afford to pay it a commercial advantage?—Yes, an immense advantage.

The payment to the alphabet clerk is three guineas?—Yes; but that is not merely for the early delivery, but the keeping an account of the postage; I have, perhaps, twenty letters in a morning, and they keep an account and take the postage altogether.

What allowance do the editors of newspapers in London make to you for vending their papers?—Ten per cent. for the paper, and ten per cent. for getting advertisements; some of the papers give twenty per cent. for advertisements; but it is ten per cent. invariably for the paper; for sending it into the country.

Out of the 10*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* you take ten per cent., and that is all the profit you have?—Yes, except the commission we take on the advertisements.

Is it within your knowledge that the express clerks have the same allowance made to them by the venders in England as you have?—I do not know.

Do you find your business as a newspaper vender much interfered with by the privileges of the express clerks?—Very much; they were in direct hostility to us when we commenced, Mr. Leet particularly.

In what way was that shown?—Papers that came to us, that did not come through them, they used to open; consequently they were retarded in their delivery; they used to retard the delivery of them, pretending they had a right to open them to see whether there were any letters; this was for the first year or two; they have not latterly done so.

How have you been able to appease that opposition?—I do not know; I never took any particular trouble with them, I went on regularly and persevered; but latterly we have not met with any interruption.

At about what period did that species of interruption cease?—For the last eighteen months there has been nothing particular to signify; there have been some odd instances.

What have been those instances?—The opening of papers, and consequently delaying them; we have had complaints when we have a paper to go on into the country, that it was not so soon as their own papers were; it came a day later.

They have the power to do that, you understand?—Yes, to take out the papers.

What they call fishing them?—Yes.

What advantage do they derive over you by the mode they have of forwarding the express papers occasionally?—To news-rooms in the country, for instance, they get five guineas for every express paper they send off; in March last there was a row about the mail not going out one evening; but they always sent out their own papers, leaving ours till the next night.

Have you frequent complaints of the English newspapers not being delivered on the day on which they ought?—Not latterly; but we had very much for the first two or three years; we were almost getting sick of the thing; we had some correspondence with Mr. Freeling about it; we sent him the letter we got, and he was very active and prompt in attending to our requests.

Was it within Mr. Freeling's power to attend to them?—We found there was not the same facility in getting attention to our complaints here as there was with him; they said I must write to Mr. Freeling, and we wrote to him.

Did you in any instance find that the newspapers had not been properly dispatched from the English office?—No; the answer always was, that they certainly were forwarded from London.

Do you receive your newspapers through any of the clerks of the roads in London?—No; the clerk of the Chester road is Mr. Austin, but we do not receive through him.

Who is your agent in London?—Mr. Samuel Newberry, in Hatton-garden, a very attentive man.

Is it not possible to distinguish a newspaper sent by a newsman from London, from one transmitted by a private individual?—I should think the difference would very easily be

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known; Mr. Newberry pastes the covers, and he addresses the papers he supplies by Lord Calthorpe's privilege, and in print.

Can there be any rational ground for suspecting a correspondence between Mr. Newberry and the persons to whom his papers are addressed, so as to make it necessary to fish his papers?—Decidedly not.

You would entertain no doubt that if a paper thus circumstanced was fished, it would be rather for delay than from a sense of duty?—Certainly. The Royal Dublin Society used to get their papers from Leet and De Joncourt; I am a member of it myself; latterly when the committee saw that our prices were 10s. less, they came to us and ordered the supply of newspapers from us. Mr. Newberry sends the papers for the Royal Dublin Society in one cover; although there are three or four papers in that one cover, there were several complaints of not receiving their papers, some little time ago; we corresponded with Mr. Freeling, and spoke to Sir Edward Lees about it; but latterly we have had no complaints.

When you say latterly, how long do you refer to?—With respect to the Dublin Society, not more than three or four months; previous to that there were several complaints.

In transmitting Irish newspapers through the post-office to the country, what regulations are you under in point of time?—We ourselves are not under any, for this reason, that when we get any orders for Irish newspapers, we give them in at the office of the papers; we never wrap them ourselves, but commit the matter to them.

Have you, in your supply of Irish newspapers, had reason to believe that any similar obstructions were put in your way, of the same nature as those you have described yourself as feeling with regard to the transmission of English newspapers?—No; we have had very few complaints as to Irish newspapers; not more than ten or a dozen in three or four years.

To what do you attribute that?—I do not know, unless it arose from our supplying of English newspapers in direct competition with Leet and De Joncourt; but the Irish newspapers we send are direct from the Irish newspaper offices, so that they cannot know whether they are from us, or ordered from the newspaper office themselves.

Each particular editor transmits his newspapers to the office?—Yes; we have orders for 200 or 300 of the Dublin Evening Mail, for instance, and the moment we get an order we send it to Cork, and so on, and we never hear any thing more on the subject.

Why do you instance the Evening Mail?—Because its circulation is immense.

Have you had any obstruction in the circulation of the other papers?—No, very few indeed.

Did you mention the Evening Mail on account of supposing it to be a favourite in the office?—I cannot speak to that.

If there is a supplement to the Evening Mail without stamp, does that pass without a charge for postage?—I believe it is the case always in this country, but not in England.

Is there any alteration you could suggest in the mode of transmitting the Irish newspapers through the post-office, which would put you as a news-vender on a fairer footing than you stand in regard to your competitors in that trade?—We have had so few complaints in respect of those papers, that I do not feel it necessary.

Have the clerks of the roads any privilege in regard to Irish papers?—They have of course; but I cannot complain, inasmuch as we have had no complaints to signify.

What advantages have they?—They have a very considerable advantage; they have, as I understand, what amounts to a penny a paper. When the Correspondent newspaper was published daily, there was a paper war between the clerks of the roads and that paper; Mr. Townsend made it appear that the clerks of the roads had 1*l.* 6*s.* per annum from every paper, and he made out a list of the number of papers that went through the office, showing that they had such a revenue from that paper; and that statement was not contradicted.

Of what description was the Correspondent?—It was the head ministerial paper, and it had an immense circulation then.

How long has it been discontinued?—It is still going on, but it is only a three days a week paper, and its circulation has very much decreased.

Have you a copy of the correspondence which passed upon that subject?—No; I was not myself engaged in that business then.

What is the profit you receive on the circulation of Irish newspapers?—Ten per cent. on all the papers.

Do you know what comparison that bears with the allowance made by the editors to the clerks of the roads?—I cannot speak to that.

Do they put them in later, or transmit them with more certainty than you do?—I cannot speak to that; but I have heard the editors complaining that the papers they sent did not reach their destination with the same certainty as the papers forwarded by the clerks of the roads into the country.

From whom have you heard that?—I have heard Mr. Walter Thom, of the Dublin Journal, state that, and he can state the allowance very accurately which is made to the parties.

Did you ever make a proposal to the secretary of the post-office to execute the printing of the post-office, together with Mr. Thom, of the Dublin Journal?—Yes, on the part of one of my sons.

What was the proposal you made?—To perform the printing at one half the contractor was receiving.

What was done in consequence of that proposal?—The postmasters-general contracted with Mr. Walter Thom and one of my sons the 6th of April twelvemonth, and it will be

shown, in reference to the account, that there has been a saving of near 3,000*l.* up to the 5th instant, which would have gone into Alderman Exshaw's pocket under the former contract.

Was the contract with your son and Mr. Thom to execute the same sort of work?—Yes; and to execute it fully to the satisfaction of the post-office.

Did not Alderman Exshaw execute a great deal of printing which your sons have not to do?—No.

Is not there a good deal written now that used to be printed?—Yes; but I speak of those they have to print, which are the same as Alderman Exshaw had to print; they gave us a statement of his charges, and it was just half his charge.

Would you have printed for half the price the different documents at that time printed by Alderman Exshaw, which are now prepared by the clerks in writing?—Most certainly.

Have you ever had any means of knowing whether it was cheaper to write those different documents than to print them?—I never heard in my life that it was cheaper to write than to print, till I heard that they had established at the post-office a writing office, and that the writing did not cost one half what the printing had done.

Do you believe that those documents can be printed at less expense than they are written?—At one half.

Are you acquainted with the nature of those forms?—I am not myself a printer; I have been a military man many years of my life; but my son, who is concerned with Mr. Walter Thom, one of the proprietors of the Dublin Journal, is very well acquainted with them, and although they do what they do for one half what Alderman Exshaw charged, they have a fair tradesman's profit, twenty per cent., or something of that kind.

With whom did your son enter into contract?—He and Mr. Thom with the postmasters-general; Lord Rosse and Lord O'Neill signed the contract.

Was it done through the secretary?—It was; but they certainly did exact stipulations that we thought very enormous. My son and Mr. Thom offered to lay in six months printing work before they had any money, but they insisted on a bond; they met with a great deal of interruption before that contract was accepted.

On the part of whom?—On the part of the post-office; we were surprized that the post-office should require security to the extent of 2,000*l.*, while my son and Mr. Thom offered to send in six months or twelve months printing before they required any money; they required a bond of 2,000*l.* from them, a bond as good as the Bank of England, which we thought a great hardship; it was done, as we thought, to sicken us from looking after it.

There was a long and unnecessary delay?—Yes, there was a six or eight months delay in the correspondence. Mr. Thom then offered to print for all the public offices on the same scale for one half, but that was the only office that they could get it for; they put them off from the others.

Have you heard of Mr. Dillon offering to contract?—I have heard of Mr. Dillon having offered to print for the Excise and Customs at a very reduced rate, but I am not acquainted with him; I have heard a great deal of him.

Has your son any connection with the post-office, excepting that of being printer?—No, none whatever; I have another son a clerk in the inland office.

How long has he been in it?—Not quite six months; he should have been in it six years ago.

Why do you say he ought to have been in it six years ago?—He was put on Lord O'Neill's list as postmaster-general, and I was told that he would be appointed the first vacancy; but there have been fifty vacancies, I suppose, since that.

Was he employed in the meantime as an extra clerk, or supernumerary?—No; he is only as an extra now; what they call an extra probationer.

Is he in constant employment?—No; he attends there at a quarter after five in the morning, and if any of those on the establishment are absent, he is called in; and he attends again in the evening.

Does it happen that he is often called in?—The last quarter it amounted to only 4*l.* 10*s.* 5*d.*, and he was up every morning at five o'clock, and attended again in the evening; it is putting him in the way of coming some day on the establishment; I have eight sons, and therefore was glad to employ him in any way.

Are you aware of any negociations having taken place respecting the payment or loan of money for public offices in Ireland?—I do not recollect at this moment; I have heard that such things have been done.

In such a way as to know that they were done, or only hearsay?—If any particular question is put to me, I will answer it.

You mean that if the question were put, was such an officer put in in consideration of a loan of money, you would say yes or no?—I would answer it if I knew the fact; whatever the question is, I will answer it to the best of my recollection.

Have you ever known any officer appointed in the post-office in consideration of a sum of money or a loan of money?—I have known of one instance; I have heard of the instance, but I do not know the fact.

The Commissioners must request to know the particulars?—I know of one that occurred in the post-office. Mr. Henry Parsons, who was a clerk, I believe, in the inland office, came to me one day, and asked me if I knew any person who would like his situation, as he had got another and wished to retire; I told him that I had heard of a person who would be very glad to give a consideration for something in the post-office; and on communicating with the father of

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the young man, Sir Richard Kellett, he said he would be very glad to give some consideration for getting his son to succeed Mr. Parsons.

To whom was the consideration to be given?—To Mr. Henry Parsons, a nephew of Lord Rosse.

Did he retire?—Yes; he is employed with his father as clerk of the Insolvent Debtors Court; he retired from the post-office when his father received his appointment at the head of the Insolvent Debtors Court.

Has the individual's appointment actually taken place?—I can only say that Sir Richard Kellett's son, whom I never saw, is in the office.

How long ago was it?—I should think it was two years ago.

What knowledge had you of this transaction?—Because Mr. Parsons came to me and asked me whether I could find out a person that would succeed him; and Sir Richard Kellett had been speaking to me frequently as to whether I could point out an opening for his son, and I mentioned that Mr. Parsons had been speaking to me, and in consequence of that I heard that he was appointed.

Were you privy to the money passing?—Yes; Sir Richard Kellett handed the money to me, and I handed it over to Mr. Parsons.

You understood the transaction to be, that Mr. Parsons was to retire, and that the appointment would be made in consequence of his retirement?—Yes; to get an eligible person who would give him a consideration for retiring; he was at this time appointed registrar to his father, the insolvent commissioner.

Do you know what situation Mr. Henry Parsons held in the post-office at that time?—I think he was a clerk in the inland office, but he was on what is called the establishment.

Will you have the goodness to state the amount of the consideration?—Two hundred pounds.

Was Sir Edward Lees in any way concerned in this transaction?—I believe not in any way whatever; I do not believe that he knew any thing of it.

Did you know any thing of the subsequent transactions which took place with regard to the appointment?—No, only this, that Sir Richard Kellett told me that he was ready to pay the money to Mr. Parsons; Mr. Henry Parsons told me it was necessary for him to go to Lord Rosse; and he returned from Lord Rosse in a couple of days, or three, with, I suppose, the consent of Lord Rosse, and he said that the thing was all settled; and I heard in a few days that young Kellett went into the post-office.

No communication took place between yourself and Lord Rosse?—No; I never heard a word on the subject since, nor had any further communication upon the subject.

You had no further communication with the secretary or pro-secretary?—No.

Was Kellett appointed an extra probationer, or at once to the clerkship?—He came in as a junior.

In the usual way?—I do not know; I only heard that he had come into the office; I do not know the young man.

Were you ever acquainted with any of the contracts for mail-coaches?—Yes; I retired from the army at Anderson of Fermoy's solicitation, to join him in mail-coach contracts between Cork and Dublin, some years ago.

Have you any concern in mail-coach contracts?—No.

Had you any at any time?—Yes; I had a third of the mail-coach contract to Cork.

Had you any thing to do with the second Cork mail?—Yes; it was I who established it; the mails used to go somewhat less than four miles an hour, and I was the first to make them step out, and go five miles an hour.

Was Mr. Anderson the contractor for the second mail-coach?—Yes; Mr. George Bell and Mr. Anderson and myself had it in thirds; the contracts were made out in the name of Mr. Anderson only.

Was the contract carried on by Mr. Anderson and yourself?—Yes; Mr. Anderson used to be very often in town, and he corresponded himself with Mr. Lees and the postmaster-general.

Were there any tenders made for that contract, or were you the only persons who offered for it?—We were the only persons who offered for it, in consideration of showing that the mail-coaches might go at the rate of five Irish miles an hour; it was thought a great improvement.

Was any consideration given for that contract?—None whatever; the contract for the mail by Clonmel had expired about the time the second mail-coach was approved of by the Lord Lieutenant and the postmasters-general; the contracts were made equal.

Was there any loan of money or consideration in any way for that contract?—Not any whatever.

That contract is still in existence?—It is; there are three or four years still in it.

Are you still interested in that contract?—I am not.

Who has the benefit of that contract now?—I believe Sir James Anderson and others; but I have had no connection with it for four or five years.

ALEX. JOHNSTON.



## Appendix, No. 166.

29th October 1823.

Mr. ALEXANDER JOHNSTON again called in and examined.

DID it ever happen to you to see a report that was made by the Commissioners on Fees and Gratuities, about the year 1809, on the subject of the clerks of roads?—No.

The emoluments which the clerks of the roads appear to derive from the sale of newspapers, according to the arrangement which has taken place since the Union, appear rather to be on the public account than for their own private emolument; has that been the way in which you understand it?—Yes; a paper they charge 5*d.* for they pay but 4*d.*

That fifth is emolument to some one; do you apprehend that to be the emolument of the clerks of the roads?—That is the way in which I understand it.

What reason have you for entertaining that opinion?—Because I saw a correspondence between Mr. Townsend of the Correspondent, and Sir Edward Lees, and he showed that the profit was 1*l.* 6*s.* per annum for each, and I understand it to be so; it is generally so understood.

Will you state whether you have been in the habit of having your correspondence as a newspaper-vender carried through the post-office free?—No; they are excessively particular; I used occasionally to get a letter franked; but for the purposes of business I have not had a letter franked for three years back.

Previous to that time, was it the practice of any of the offices to deliver franks to any persons with the initials of the name only, leaving to the individual to fill up the direction?—I have seen that done.

Did they give a dozen or two dozen covers at a time?—I have seen perhaps half a dozen or ten at a time, with the signature of the person whose privilege it was to frank upon them; for instance, the surveyors of the post-office.

When did that cease?—I have not had any myself for upwards of three years.

Are you in the habit of circulating any of your newspapers free through the penny post?—No; none whatever. The only paper that I have seen go through the penny post is the Dublin Journal; we get it ourselves in that way.

Is the Dublin Journal paid for?—I do not know any thing of the arrangement.

Does it circulate free through the penny post?—Yes; the Dublin Journal comes to us through the penny post.

It is not charged to you?—No charge; I suppose there is some arrangement with the proprietors on the subject.

You mentioned on a former day a sort of negotiation about an office, and stated that it was a matter of conversation that such things had taken place; did any other instances of the kind ever come to your knowledge?—None, as connected with the post-office.

With regard to any other revenue department, has any negotiation of the kind ever come to your knowledge?—No; none through me.

Have you known of any?—No, I have never known of any; I have heard that such things were done, but I never heard of any individual instance; I have merely heard it as general conversation.

At the time this occurrence took place Mr. Parsons held a situation in the dead-letter office in the post-office, did he not?—I do not know in what department of the post-office he was; I rather understood he was in the inland office, the sorting office, but I cannot be sure upon that subject.

When the Cashel mail was contracted for, upon what terms was the agreement made?—I forget the mileage allowance myself.

Was it greater or less than the usual contract price?—It was less than the original mail; I think it was 9*d.* the double mile.

Had you any communication with Lord Rosse upon the subject of that contract before it was entered into?—Never direct myself, but I believe Mr. Anderson had.

Was Lord Rosse favourable to the establishment of that mail?—No; I think he was averse to it.

Did he sign the contract?—Yes. The duplicate is in the possession of the solicitor of the post-office.

You think it was executed by both postmasters?—Yes, I think so; I have had one copy of it in my possession some years ago, but not now.

Did Mr. Anderson ever inform you what had passed between Lord Rosse and himself upon the subject?—No; I only recollect generally, that Lord Rosse was averse to it, and that he proposed that that mail should go only to Cahir, to lop off the distance between Cahir and Cork; that was after the contract had been executed, perhaps a year or two.

Sir Edward Lees, then Mr. Lees, was secretary of the post-office at that time?—Yes.

Was his opinion favourable to it?—He appeared to approve highly of it, in consequence of our being able to go at an accelerated rate; the former contracts were at four miles an hour, and we undertook to do it at five miles an hour, and it was very much approved of by the merchants of Cork and of Dublin; it was in consequence of that that the period was extended to so long.

**Examinations.** Is not there an officer in the post-office who is called the superintendent of mail-coaches?  
—Yes.

**No. 166.** Was there any reference made to him at the time of making that contract?—Yes;  
**Mr. Alex. Johnston.** Mr. Ferguson went down into the country to watch the progress of it, and to examine the  
29th Oct. 1823. road; he made his report I suppose to the postmasters-general.

Were you present at the signing of the contract?—I do not think I was, but I know I was about the office; and I was at different times with Mr. Pole, now Lord Maryborough, then secretary, when it was submitted to the Lord Lieutenant for his approbation.

Was he favourable to it?—Yes, he was very much so, certainly.

Do you remember whether Lord Rosse was in Dublin at the time the contract was executed?—I do not know; Lord Rosse used to come occasionally; he did not stay above a day or two at a time.

You do not remember that he was absent at that time?—No; I have no particular recollection about it.

The other postmaster-general was Lord O'Neill?—Yes.

What communication had you with Lord O'Neill upon the subject?—I never had any directly.

That was all left to Mr. Anderson?—Yes; and it was taken out in his name, though Mr. Bell and myself had equal shares in it.

Has it come to your knowledge that the existence of this coach has been since thought unnecessary?—I know very well that Lord Rosse disapproved of it, but I never heard that the merchants disapproved of it, or that it was generally disapproved of.

Has there ever been an attempt to get rid of the contract?—I know that Lord Rosse was very anxious that it should cease.

There have been offers to the contractors to put an end to it, have there not?—I do not remember that there has been any specific offer, but I know that Mr. Anderson was in correspondence with Lord Rosse upon the subject; I do not know that any specific terms were offered to Mr. Anderson.

Is there any fee paid at the post-office on the execution of a contract?—Only to Mr. Thompson the solicitor. I would beg to suggest that it would be desirable that Sir Edward Lees and his brother should be examined on this matter of Mr. Parsons.

Can you state any reason?—Nothing very particular.

They were not of course privy to it?—No, decidedly not; I understand they have come to the knowledge of it only within these few days.

ALEXANDER JOHNSTON.

### Appendix, No. 167.

29th October 1823.

THOMAS TOWNSEND Esq. called in and examined.

YOU are proprietor of a newspaper called the Correspondent?—I am.

Is that a daily paper?—It was a daily paper, but it is now published on alternate days.

Is it a paper which has been long established?—About sixteen or seventeen years, as well as I recollect.

At any period since its establishment have the proprietors experienced any difficulties or inconvenience in the mode in which the paper was circulated through the post-office in Ireland?—Very considerable difficulties about the time the paper was first established; I never was myself concerned in the details of the paper; but it having been reported to me that the clerks of roads took upon them to affix a value to the paper, to pay the proprietor only so much, and to require from the subscribers a certain thing far beyond what the proprietor himself required; I made it my business to fix my attention to that transaction, and to contend against it as well as I was able.

Will you have the goodness to describe what the sum was that was charged to the clerks of the roads by the proprietors for the paper, and what they charged again to their correspondents?—I do not recollect what they charged at the time the Correspondent was set up, but I know it was something miserably small, considering the expense; it would hardly cover the expense—it did not indeed cover the expense; and I know I was the first person in hostility to this system who resolved to send the newspapers from the office of publication; and though the clerks of roads made at that time a sum of upwards of 2,200*l.* a year out of the profits of the Correspondent, they opposed the sending any from the office, and threw in the way a multitude of obstructions.

Were those applied to the Correspondent only?—I believe not; I rather think it was part of their system; I am sure their charges were; and they introduced a gentleman to me, Mr. Maginell, as the representative of the gentlemen in the office. He could not give me a reason why I should squander my understanding and purse to give the clerks of the roads several thousands a year, and after a time it broke up. If I were to go back to the files of the paper, I could there find the whole of it, for it was there stated in very strong and not very measured language, in letters to Mr. Lees. I thought it one of the most monstrous things that ever was attempted, that the moment I thought proper to abstract

from

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from my leisure a certain portion to notice affairs as they passed, and after I had expended 2,000*l.* or 3,000*l.* in setting up this, the clerks of the roads should take all the profits, and not with the courtesy of a partner, but doing it by main force. I took it up myself in the first instance alone; the public journals of Dublin were pretty tame with the persons in power here, but at length they took it up. I prepared a petition to be presented by Mr. Grattan to the House of Commons. Mr. Pole was just coming into office; he wished the matter to be left to him, and the whole was satisfactorily concluded by the law being assimilated as to the transmission of newspapers between England and Ireland. They closed the office at a very early time, even the clock was arbitrarily employed, and if the paper was not in in good time, it was stamped with the postage.

All that is now remedied?—Yes; it was remedied in consequence of this dispute. I informed Lord O'Neill of the manner in which the clerks of the roads had behaved, and that it was a pursuit to which a gentleman could not stoop if it was to be pursued.

Do you know the allowance which is now made to the clerks of the roads for the papers they circulate?—I believe they charge 1*l.* on each paper; that the charge for the Correspondent is three guineas or four pounds; there was some objection to paying the 4*l.* when the publication was changed, and it was three guineas; the clerks of the roads paid the newspaper editors 3*l.*, and they charged 4*l.*

Have you ever heard any complaints that the papers transmitted by your agents were obstructed in the post-office?—I never have of late. Mr. Johnston, who is dead, wrote to me, stating that the Correspondent came too late to his office; that in case of its not being in time, he would substitute another paper for it. I thought that a very great assumption. I thought it was the affair of the person taking the paper, whether he would take that, subject to the delay and interruption, or another paper; but Mr. Johnston wrote me this, and I answered to him that if he did it, I would make him as great an example as the law would allow me, and he might do it at his peril; that was about a year ago; he was clerk of the Ulster road.

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## Appendix, No. 168.

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JAMES MAGEE Esquire called in and examined.

ARE you Proprietor of the Dublin Evening Post?—I am sole proprietor.

Are you acquainted with the details of the management of that paper, so as to know the mode in which it is transmitted through the Post-office?—I am tolerably well acquainted; I pay great attention to the matter myself.

Your newspapers that are transmitted from your own office to subscribers are obliged to be in the office before six o'clock?—Yes; six o'clock is the hour limited.

Are they folded and directed?—They are folded and directed, and ready to be sorted.

What is the latest hour at which you can transmit them into the country, on making a small payment?—I understand half-past six.

Are you in the habit of supplying many newspapers to the clerks of roads?—Yes.

What portion of the whole number of your newspapers that are transmitted to the country are supplied to them?—I transmit from my own office about three to their one.

Is the allowance to the clerks of the roads the same on all the papers, or does it differ?—I should suppose it differs.

What does a subscriber to your paper pay annually?—Four pounds Irish per year.

What do you charge to the clerks of the roads?—We charge them 9*s.* 8*d.* for twenty-four numbers, a quire.

How does that stand compared with what you charge to general subscribers?—The yearly subscription to it is much more considerable than that, for we have the expense of clerks, postage, and providing covers, and sending them to the post-office; all those expenses we cover in the general subscription price; the difference between that and the yearly subscription price is the profit of the clerk of the road.

How often is your paper published?—Three days a week.

Do you think that the privilege enjoyed by the clerks of the roads in circulating the papers interferes materially with your own sale as a newspaper-vender?—It interferes materially with the profits we would otherwise have, for they take away a certain portion of our business; we should have the supplying of them ourselves if they did not; formerly they had the entire privilege of sending them.

When did that cease?—I do not recollect precisely; it was in the life of my late brother. The newspaper editors found they had the means of transmitting them through the names of members, and they began to do it; but still the clerks of roads kept a part of the supply in their own hands; the right of sending the whole by them was never disputed, I think, till twelve or thirteen years ago.

Have you any reason to believe that papers circulated by them receive facilities and preferences in the post-office; or that by the postmasters in the country their delivery is facilitated?—I suppose not by the postmasters in the country; but that they have the facility here of getting their newspapers later into the mail-bag than we have; we cannot,

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in

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in consequence of that, make up our supply for the clerks of the roads, until we have prepared our own; they have the privilege of putting theirs in after we have put in ours.

Do you apprehend there is any preference shown to particular papers in the post-office?—That is a thing that I cannot take upon myself to say of my own knowledge; it is only supposition, and I would not wish to commit myself by stating that.

Are you aware that according to the arrangements of the clerks of roads, if their profits fall below a certain amount they are made up to them by the public?—No, I was not aware of the fact before.

Have you always considered the advantages derived by the clerks of the roads as strictly applicable to themselves?—I have always thought so; that it went into their individual pockets, independent of any other advantages they might derive from the establishment.

Have you ever made any application to circulate them freely through the penny post?—To the best of my recollection there have been verbal applications made, and it has been refused.

Do you know of any newspaper circulated freely through the penny post?—No, I have never heard of it.

Are you in the habit of sending many papers abroad?—We send a good number to England, and we send some to France and to Italy through the medium of Mr. Cowie in the English post-office; we have several orders from him.

Is there any influence in the mode in which they are transmitted?—We direct them to Mr. Cowie as he requests them; of some he gives us the foreign direction.

Are you in the habit of taking a foreign newspaper?—I did for a time, but do not now; I got them in the same way through the foreign post-office in London.

Would it be a material convenience to you in the circulation of your paper, if, instead of six o'clock, you were permitted to put in the papers as late as half past?—Certainly; there would be very few times in the year where we should have late papers then.

Does it occur frequently now that you have late papers?—Not now; but when Parliament is sitting we endeavour to keep the paper back, to put in the intelligence of what has passed in Parliament, and are sometimes too late in consequence.

Would the extension of time affect the privilege enjoyed by the clerks of the roads?—No, I do not think it would at all; they cannot get their present supply till we have prepared our own supply for the post-office.

JAMES MAGEE.

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Mr. FREDERICK CONWAY called in and examined.

*Mr. Fred. Conway.*

ARE you the Editor of the Dublin Evening Post?—I am.

Are you in the habit of receiving English newspapers through the office of the express clerks?—Yes, we are.

Is it necessary for you, on account of the additional celerity with which those papers are delivered, to receive them in that manner?—It is.

How much sooner are they delivered to you through the express clerks than they would be through the alphabet?—I should suppose not above half an hour or thirty-five minutes; but that is a considerable matter for an evening paper that must go to press at a certain time.

Are there any days on which the newspapers arriving through the express bags are delivered, when those through the alphabet are not?—Those through the alphabet are delivered in half an hour afterwards.

Does it ever occur that the express papers are delivered when others are not?—If the packet comes in before seven or eight o'clock, we always receive the papers in the evening, indeed, I believe, generally till ten or eleven o'clock; indeed, it was so managed some time ago, that we got the papers almost as soon from the alphabet as we got them from the express department; however, there was some dispute between the respective officers of those departments, and for a considerable time they detained the alphabet for about an hour or two hours afterwards. It is better now, I believe, though they are going into the old plan again, I understand.

What is the additional cost of those papers delivered through the express clerks?—I cannot exactly speak to figures, but two evening London papers and a Sunday paper cost 3*l.* odd, and I know those papers might be had for 9*l.* or 10*l.* less if they were received through the alphabet.

If they were received through the ordinary delivery, the expense would be less?—Yes; there is a subscription to the alphabet; two guineas, I believe.

Do any of your newspapers circulate through the penny post?—No; I never heard that they did.

Have you any difficulty in circulating supplements of your newspaper when they are published through the post-office free of charge?—I have heard of a difficulty when they attempted to send the supplement the day previous to the publication, and the print being unstamped, I suppose the post-office refused; but there have been instances, I know, where it was transmitted.

Was that the case with your own supplements?—No.

Have there been instances of your own supplement being circulated without the paper?—No.

Is

Is your supplement an additional sheet, or an additional half sheet?—An additional half sheet; there have been instances where some of the papers have, when they expected a heavy parliamentary debate, published that the day before, and circulated it without the paper.

Without the stamp?—Yes.

Have you ever yourself attempted that?—No, we have not; I know there have been prospectuses, recommendations of papers, franked through the post-office.

What papers are those?—I allude particularly to the paper called the Antidote, commonly called Sir Harcourt Lees's paper. I have seen a printed letter that was sent up from the country to me, a printed letter by Sir Harcourt Lees, recommending the paper to the Orange lodges, which I believe was transmitted through the post-office franked.

Have you one of those letters?—No; but I think I should be able to procure one of them.

Was the printer's name upon it?—I am not certain.

Who printed it?—I cannot recollect. I think I saw the post-mark upon the letter, showing it had gone through the post-office.

By whom were those letters of Sir Harcourt Lees franked?—I cannot say that; I rather think by Sir Edward Lees; but I cannot be positive.

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### Appendix, No. 169.

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Mr. WALTER THOM called in and examined.

HAVE you any connection with the publication of any journal?—Yes; I am the proprietor of the Dublin Journal, to the extent of two thirds.

Are you a printer generally?—Yes, I have a printing establishment too.

Are you connected in business with Mr. Johnston, who is a newspaper vender?—Yes, with Captain Johnston's son, as far as printer to the general post-office; but he is not connected with me in the general department of the printing.

Are you interested in his business as a newspaper vender?—Not the least.

When did you make a proposition to the post-office to undertake the printing for it?—It was about the beginning of 1822. I have copies of the correspondence which passed between me and the public departments of this city; if it is wished, I shall be ready to produce them.

When you offered to undertake the printing business for the post-office, was your proposal to accept half the charge that was paid to Alderman Exshaw?—Yes, exactly.

Was that applied generally to all the documents alike that were printed for the post-office?—Yes.

To all blank forms, and all headings for books?—Yes; except such stationery as Sir Abraham Bradley King supplied; our offer was not considered as interfering with the patent right he claims for supplying stationery; but we have occasionally supplied them with blank paper, merely because Alderman Exshaw had done so before.

Do you now print all the forms of the post-office which formerly used to be printed by Alderman Exshaw?—Yes.

Do you not understand that a considerable portion of the forms for books are now prepared by writing which used to be printed?—Yes, they are.

Would you have undertaken to print all those for half the sum which had been paid to Alderman Exshaw?—Yes, I would.

Can you state whether it would be cheaper to print those books than to employ a person to write them?—I do know something about it, which is, perhaps, matter of opinion and calculation. Alderman Exshaw charged for those books most enormous prices; they found it, perhaps, a great deal cheaper; and I understand that the whole establishment in that writing office comes to about 240*l*. I could undertake to print the whole for the expense that it costs the post-office, which would be, I suppose, one third or one fourth part of what Alderman Exshaw charged, from the information I have.

You feel persuaded that printing would be as cheap a mode, if not cheaper, than the mode that is at present adopted in the post-office?—I am persuaded of it; but it is, perhaps, right for me to state, being frequently in that office, they have other business to execute besides the mere writing of those books.

What description of business?—They forward to the country postmasters all printed forms; they forward the work we supply the post-office with; they receive it all; it is frequently carried to the respective offices when it is printed.

Is the printing you execute for the post-office strictly confined to public documents?—Yes; I conceive there is no private printing.

What sort of papers are those you print?—All description of papers.

What is the duration of your contract?—It was for seven years, and I believe as much longer as we give satisfaction to the postmasters-general; there is a special clause in it, that where we shall furnish paper as well as printing, if the price of paper shall advance, from

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war, or any extraordinary circumstance, we shall be allowed a proportionable consideration, or if it should fall, we should make a proportional abatement.

In what way are your newspapers dispatched through the post-office over the country districts of Ireland?—They are dispatched in two ways: to those subscribers who come to our office and pay their subscriptions, we send them to the post-office before six o'clock; for those subscribers who pay their subscriptions to the four clerks of the roads, they receive them from us after six o'clock, and dispatch them as soon as they find convenient; so that we have two classes of subscribers, one that comes to the office and pays us in the office, and another class through the clerks of the roads.

Do those subscribers who pay at your office receive the papers folded and dispatched from your own office?—Yes.

At what hour must they be put into the post-office?—They must be put in before six o'clock, or we have to pay a fine of a halfpenny, which is frequently the case; I have had to pay thirteen or fourteen shillings frequently.

What is the latest hour at which you can put them in?—We can put them in till seven, paying that.

What do you charge for your paper to the subscribers who pay at your office?—Three guineas, Irish money, in the country, and three pounds in Dublin.

Will you describe in what manner and under what circumstances your paper is supplied to such individuals as take it through the clerks of the roads?—The clerks of the roads receive the papers from us in quires; they send boys for them after six o'clock, who wait until they can be delivered; they carry them to the post-office and fold them up, put them in a wrapper, and address to their subscribers, and pay us at the close of every month.

How much per paper do they pay you?—They pay us four-pence, and have a penny.

How much less is that than is paid by a correspondent in the country?—Our retail price is five-pence for a single paper, our subscription is three guineas; I believe that is some few shillings more than the five-pence per paper.

Then the clerks of the roads have an allowance of full twenty per cent. from you in the sale of the paper?—Yes.

What do they charge to a customer in the country?—The same price as we do, three guineas; we think their allowance is three-pence per week on each; three times fifty-two gives the exact profit they make on each paper; something about ten shillings or half a guinea.

What persons are employed in the office folding and directing the newspapers that are dispatched by the clerks of the roads?—I cannot give a distinct answer to that; I have no opportunity of seeing; that depends entirely on the number; they seem to have a boy each that comes to our office; I suppose that boy is sufficient for the number they dispatch; but that depends upon the number.

Out of the number of papers that are sold by you in the country, which is the greatest proportion, those transmitted through the clerks of the roads, or those sent from your office direct?—The greater proportion is sent from our office.

Is it divided in equal parts nearly?—I think the greater proportion go from our office; perhaps double; that is generally the case.

Have you ever had occasion to think that the clerks in the office favoured the dispatch of their own papers, and impeded the circulation of yours?—I have heard that alleged; I think it is natural enough that they would prefer their own interest to ours.

What opportunities have they of exercising that preference?—I do not see that they could have any if we sent in our papers by six o'clock; the mails are generally dispatched about eight; they have two hours; they can take in their own even at half past seven; they can take ours in at seven, and still have opportunities of forwarding them, but they cannot keep back ours; at least we would make a serious complaint if they did; they would not do it frequently; it is sometimes the case that they cannot dispatch them till next day; but we are quite aware ourselves that we have been too late.

Do you know any thing of an operation that is called fishing newspapers, examining them, for the purpose of seeing whether any written correspondence is transmitted in the envelope?—Yes; I believe they are authorized by the statute to break up every newspaper, and examine it.

Are your newspapers frequently examined?—The papers must be folded in a manner to give them an opportunity of examining them, and they generally are so.

Are they so examined?—I do not know; I should imagine they are occasionally.

Are you aware of the transactions with respect to tenders for printing for the Customs and Excise in the beginning of 1822?—Yes.

Have you any reason to think that when you made an offer for printing for the Customs and Excise, Mr. Woodmason, who was continued in the supply, was informed of the terms on which others offered?—My opinion is that he was; I found every thing very unfair; I made up my mind to petition Parliament on the subject; I thought myself deceived.

You have the correspondence which took place with the Excise?—I have.

How did it appear that you were deceived?—One letter I got that they had made a contract; that I conceive was merely to prevent further application on my part; that they had entered into a contract already. It was consistent with my perfect belief that the Customs had not, for they have since advertised that they had not. I had information of the correspondence taking place between them and the printers.

Who were the printers?—Mr. Woodmason and another person. I marked that in a memorial I prepared to send to the Marquis Wellesley, that that was official falsehood; the Excise did not advertise, but the Customs did.

Mr. Woodmason does the printing now on much lower terms than he had been in the habit of doing it for?—I suppose for not more than half he had been in the habit of receiving for it.

Do you know that Mr. Dillon had made a tender previous to that?—Yes; after I had made my first offer to print for the public offices. In a letter I wrote to Mr. Grant, I offered to furnish the Gazette free of any charge whatever; it cost the Government 2,300*l.* a year, as I was informed; that was in 1821, four or five months before Mr. Grant left.

Are you in the habit of circulating any part of your correspondence free through the post-office?—I have occasionally got franks from the Castle and the post-office, but I cannot get one at all now.

Were you ever in the habit of getting franks in blank covers in bundles?—Yes; I used to get them under the privilege of the late Mr. Taylor, in the Castle, and under the privilege of Sir Edward Lees, but never in bundles; sometimes under Mr. Gregory's cover. I never presumed to request any person to send any letter to me, without the permission of the individual.

Was the mode in which you got franks for yourself, receiving bundles of covers that had the initials of Sir Edward Lees's name in the corner?—No, I never had that; I never had more than one frank at a time, and it was generally addressed altogether. I used occasionally to send my letters to the Castle, and one of the gentlemen franked them. I never had twenty letters in the course of the year. I never got franks for my business; only for my friends on the other side.

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Appendix, No. 170.

8th November 1823.

Mr. ANTHONY O'CONNOR and Mr. CHARLES DEAN OLIVER called in and examined.

HAVE you lately made proposals to the postmasters-general to enter into a contract for conveying the mail in a coach from Cork to Limerick?—(Mr. O'Connor)—I have made several proposals since February last.

Have you made them jointly?—Yes; Mr. Oliver is my security; he was always mentioned as my security.

Was there a public advertisement inviting persons to offer for a contract?—There was; after several proposals I made, an advertisement appeared on the 10th of May, a copy of which I have in my pocket.

Have the goodness to produce it.

[The witness produced the same in the Cork Reporter, of the 10th of May 1823, stating, that the postmasters-general were ready to receive proposals for a mail from Cork to Limerick, for the term of seven years, in coaches drawn by four horses, carrying four inside passengers, and four outside; the proposals to be given in on the 1st of July next, to be opened in the presence of the postmasters-general, and the persons proposing, if they should choose to attend. Signed by command of the postmasters-general the 9th of May 1823. E. S. LEES.]

(Mr. O'Connor)—We were in treaty from February to May, and after coming down to the lowest terms I would tender on, the communication I received was, that, by command of the postmasters-general, it was to be advertised in the Cork and the Limerick papers.

What took place in consequence of that?—I came to Dublin on the 1st of July, and attended at the post-office at twelve o'clock; I remained in the secretary's office till half past one, when I was called into the board-room. Sir Edward Lees, Mr. Thomas Orde Lees, and Mr. Ferguson attended in the board-room.

What took place there?—They opened three proposals, which they said were all they had received.

Did they open them all in your presence?—They did; they told me there was one of them from a Mr. M'Guire of Dublin, another from a Mr. Macnamara of the county of Limerick, with references to security, I believe, in Dublin—they seemed to know perfectly well where they came from—stating that if they were declared the contractors, they would immediately come forward and enter into the necessary securities; they mentioned some apology in one of them, I recollect, for not personally attending. Mr. Ferguson was directed immediately to calculate all the proposals; and upon taking into account the tolls, and every thing of that kind, they declared that mine was the lowest proposal; and they started a further agreement, which was not at all in the advertisement, and which I most reluctantly acceded to, lest I should lose the contract; a copy of that I requested from their books at the time I signed it.

[The witness delivered in the same, which was read as follows.]

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“ Sir

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and

Mr. C. D. Oliver.  
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“ Sir Edward Lees having stated that a plan is under consideration for building and supplying mail-coaches by contract, and that the annual expense of such coaches will not exceed 2*d.* each single mile, and may be even under that sum, I consent that this proposal shall be liable to such contract, and that I am willing that the post-office should supply its own coaches, and charge the amount to my mileage, by receiving three months notice.

“ (Signed) ANTHONY O'CONNOR,  
“ 1 July 1823.”

(*Mr. O'Connor*)—My partner, Mr. Oliver, has his own coaches, and builds them in Cork.

(*Mr. Oliver*)—I am a contractor on other lines, and build my own coaches.

Did you sign the contract at the time?—(*Mr. O'Connor*)—No; they said that very evening they would send the paper to Lord Rosse, and I have been waiting for it ever since.

What has happened in consequence of that transaction?—In August I returned to Dublin, and wrote a letter to Lord Rosse, saying, that a month had elapsed, and there was no chance of getting any final answer. Mr. Thomas Lees with very great kindness told me, “ Mr. O'Connor, the fault is not with us; we transmitted the paper immediately to Lord Rosse, and, as his lordship is at home, I think you had better call on him and remind him of it:” accordingly, in my way to the south, I called on Lord Rosse, and he then told me, “ Mr. O'Connor, I am going to Dublin to-morrow, that would be Sunday; I must be in Dublin on Monday, and you may depend on having your business carried into effect.” I wished his lordship good morning, and never heard any more of it till on the coming on of the quarter day. The 1st of October I again sent a letter to Sir Edward Lees, and Sir Edward Lees's answer came before the 6th of October; and previous to that I wrote up to Sir Edward Lees, stating that I was ready to commence, if they thought proper, on the 6th of October, the quarter day, and begging his answer.

What was his answer?—That the post-office could do nothing in the transaction, in consequence of the Commissioners of Parliamentary Inquiry being then on post-office business, and that until they had made their report, the post-office could not enter into any new engagement.

When was this statement made?—It was made on either the second or third of October.

Did they say that they had any authority for making that statement from the postmasters-general?—No; it came officially down,

Was this an answer made by Sir Edward Lees, as his own understanding of the case, or that in what he said to you, he was expressing the opinion of Lord Rosse and the postmaster-general?—I have a copy in town; but I do not recollect further than that he said that the postmasters-general could not enter into any contracts during the inquiry of the Commissioners.

Did you subsequently see Lord Rosse?—Yes; we waited on Lord Rosse last week.

What answer did you receive from Lord Rosse?—Lord Rosse repeated the same, that really their hands were tied up, and they could not well enter into new engagements while the inquiry was going on, and while the Commissioners were sitting; that they were quite willing to do so; but, as we were on the way, if we liked to go on to Dublin, and see what could be done, he had no objection, and he would carry it into effect if there was no obstacle; we also expressed our intention of waiting on Mr. Goulburn.

(*Mr. Oliver*)—On Friday week, when we waited on his lordship, he expressed his anxious wish to carry it into effect if he could, and said that if he waited on Mr. Goulburn, he might assist us in carrying it into effect; the papers have not been submitted to Mr. Goulburn: we have been trying to get them submitted to Mr. Goulburn, but have not yet been able.

Where do you apprehend the obstruction lies?—I conceive with the general post-office, inasmuch as they have been keeping us at bay from the month of May last; we were anxious to know their determination; we laid in our horses and carriages, not knowing when we should be called upon.

Do you suppose there is an indisposition to close with you?—(*Mr. O'Connor*)—On the contrary, I found the greatest anxiety on the part of Sir Edward Lees and Mr. Thomas Lees to carry it into effect.

(*Mr. Oliver*)—Mr. Goulburn said, if the papers were laid before him, he would give his answer at once; that it was very hard we should be kept so long in a state of suspense. The commanders of the cavalry regiments in the south of Ireland have been remonstrating for these three years, in consequence of the escort necessary for the postboys.

Has any proposal been ever made to you, or any suggestion on the part of any individual connected with the post-office, to alter the arrangement proposed by you?—(*Mr. O'Connor*)—Not at all, for it was under an alteration that I gave in the proposal.

Has it ever been suggested to you that it would be desirable to make an alteration in the persons concerned?—No, never.

Or to let any other persons have a share in it?—No.

(*Mr. Oliver*)—There was a gentleman did write to me to say he meant to be a bidder for it; and my reply was, that if he chose to interfere with me, he might; but that I thought it was not the conduct I merited.

Did Sir Edward Lees at any time propose to you to take Sir James Anderson of Fermoy as a partner in the contract, and not to take Mr. O'Connor?—I do not know that Sir Edward Lees did; I cannot swear positively that Sir Edward Lees did; but Sir James Anderson talked



talked to me upon the subject a year and a half ago, and I said, I have been so long in connection with Mr. O'Connor, I could not set him aside.

Do you know any thing of a person of the name of Macnamara?—I do not; there are a great many persons about Limerick of that name.

Do you suppose he was a person that offered for that contract?—I suppose it was one of that family.

Do you suppose that was a pretext for offering a contract on the part of some other person?—I have reason to suppose Macnamara was put in, that we should not know who the person was.

Do you know a person of the name of Gallway, who is a mail-coach contractor in that part of the country?—Yes.

Was that offer made on his behalf?—(*Mr. O'Connor*)—I think not; we thought that Mr. Macnamara might be put in by Messrs. Lyon and Roche, for they were determined to oppose us.

(*Mr. Oliver*)—They told us they would; we supposed they did not wish it should be known it was from them, but that they should be the ostensible persons.

*[The Commissioners here informed the witnesses that they did not interfere in the detailed management of the post-office, and could express no opinion upon the subject of their contracts.]*

Did you state that Sir Edward Lees never endeavoured to prevail upon you to take Sir James Anderson in?—(*Mr. Oliver*)—I do not think he ever did.

Do you know that he did not?—I declare, upon my oath, I do not think Sir Edward Lees ever pointed him out to me; if he had, I would have communicated it to Mr. O'Connor.

(*Mr. O'Connor*)—I am certain he never did; nothing could be more fair or honourable than his conduct in the whole business.

ANTHONY O'CONNOR.  
CHARLES D. OLIVER.

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ARCHIBALD TAYLOR Esq. called in and examined.

YOU have been employed as an engineer under the post-office, have you not?—No, I have not.

Are you an engineer?—I have been employed as an engineer; I served five years in the staff corps, and have been latterly employed occasionally in superintending the Kilcullen road, of which Major Taylor and Captain George Taylor are proprietors, under an Act of the Irish Parliament. I did apply, on behalf of the trustees of the Kilcullen road, to this Board, respecting certain tolls on mail-coaches, that we have been, I conceive, unjustly deprived of by an Act of Parliament introduced by Mr. Grant, who afterwards, as far as was in his power, repealed the Act, by ordering the post-office to pay us, which order the post-office have declined for the last year and three quarters to comply with.

By what Act is the Kilcullen road vested in the persons you have named?—By the 38th Geo. 3. c. 83., an Irish Act.

That was passed in the period of the Rebellion?—It was.

What are the terms of that Act?—The terms of that Act are, that under certain conditions the individuals therein named are to be possessed of the tolls of that road as their private property for fifty years, on condition that they put that road into a perfect state of repair, pay a certain portion of its debts, be answerable for the remainder, and contract to make improvements with the same tolls as with which tolls the former trustees had been unable to keep the road in repair, and had suffered the interest of the debt to run in arrear. The conditions of that Act were immediately fulfilled, and have been acted upon up to the present time; the debt they contracted to pay has been paid, and the improvements they contracted to make have been made. It is the first road, I believe, in Ireland, Scotland, or England, which for twenty years discharged any part of the debt which had been contracted on the credit of the tolls, and keeping the road in repair; I know at least that that is the case with respect to Ireland.

In case of the Kilcullen road being suffered to go out of repair, what remedy had the public?—We are under a penalty of 20,000*l.*, which can be levied at once, and the gates sequestered by the Chancellor.

Is there no remedy but by a bill in Chancery?—It is an immediate proceeding, under an affidavit made before the Lord Chancellor; the penalty is incurred and the tolls are sequestered.

Has the amount of tolls on that road greatly increased of late years?—The amount received at the gates for all other conveyances except mail and stage coaches has diminished instead of increased; the reason of that is, that in consequence of the improved state of the

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roads, the Irish cars which formerly carried only ten hundred weight have been very much superseded by one which carries from fifteen to twenty; and though the weight carried on the roads has been doubled, the tolls received by the contractor has been decreased.

Those are what are called the Scotch drays?—Yes.

What is the rate of the toll paid on each stage coach that passes along the Kilcullen road?—An English shilling per horse at every gate, with an addition of *4d.* a horse granted in lieu of a prohibitory toll of *5s.*; that by a former Act was granted upon stage coaches carrying more than three inside and ten outside passengers, which was repealed, and *4d.* a horse granted in lieu of it.

What is the length of trust in a direct line from Dublin?—Upwards of twenty-three Irish, nearly thirty English miles.

At how many gates is the toll paid in that district?—It depends on the change of horses.

If a carriage went outright without any change of horses, how many times would the toll be paid?—Twice.

When did the wisdom of Parliament enact a prohibitory toll?—It was enacted thirty years ago on the Limerick, and subsequently on the Kilcullen and other roads.

What was the object of this prohibitory toll?—The object was to protect the interests of the mail-coach contractors from a threatened opposition on the part of the Grand Canal Company, who propose establishing a caravan to carry thirty-six passengers, from Monastereven to Limerick.

The object was to give a preference to the mail?—I conceive so; and a similar statement has been made before a Committee of the House of Commons.

Is that stated in the preamble of the Act?—I am not aware of the contents of the Act. Mr. Anderson was the first contractor for mail-coaches, and it was at the time of his contract that the clause was enacted.

What was done in consequence of that enactment?—This Act never was enforced; the coach or caravan was not established by the Canal Company.

The Act has since been repealed?—Yes.

Is there an end of the operation of it?—Yes; by another Act, *4d.* per horse on stage coaches has been substituted.

By what has that been enforced?—By an Act introduced by Mr. Pole (Lord Maryborough,) I am not certain of the date of it.

Do you make, on the part of the proprietors of the Kilcullen road, any claim under the Act brought in by Mr. Pole?—I conceive the contractors are by the Act entitled to claim the *4d.* per horse. The post-office, I understand, refused to pay it to the contractors for the Limerick road; the contractors for the Kilcullen road never claimed it.

Is it not evident, by the account you have given of the transaction, that the original Act under which you profess to claim was an Act for the purpose of giving an advantage to the mail, to the disadvantage of the coaches that carried many passengers; how then is it possible to suppose that that Act can be made to operate against them and make the toll payable?—That is the argument of the postmaster-general; and under that view, we have never claimed it.

Is there any claim now pending between the proprietors of the Kilcullen trust and the postmasters-general?—Yes; the particulars of which I had the honour to submit to this Board; in consequence of the Act of 1819 the contractors have been deprived of *316l. 6s. 8d.* per annum. We make no claim for the *4d.* per horse, but we do claim the third payment of toll.

In point of fact, what is the amount of toll paid by the mail-coach changing horses as it does in passing over the line of road vested in Messrs. Taylor?—*4s. 4d.* at each pay-gate.

Upon the return of the coach, what does it pay?—Every time that it passes through it pays.

Do you mean *8s. 8d.* going and coming in the twenty-four hours?—No; *17s. 4d.* going and coming; the coach that leaves Dublin pays *8s. 8d.*; the coach that comes from Limerick or Cork likewise pays *8s. 8d.*

Do many stage coaches run that road?—There are several; I am not exactly positive as to the numbers; I would rather refer to papers.

There are several stage coaches run the road?—Yes.

Are they drawn by four horses?—All of them.

You say you look occasionally to the repair of the road?—Yes.

Have you any assistance from the counties in keeping it in repair?—None, nor ever received any; we have never received in the slightest degree any assistance from the public but in the tolls.

How much per perch or per yard does the annual repair of your road average?—Perhaps the reading of a paper I have will afford the information: these are the rates at which the Limerick road was managed by Captain George Taylor for seven years; the paper is an outline of a proposal for the perpetual support of the post-roads in Ireland. A rate for the other roads may be devised, founded upon the actual expense of the road from Naas to Limerick, which was managed for thirteen years upon an average of seven years, viz. from April 1796 to April 1799, being three years; and from April 1805 to April 1809, four years; the amount was *32l. 6s. 8d.* per mile per annum, including all costs; but I must observe, that the Limerick road does not commence until fifteen miles from Dublin; of

course, on a road within fifteen miles from the capital there would be a considerable increase of expense.

Does the average on your own road exceed that?—Yes, considerably; it does not probably exceed it from Naas forwards, but it could not be done at that rate nearer Dublin.

Are the distances from which you have to draw stone considerable?—No, not considerable.

What is the greatest distance you have to draw stone?—I think the greatest distance we receive any stone is not more than five or six miles.

Do you contract for quarrying the stone?—We contract for laying the stone down unbroken, and then we contract with the poorer description of people for breaking the stone; we pay by the load of seven and a half hundred weight; that is the weight usually drawn by the old Irish car.

Would three car-loads about measure a cubic yard?—I cannot say exactly.

What do you pay for breaking one of those car-loads of stone?— $2\frac{1}{2}d.$  the seven and a half hundred weight; we sometimes give more; I am not aware of our giving less.

Do you find tools in that case?—We give the poor people a large hammer when the quarry-stones are laid down in large lumps; but they undertake to find the small that they break it with themselves.

Have you been able to form any sort of estimate of the expense of maintaining the roads by presentment?—I imagine that the rate I have stated,  $32l. 6s. 8d.$ , would maintain all roads, except in the neighbourhood of large towns.

Have you ever seen an account of the roads kept in repair by presentment?—I may have seen some; but I have no immediate recollection, nor am I in fact more than generally acquainted with the subject.

By what means are they kept in repair?—They are repaired by a presentment to an individual, and he lays out the money.

How is the money accounted for?—By the oath of the individual that he has laid it out.

Is there any examination of the account?—I am not aware of the checks on the expenditure. The individual swears that he has laid out upon the road the money which has been presented; having sworn in the first instance that the repairs are wanted and will cost so much.

Does he swear that the repairs have been made?—Yes.

You probably know that very large sums advanced by the public from the consolidated fund have been laid out on the mail-coach roads of Ireland?—Yes, I do.

Are you aware of the way in which that money has been laid out?—No.

*(The paper referred to by the Witness was delivered in, and read as follows.)*

“ Outline of a Proposal for the perpetual support of the Post Roads of Ireland, particularly those Roads in which the Mails are conveyed by Wheeled Carriages.

“ It is very respectfully submitted, that it would be advantageous to the public that the Government should take under their own direction all such post roads on which mail-coaches do now or may hereafter travel with the mails, whether turnpike roads or country presentment roads; and to place the management of them in persons properly qualified, in the name of a board, subordinate to the postmaster-general\*, to consist of five officers†; to them might be confided the receipt and expenditure of all the funds for the purposes of the roads, whether raised by turnpike tolls or county presentments, subject to the control of the postmaster-general, or such other trustees as may be named, and under such checks as might be deemed necessary.

“ All the turnpike roads might be taken with the tolls as now authorized by the laws respecting them and the debts affecting them.

“ A rate for the other roads may be devised, founded upon the actual expense of the road from Naas to Limerick, (which I managed for thirteen years,) upon an average of seven years; viz. from April 1796 to April 1799, being three years; and from April 1805 to April 1809, four years; which during these two periods averaged  $32l. 6s. 8d.$  per mile per annum, including all costs.‡ In which thirteen years the road was kept up in a state till then unknown in Ireland; many improvements made, by cutting down hills on more than one hundred places, from one foot to twenty-one feet deep, and filling hollows and gorges.

“ The expense of the Kilcullen road for the last seven years might be a safe rate to calculate the cost of all the roads leading out of Dublin for the first two stages, which are considerably more expensive than the roads at greater distance from the capital; but as they are all turnpike roads, except one to Wicklow, it may be unnecessary to mention the cost, further than for satisfaction as to the practicability of this design.

“ On roads at a greater distance from Dublin than Limerick, on which there are fewer travellers, the rate per mile might be reduced.

\* This has been improved upon in the late arrangement for the London and Dublin road, by the appointment of commissioners, named from the high officers of state.

† The number of officers would be regulated by the extent of road put under the charge of each.

‡ During the intermediate period the accounts were kept in an office in Dublin, and are not now in my possession; but the cost was not greater.

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Archibald Taylor,  
Esq.  
27th Oct. 1823.

“ It is obvious that the grand juries of the counties through which those roads pass would be required to make presentments annually for the average cost by the mile, which (it is presumed) would cost less, or at all events not more, than the annual expense heretofore; at same time, by the constant attention of the officers, and having the power of generally applying the funds where necessary, would be kept in more regular repair.\*

“ All the money arising from turnpike tolls should be paid weekly to the nearest postmaster; and the county presentments, when collected, should be paid by the county treasurer to the postmaster of the county town. The overseers weekly bills of work should be transmitted (free of postage) regularly to Dublin, where one of these officers should be required to attend, in order to inspect the accounts, and give orders on the postmasters for the payment.

“ The Kilcullen and Limerick roads are held by contractors named in special Acts of the Irish Parliament, who have a right to the tolls which are defined, for which they are bound to keep the roads in proper repair and make certain improvements, which they have as yet performed. In case of resuming these roads, the contractors would expect compensation, which, with some of them, might not be easily adjusted; therefore, it might be proper to let their periods run out. The Kilworth road is held by a contractor under the trustees, which is only a private agreement, and might probably be resumed for little compensation. But if all or any of these roads should be resumed, it would be always understood that the post-office or public revenue should lose nothing in any case; on the contrary, it is confidently expected that by the end of the first ten years the roads would be in such complete state, that the tolls arising at the gates would be sufficient afterwards to keep them in repair, and to pay the interest of the debts; and that the post-office would be relieved of the turnpike tolls now paid quarterly to the trustees and contractors out of the post-office revenue to the amount of 7,000*l.* or 8,000*l.* per annum, which, under the present system, would continue for ever. The county presentments, under a careful economy, would also be sufficient for the repair of the roads to which they would be applicable. It is also to be understood, that the salaries and allowances to these officers, and all under them, should arise out of the tolls and the presentments; and that ultimately, the debts of all the turnpike roads would be paid off. As these officers would be necessarily out upon the roads a great part of their time, it would be proper that their allowances should be particularly specified in the law to be made for this design, that nothing should be left for extra charges.

“ The above is founded upon experience, and the mode practised in the management of the Limerick and Kilcullen roads for the last twenty-seven years.

“ 39, Camden-street, Dublin, }  
“ 24th October 1823. }

“ GEORGE TAYLOR.”

ARCH. TAYLOR.

## Appendix, No. 172.

29th October 1823.

Mr. WILLIAM DUNCAN called in and examined.

No. 172.  
Mr. Wm. Duncan.  
29th Oct. 1823.

HAVE you been employed as an Engineer by the Post-office?—I have.  
In what way were you paid for your labour?—We were paid at the rate of 4*l.* 4*s.* a mile for designing, surveying, and estimating the road.

Did you receive any salary?—None.

When were you appointed?—I believe in the year 1805, which was the commencement of the Act.

Were you appointed by Act of Parliament?—No; I was recommended by Major Taylor, and appointed by the post-office warrant. I believe that the Act of Parliament went to the appointment of persons properly qualified to make the surveys.

What number of years were you employed in making the surveys?—Not constantly at a y particular time; but I think I was employed from 1805 occasionally till 1813.

What lines of road did you survey?—From Dublin to Wexford, from Dublin to Drogheda, and from Dublin to New Ross, and part of the line to Slane.

Through what counties did the road to New Ross pass?—Through the counties of Dublin, Wicklow, Carlow, and part of Wexford; the principal part of it was in Carlow.

Was there not a road to Waterford?—That is part of the line to Waterford by New Ross.

\* This clause has occasioned much threatened opposition by the grand juries, as encroaching on their privileges; but this will be obviated by observing that the grand juries have by the existing laws the power of contracting for the support of the roads under their authority, and is practised almost in every county, but limited in the expense. Certainly the postmaster-general, or the trustees, would be more respectable contractors than the poor country people with whom they now deal. All that would be wanted for this purpose would be to enlarge their powers as to the cost, and leave them at liberty to contract or not; but with power to the postmaster-general, or the trustees, to repair where necessary, and oblige them (the grand juries) to present for the expense.

What

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*Mr. Wm. Duncan.*  
29th Oct. 1823.

What part of that road has been executed?—The part of it which lies in the county of Wicklow; they are now working on part of it—none else; they are building a bridge over the river at Poolafoucca, which was the great obstacle to their going on with the work; they have got a grant of money to enable them to go on with it.

Has the road been made through the county of Dublin?—No, it has not; the bridge bounds the counties of Dublin and Wicklow.

Has the road been made through the county of Wicklow?—Yes.

Has it been made through the county of Wexford?—No; I believe they will go on with it in the counties of Wexford and Carlow after this bridge shall have been built; the want of that has been the great obstacle to their proceeding with it.

Have you had any opportunity of seeing any parts of the roads which have been executed?—Those I laid out, I have; I travelled on that in the county of Wicklow the other day.

Are they laid out strictly according to the plans?—Yes; they are laid out strictly on the line I pointed out.

Is that required by the Act of Parliament?—No; I rather think the Act of Parliament has not provided for that; it refers to other Acts.

In the instances where the Act of Parliament has not provided for the laying it out, who did it?—I believe, the post-office.

Was that paid for out of the same fund as the surveys were?—I believe it was; I do not think there have been more than one or two instances where the post-office did pay, and they paid at the same rate as we were paid for our attendance on the grand juries; namely, 1*l.* 1*s.* a day for our attendance, and 2*s.* a mile for our travelling expenses; it was a very unpopular thing at first, and the grand juries would not do any thing unless the post-office had come forward to get it executed.

Was the work of lock-spitting the road paid for by the post-office, or the counties?—That was paid for by the counties.

It was only your own attendance to see the road cut that was paid for by the post-office?—That was all.

Where roads were executed under your surveys, did you see the roads set out?—Yes; where they were put into execution I did in every case.

Was there any specification of the mode in which the work was to be executed, as well as a plan?—The estimate in general specified the manner in which the road was to be executed.

Were the contracts generally made for the completion of the road within your estimate?—They generally were; at the same time they exceeded them; I think, in most cases that arose from the difficulties which arose after the work began, such as rock and other things, which we could not have foreseen.

What was the usual average of the Irish mile for the execution of the road?—I think on an average it came within 800*l.*

Did that include the fences?—The fences were included in the estimate for the making of the road.

Upon the whole, has the work been executed, in your opinion, in a satisfactory manner?—I think upon the whole it has; there were some exceptions, but not on the lines with which I had any thing to do.

You say a very small portion of the line from Dublin to New Ross has been completed?—Only that which lies in the county of Wicklow.

In what state are the roads in the other directions which were surveyed by you?—I believe those that were not put into execution are in very bad order; those that were executed are in very good order; the line to New Ross was in a great measure a new line altogether, to shorten the distance.

Has the road from Dublin to Drogheda been completed according to the plan given in?—No; they abandoned that plan altogether, and have gone by the line I surveyed by Slane. It was not intended that the Slane road should be that to Drogheda, but to go by Monaghan (the Londonderry line); but the Messrs. Bournes have struck out a road for which they have got private presentments, not at all from the post-office, that branches off and goes to Drogheda.

Is that a deviation below Ashbourne?—It is.

Then the public money has never been advanced on any part of that road?—Only as far as from Dublin to Slane.

Did you set out the survey of the road from Dublin to Slane?—No; one part of it was surveyed by Mr. Larkin; I took up his survey.

Is the road to Ashbourne laid out according to Mr. Larkin's survey?—Yes.

Has it been constructed according to your survey from Ashbourne on to Slane?—Yes, I believe so; there was some part near the Boyne I did not put into execution, but all the rest, as far as it was new line, they carried into effect.

Did your survey in that direction extend beyond the Boyne?—We went to the village of Slane, but we could do nothing there, for we were inclosed within the domains of the Marquis of Conyngham; that would require very great alteration.

It goes up a steep hill there?—Yes; we proposed the filling up of the bridge, and some improvement of the hill.

Has there been any post-office survey of the mail-coach road still further north?—Yes; there has been to Londonderry, by Mr. Larkin. With respect to the road to Drogheda there

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was a line of road suggested by Lord Oriel, then Mr. Foster; he was anxious to keep to that line; I surveyed that also, but there seemed to be predilection for going off more to the left, which I did; but they have left that and gone off to Slane.

In what manner are those roads kept in repair?—By the county.

Is there a toll upon them?—No, not on any of those I have mentioned; I know there is none on the Wexford line, and none on the New Ross line, as far as it has been made; but I am sure they will not be able to keep them in repair without tolls; they are out of repair generally before the assizes come round.

If there is a presentment for repair, cannot that money be kept applicable to the maintenance of the road permanently throughout the year?—I believe they are not competent judges in general what the road will require, and they frequently fall short of the money it will require between the two assizes, therefore it must stand over, unless the gentlemen themselves choose to lay out the money.

Have you been employed to repair roads under presentments of grand juries?—No, I have not.

Have you had occasion to observe the proceedings under them?—Yes, frequently.

Does it strike you that the money is laid out in an economical and efficient manner?—No, not at all times.

Are you sufficiently acquainted with the roads over which the mail-coaches of Ireland travel, to know what portion of the whole is subject to toll, and what is not?—No, I am not; but in general all the mail-coach roads, with very few exceptions, have turnpikes upon them; those to Belfast and Londonderry and to Cork, which are the principal, have turnpikes. I believe, in some cases where the tolls are not found sufficient to keep the roads in repair, Mr. Bourne, who is a very active man, has interest enough with the grand juries to get presentments for the purpose of assisting them. A great part of the road to Galway, I recollect, has no turnpike, and probably some of the cross-roads have not turnpikes.

According to the provisions of the Road Acts, is it not necessary that those roads that are laid out under the post-office surveys should be of a specified width?—Yes, I believe it is; I know that they were to forty-two feet clear—exactly two Irish perches.

Do you think it desirable they should be of that width?—No; I think in some cases it is too wide; in cases of cutting of rock, for instance, that a great saving of public money might be made if we had not made them so broad, and that they would have answered the purpose quite as well.

Would it not have saved expense in keeping them in repair?—Yes; but I think it is desirable not to make them too narrow where they are confined, especially as the sun does not get at them, and they are cut up.

Would it not be desirable, in your opinion, to leave a discretion to the engineer?—Yes, I think so; I think they ought not to be less than thirty-two nor more than forty-two feet.

Is it necessary they should have a footpath by the side of them?—Yes, I think it is.

Would thirty-two feet be in all cases necessary, as the footpath opens also to the air?—I do not think that a road should be much less than thirty-two feet, or it will get cut up; when I say thirty-two feet, I mean including the footpath; the forty-two feet includes the footpath; thirty-seven feet of road and five of footway; most of the roads of this country are made twenty-one feet; they are cross-roads, and would not do for general public roads.

Are you well acquainted with the provisions of the Road Acts?—Yes, pretty well.

Is there any point on which it has appeared to you they require alteration or amendment?—I dare say they do a great deal, but I have not been in the way of looking over them for ten or twelve years. I know there are many inconveniences arising from the mode of presentment by grand juries, and the attendance of persons upon them, and the manner of presenting.

Is there any mode by which the due expenditure of the money is secured, and in which there is any regular mode of accounting for it provided for?—I believe the treasurer of the county is the person accountable for the money.

In what way are the accounts examined?—They are examined by the grand juries at each assizes. The money presented now he is of course accountable for, and he produces his books at the next assizes, to show what part has been expended; the overseers of roads are obliged to swear that they have expended the money: I believe that is the only security they have.

Is there no detailed examination of the accounts?—There is a certain form, in which they state that they have expended the money, and they swear to that.

Does it appear to you that that is the form in which the accounts should be passed?—No, I certainly think not; if I were to speak my mind fairly, I think the grand juries should have nothing to do with the expenditure of the money; I do not think they are competent to the examination of the work; one person makes his road one way, and another person another; in driving over a road, it will be observed that four miles is made in one way, and three in another, though the materials they have in this country for making roads are the best in the world in most instances.

In all cases in which the money has been advanced from the consolidated fund have not the counties undertaken to repay it?—Yes; I believe they have done it in six years.

Is there any mode in which the payment could be secured, if the presentment was not made by the grand juries?—The presentment must be made by the grand juries before the money is advanced, and they must show that the road has been made.

Do you think that it would be better the whole expenditure should take place under Government control, and that the counties should have nothing further to do than to guarantee the repayment of the money?—There is no doubt of it.

Would that be a more economical mode?—I think it would.

Would the counties be better satisfied?—I think they would not; it would be taking what is called a job out of their hands.

Would not the counties be satisfied if the road was good and the expense much less?—There is not a doubt they ought to be.

Have you any doubt that if the work was executed by an engineer employed on the part of the public, a regular account kept of the expenditure, and a vigilant examination into it, the money would be more economically as well as more effectually laid out than under the present mode?—Certainly; it would be more economically and much better laid out, I am convinced.

Has it ever occurred to you to consider of any mode which could possibly be adopted for the maintenance and repair of those roads after they have been constructed by the counties?—I conceive that in place of allowing the grand juries to repair them after they have been executed, they should be bound to present a certain sum of money at each assizes; any engineer would be able to make an estimate of the quantity required for repairs; and the money left in the hands of the county, or any gentleman in the county, ought to be transmitted to the post-office, to be laid out by a gentleman appointed by the post-office, and the post-office accountable for the work.

Is not an officer sometimes employed in the roads, called a supervisor, who has the power of laying out a limited sum without presentment, which must be afterwards accounted for and paid?—The supervisor is no more than an officer appointed under the grand jury in each barony; the Act of Parliament does not allow a general supervisor for each county, but for a barony; he is only a farmer in the neighbourhood. The gentlemen of the county sometimes oversee the repairs of a part, and are allowed, I think, about one shilling per perch.

That is not an efficacious mode of keeping a road in repair?—Not at all; the man is not competent to the business at all.

Have you had any opportunity of observing that roads not surveyed and laid out by yourself, but surveyed and planned by other engineers, have been constructed by the counties, but not according to the plan and specification given?—I do not recollect to have seen any thing of the kind; I recollect one instance, indeed, near Skibbereen, where there was a good deal of animadversion on the money not being laid out properly, and that did cost them a great deal too much money; there was an investigation; I think it was altered or repaired. One of the great faults of the Post-road Act was, that the engineers who surveyed the roads were not themselves made to carry them into effect; there must have been various things they foresaw which the persons who executed them did not. On the road to Wicklow there were two or three men who were employed on the military road, who were competent to carry the thing into effect, and did it; but that is only one instance out of a good many.

In what state of repair are such parts of the roads over which the mail-coaches drive as are toll roads?—I think, in general, pretty good.

Do you happen to know in what county the largest expenditure of the money advanced by the public has been made?—No, I do not; but I should imagine the county of Cork: there are various long lines of road in that county, and it is a very extensive county.

WILLIAM DUNCAN.

Gentlemen,

34, Charlemont-street, 30th Oct. 1823.

I BEG leave to correct a part of my evidence of yesterday. I think I stated that the appointment of engineers, &c. was by Major Taylor; I meant to say, "That it was through that gentleman's recommendation, but by authority and under warrant of the postmasters-general;" and which I find (on reference to those documents) were in strict accordance with the Act of Parliament.

I have taken the liberty of committing this to paper, lest, by waiting on you in person, I should interfere with any of your appointments for the day.

I have the honour to be, gentlemen,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Parliamentary Commissioners of Inquiry,  
&c. &c. &c.

WILLIAM DUNCAN.

Examinations.

No. 173.  
 Earl O'Neill.  
 9th Oct. 1826.

## Appendix, No. 173.

Monday, 9th October 1826.

The Right Hon. the Earl O'NEILL examined.

THE Parliamentary Commissioners, hearing your lordship was come to Dublin, beg to have an opportunity of some conversation with your lordship on the subject of the Irish post-office. The Parliamentary Commissioners have not yet been able to make a report on the subject of the evidence they received from the different officers in the year 1823, but it is hoped that in the course of the ensuing session their Report will appear. In the mean time they were desirous of seeing your lordship, in order to know whether any progress had been made in any of the improvements which had been suggested during the time the Parliamentary Commissioners were here, to remedy some of the inconveniences which were then complained of and acknowledged to exist?—We have been expecting almost every year a report to come out, and therefore, looking to that, there has not been so much done as would otherwise have been done; nothing has ever come to us officially from the Parliamentary Commissioners; any thing which has been hinted at as an improvement has been taken advantage of; but, looking to a report coming out, there has not been that exertion used probably which otherwise might.

The report, if made at present, must be founded upon the state in which the Commissioners found the office at the time of their examination; if, however, any improvements have been since adopted, it is material they should be aware of them, that their report may be founded on a fair and clear statement of the facts?—It will be impossible for me to give an answer to that at this moment. I know the general disposition of the department has been, that any thing that was suggested to us as an improvement should be adopted, and to get as near the English system as possible; but nothing material occurs to me at the moment.

With respect to any regular meeting of the board, have your lordship and Lord Rosse come to any agreement as to the times of meeting?—There never have been any stated times of meeting, nor I never heard that recommended as an improvement.

You have no regular board?—On particular occasions they are called, but not at any stated times.

On what occasions are boards called?—In fact, any postmaster-general is considered as holding a board when he is in the board-room.

Alone, or with the secretary?—Of course with the secretary.

You consider the presence of the secretary necessary to form a board?—I consider the presence of the secretary perfectly necessary.

With the secretary, one postmaster-general would be sufficient?—Certainly; that is my idea.

No other person is considered to be a component member of the board?—No other person; the board, in fact, is merely a term made use of: there never have been any stated times for holding boards since I have been in the office; and when a postmaster-general comes in it is considered as a board; he sits and rules whatever is to be done, with the secretary.

Has there been any understanding come to between your lordship and Lord Rosse respecting collision of opinions upon any measures to be adopted; as, for example, in the case of misconduct of officers, or general improvements recommended, or upon a contract being entered into, or the appointment of a new post-town?—There has been no particular arrangement as to that; there has been occasionally a difference of opinion, but not often.

Has there been any arrangement as to what is to be done when there is a difference of opinion; whether you are to meet and discuss it together?—The usual custom has been, that one has given way to the opinion of the other; when there has been a difference of opinion (it is not very common) the cases are generally brought forward by the secretary; and it is not very common; but occasionally there have been on some particular points.

Are the cases brought before the postmasters-general?—Every case is brought before each postmaster-general, or ought to be; that is the instruction.

Is there any written instruction to the secretary to that effect?—I am not exactly aware of any; but that is the custom, that every thing goes before each postmaster-general in the shape of minutes.

When your lordship comes to Dublin, do you examine the minute books to see whether every case of that description has been forwarded both to your lordship and Lord Rosse?—The minute books are signed by both the postmasters-general, and then entered in a book and bound together.

Whenever you come to town?—They are sent to us wherever we may be.

Not the minute books?—No; the minute books are made up afterwards; the minutes are all numbered and dated.

Are the minutes sent to you periodically?—Just according as business occurs; not regularly as to date, but according as business occurs.

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How often do they go to your lordship; daily, or weekly, or monthly?—Not regularly daily, but there is never a week passes without more than one, according as the business happens to come in.

Does the business come direct to your lordship from other officers besides the secretary, or is he the only channel of representations from other officers of the department?—Every thing is supposed to come through the secretary, and does go through him; those minutes are signed by him, to show that they have gone through him.

Is there any signature of other officers of the department, with respect to representations made by officers of the department to the postmasters-general?—They may represent to us themselves, if they please, there is nothing to prevent it; but the regular way is for all to go through the secretary.

Do they do that usually?—The generality of the business comes through the secretary; it does, however, happen occasionally that some officers wish to address us themselves on any grievances they have, and there is nothing to prevent it.

The general custom is for any thing to originate with the secretary in the manner in which it is communicated to your lordship?—That is the way in which I have conceived it right to be done; I have considered it not right to transact any business without the secretary knowing what is going forward.

Do the documents come through the secretary to you, or does the secretary state what has occurred?—He always forwards the documents which he receives, whether memorials or letters, or whatever they are, and we consider the point, and approve or disapprove.

In returning the minutes, it is your lordship's custom to make observations, stating your opinion?—Yes, certainly.

In case of any difference of opinion between your lordship and Lord Rosse, what is done?—That is an embarrassing thing to the secretary, but it has not often occurred.

One of the particular cases which came under the cognizance of the Parliamentary Commissioners was that of the second Cork mail; does that contract still continue?—Yes; it has some years to expire yet.

Is it found to be more beneficial to the public than it proved at first?—It did not turn out so favourably as it was expected at first, but it does now.

Is it more beneficial than it was?—Yes; and I think it will be more so if the Liverpool packet, which has been lately established, goes on.

Was any attempt made to induce the contractor to substitute any other line for the Cork line?—We can send them on any line we please.

In order to get rid of a contract confessedly not beneficial, have you the power of compelling them to take another road?—Certainly, I conceive so; we have on other roads; we frequently change the line of road for the public convenience.

Has any attempt been made in reference to that particular line?—I do not know that there has.

Would it not be beneficial to do so?—I think it was once before us, on the idea of making them take a different road; I forget the result of it.

Is there any other road in which it could be better employed?—I am not prepared to answer that question; I am inclined to think it does not go the same road as the night mail.

The question is, whether it could be altered so as to go to another place, not to Cork?—No, certainly not; we could not send it to Limerick, for instance, instead of Cork.

Of course you cannot under the contract, but have the postmasters-general tried whether they might not be induced to make the alteration?—That is a matter which has not been thought of, as far as I know.

Was the opinion of the Crown lawyers ever taken upon the validity of that contract; it was signed by only one postmaster-general?—I never heard that the validity of the contract was disputed, nor do I know that any opinion was taken on it.

Is there any understanding between your lordship and Lord Rosse at present, that no contract shall be considered as binding upon the post-office unless it is signed by both postmasters-general?—No distinct understanding; but I have always understood, that as we both sign other documents, so we should both sign contracts, though one has the power to do it, as I conceive.

If the signature of one is equally valid with the signature of the two, there appears to be no reason for the second signature being added?—There can be no doubt that the act of one of the postmasters-general is valid; we are called joint postmaster-general, with equal powers.

For all purposes?—Yes, I should conceive so.

Then what does your lordship conceive to be the object of having two postmasters-general?—I do not know, except in case of sickness; it was in the same way in England, I believe.

Your lordship is not generally aware that there is an understanding between the two postmasters-general that the signature of one shall not be valid unless it is supported by the signature of the other?—There is no understanding of the kind, but documents do come to us both, and are signed by us both.

Is it the practice for the two postmasters-general to meet together at the board-room?—It is not very common.

Has it taken place for several years past?—I do not recollect that it has for three or four years.

Did it ever take place?—Yes.

For how many years does your lordship suppose it has not? Since Lord Clancarty resigned

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have the two ever met together as a board?—Yes; I think it has occurred since Lord Rosse came into office, but not for some years back, as he suggested that the business should be done by minutes, which render meetings less necessary.

In the case of a clerk being reported by the secretary as a proper object for suspension or for punishment, would the decision of one postmaster-general be sufficient so to suspend or to punish him?—I should think, strictly speaking, it would, but this is merely matter of opinion.

Suppose in the case of a minute, containing a recommendation for such suspension, being sent first to one postmaster-general and then to the other, that the opinions of the two should vary, what would the secretary's conduct be then?—I should think he would refer to the Government in a case of that kind; there is no positive instruction upon the subject, but I should think that would be his course.

Supposing your lordship came to Dublin, and was convinced that the suspension ought or ought not to take place, would your lordship think yourself authorized to direct the secretary, by a verbal communication, to pronounce a sentence of suspension or fine without consulting the other postmaster-general?—He has a power himself of suspension without consulting us.

Supposing your lordship was aware that the other postmaster-general differs from you, would you think yourself authorized to give your opinion, and direct it to be carried into execution?—I should think it absolutely necessary to give that opinion, but I should not enforce that order if I knew the opinion of the other postmaster-general was different; but if I saw occasion, being myself in Dublin, to suspend an officer, I should suspend him, but I should not enforce his dismissal against the opinion of the other postmaster-general.

Is it in the power of the secretary to suspend without consulting the postmasters-general?—I conceive so; it has always been the custom.

Is it allowed by the postmasters-general?—I should think it absolutely necessary, unless we were always upon the spot.

Is that suspension intended only to last till the opinion of the postmasters-general is known?—Exactly so; till our opinion is known.

Have the Government any power of interference with respect to the appointment of subordinate officers?—They have nothing to do except with the nomination of the secretary, and two or three whom they call patent officers.

Then, when your lordship speaks of referring to the Government in the case supposed, what authority do you suppose the Government to have in respect to a person in whose appointment they have no concurrence?—They could do nothing but through us.

Then what is the use of a reference to the Government?—I see no other way of settling it in case of a difference of opinion.

Has it happened that the Government have been consulted on such a difference of opinion? I do not recollect its ever having been done in any case.

Is your lordship aware that an order has been signed by one of the postmasters-general, that no contract shall be considered valid until it has been signed by the two; that such an order exists upon the post-office books?—I am not aware of it; there are several contracts not signed at this moment.

It was with reference to the Cork mail stated to the Parliamentary Commissioners, that Lord Rosse had sent an order that no contract should be considered valid unless it was signed by both?—It has been without my knowledge if that has been done.

There was a contract for the Limerick mail-coach in agitation for some time; is your lordship aware whether that has been signed?—I cannot answer that question at this moment.

The Parliamentary Commissioners understand there was a difference of opinion with respect to the number of passengers by that mail-coach?—Yes.

Was that the cause of the delay of the signature of the contract?—I think it is probable. I have been desirous of getting the mails into the English system as far as possible; the contractors object has been to load them with outside passengers, which render them extremely insecure.

Has any reduction been made in the mileage of the mail-coaches in Ireland?—I am sorry to say it has not; on the contrary, they are rather rising; there are several for which we cannot get offers.

What is the maximum of that which you offer; the highest mileage you have offered?—I cannot answer that without memorandums; I should be afraid of making a mistake.

Can your lordship state the lowest they have offered at?—I cannot.

It used to be done for fifteen-pence a mile?—I believe they are done under that in all cases.

To what periods are the contracts now limited?—We have been granting them only for seven years lately. There are a great many expiring, and others will expire very soon. There seems to be a regular combination among the contractors to keep the prices up as much as possible. We have been trying to get the innkeepers along the road to take them.

What method do you take of having it made known that you wish to enter into contracts?—We advertise it in the newspapers, and the surveyor of mail-coaches is sent along the road to see what can be done. The fact is, there are so very few people in Ireland who can do it, that there is an understanding between them, and it is very difficult to break through their combinations.

They demand permission to carry more passengers on the mail-coaches in Ireland than in England, do they not?—Their great object is outside passengers; people do not care here about their convenience in travelling inside.

To what number do you limit the mail-coaches?—They have got now to three and four; my first idea was that they should have, as in England, only two; they have more in ours, we have two guards, which we are obliged to have where there are so many outside passengers.

Has any difficulty been found in making contracts on account of the speed required?—They always look for higher terms according to the speed.

You go in some cases as many as eight English miles an hour?—Five and a half, which is equal to eight English; none of those we have formed lately I believe are slower than that; I never found any objection as to that rate, except that they expect to be paid higher if they are obliged to go fast.

Have you any difficulty with regard to the state of the roads, or does the post-office interfere at all?—They have no power whatever.

Do the postmasters-general ever indict the roads?—We have nothing to say to that; we in general find our great roads very good, especially where there is a mail-coach upon them.

You do not consider the state of the roads a source of complaint, as far as the post-office service is concerned?—Decidedly not; I consider our roads as remarkably good in general.

Have the postmasters-general no power of interference in respect of the state of the roads?—No, no further than this, that there is an Act to survey the roads, which is done by our surveyor, and he reports on new roads, but we have nothing to do afterwards with the working of them.

Have you no power of calling on the grand juries?—We cannot oblige them to do it; that entirely rests with them; there was an Act giving us that power, but it did not continue for any time in force.

What is the duty of the superintendent of mail-coaches?—He is the head of the office here; there is only one.

Does he visit the mail-coach establishments in any part of the country?—He is sent down by us to the country when any thing is wrong.

Do you send him down on occasions of contracts to be entered into?—Yes, when we think we can get any thing done by the people on the road; we have never been able yet to get any thing done by the innkeepers; we send him down to inspect and to see what can be done.

The office of superintendent of mail-coaches formerly was that of a person who was frequently travelling over the country, and reported to the post-office the state of the mail-coaches?—This office was established when I came into office first; there was no such officer before that time; the same officer has been in it ever since; he does not go down unless he is ordered by us; then he goes as a surveyor.

Is he an active man?—Yes, I think he is.

He is acquainted with his business?—Yes, I think so; he ought to be; he has been a good while in the office.

Is that his sole employment?—I think he has something to do with the English money-orders in the post-office.

He is entirely a servant of the post-office?—Yes, he is.

What is his name?—Joseph Ferguson.

Are the surveyors confined to particular districts?—They are allotted to different districts, but we send them where we please.

How is their duty regulated; is it by special orders from the post-office, or are they instructed to go particular rounds?—By special orders.

Are their districts ever changed?—It has been done, but not often.

How many districts are there?—Four districts.

Are they generally employed?—Sometimes they are all employed; insomuch that we have to send other officers in their places; at other times it happens that they are not all employed.

Does it ever take place that while the surveyors are not employed, and while the extra surveyors are not employed, clerks of the post-office are sent to attend in their stead?—It ought not to take place.

It was stated to the Parliamentary Commissioners three years ago that that had been the practice?—It ought not to be the practice; it is not the practice to my knowledge.

On whom would it depend?—On the secretary; he would know where the surveyors were, and ought not to employ a clerk while they are unemployed.

Could he do that without the orders of the postmaster-general?—He might; he does not consult us in the first instance; if a postmaster dies, he sends a person to take charge of the office immediately; that he does of himself; it is generally understood that no clerk is to be employed while any of the surveyors are unemployed.

If you had found that any clerk had been employed while the surveyors or extra surveyors had been unemployed, what would be your lordship's conduct?—I should remark upon it if I heard of it.

Are not those things put into the minutes?—No, they are not.

Should not you consider such an occurrence as a person being sent down to act as a surveyor a thing proper to be put into the minutes, as it may occasion an increase of expense?—Yes, so far as the surveyors are concerned, not otherwise; the acting surveyors are paid no more than would be paid to a surveyor.

Is the pay of the surveyor in such a case suspended?—His daily pay is suspended; he is paid 100*l.* a year, but his mileage is suspended; he swears to his account; he is paid only for the number of days he is actually employed, and the officer sent in his place gets the same allowance.

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When he is sent on any special service, is he considered bound to perform any other duties which would naturally be considered the duty of the surveyor, though that may not be specially marked out in his instructions?—I consider that he is bound to notice any irregularity he sees, but not to go to any other place than that to which he is ordered.

Supposing he is on duty at any place, he is bound to examine the state of that office?—Certainly.

Your lordship considers that he is bound to report upon any irregularities he may observe, though not directed specially to do so?—Yes, he is bound, but he is not to put us to any more expense than we authorize. I think he should be at liberty to be always upon the alert; but then there might be this difficulty, that we should not know where they were at the moment we want them.

Might not that be obviated by their sending daily reports?—Yes.

Are their reports sent to the postmasters-general?—No, unless there is something special in the report.

Then it may happen that a surveyor may have been sent to take the place of a postmaster, and his report may not come before the postmaster-general?—Certainly; there may not be any thing special; he may merely have taken possession of the office and conducted the business.

Would it not be advisable that the postmaster-general should be aware of the state in which the office was found, and the length of time during which the surveyor was likely to be occupied there?—It might be an improvement.

A surveyor in charge of an office receives payment as a surveyor, and not as postmaster?—As a surveyor; he receives so much a day while he takes charge of an office.

The person who is sent down as a surveyor in case of there being no surveyor receives the same allowance?—Yes.

Does he not also receive his salary as a clerk?—As another is employed in his place and must be paid, I rather think that is stopped; I know it is stopped in case of sickness, but I cannot state at the moment how that is.

Being absent, would he not be subject to a daily fine for absence?—It would be hard to fine him, as he is absent by direction of the secretary; but I think that his pay is given to another who does the duty; I know, in case of sickness, there the pay given to the officer who does the duty is deducted from him, and it is complained of very much in our department.

That is a daily fine for non-attendance?—It is a payment by them instead of by the public.

What is that fine?—It varies in the different offices, whatever it may be.

Does it vary much?—I rather think in the secretary's office it is higher than in others.

It has been stated to the Commissioners that it is 3s. 6d. a day?—That is for the inland office; whether the clerks in the secretary's office pay more I cannot say.

How is that regulated?—By custom.

Has it ever been examined and controlled by your lordships?—I believe it has been generally left to the secretary to give what he thought fit, not changing it from day to day, but according to a scale.

Is that a power which you think it right to leave to the secretary; that of regulating fines in case of absence, voluntary or unavoidable?—It must be left to some person, and I do not know to whom else it could be left unless we were always upon the spot.

Ought not the principle of it to be laid down by the heads of the office?—I conceive it is laid down.

Is the mode in which it is acted upon regularly reported to your lordship?—The fines come before us; they are all put into the minute, but the payments made by one officer to another for doing his duty do not come before us.

The question respects the fines in case of absence from duty; in case of illness or otherwise?—They all come before us in the minute.

Is your lordship aware of the mode in which the money arising from the fines is managed?—There is an account kept of it.

Is that account controlled or examined?—It is frequently examined.

By whom is it kept?—I rather think it is kept by the chief clerk of the secretary at present; and there are orders given out of it for different charitable purposes in case of persons being sick, and so on.

Is the debtor and creditor account ever regularly examined and passed?—It is frequently called for and examined, but not at stated periods; I do not know that it is audited or settled.

By whom is it called for?—I have frequently heard it called for in the board room; but I do not know that it is actually balanced at any particular period.

By whom has it been called for?—When orders are given for mail guards, perhaps, or any persons receiving relief, I have heard this account called for, but I have never minutely inspected it myself; I mean that there is a regular account which may be seen at any time, but I do not know whether it is settled at any stated periods, I have never examined into it.

In whose province would it fall to exercise a check over that account as on every other account?—The order for the fines is a check on one side, and our order for any monies to be paid out of it is a check for it on the other.

Who sees that your lordships orders are correctly obeyed, and that they are put to account?—The secretary.

Is there no appropriation of those fines without an order of the postmasters-general?—  
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I know we do give orders for that; I believe the secretary has no power to give an order for it.

Does he apply any part of it, and then receive the sanction of the postmaster-general; or does he require a previous direction of your lordships?—I think he recommends, and we give an order, and that it is done by that mode.

The postmasters-general are not made acquainted when the appropriation of those fines has been made, with a view to their sanctioning it?—No; I do not think there is any regular time for settling them; the account is frequently called for and examined; I have examined it myself. The fact is, there are generally more demands come upon it than those fines come to; it has been frequently said, when there have been demands, that there was no money to give them.

How has it been ascertained that such is the state of the account?—I have not paid particular attention to that account, but I suppose the secretary looks to that; I have never heard any complaints myself.

Do the postmasters-general always adopt the recommendation of the secretary as to the persons who shall receive allowances out of those funds?—I think they do in general; I do not know that there is any objection made to his recommendation.

Your lordship said, that in the minutes the fines were brought under your notice; do those fines show the length of absence of each individual that occasioned those fines against him?—They state the particulars of the things that he was fined for.

Would it necessarily come under the observation of the postmasters-general how long any person had been absent, and for what he was fined?—Yes; the length of the absence would be stated.

Then if no comment is made by the postmasters-general upon the fine, that fine is supposed to be confirmed?—Yes.

Has it ever been suggested by the postmasters-general, seeing such minutes of absence, that it is time that the absence should be put an end to?—It has often occurred to me that the officers who appear to have been absent should be either removed from the lists, or compelled to do their duty; the answer has been, that they were looking for compensation.

What is the greatest length of absence you have allowed to an officer during a year?—The understanding is, that if their duty is done, that is enough. I have a return of the absent officers, and the time they have been absent, some for a very long period. There are persons who have other situations in this town, and in fact never come near the office at all.

Can your lordship say for what period any officers have absented themselves from the office at any one time?—I believe there are instances of more than a year at present.

Some of those officers have offices in other departments, have they not?—I have understood that they have other business in Dublin, and that they do not consider this worth attending to; that they are looking to the number of years.

Can your lordship state the length of services of any officer in that situation, and his present salary at present; perhaps your lordship alludes to Mr. Donlevy?—It is impossible I can do that without looking to documents not now before me.

Has your lordship ever desired any of them to present themselves before you, and to account for their non-attendance?—Indeed, I have not; but I have frequently wished to do it, and have communicated that wish to the secretary; but the answer has been that these persons are all looking to compensation, and it would be doing them injustice to remove them.

Do you consider that it would be injurious to them that you require their attendance that you might yourself be acquainted with their case, and form your own opinion whether they are entitled to further indulgence?—I have often thought that ought to be done.

Has your lordship met with any opposition on the part of the secretary to that?—No, but the contrary; the secretary has frequently recommended, that those people should be removed at once, and that it should be seen what they were entitled to, and what they were not; that it is inconvenient keeping them on the books every day absent; it is not, however, any additional expense to the public.

If your lordship has never examined them personally, have you ever taken their case into consideration, and reported to the Government your opinion of what should be done?—No, only verbally; I have mentioned to Mr. Goulburn that there are persons who have other situations here, two or three attorneys, and others, who will never join us, and that the office was in an improper state on that account. We have been for the last two or three years expecting a report from the Commissioners.

Do not your lordship and Lord Rosse feel yourselves competent to act without the report of the Commissioners of Inquiry?—Certainly; nothing has prevented it but our waiting from month to month expecting something would be done, particularly with respect to compensation for old officers; they are all looking to it; perhaps they may never get any thing; but as long as they have any hope they are desirous not to be paid off; and some of their cases have been long before Government.

Those persons have no legal claim?—No; those persons if they had legal claims would urge them; but their remaining in the office so long may raise a legal claim.

Then there is an accruing charge to the public arising out of that very continuance of absence?—Certainly; I think that it should be altered, and that those persons should be obliged to do their duty or to leave the office.

The Commissioners cannot understand why the postmasters-general, who appear to have the power, have not taken that into their consideration; has your lordship ever had a report

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made to you from the secretary upon that subject?—I have had a return of the persons who have been absent, and the length of time they have been absent, and it has been put off on that very ground that we do not know what to recommend; they are all looking for compensation, but there is not a very great number of them.

If there is an obvious remedy for abuse in the power of the postmasters-general, why should they feel it necessary to look for the report of this Board?—They are all looking for compensation, and would think that injustice was done to them.

Your lordship would not be deterred from doing that which was right by any matter of that sort?—No; I think it is a thing which ought to be done.

On the general question of allowing officers in the post-office to hold other situations, does your lordship think that the post-office is enabled to pay them sufficient salary to dispense with their employing themselves in any other department, public or private?—There are a great number of them very miserably paid, and those who are not employed except in the morning and evening require other means of employing their time; some of them are actually paying more to their deputies than they are receiving.

Is that with a view to eventual compensation?—No, it has not been with an idea of compensation; it is a fact, that some officers in the inland office are paying more for their deputies than they actually receive, even when they are sick.

Are they not receiving other salary from other departments in the same office?—Some of them are, and it is taken out of that other salary.

Do you suppose that they are acting under the impression that during this period their claim for compensation will increase?—They consider that that is to be regulated by the years they are in the office.

That the length of time is going on, and so their claim is enhanced?—So long as they are in the office their length of time is going on.

Is your lordship speaking now particularly of the probationary clerks?—Yes.

They have been in the office not a very long time?—Some of them; others of them have.

By whom are the probationary clerks appointed?—By the postmasters-general.

On whose representation of their being wanted?—The secretary; vacancies are stated, or clerks being wanted.

Does he report the necessity of such a probationary clerk being appointed, or merely report the vacancy?—There is no specific number for the probationary clerks; they can be appointed as there is a necessity in the office, and when there is a necessity he sends to us to send in names.

Is he the sole judge of that necessity?—The sole judge.

Is the number of extra probationers increasing or diminishing?—I should not conceive there is much difference; we are frequently calling in letter-carriers to assist in sorting the letters; there are a good many sick; the regular establishment is limited, the extra is not.

With regard to those absences for which a small sum is paid, in comparison to the whole allowance of some of the clerks, is there any strict examination with regard to the real cause of absence?—They generally send a medical certificate, except those officers who have not been with us for some time; sometimes a letter; if there is any reason to suspect there is any impropriety going on, the surgeon of the establishment is ordered to inspect the report.

The surgeon of the establishment?—We have a surgeon who is always employed by us.

How is he paid?—By an annual salary; I think 100*l.* a year.

What services is he required to perform for that salary?—He takes care of the sick guards, and those who cannot afford to pay for medical advice.

Has the whole establishment a claim upon him for that salary?—The whole establishment may claim his attendance if they choose; it is generally confined to the lower parts of the establishment.

What is the name of the surgeon?—His name is Kerrin.

Your lordship may probably remember the circumstance of the suspension of the comptroller of the British-mail office, Mr. Homan?—I do, some time back.

That suspension ceased during the time the Parliamentary Commissioners were here?—Yes.

Has any thing occurred since to make your lordship dissatisfied or otherwise with the conduct of that officer?—I have heard very little about him lately.

With regard to the state of the post-office, is there any representation your lordship would make to the Commissioners to draw their attention to any particular point?—I am not aware of any thing.

Particularly with regard to the British-mail office?—The secretary had an idea at one time that the British-mail office could be done away with; but I considered it a very necessary part of the establishment, particularly since the second packet.

There was an idea that it might be combined with the inland office?—Yes, that was the idea.

That might have the effect of employing during the day many of those whom your lordship describes as individuals whom you can now employ only morning and evening; if the British-mail office were united to the inland office you might find them full employment?—Yes; but then they would require further salary; and I doubt whether any man's constitution could stand such severe duty for any length of time.

Some of them go to another office for employment?—Yes; the British-mail office is uncertain;

uncertain; they can never be out of the way, they must be always ready; I do not mean to say it is an impracticable thing.

If you could diminish the number, might you not afford to give them better salaries and employ them the whole day?—I dare say a great many of them would be very glad of it, if they have constitutions to stand it.

Have the late arrangements for bringing the British mail given more or less trouble in the British-mail office?—Considerably more trouble, so far as requiring more attendance; they are there at different hours, which they were not before.

Has it increased the expense?—I rather think they have been obliged to call in two more clerks, but the establishment is not permanently fixed; I rather think two extras have been called in in consequence.

Is it at all understood that this new arrangement is likely to be suspended?—I have not heard a word of that kind; Mr. George Freeling was here a few hours, but I was not in town.

Has it been under the consideration of the postmaster-general what alterations would be necessary or desirable in the inland communication, supposing the new arrangement for bringing the British mail to continue?—Sir Edward Lees has drawn out a scheme, but it is not determined on at present; if it is to last, I think very important changes may be made.

Nothing is matured at present?—No; the general opinion appears to be that it will not answer.

What is your own opinion?—That it will never do to have the Liverpool mail call at one o'clock in the morning at Holyhead during the winter.

What is your lordship's opinion as to a direct communication from Liverpool?—That is the only way of doing it, I think.

Does your lordship consider that practicable during the winter?—I cannot see any objection; the regular traders go all the year.

What facilities would that give you at Holyhead?—No facility whatever; the regular mail would then come from Holyhead as it does now.

And arrive at what time?—If it is to leave Holyhead at one in the morning, there is no reason why it should not arrive here as soon as the Liverpool.

It might be enabled, perhaps, to leave Holyhead an hour or two sooner?—That depends upon the expedition of the mail on the other side of the water; but I think it can never answer to have a packet in the middle of winter, with such a tremendous tide as they have there, looking into Holyhead at one in the morning; it may do very well in fine weather; at present it is an extremely expensive arrangement. Captain Skinner came over the other day, and the other packet was after him the whole way, but he was ordered to start at three o'clock.

Your lordship mentioned that there were several points in the post-office now suspended, waiting for the report of the Parliamentary Commissioners; will your lordship have the goodness to state what they are?—Our general feeling is, that we should not go to any additional expense at present; there are several applications from post-towns to increase from three days to six days; these matters have lain over; I do not see any particular reason why they should lie over.

Is there any other head of delay?—I do not know of any thing else standing upon that ground except those officers before alluded to; certainly they should be obliged either to leave the establishment or to do their duty.

Your lordship being now upon the spot, should not you consider yourself competent to do that?—I see no objection; I have given my opinion repeatedly.

The Commissioners would wish to know whether they can expedite the doing that which is proper on the subject?—It is a very simple thing; but the answer has been, that it would be very unkind to them to do it.

Does your lordship correspond directly with Lord Rosse?—I have done so.

Has that been very frequently?—Not very frequently of late; it has occurred in case of any difficulty, that we have written direct, without writing through the secretary.

Have you come to any decision in consequence of that correspondence?—Always.

And reported your directions to the secretary?—Yes.

As being the united opinion of both the postmasters-general?—Yes, exactly so.

In writing?—If there has been any difficult point; there have not been any instances of it of late.

Has there been any correspondence respecting points on which you differed, since the business of the Cork mail?—The Cork mail was a considerable time back; if there has been any point on which we wished to obtain the opinion of the other, we have written the one to the other; it has not happened of late so frequently as formerly.

Are you in the habit of corresponding in regard to the general administration of the office, or the introduction of improvements which may suggest themselves to your lordships, as you have not been in the habit of meeting in the board-room?—Frequently that has happened on both sides; but I have not known many instances of it lately; it has been generally the secretary has written.

Would it not effect a present saving as well as operate to prevent the increase of claims for compensation, if something were decided in respect of those officers who your lordship thinks ought not to remain in their present situation?—Certainly, I think they ought not to remain.

There would be a saving of expense?—I do not know that; perhaps we might have to give compensation to those people.

## Examinations.

No. 173.

Earl O'Neill.

9th October 1826.

Would it be necessary to fill up all their situations?—Their situations are filled up at present by the persons doing their duty.

The substitutes are paid out of the stipends of the actual officers?—Yes; and the balance is given to those persons; there are not a great many of them.

Mr. Donlevy is returned one hundred and forty-one mornings and one hundred and forty-two evenings sick, in one half of the year?—Mr. Donlevy has been a very long time in the establishment; in fact he is completely worn out, and he is entitled to a very high compensation.

Is that increasing daily under this permitted absence?—No, I think he has completed his full time, and that if he was to stay he would not increase it.

Does he forfeit his whole salary for not coming?—I do not think he forfeits any thing as president; one of the vice-presidents always does the duty, and they have fixed salaries.

He is stated to forfeit 50*l.* a year; the surgeon has stated that no officer can absent himself without his certificate; does your lordship consider it usual to require the certificate of Mr. Kerrin?—I believe not always, but if there is any suspicion his certificate is required.

He states, that when they are well again it is his duty to report that fact?—None of his reports have come to me.

Mr. Donlevy, who is returned sick, is also accomptant-general of the Bank of Ireland?—He is.

Does he perform the duty of that office?—He can at present perform very little duty at all; he is in a very bad state of health now.

Has he been ill during the whole of his absence?—I think that he may be able to do duty in the Bank of Ireland that he cannot do for us; he may be there at twelve o'clock, though not with us by six.

Does not your lordship see, that by the fining officers so small a sum you afford a temptation to the officer to absent himself; for he gets a very good salary, deducting his fines, for doing nothing?—Yes; the object is his salary, I suppose; but the fact is, that the president of the inland office ought to have no other office.

Your lordship can require no report of any commissioners to enable you to decide that case?—No, we cannot; the secretary has brought that matter before us; the truth is, Mr. Donlevy is a very respectable man, and it would seem very hard to dismiss him at once; but he is entitled to a very high annuity, and I think he ought to be obliged to give up his office.

Why should he be permitted to prefer performing the duty of another office where his absence will not be permitted, rather than that of the post-office; is it not the consequence of the principle of the office, which takes a small fine for a daily absence, and the same fine for a highly-paid officer as that inflicted on a low-paid officer?—Certainly; the fine ought to be in proportion to the salary.

Did your lordship ever propose that principle to the other postmaster-general for adoption?—No, I do not think I ever did.

The case of Mr. Harrison appears to be the same; he is absent one hundred and sixty-five days in the half year, and is fined 32*l.*, receiving as the difference 92*l.* Mr. Cullen the same; he is an attorney; he is in the inland office?—He is one of the very persons I allude to.

He is absent one hundred and sixty-five days, is fined 32*l.*, and receives 78*l.* every half year; is not that a cause for excluding him at once from the office?—Certainly; decidedly so. Sir Edward Lees and I have talked the matter over; the answer was, it would be hard to remove these people till we saw what was to be done.

From whom did you get that answer?—Sir Edward Lees seemed to think that was the general feeling.

The Commissioners understood that your lordship and Sir Edward Lees were of opinion they ought to be dismissed?—Sir Edward Lees and myself have talked the matter over, and we think these people ought to be removed or do their duty; these people come and say to him, it is very cruel to remove us at this moment, for there may probably be very soon something recommended, which may be advantageous to us.

That cannot be an excuse for their not doing their duty?—Certainly not.

There is another instance, Mr. Wall, who has been absent one hundred and sixty-five mornings, and one hundred and sixty-five evenings, for which he is fined 32*l.* 6*s.* 2*d.*, and has received 57*l.* 12*s.* 10*d.*; he is a clerk in a private bank; you give him 115*l.* a year for doing nothing, and to enable him to do the business of a private employment?—The only thing is, that these persons think they have claims, and that that may come out on examination.

There can be nothing come out which could dispense with their performing their duty if they continue in the office?—That is my feeling; we should have done it, but expecting that a report will be made; if we dismiss those persons just now, I suppose they will get nothing, except such a man as Mr. Donlevy, who is entitled by law to it.

No legal or equitable claim could be prejudiced by putting it to those people, "Come and do your duty, or quit the office;" does not that appear to your lordship?—It does; if the Commissioners think it a proper thing to be done, I will do it immediately.

What authority has the secretary with regard to incurring incidental expenses, without reference to the postmasters-general, repairs, or any thing which may be merely a matter of course?—He has so far power that he orders those things, but they are liable to our scrutiny afterwards; whatever an officer wants he writes down, and if the secretary approves

of



of it he directs it to be done, unless it is any great thing; then it is referred to us at once.

Why should not it be referred to the postmasters-general at once?—Only that in small things there must be some person in whom confidence can be placed, and if he is not to be trusted in that, of course he ought not to be in the general duty of the post-office.

Would it not be better that the sanction of the postmaster-general should be seen before it is done?—Certainly, if it is of any moment; any thing where delay is not of consequence.

There is a habit in the post-office of corresponding between the secretary's office and the departments below, in writing; your lordship is aware of the book in which that kind of current correspondence is kept?—Yes.

Does your lordship consider that as beneficial, or does it tend to the secretary not making himself sufficiently master of the business, by going at once into the office and examining?—I cannot see any objection to the writing; it is more pleasant to the other officers, as he cannot be misunderstood. I do not see that that is to preclude his making inquiry; perhaps it is less liable to mistakes than personal communication.

Is it not likely to lead to a committal of the individual, the secretary, who gives the order, or refuses the application; when it is once reduced to writing, he is more committed than if he had given a personal refusal, and on personal communication thought it better to revise that decision?—It should not be done in any case where there can be any doubt upon the subject; he ought duly to investigate the matters before he writes upon them.

Has your lordship had occasion to examine how it proceeds?—I have not; I never heard any objection stated to it before; in the case of ordering officers to particular duty I should think there can be no objection to the doing it in writing.

The practice of carrying on this correspondence in writing prevents explanations and inquiries; an order is likely to be given at the moment, upon one representation, without duly weighing the matter?—I see the way in which it is viewed; it does not occur to me to see an objection to it; I should think that a man would be less likely to do a hasty thing in writing than verbally; certainly it would be more difficult, in case of any thing wrong, to recal it; perhaps the practice may be bad.

Does your lordship conceive the practice has grown up for the benefit of the subordinate officers, or of the secretary?—I have often heard the officers say they would rather have their directions in writing.

Does your lordship conceive that may have arisen from the want of a cordial understanding between the officers in the under departments?—That is possible.

Has any alteration been made with respect to the privilege of franking by the officers of the department?—Some time ago the privilege was taken away from some particular officers; I think the accountant-general used to frank.

With regard to the clerks of the inland department?—No clerk of the inland department has the privilege of franking.

Does he receive his own letters free?—He has no privilege of doing so.

By the custom of the office?—I heard before that they had the privilege of receiving them; I think there was a regulation made when the Commissioners were last in Dublin.

The subject was brought under your lordship's consideration by the Commissioners at that time?—I recollect it was.

The power of forwarding periodical publications free of postage; has any regulation been made with respect to that?—There was at that time; the fact is, that the Commissioners were a good deal misled by the Almanack, for the Almanack put in a parcel of things that were never authorized by us.

Probably the whole number were not practically forwarded?—No; there were a parcel of magazines which I understand were not forwarded.

Does your lordship consider that they have a right to forward, free of postage, any one of those?—I fancy nothing but newspapers and certain charitable papers; at that time it was not the practice, I believe, to send the things which were put into the Almanack; I recollect they put Ladies Magazines and things of that kind.

With respect to any one periodical publication, what is the practice now; is there any power in the clerks of roads to forward, free of postage, any periodical publication?—Nothing but the papers particularly stated by the original Government orders; there is a distinct order what they can send and what they cannot send.

Does that order emanate from the Government or the postmasters-general?—Certainly not from the postmasters-general, but from the Government; I presume on the original establishment of the office.

Does your lordship understand that the clerks of the roads have no power of forwarding any periodical publication of their own free will?—I conceive so, with the above exceptions.

And that that is the practice?—I have heard no complaint upon the subject; I recollect the question being asked by the Commissioners when they were last here.

Did the questions of the Commissioners induce your lordship to make inquiries into the subject?—It was inquired into at the time, but I cannot recollect the precise orders which were given upon the subject; I have no reason to think there is now any abuse going on upon that subject.

Your lordship conceives none of the clerks of the roads derive any emolument from forwarding any periodical publications?—None but what they are permitted by the regulations of the office to do; but I cannot recollect precisely the distinction which is laid down in those regulations.

Examinations.

No. 173.

Earl O'Neill.

9th October 1826.

Does the appointment of the clerks of the roads take place by seniority?—Generally so, but not at all as a matter of course.

How is it regulated?—By the postmasters-general, I conceive; they have the power to appoint whom they please as clerks of the roads.

Is it limited to any term of service; do you consider yourselves entitled to appoint a young man who has just entered the office?—The custom has always been to appoint an old officer; I conceive we might appoint whom we please; but it has generally been considered as a reward for services.

How many are there?—Four.

Of whom the chief clerk in the secretary's office is one?—He is.

Do those appointments, with others in the post-office, take place by the nomination of the postmasters-general alternately?—Yes, that is the regulation.

Throughout the whole office?—Yes; except the country postmasters; we have made arrangements for our own convenience with respect to the country.

Is the alternation equal among the clerks and messengers and letter-carriers, or is there a roster for each description?—A roster for each.

Does your lordship understand what becomes of the balance of what is called the Suspension Fund, at the end of the year; does that go on from year to year, or is that given to any one person in the office?—Whether it is left in the Bank, or not, I cannot tell.

Is it lodged in a bank?—Yes, I think it is; I cannot state that positively.

The fines are sometimes directed, and afterwards remitted; by whose authority can fines be so remitted?—I conceive that fines cannot be imposed except by the postmasters-general, and of course cannot be remitted but by them; they are recommended by the secretary.

Are not fines imposed sometimes by the secretary?—They are suggested by the secretary, and put into our minutes, but sanctioned by us.

Does your lordship understand that the stoppage of the money never takes place until they are sanctioned?—Certainly, I conceive so.

A fine on a deputy postmaster, for instance, in case of the delay or non-arrival of the bag from a particular post-town; can the secretary fine a deputy postmaster for such a cause?—I am not very sure whether the fines of the deputy postmasters come before us, but I know the fines of the officers in the department come before us.

You do not mean to include the daily absences as coming before you?—Yes; every officer of the department, when fined, it is entered in the minute; it is not sent by the secretary at the moment; he is fined, but it comes before us afterwards.

Can it be remitted only by an order of the postmasters-general?—Certainly, I conceive so.

Is that signed by both the postmasters-general?—It is so, in fact; but I conceive the signature of one would be sufficient.

There is a per-centage allowed on fines to a clerk called the minute clerk, for keeping the account, is there not?—I am not competent to speak to that.

Does it frequently happen that fines are remitted?—Fines on mail-coach contractors for delays are frequently remitted.

Are they remitted on examination?—On memorials, and the reports of our surveyors, if any particular reason can be stated, a bad road in any particular spot, for instance.

Is your lordship aware that that per-centage is, even in case of a remission, still received by the minute clerk?—I am not aware of the regulation with respect to that per-centage, but I should think it could not be received if the money is not paid.

That was stated to the Commissioners on a former occasion?—Then that is a subject worth inquiring into, certainly.

With respect to the fines on mail-coach contractors, how are they fixed?—The regulation is by the time they are absent, so much by the minute, or the five minutes, or the ten minutes.

Is that fixed by the contract?—I do not think that is in the body of the contract.

Is there any power of enforcing them?—I should suppose there is, certainly; if it is in the contract it can be enforced; if it is not in the contract, it is, I suppose, like many clauses in leases, very hard to enforce.

Your lordship stated that you were not aware of the present regulations respecting clerks receiving their letters free?—I know of no privilege they can have to receive them free.

Either the common clerks or the clerks of the roads?—I am not aware of any privilege they can have.

Your lordship is not aware that they are allowed by the office for the amount of the bills to be reduced by so much as the postage of the clerks of roads has come to?—I never heard of the practice.

Is your lordship aware whether any regulation has been introduced since the period of the last inquiry with respect to the privilege assumed by those persons, the clerks of roads

roads or express clerks, or others?—I think there was a regulation immediately after the Commissioners were here with respect to the things they had the privilege of sending; I think it turned out that they had not gone to the extent the Commissioners had heard they had. As to the franking privilege, I know that was taken away from two or three officers, but that was not done by us, I think, but by an Act of Parliament; as to their franking, it is impossible they can frank, for the inspector of franks must see them.

The question refers to their power of franking through the secretary, or in any other way?—The secretary may do what he pleases, of course, as to franking.

Would he feel justified in franking as a matter of course any thing sent up by a subordinate officer?—Indeed I should think not; I hear he is very particular as to franking.

Is the secretary in the habit of sending to your lordship reports of any information received with respect to the illicit conveyance of letters?—That has frequently come before us at different times.

In case of information to that effect, is the secretary bound to pursue that information, or should he report it to the postmasters-general?—He should pursue it as much as possible himself, and report it to us.

Ought the district surveyor, to whom the information may have been given on the spot, to apply for instructions from the post-office, or would he carry on the information himself?—If he hears any thing on the subject, it is his duty to investigate it and to report it.

With respect to tolls, what is the state of the post-office; you are subject to tolls?—Yes.

Are you competent to make contracts for those tolls with a view to procuring a diminution of their amount, or do you pay the same as other carriages?—They make us pay exactly the same as all other carriages; of course, if we can get them to take less we are authorized to do so.

Have you made any arrangement of that kind?—We have made the best bargain we can in all cases; but it is very hard to make them take off any thing, when they know we must go the road; the tolls amount to nearly 7,000*l.* a year, I believe.

Do you conceive that the mail-coaches do not in some cases pay more than some of the private coaches?—I should think not.

Does your lordship think that the private coaches in any instances pay a composition when the mails do not?—It may be so, but I never heard of its being done.

Has any suggestion been made to your lordship respecting the facilities which might be afforded to the Irish post-office by taxing all the letters for Ireland in London?—No.

Have you any notion upon the subject how far it might reduce the expenditure of the Irish post-office?—It is a thing that would require consideration; it would, no doubt, in some measure reduce expense here, but it would require some consideration how far it would answer in other respects.

That would enable you to get the British mail out of the office sooner than you do at present?—It certainly would.

Would it not in the course of the year enable you to send the British mail with the inland mail a greater number of times, by giving you half an hour?—If this Liverpool packet goes on, we shall be able to do that as it is; if the mail is to leave Holyhead at one o'clock, we ought to be able to have the English letters with the Irish in the morning; of course, that taxing in London would relieve us to a certain degree, but I cannot say how far it would be desirable upon the whole.

Do you think it could be practicable to effect a sorting of the letters before their arrival in Dublin; on board the packet, for example?—Then there must be an officer of our own on board the packet: there are such improvements going on, it is hard to say what may be done; but I never heard of that idea before; I recollect there being a suggestion of the letters being sorted at Holyhead during the time they were waiting for the Chester mail, but I never heard before any idea of their being sorted on board the ship, nor do I think it would answer.

Is it not the case that the letters make a very circuitous route in their way to different places?—Yes, it is, in many cases.

Would it not be possible to effect a more direct conveyance?—Not without considerable expense.

Letters going from Belfast to Galway, for instance, by what road do they go?—There is no regular mail but through Dublin; they would go through Dublin as the quickest route; we have long wished to establish a mail from Belfast to Sligo, but the terms were so very high we never could attempt to submit it to the Government; the contractors were afraid to speculate, not knowing whether it would pay, and asking us to pay much more than it was worth.

Do you not conceive it would be highly advantageous to the country if it were done?—I think it would.

Would it not be supported by the gentry of the country?—I am sorry to say there is not a great degree of public spirit there.

Examinations.

No. 173.

Earl O'Neill.

9th October 1826.

What would be the difference in point of time in a letter going from Belfast to Galway in that line?—It would be impossible to state that without making a regular calculation; but many hours could be saved.

Are there any other lines of communication which your lordship considers desirable?—The Government have approved of one from Londonderry to Sligo, through a very wild part of the country; it will be attended with a considerable expense, and so would that of the line I have just stated from Belfast to Sligo direct.

Has there been any estimate of the expense of that?—Yes, we had a regular proposal.

Including the probable produce of the postage?—Yes, and deducting all the cross lines which are riding posts now. We know what it would cost pretty nearly; it came to such a sum we were afraid to submit it officially to Government; we have privately submitted it to Government. I have no doubt that in the end it would pay; but it would be a considerable time first. The innkeepers are not in a situation to do as they do in England; they could not keep horses for it unless we paid them as much as we should pay for posting.

Supposing the line of communication from Derry to Sligo to be established, would not that be a nearer road from Belfast to Galway than through Dublin?—I should think not; we have a mail-coach from Belfast to Derry now.

What is the line of communication from Sligo to Cork?—There are plenty of mails from Limerick to Cork, but there is no direct communication from Sligo to Limerick by mail. A letter would go to Limerick by some of the cross posts, and then by the mail to Cork. I think there is little doubt that that line will be completed as soon as the line from Londonderry to Sligo is effected.

Does your lordship think that the roads generally are in such a state as to admit of improved communication?—There is great variety; there are a great many good roads which would bear mail-coaches at present; and we find where a mail-coach is put on, that the gentlemen of the country are anxious to keep it up; and it has this effect, that the expense of the road falls upon the county at large after that, instead of falling on the baronies.

The postmasters-general do not consider it any part of their duty to originate plans for new lines of communication?—There is no necessity for that, for we have applications innumerable, which we cannot attend to merely from the expense.

Have any steps been taken of late to survey the existing post-towns with a view to considering whether it is worth while to continue them all as post-towns; are there not some places called post-towns which not only do not pay, but are single houses?—I believe there are not many instances of that kind; but there are many instances of post-towns which do not pay; there have been instances of post-offices being knocked off in particular places.

Have there been any lately?—I do not recollect immediately; it is a very difficult thing to do after a post-office has been established.

In some places there have been post-offices established by considerable exertion of private interest?—Formerly that was done, but I think not of late.

Have any steps been taken to be relieved of them on finding they did not pay?—That has been done; but there are still some which do not pay.

Has that been done in any cases within the last ten years?—Yes; we do not establish any new post-offices unless we think they will pay, and generally find they do pay; it originates correspondence, and we find the issue in general more favourable than had been at first supposed.

Is not the present line between Derry and Dublin a circuitous one?—I should rather think not.

It has been represented that there is a shorter line of road by seven or eight miles, by Slane?—I should think it possible; the object of the line was to take in as many towns as possible.

Is there reason to suppose there is much evasion of the rates of postage by the conveyance of parcels and letters by steam vessels, or ships trading from the ports of Ireland?—I do not think there is much reason to suspect that those things are done to any great extent.

Have any particular instructions been issued to the postmasters to be on the look out?—They have very particular instructions as far as possible; but it is very difficult for a postmaster to prevent it, unless he has a suspicion.

The establishment of steam vessels has made that mode of sending letters much less difficult than it was?—Yes; it is impossible to prevent it entirely.

What check do the postmasters-general exercise on the payment into the Treasury by the receiver-general?—We issue our warrants occasionally for the payment of money into the Treasury.

For a transfer at the Bank to the account of the Exchequer?—Yes.

With respect to the amount of the balances so transferred, how are they ascertained?—By the weekly checks of the accountant-general.

Will your lordship have the goodness to state the mode?—The usual mode is for the secretary to ascertain the amount which can be paid in, and send the warrant down to the postmasters-general to sign.

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Examinations.

No. 173.  
Earl O'Neill.

9th October 1826.

The only knowledge of the postmasters-general is by the warrant directing a certain sum to be transferred?—Yes; the secretary directs the amount of the payment.

Is that done periodically?—Not at stated times.

On whose discretion does it rest when it is to be done?—The secretary's.

Do the postmasters-general exercise no control with respect to lodgments in the Bank?—No control, except through the secretary.

Does the accountant-general of the post-office lay any account before your lordships?—Yes, he lays his accounts regularly before us.

What do you consider regularly?—At the stated periods at which they are ordered to be made up; quarterly and annually.

Are those accounts generally accounts of the whole receipt and expenditure?—Yes, a detailed statement.

Does that occur quarterly or annually?—Quarterly and annually.

Do you go into any examination of the accounts so submitted to the postmasters-general?—They are examined as far as possible.

Would the postmaster-general be able to state, of his own knowledge, at any time, whether the full amount of receipts at any one period had been transferred to the Treasury?—They are transferred to the Treasury in round sums; he could not state the exact balance without having the accounts before him.

Does it appear that the postmaster-general is able to state at any time that the account is closed for a particular time?—Certainly, if he is in the way of having the accounts before him; in Dublin, for instance, or when the accounts are sent to him in the country.

Could your lordship say, for example, up to what quarter or year the balance has been transferred to the Treasury?—Not here; not without having documents.

What documents would your lordship require in order to be enabled to do so?—I should require the account of the accountant-general.

Are no steps taken by the postmasters-general to ascertain, at fixed periods or occasionally, that the precise balance of such accounts has been paid into the Treasury?—We know that by the account, and the orders we give for the sums paid into the Treasury; and there are checks in the secretary's office, but they are not immediately put to the postmasters-general.

Is it ascertained, for instance, that the balance of the account up to the 5th of January 1825, or any other period, has been settled and paid to the Treasury?—Yes, I conceive so.

Are the postmasters-general at all parties to the account submitted for audit to the Auditors of Imprest Accounts?—Yes, so far as signing them; and they examine them of course before they sign them.

It is the practice to examine them?—Certainly.

To what extent are they examined by the postmasters-general?—So far as seeing that all those sums are right, like the examination of any other account.

Are they vouched to the postmasters-general?—Certainly.

What is the nature of the voucher?—Just like any other account; there are vouchers for every thing which is paid.

With respect to the receipts?—There is a regular system of vouchers.

That probably will be taken from the receiver-general's accounts?—Our late accountant-general was a very clear man; he put it on a very good system, which is still followed up.

Did your lordship ever hear of any pecuniary consideration passing for any appointment in the post-office?—I am not aware of any one at present.

It has been represented to the board that there was a pecuniary consideration given by one of the officers who now fills a very responsible situation there?—I never heard of it, or I should have taken notice of it, certainly.

It may be nothing more than rumour?—I never heard the rumour at least; I have no recollection of it.

Your lordship mentioned some time ago, that you sometimes addressed Lord Rosse upon subjects where there was a difference of opinion between the postmasters-general?—I stated that merely on recollection; I do not recollect any particular case at this moment; if there is any difference of opinion between the postmasters-general, it is the habit to write.

Is it your lordship's habit to enter into the details of the minute sent by the secretary, and to offer your opinion to the other postmaster-general upon it?—It is more usual to make it to the secretary, unless it is any thing of a confidential nature.

Do you make it to the secretary in writing?—Yes.

Is the secretary to send that objection of your lordship to the other postmaster-general?—I conceive, if the opinions cannot be reconciled, he must appeal to Government.

Though they may not be reconciled on one day, they may be on another?—Yes, and that is generally the case; a person may alter his opinion on explanation; that is the usual course it takes.

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Has it been the custom with your lordship, in case of a collision of opinion, to give in to Lord Rosse's opinion?—I have done so.

Habitually?—Not as a matter of course; but it has happened; and it has happened that he has given in to mine occasionally.

Do you consider that you are practically in that respect on equal terms?—Indeed I should think so; I have no reason to think otherwise; there may be some points that people entertain opinions, on which they are not easily shaken in.

The difficulty arises from there being two postmasters-general not in the habit of meeting and consulting together on the merits of each case of any consequence?—Yes, that is a thing which may happen; it is a thing which does not very often happen.

There is a case respecting the fining of an officer of the name of H. Leahy, 129 days absent, without any cause assigned; is your lordship aware of having entered on any examination of that case?—No, not at all; he is one of those officers who is very often absent, I observe.

That is, without any cause assigned, according to the return handed to the Commissioners?—I conceive it is the business of the secretary to inquire the reason; I was not aware he had been so frequently absent, but I have seen his name frequently in the list.

Is it the custom of your lordship to inquire of the secretary the cause of such absence?—Frequently.

Here is a very striking instance of an individual absent nearly half a year without cause?—I should think the cause must have been known in the office; I should think it impossible he could have been that length of time absent without cause.

There are various others absent without cause, but none for such a length of time; is it likely that absence was occasioned by his being an attorney, as well as a clerk in the inland office?—I cannot tell as to the man, for I do not know him; I have seen his name very often in the list.

The Board have been given to understand that it is not your lordship's habit to enter into details which are submitted, or to offer any remark upon them, but to sign them without comment; how far is that consistent with your lordship's impression upon the subject?—That must refer to some particular matter I should think, or it must have been misunderstood; I never signed any thing in my life that I did not understand.

The question is, "Lord O'Neill has never been in the habit of taking a part in the detail of the duties?" The answer is, "Never; I have never known him make any remark upon them; he has signed them?"—That is not my statement; I wish distinctly to state, that every matter of business which comes before me I investigate as closely as I can before I sign it, and make every observation which does occur to me.

O'NEILL.

Sir,

Dover Street, Piccadilly, 12th Nov. 1826.

HAVING been on the move for some time, your letter of 29th ultimo, with its inclosure, did not reach me in regular course, and it was out of my power to return it to you until now; I trust, however, the delay will not be the cause of any inconvenience to the Commissioners or you.

I now return the evidence corrected and signed; and with reference to that part of it which relates to the privileges of the clerks of roads in forwarding periodical publications free of postage, I wish to observe, that it appears on inquiry that the clerks do conceive that they have the privileges referred to, though they are seldom exercised, in consequence of those publications not being much in demand in the country parts of Ireland, and it had therefore not been brought under my notice.

In the event of its being intended to print this evidence, I should like to have an opportunity of correcting so much of it as relates to this point in pages 772 and 773.

In p. 772 I beg to add, that I have since inquired, and find that no per-centage is charged by the minute clerk on fines which are remitted.

In p. 772 I wish also to add, that I find the postage of letters to the clerks of roads is returned to them after it has been charged; this I was not aware of at the time of my examination.

Requesting that you will do me the favour to place this letter before the Commissioners, I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

O'NEILL.

T. C. Harrison, Esq.

## Appendix, No. 174.

Tuesday, 10th October 1826.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Rosse examined.

THE Parliamentary Commissioners having heard your lordship was in Dublin, have taken the liberty of requesting your attendance, in consequence of their not having been yet able to make a report upon the subject of the post-office, which has been expected for some time. As the Commissioners were in Dublin, they wished to take advantage of the opportunity of seeing your lordship and the other members of the post-office department, to inquire whether any alterations have been made in the establishment since the year 1823, when they were here last, on which occasion they obtained a good deal of information upon the subject. They would now wish to be put into the possession of any alterations which have taken place since that period?—I do not recollect any alteration having been made, for we abstained from making any alteration pending the time of the report being made.

Are there any particular points to which your lordship and the other postmaster-general have directed your attention in the establishment of the post-office, for which you are specially waiting the appearance of the report?—With respect to the salaries of the officers, there are alterations which we would propose to Government; we think some of them are under paid, and from some of them the increase of salary has been stopped, an increase to which they were entitled under the previous Act of Parliament, and under the regulations of the office.

On what occasion has that stoppage taken place?—There was an order from the Treasury, about three or four years ago, desiring us not to make any increase of salary on account of the standing of the officers. When Lord Clancarty was appointed postmaster-general, the office underwent a complete revision; a statement was at that time laid before the Government by Lord O'Neill and Lord Clancarty, and by that statement there was to be a certain gradation of salary in proportion to the standing of the officers, and those who remained, whose conduct had been such as to justify the continuance of it, were to receive an increase; and that increase has been stopped.

Since what time?—I believe three or four years ago.

By the order of the Government in Dublin?—No; the Treasury in England.

Was any reason given for that order?—I believe not.

Has the result been, that from that period no increase has taken place in the salaries?—Yes; no increase beyond the proportion which the officers were entitled to at the date of the Treasury letter.

Was the regulation, to which your lordship alludes, confined to the post-office department?—No; I believe it was a general letter to all persons concerned in the collection of the Revenue, subject to like regulations from length of service. The letter can be laid before this Board for greater accuracy. There has been a further application from the Treasury to us, to know whether we could make any further reduction; that we have not yet answered; it came only the other day, and it appears rather an extraordinary time, before the Report of the Commissioners.

Is there any other subject of regulation which has been delayed in consequence of the delay of the Report?—I am not aware of any other.

The progressive increase of the salaries has been suspended; and your lordships have delayed to make any communication in reply to the notice from the Treasury for the reduction of the establishment?—Yes.

In looking over the statement of the establishment of the post-office there appear to be several clerks who have been very irregular in their attendance, some of whom have not attended, perhaps, for a whole year, but whose salaries have been still continued to them?—There are instances of that kind; I conceive it has been principally caused by our still awaiting the decision of the Treasury and of this Board.

Upon what subject?—With respect to their salaries; we could not well settle them; there is certainly something due to them.

But if they do not attend at all?—It is only on certificates of ill-health that they are absent; we employ a surgeon, who is paid by the year by the post-office; he examines and reports upon them, and when it is declared that their state of health is such that they are not able to attend, we cannot well force them, but we make them pay for the attendance of others in their place; we have upon our list a certain number of extra officers, that are only employed in consequence of the absence of the officers on the regular establishment; for, otherwise, if we had not those extra officers, if an officer was prevented attending by illness, the business must be delayed: besides, there is an advantage in having those extra officers; they are gradually, as they are employed, taught their duty; they are brought in when they are very young, and it requires almost a sleight of hand to perform the duty of the inland office.

Does not it appear that you are paying very dear for that experience; you are paying the large salaries, in some instances, of six or seven officers for that experience; has your lordship

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lordship ever taken any measure to examine those officers who absent themselves either on account of ill-health (pretended ill-health) or without assigning any cause?—Yes; for instance, in April I had them before me, and had the surgeon of the establishment before me, and we inquired into all their cases, and made such decision then as we thought was reasonable towards them.

Did you secure any more regular attendance?—Some of them attended more regularly in consequence.

There is a case of Mr. Donlevy at the head of the inland office?—Mr. Donlevy has been very nearly fifty years (if not quite fifty years) in the office; he has been the most regular and diligent attendant upon the office that we have had; he was there early and late, though an old man; he still continued until his last illness; he was one of the best officers we had, and he had the control of the entire inland office; he is a most respectable man. The officers of the inland office are employed only early in the morning and late in the evening. Mr. Donlevy attended regularly; and besides that he was accountant-general to the Bank of Ireland, where he was employed in the middle of the day; and he was in the Bank of Ireland esteemed one of the best officers that they had. He became ill, and latterly (but it was only for some months past) he has been unable to attend; and in the hope that he would recover again, and in consequence of his very long and very diligent services, I thought it would be a very hard thing to dismiss him before the fifty years was to a certainty expired, that he might be entitled to that retiring salary if he was not able to resume his duties; but he has written to me repeatedly that he did expect to be able to resume his duty.

Does he perform any duty as accountant-general of the Bank of Ireland?—He does occasionally, I believe, in the day-time; but it did not agree with his health to be out so early as six in the morning and so late as eight at night; he may do something in the bank, but I believe not much.

Do you think it still necessary to keep him in his office until he shall have completed the fifty years, for the mere purpose of rewarding him with a higher retiring provision?—No; but he expects himself, as he has stated in his letter, to be able very soon to resume his business; and I think after so long a service as that, it would be cruel to discharge him; one would not do it with a servant of one's own.

Would not your lordship think it wrong to admit as an excuse for the neglect of one duty that which does not prevent the performance of another?—It depends upon the time of the day; one might be able to go out for an hour or two in the day to the bank; I am not sure that he does that; and yet not be able to go out early in the morning or late in the evening. I am not sure that Mr. Donlevy does go to the bank every day.

In such an office as the post-office it is proper and necessary that every officer should be efficient?—Yes, it is so; but we cannot prevent these diseases.

For how long do you think Mr. Donlevy has been incapable of performing his duties as an efficient servant of the post-office?—I believe it was about March last; I am not exactly certain.

He has not been present in the office since the 5th of January?—I am not certain as to the time; I know it was the beginning of the year; but close attention to the post-office and at the bank, preparatory to the assimilation of the currency, caused, as I have been told, an attack of the gout.

There is a case of Mr. Harrison, who has been absent in the half year 165 days, and has been fined 32*l.*; is your lordship acquainted with the particulars of that case?—Mr. Harrison is, I believe, also an officer in the secretary's office.

He is in the inland office, and remittance clerk in the secretary's office?—He is a very good officer in the secretary's office; but he has been subject to some illness, I think it is something of a falling sickness, something of epilepsy.

For any length of time?—I think it has been; but it has not prevented his acting in the secretary's office; he is a very good officer there.

Is he also a claimant for compensation by length of service?—I conceive he is.

Do you conceive Mr. Harrison attends regularly in the secretary's office?—I conceive he has; I have never missed him when I have sent for him.

He continues to be in the receipt of his salary as an inland officer, but without attendance?—Yes; but he receives only a part of his salary.

The fine is very small in comparison, when it is considered that there is no attendance at all?—It is; but the fact is, we have suspended these kind of things until we knew on what system the officers would be put in consequence of the Report of this Board. The Irish Government ordered us by letter not to make any permanent appointments, as there was to be a revision of the office.

Is it a fact that Mr. Harrison is acting in one office as a principal, and in the other by a deputy?—The duty in the secretary's office is in the middle of the day, it is from ten till four, and that does not interfere at all with his attending in the inland office, which is from six to eight in the morning, and from five to eight in the evening.

Was not it to be understood from that which your lordship stated, that Mr. Harrison acted by himself in the secretary's office, and by a substitute in the inland office?—Yes; he has not had health to attend to both; the early duty becomes severe in cases of illness.

There is a case of Mr. Cullen who has also been absent 165 days in the half year, and fined 32*l.*?—Yes; Mr. Cullen ought to have been dismissed too, but there has been



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that kind of suspension, not knowing what compensation would be made for retiring, we have been expecting every session the Report of this Board.

What other situation has Mr. Cullen?—He has no other situation in the office.

Is your lordship aware what employment he has out of the office; is he an attorney?—I believe there is one who is an attorney.

Has your lordship ever ascertained whether he was an attorney?—Yes, I recollect I have been told he was an attorney, and this was one of the cases we considered last April, and the reason I did not take any decisive step respecting him was still expecting this Report, and that where men have been a long time in the office, I did not wish to do them an injury when we could not settle what retiring salary they were to have.

Would it not be considered a matter of course, that in any other office a man being an attorney and not attending any one day in a half year or perhaps longer, would have been instantly dismissed without any further inquiry?—Yes, if there were not peculiar circumstances in the case; we did not know what his retiring salary was to be.

Why should he have any retiring salary if he did not choose to attend?—Because he had attended a great while, and is in a bad state of health.

Is that considered a sufficient reason when a man ceases to attend, and has another profession to attend to?—I think a man ought to be rewarded when he has attended a public office for a considerable time.

Has your lordship applied to the Government to know what retiring salary they would give to such an officer being an attorney?—I never heard that his being an attorney was a reason for not giving him a compensation.

If he has chosen to attend to another profession instead of the office, is that a reason for continuing him?—I think not; but I think that if he has attended for a considerable time, and is in a bad state of health, he has a claim.

Is your lordship aware that the secretary of the post-office was instructed three years ago, that he was not to wait a single day in the introduction of any improvements, or in the common progress of the office, in doing that which was considered necessary, in consequence of the inquiries this Board had instituted?—We really did not know what salaries they were entitled to; we did not get answers from the Treasury; we have applied again and again to the Treasury upon the subject.

When your lordship speaks of salaries, do you mean retiring salaries?—Yes, compensation.

There would be no prejudice to the claims of individuals in requiring their attendance?—No; but in the office there were young men training up who were doing the duty for them.

Does not your lordship conceive it a great abuse to permit persons to continue chargeable upon the public who were rendering no service?—They had rendered considerable service, and it was pending that difference of opinion what they were entitled to after those services ceased.

Your lordship must be aware that no Report of this Board could affect the claims of those persons as to legal claim for compensation?—No; but we could not arrange it with the Treasury what retiring compensation they should receive; nor was the public at any loss, but the contrary; for we should have to pay the retiring compensation to those who were removed, and also to pay the salaries which they now have, to those who succeeded them.

Is not the certificate of the head of the department necessary for each person before he can receive a compensation?—There is a recommendation.

Would your lordship feel no difficulty in granting such a certificate in those cases?—If it arose from the causes I have mentioned. If he has been a very useful officer who has served for a great length of time, such as Mr. Donlevy, and is taken ill just before his time for retiring, and expects to recover.

But in the case of a person who is not ill, but is an attorney?—Mr. Cullen's case I do not recollect so perfectly; I am not acquainted with Mr. Cullen, but I understand he is a sickly man.

There is a Mr. H. Leahy?—He has been dismissed: he went to England on business, and was dismissed for not returning in time.

There is also a Mr. William Leahy?—He had a fever in the post-office where he slept, and was obliged to leave it lest the contagion should spread.

He was suspended for 100 days?—It was an informal way of expressing it; for if a man is ill he ought not to be suspended for that; it was a mere informality in the expression.

Was he fined for that absence?—He was; those that are sick are all fined for their absence; their salaries were somewhat increased when Lord Clancarty was postmaster-general; and for fear of their staying away on pretence of illness, it was then ordered that they should pay a certain proportion of salary even during their illness.

Is not your lordship aware that that very regulation is the cause of that absence?—Not in Mr. William Leahy's case.

That the circumstance of a regular fine for absence may be the real cause of the absence?—In some cases it may have contributed to it; but Mr. William Leahy was really ill; at least it was represented to me that he was in such a fever that he was removed from sleeping in the post-office.

The effect of this regulation may be that an officer may enjoy a sinecure in the post-office?—It was only for a season.

Here are certain officers absenting themselves, and there is a deduction of only part of their salary, and that goes on for the half year?—It is in consequence of representations to us

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us that their health will not permit them to attend. Besides, in Mr. William Leahy's case, and the other junior officers, the stoppage amounts to the whole salary.

Is it the rule of the office that Mr. Kerrin's certificate is exacted in every case where there is absence from ill-health?—I have always ordered it, and have myself inquired into it from Mr. Kerrin himself.

Has your lordship ever called Mr. Cullen before you?—I ordered all those officers that were fined last April to be brought before me; whether he was there or not I cannot recollect at this moment. I am not acquainted with him.

Since April has there been no inquiry into the state of health of those absentees?—No, unless Sir Edward Lees made it; it was his duty, as secretary, to make it more expressly. There was a general order, that when any one was ill a surgeon should be immediately sent for; and not only that, but that he should visit him occasionally, once a week, or at what times he thought most fit, to ascertain whether they were really ill or not.

Is he required to make a report at any particular time?—He is required to report their cases to Sir Edward Lees.

Is it a rule that he shall report from time to time the state of health of the persons under his care?—I do not know whether there is any particular time; but once a week, I think, he is to visit them, and oftener if required.

Are those reports sent to the postmasters-general?—No, they are not.

Then your lordship is not put into possession of the circumstances of the attendance or nonattendance of the officers of the department?—I have a return every day of the attendance, morning and evening, of every officer in the inland office.

That can be of very little use, unless your lordship is informed of the cause of their absence?—The cause is assigned; if a false report is made to me, the officer who made a false report ought to be dismissed immediately. No officer down to the extra probationers can be absent without his name being mentioned in that report, and we have a return of the attendance of all the other officers of the department, as to the very hour and minute they come, and the minute that they leave the office every day, and signed by the head of each department.

Do your lordships take any measures to ascertain what reduction you can make in the number of officers of the post-office, without interfering with the proper execution of the business?—I think about three or four years ago we reduced as much as we thought we could reduce them without delaying the business. I myself attended every night, and occasionally every morning, to see what number of hands were necessary, in order that the mails should be dispatched in proper time, and we reduced the number of officers very much then, and went as low as we thought we could without retarding the public business.

Do you conceive you are now at the lowest amount?—I should think we were, according to our present system.

Do you think that if those experienced officers who have lately absented themselves attended regularly, you could reduce the number of extra probationers?—We could; but still there would be the same number of hands employed, and the same expense; for the extra probationers get no salary; they are paid only for the morning and evening they actually attend.

They are paid out of the fines of the others who do not attend?—Yes.

Is not that the maintenance of an abuse?—It would if it was to be continued, I think, in some few cases.

Is it not in the progress of continuance; there appears no attempt to diminish it?—It was the intention to diminish it; but it would not diminish the expense to the public.

Is it not objectionable to increase the number of idle hands, and to pay men for work which they do not do?—Still I think it is an advantage to have some young men learning the business; they cannot learn it at once; if any one was to go and try to sort the letters, and to throw them off into the different pigeon-holes, he would find how slowly he could do it.

That applies, in one way or another, to all the departments; do you consider that the duties of the post-office department are more difficult to learn than any other?—I do; because it is so much so, that we are not allowed to bring any but young boys into the office; and if there were people brought in at thirty or forty years of age, as formerly, they would never be taught to do it accurately and expeditiously.

What does your lordship mean by not allowed?—We are prohibited by Government on that account. I could not be taught to be a juggler now, and play sleight of hand tricks. If the rapidity with which the letters are sorted now were observed, and how many mistakes an old person would make if he was set about it, it would show it is impracticable for such a person. I think it is desirable to have a few boys always in training.

How many probationers are there?—Four: the number of extra probationers depends on the representation of the president, who states to the postmasters-general when more are necessary for the business of the office.

What is the maximum of extra probationers?—I think fourteen is the fixed number; we are not limited as to extra probationers, but we never appoint them unless there is an occasion.

You continue the same number?—Unless they report from the inland office that more hands are wanted.

Is it necessary that those probationers should be supernumerary; must they be the substitutes

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stitutes of persons receiving higher salaries?—No; they would be required if all the senior officers were in attendance.

Might not they be taken in as an addition to the office to supply vacancies?—They are paid a fixed salary, and are considered the junior branch of the inland office. The extra probationers have no salaries, and are employed to supply accidental vacancies.

Would you not pay them as you do now, and would you not save the salaries of those officers who do nothing?—The young men put into the sorting office are almost all gentlemen's sons; we look to that as an advantage to get gentlemen of that description, brought up with good principles, or else the sons of merchants or persons of some consequence. This we consider as a great security for the fidelity of their conduct, and therefore ever since I came into the office I have refused appointing any person that was not of that description, either a merchant's son, or a gentleman's son, or a clergyman's son, some one who I thought was brought up in good principles; formerly they used to put in the sons of servants and inferior persons, and they had not character to support, and the office was very frequently plundered.

Your lordship's observations do not apply to the question whether you would not have the same business done by the same number of probationers and extra probationers paid as they are now, but by dismissing the officers who do nothing, whether that would not gain to the public the difference between the fines they pay and the salaries they receive?—We look upon it that the great inducement of the young men to go into the office, is the rising to those situations amounting ultimately to 200*l.* a year; but they rise exceedingly slowly in the office.

While those persons are merely representatives of other substantive officers, the hope of attendance is less than it would be on a different system?—Yes, certainly so.

Then would not that be a recommendation of the adoption of a different system?—Yes; but that I look upon only as a temporary measure.

If those persons whom they represent were removed by any accident, would there be any prejudice to the service?—No, there would not; but if the salaries were to be diminished in the manner just suggested, I think that really would, because I think, after all, the officers of the office have a very small remuneration.

Would it not be better economy to give those persons called probationers the full salaries, if they are not considered more than sufficient for the full discharge of the duties they execute?—If we had the power of doing it; I think there might be a better system adopted if the Government would sanction it.

What sanction can your lordship require for the removal of persons who are permanently absent?—I can only repeat to that, that it is but a temporary measure in our office in that respect.

What would be the limit of that indulgence?—The moment it was settled at the Treasury what our retiring allowances were to be; a person retires on a salary in proportion to the salary he loses when he is going: we cannot ascertain what is the salary he loses, because it has not been decided what should be his increase of salary.

Is it certain that he will have any increase?—He would, but for that order, four or five years ago.

Then the quantum of increase has probably been ascertained?—It has been ascertained, but it was stopped altogether from the date of the Treasury letter.

Then your lordship considers none of the data to be wanting which would establish that claim to compensation, if that person were dismissed to-morrow, therefore there can be no injustice to that person?—The Treasury would oblige us, in case we recommended his superannuation, to state what his salary and emoluments were; if we state what his salary is, we state it as much lower than that he is entitled to by the order of Government under which he entered the office.

The Government know what would have been the quantum of increase which under that arrangement the applicant would have been entitled to?—Yes, when we specify the amount.

Then if they choose to allow that standard, it is before them?—Yes; but we wish to state the sum which we think the party entitled to.

Then no further information is required?—It is exceedingly difficult often to get answers from the Treasury; if the thing was once settled, we could arrange the whole without any difficulty.

The Board do not understand what remains unsettled; those clerks have received certain salaries; it has been proposed they should have a gradual increase according to an ascertained scale?—It was decided by the Government that they should.

Then that being ascertained, what difficulty is there in stating that, when the services of that person are no longer required?—The Treasury would not agree to it; we must state to the Treasury such a man has received such a salary, and recommend him to be allowed to retire.

Is it not in your lordship's power to state to the Treasury, in respect of Mr. Donlevy for instance, or Mr. Harrison, that he has been so long in the office, that his salary is so much, and that you wish him to retire, and to ask the Treasury what they wish; or to state that his present salary is so much, and that if it had been increased according to the rule, it would have been so much more, and that their lordships may decide accordingly?—We may propose it in that way, but we have been putting it off from time to time, expecting the decision of this Board.

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There does not appear to remain any decision to be given; what remains to be decided but the claim which that individual would of course advance to the one or the other, if the individual is told, "Your services now cease; prefer your claim;" what remains for your lordship to do?—It might be done in that way; but still it would be deemed a hardship to the individual.

Does it occur to your lordship that that would be a hardship?—I think the Treasury would probably order him a remuneration only according to that he has received.

Is it not very probable that it will be recommended that those officers should not be considered in any remuneration that could be given to them as having served at all during the time of their prolonged absence, and that in all probability they have received their salary for doing nothing; is there any likelihood that the several years they have staid away will be taken into consideration?—I perfectly agree that those who have staid away for years will not be so remunerated; the only case of hardship I conceive is, such as that of Mr. Donlevy, after a great length of service in a very important situation; I think we should have some kindness. But whatever compensation he gets is of very little consequence to the public, though it may be a matter of feeling to himself, for after a man has served fifty years in an office he cannot be long a pensioner on the public; they may do a harsh thing towards such a man, but that I could not do with respect to a servant of my own.

Does not your lordship think that is wrong to enhance a claim for compensation by the period during which the individual is in fact doing no service?—Stating it generally, I should say so.

Does not your lordship think that is a fair statement of the situation of many of those persons?—It may be with respect to some of them, but I am not sure it is.

Then is it not necessary that, in respect to some of them, some step should be taken?—I think so, probably; and with respect to some of them, except Mr. Donlevy, I do not know them even by sight; and I have no particular partiality in any way for them; but it appeared to be the opinion in the office when we wished to proceed on any of those cases, that we should have an answer soon, and it has been postponed in that way; we may have been very wrong to postpone it, but the postponement has been prolonged unexpectedly from time to time, expecting that the Treasury would have decided, or that the Parliamentary Commissioners would have decided.

It could never be expected that this Board would lay down any rule for the compensation of those persons?—We expected a general arrangement would be proposed; so the Irish Government stated to us.

That could not affect the claims for compensation?—No, it could not, probably.

One of the subjects on which the Parliamentary Commissioners had the honour of conversing with your lordship some years ago was, the mode of communication between your lordship and the other postmaster-general; has there been any principle agreed upon since that period, with respect to such communication; is it understood that every report from the secretary must regularly be made to both postmasters-general?—Yes, it is.

Is it understood that it should be made to one in the first instance, and then to the other?—No; according as it is convenient; Lord O'Neill, for instance, might be in England, or if he was in town, it would be made first to him; that is left discretionary with the secretary; whatever he thinks best for the public business.

In case of a collision of opinion between your lordships, what is done?—There have been but very few instances of collision of opinion. I never knew, from the time I was appointed till just before the Commissioners came here, that Lord O'Neill differed in any point with myself; every suggestion I made for the improvement of the office he always agreed to. Just at the time the Commissioners came here a difference of opinion arose. I made an inquiry into the conduct of Mr. Homan, and though Mr. Homan might not have been quite justifiable in every thing he did, I did not think he had done any thing for which he should be dismissed; Lord O'Neill was in England at the time, and he came over, and upon written papers that were shown to him by Sir Edward Lees, he made a minute directly opposed to the decision I had made upon the spot: I certainly felt hurt at that; having made a *vivâ voce* examination of the different persons, I thought I was more competent to form a correct opinion than he was upon written documents. I believe he made the decision in Wales before he came over; I thought it incorrect that he should make a written minute in opposition to mine, without some previous communication with me; and that caused a certain degree of coolness; but it was the very first instance of it, and I have not found latterly any disposition of that kind; he is a very quiet, easy, good-natured gentleman.

In case of contracts for mail-coaches, have your lordships had occasion to make any such contracts of late, and has any such contract caused a difference of opinion?—Yes; the contracts for mail-coaches latterly were to be by written proposals, sealed, and to be opened in the presence of the postmasters-general, or such persons as we should appoint in case of absence; and there was one particularly, upon which certainly there was a difference of opinion, which was the Limerick mail-coach.

About what period was that?—I suppose it was three or four years ago. There were different sealed proposals made, and Lord O'Neill was at the time in England. I wrote to Sir Edward Lees to advertise for those proposals, and that whoever gave in the most advantageous proposal for the contract should get it; meaning, of course, with a person we thought competent to carry it into effect, that was included. I found it would be particularly inconvenient to me to have been present the day the proposals were to be opened; and I desired that Sir Edward Lees would get Mr. Crofton, the lawyer, employed by the post-office

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post-office to attend on the day, and to have all the parties present, that there might be no possible suspicion by any one that there was any thing unfair; and accordingly the proposals were opened, and Mr. Bourne's was the lowest, and Mr. Crofton was present, acting for me, a very respectable and honest man as can be, and Sir Edward Lees was present, and several others.

Was Lord O'Neill present?—Lord O'Neill was not in Ireland at the time.

Was his lordship aware of this?—It was advertised in the public papers; and I suppose it was communicated to him by Sir Edward Lees; it was his duty to do so; it was quite a public transaction. Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, now Lord Bloomfield, was one of those persons present; Mr. Bourne's proposal was considerably the lowest, and he was declared the contractor; and I made a report of it to Mr. Goulburn. I sent a copy of the communication from Sir Edward Lees to Mr. Goulburn, who approved of Mr. Bourne's proposal, though his approbation was not necessary; but it was he who first suggested the propriety of making that contract by sealed proposals: afterwards I made a rule that all the contracts should be in all cases by sealed proposals, which Mr. Goulburn also approved. Lord O'Neill objected to that contract; I think his objection was, that it was for four outside passengers, and he thought no mail-coach should carry more than three. I had observed coaches travelling with rapidity with a great number of outside passengers in England; and as we could get the contract on considerably better terms by allowing four, and as Mr. Goulburn had approved of the four outside passengers, I did not apprehend any difficulty about it: however, Lord O'Neill refused to sanction it, and there has been from that time no contract executed; and Mr. Bourne has continued carrying the mail without a contract.

How is he paid?—He is paid according to the terms upon which he carried it previous to sending in those proposals, as if it were a continuation of the old contract.

Were those better or worse terms?—They are more advantageous to Mr. Bourne; I represented it as strongly as I could to Mr. Goulburn, but I had no power.

The Limerick mail is now carried in the same way as it would have been under the former contract?—Yes; it has been carried so ever since, at the rate of the old contract.

Has your lordship had any communication with Lord O'Neill upon the subject?—I had at that time through Sir Edward Lees; it was just after the occurrence I have before mentioned, and therefore I did not write to him upon the subject.

Has your lordship been in personal communication with him upon the subject?—No; I have not seen Lord O'Neill since that time.

Are you in the habit of meeting Lord O'Neill occasionally on business?—I have not since that period; it has happened that we have not been in town at the same time since that time; I called upon him yesterday.

Is it for many years your lordship has not been in the habit of communication with Lord O'Neill?—Just before the Commissioners last came over in 1823.

Since that period have you had any personal communication with Lord O'Neill?—No, I have not seen him.

Would Mr. Bourne have taken the lower terms for which he offered to accept the contract, if that had been tendered to him for the performance of the duty?—I suppose he would; but Sir Edward Lees would not do that; for it was like sanctioning the contract which had been made. Sir Edward Lees always appeared to me averse to the contract.

How many outside passengers is he now carrying?—Four, I think, as under the old contract.

So that the only difference is, that there is no contract entered into, and that on account of that Mr. Bourne benefits by the difference?—Yes, he does.

On a former occasion Lord O'Neill had signed the contract for the Cork mail during your lordship's absence?—Yes, he had; that is a great while ago.

Since that the Commissioners are informed an understanding has existed that there shall be no contract considered valid without the signature of both?—Yes.

Is that by written order?—Yes; I wrote to Lord O'Neill; I was in England attending Parliament; I had no idea that a contract was signed till I came back.

Lord O'Neill agreed to that understanding?—Yes, at once; in fact he never objected to any general rule I laid down; and I do not yet understand why he has objected to the execution of Bourne's contract.

Is it the practice of the postmasters-general to do business at the post-office as a board?—We have sometimes, but not lately.

When was the last time that your lordship ever met the other postmaster-general as a board?—I do not recollect, but perhaps a year before the time I have spoken of.

In using the term board, how is it to be understood that the board was constituted?—By our patent, one postmaster-general makes a board.

When your lordship speaks of the former practice as having held a board, how was such a board composed?—One postmaster-general was sufficient always since the establishment of the post-office.

Is one postmaster-general still considered competent to do any act?—There are various things that by mutual agreement, and by orders made by ourselves, cannot be done but by both: as for instance, signing warrants for the payment of money; before I came into office there was no such form; every order was merely initialed by the secretary, and the postmasters-general never saw it; and all the money the post-office had in the Bank might have been drawn out in the initials of the secretary. When we first established the system of warrants, one postmaster-general was sufficient to sign, agreeably to the old regulations of the office; that one postmaster-general constituted

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a board; however, in the course of a year or two, I apprehended there might be cases in which a warrant might be brought to one postmaster-general to sign, which the other postmaster-general might object to; and besides I could not see the whole of the expenditure unless every bill was laid before me, and therefore I wrote to Lord O'Neill to suggest that it was desirable we should be put in possession of what was doing, by every bill being transmitted to us both, and every warrant signed by both; and since that time no money can be paid, if it is only a penny, without our joint signature, except in the instances of payments to the Treasury; and in these there can be no possible loss to the public; it was, I think, suggested by Sir Edward Lees, that as there might be cases in which there might be an immediate call for money by the Government, the signature of one should be sufficient, as it was merely transferring money in the bank from the post-office account to the account of the treasury board.

Did the dispensing with the two signatures in that particular case leave it to the discretion of any officer, what should be the amount?—No; more could not be transferred than was to the credit of the post-office in the bank.

Was it the rule to transfer all you had?—No; for a certain sum must be kept for contingencies; we transfer 10,000*l.* when there is 13,000*l.* or 14,000*l.* in the bank. In this there can be no loss to the public; and Sir Edward Lees would take care in having the minute framed, and the warrant, so that there should be enough left in the bank for contingencies.

There are certain patent officers in the post-office, such as the accountant-general and the receiver-general?—Yes; the accountant-general, the receiver-general, the secretary, and the resident surveyor, whose office is a sinecure.

Is not the comptroller of the sorting office a patent office?—No; it was originally, but Government relinquished that appointment at the time Lord Clancarty was appointed; in the year 1806.

Does your lordship consider those patent offices independent of each other, or that there is any control in any one of these officers over the others?—They all feel a certain degree of independence; they are independent of the postmasters-general.

Is the accountant-general independent of the secretary?—Quite so.

How far may your lordships, the postmasters-general, exercise a control over the accountant-general?—We have no control; but if he did any thing wrong, we should make a representation to Government.

Your lordships are required by statute to keep an account of receipts?—Yes, certainly.

Does your lordship conceive that the accountant-general acts in that capacity for the postmaster-general?—Yes.

Then do you not conceive you have a control over him?—He is always ready to attend to us; but we cannot remove him, any more than the secretary, without the interference of Government.

No account is kept of the receipts but by the accountant-general?—No; except by the receiver-general and the remittance clerk. Immediately after my appointment the accountant-general's office was remarkably well arranged by a very clever man, Mr. Prior.

Is the accountant-general in the habit of making reports to your lordships on any occasion?—Yes, we have a weekly check; and we get other reports quarterly from the accountant-general.

Do they pass through the secretary's office?—They are transmitted to the secretary, but they are always signed by the accountant-general, or by his first clerk, Mr. Mills.

What means do your lordships possess of judging of the accuracy of those accounts?—We have only that of comparing them with the various returns of postage from which they are prepared, and with the books of the remittance clerk and of the receiver-general; and whenever they come to be audited by the Commissioners of Accounts, if there was any inaccuracy in calculation, it would be discovered by persons more expert than the postmasters-general can be.

With respect to receipts, have the postmasters-general the power of forming a judgment as to the accuracy of the accountant-general's account?—The revenue is all paid into the bank.

The amount so paid in appears in the account of the accountant-general?—It does, and in the receiver-general's and the remittance clerk's, for so much as passes through his hands.

Have the postmasters-general any power of judging whether that is a true amount or not, so far as the receipts go?—It is only by comparison; there is the remittance clerk's book in the secretary's office, and the other returns for the receipts and disbursements in the accountant-general's office.

Is that brought before the postmasters-general when the account of the accountant-general is submitted?—The cash book of the remittance clerk is repeatedly looked at, and compared, to see the state of the deputies, but not for the purpose alluded to by the board.

Are the commissioners to understand that there is a *bonâ fide* comparison between the receipts as entered in the secretary's office by the remittance clerk and the account submitted to your lordships by the accountant-general?—No; the comparison is only made for the purpose stated.

Do the Commissioners of Imprest Accounts receive any account from the remittance clerk?—No; the whole is stated by the accountant-general, and then investigated in the closest way; it takes about three months to prepare an account for audit in the form

required; our accounts are so very complex, there is so much detail, and so many persons paying in small sums.

With respect to the postmasters-general, they take the account of the receipts upon the faith of the accountant-general's signature?—Yes, that is really the fact; if any deputy write to us (and we often get letters) that money was due to him, or he had not got credit for the full amount, we should look into it.

Your lordships sign the accounts which are transmitted for audit, do you not?—Yes; and attend at the office of the Commissioners to answer any questions.

How are your lordships called upon by the Commissioners of Audit to verify those accounts?—We verify them by our signature, and we answer every question upon oath; for some years we have not been able to audit: I have written again and again to the Government here and to the treasury board, and we have not been able to get them audited; we have several years accounts unaudited, which is very unpleasant.

What is the first year unaudited?—I think 1817; I have written and spoken to Mr. Goulburn on the subject.

What is the reason of their not being audited?—One of our duties was the having surveys made of the roads. Major Taylor was appointed by Government as inspector, with a salary of 500 guineas a year; he was to see that those surveys were regularly made and properly done, and on the most approved lines, and to certify each for us; and upon his certificate on oath, we were to order the payment to the surveyor: there was some expense incurred in those surveys, that the Commissioners of Accounts thought we were not authorized to make; as, for instance, suppose we ordered a survey to be made between two towns, and that the survey was made in a certain line, and afterwards the grand jury would refuse to present for that line, but required us to make a survey in another line, which they thought more convenient, we could not get the first line presented; then we ordered the survey of the second line; but the Commissioners of Accounts did not think we were warranted by the Act of Parliament in allowing that; but if we did not do so, we could not have got a mail-coach road made. Originally, we had the power wholly in ourselves of deciding on the line; but the Act that gave it to us was repealed, and we were deprived of that power. There was another expense that they objected to, which, though trifling, came to a good deal of money, that is, lock-spitting: the surveyor lays out a line, and turns up the sod all along to mark the line; a mere map would not be sufficient to guide the country people in making the road; if they make a road twenty yards at one side or the other from the line laid out, it may be made very injudiciously, and the lock-spitting appeared to be a necessary part of the survey; the thing was not complete to be acted upon without it: the Commissioners of Accounts objected to this, and they objected to above 10,600*l.* altogether, being an expenditure occurring in different years which they would not give us credit for. Government got the opinion of the attorney and solicitor-general in our favour, that we had a right to the credit. Mr. Foster, now Lord Oriel, was the person who framed the Act in the House of Commons, and he wrote a very strong letter, stating that our construction of it was correct, and according to the intention of the Legislature at the time; but notwithstanding that, and that all we wished was to let the Commissioners of Accounts give us credit for that money, from that time to this we never have been able to get an answer to our applications; we have written year after year, and, besides that, I wrote and spoke to every secretary. The account, as it now stands, represents us to be greatly in debt. We have been most anxious to have it settled; for if we found a difficulty now, we should find it much greater at a future day, as vouchers might be lost and persons might die, who could replace them or explain them.

Have similar expenses occurred in each year?—We have had very few surveys latterly. I represented to government that I thought Major Taylor's services were no longer necessary, and that his salary, 500 guineas a year, amounted to more than the whole expense of the surveys latterly, and therefore should be stopped.

How did that occurrence prevent the audit of the account of subsequent years?—We must have proceeded to make up the account with a very formidable balance against ourselves.

Do you carry forward your balances from year to year?—Yes. It is very unpleasant to us, where properties are subject to the debt, to have such a large balance appear against us, and it is discreditable to the office, therefore we entreated the Treasury Board to have it settled; it is the greatest possible inconvenience; there are rooms full of vouchers; from the nature of our accounts it may be guessed how very voluminous the vouchers must be; several thousand vouchers to support every year's account. The Commissioners of Accounts require a voucher for every the smallest disbursement.

Would it not be expedient to raise a new account beginning with the year succeeding that in which the objectionable items appear?—The Commissioners of Accounts would not do that; we had the greatest difficulty in getting them to act at all. I was at the Treasury before I was at the post-office; we were then continually calling upon the post-office to account, and one of the first things which occurred to me when I came into the post-office was to get the thing done, which I could not when at the Treasury. The post-office went twice before the Commissioners of Accounts before my appointment. They attempted to account for the years 1804 and 1806, proceeding on a supposed balance; and the Commissioners of Accounts found that the accounts of the post-office were in such a disorderly state, and the vouchers were so imperfect, that they stopped; and when I came in, in the year 1810, we found a new system of accounts, and went before the Commissioners of Accounts, beginning from the time of my appointment; and they said that though our

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accounts were more voluminous than any accounts they had ever had before them, and more voluminous than all the accounts which they audited, ours was the most accurate which had been ever submitted to them; and they audited our account, and so went on year after year for seven years, until this occurrence of the surveys.

Does your lordship understand by whom the objection is made; is it common to all the Commissioners, or do you understand there is any one individual among the Commissioners?—I do not know; they answer only as a board.

You have no reason to suppose that the difficulty arose with one Commissioner more than the other?—No.

The items stand as disallowances upon the account?—Yes.

Your lordship states that you had the opinions of the Crown lawyers sanctioning the charge?—Yes.

Are the Commissioners of Imprest Accounts aware of that?—Yes, they are.

What further satisfaction do they require?—All they required was an order from the Treasury.

Which Treasury?—In England. When we went before them first, we had a treasury here. With difficulty I got them to begin with the year 1810; they audited that year on getting an order from Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer here, that we should make up the account on the supposed balance previous to our time, with a proviso, that that should not prevent, at any future time that the Government thought fit to order, an examination of the antecedent accounts; and upon that supposed balance we proceeded. Until we got this, the Commissioners of Accounts would not proceed; now the only difficulty is to get those items allowed, that we think we have a right to; if we have not any right, it is Major Taylor's fault, the person appointed by Government; let Government make him pay the money.

Still that objection to the account which has been tendered would not prevent the balancing of the successive accounts?—No; we are quite ready to prepare our statement, but the Commissioners of Accounts would not go into them without stating in the first instance this great balance against us.

Has any application been made by the postmasters-general, supported by the opinion of the law officers, to the Treasury?—Yes, repeatedly.

What answer have you received?—They did not answer for a length of time, and then they wrote to us to send a new statement, for the last had been mislaid, or something of that kind.

Have you never received a satisfactory answer upon the subject?—Never.

Since what time?—I think eight or nine years. Mr. Frankland Lewis, when he was here, said he could easily get it done; but it has not been done.

Is Mr. Herries aware of this?—He has been informed of it repeatedly; we had a statement of the case printed, thinking they would read it, perhaps, with more ease; Mr. Herries said that he had mislaid that statement, and he wrote for another.

Are the accounts actually prepared in the post-office?—They are actually ready, and only require to be stated in the form and detail necessary.

To what period?—I have not asked the accountant-general since I came to town; but the last time I asked him, the year 1817 was ready to be submitted. The number of vouchers is surprising; the first time we went before the Commissioners of Accounts there were hackney coaches to carry the vouchers; to have all these accumulated in the office is a very great grievance; if any of them should be lost, it will be a serious inconvenience. I wrote to the Lord Lieutenant himself particularly, four years ago, and I wrote other private letters to the Government.

Has your lordship had any conference personally with the Commissioners of Imprest Accounts upon the subject?—No, I have not; I thought it unnecessary, for they would not examine the first account until we got an order from the Treasury, and the Treasury alone has the power of doing it; it appeared to me to be as reasonable a thing as could possibly be; the only objection in one case was, that they did not think the Act of Parliament allowed us to survey two lines; it is very often necessary to survey more than one line, to be satisfied that we have got the best: then they objected that there were new maps, and new notices; the Act of Parliament requires those maps and those notices; if we send in a set of maps to the grand jury, we never get them again; they tear them or lose them, and they require them each assizes, or we could not get the presentment.

Is there a survey book kept in the post-office as required by the Act of Parliament?—Yes; and there are copies of all the surveys which have been made.

And a measurement of all the roads under your lordship's direction?—Yes; it began in Lord Clancarty's time, before I came into the office. I found when I came into the office that the expense of surveying alone was so great, that the surveyor's bills came to 6,000*l.* a year. As soon as I could I stopped that, and more than twenty clerks employed under him, and a great establishment. That has been stopped many years ago; we determined, unless some respectable principal person of the county would undertake that if we surveyed a road it should be made, we would not go to the expense of the survey.

Have your lordships introduced any new regulations into the office respecting the fines, or how is that restricted?—If there is any complaint made, we look into that particularly; but besides that the account is laid before me.

Who has the power of levying fines?—Sir Edward Lees, the secretary.

Alone?—If a mail-coach arrives late, he enters such a fine, and so on, and that is generally entered in the morning reports.

Whom



Whom also can he fine but the mail-coach proprietor?—The deputy postmaster in certain cases; but they do not amount to much.

What other officers are subject to his fines?—The officers of the office if they do not come in time, and so on.

Are they fined exclusively by the secretary, or by the heads of the departments?—It is done by the secretary; the representation is made by the head of the department.

The amount of the fine is fixed by the secretary?—The amount of the fine is fixed by the secretary; and if they think it too heavy, they complain to Lord O'Neill or myself, and we, in various instances, take off the fine.

Would the fine be taken off, or rather restored, by the order of one postmaster-general?—Yes, I believe it would; it is generally a small matter. I never knew any difficulty made in getting off a fine. I would write to Sir Edward Lees to know if there was any objection to taking it off, or what the grounds were; and I would write to him, would it not be better to restore the money.

In the case of suspension, is the power of suspending also confined to Sir Edward Lees?—Yes; he has the power of suspending any officer, except a patent officer.

Including the surveyors and presidents?—Yes; we think it necessary there should be a good deal of power upon the spot.

Is that power conferred upon the secretary by his patent, by the law, or by any written instructions from your lordships?—Indeed I am not quite aware of that; not by the statute; but I believe, in the absence of the postmaster-general, the secretary has the power of acting.

By what authority?—I believe by the Government.

Is your lordship aware of the Government having made any communication to that effect?—I rather think so; it has always been exercised, and is so in England by Mr. Freeling.

He can only act subject to your lordships directions, and under your lordships responsibility?—Of course; and we can give orders to the contrary.

Has the accountant-general the power of suspension in his office?—No; I never knew any instance of it.

If he was dissatisfied with the conduct of any one of his clerks, what steps would he take?—I suppose he would order the clerk out of the office, and report him to the secretary; but I never knew an instance of the kind occur.

Do the patent officers nominate any of their assistants?—No.

Your lordships have the whole patronage?—In the accountant-general's office it is necessary they should be particularly well qualified; and therefore, whenever there has been a vacancy, and I have a right to appoint a person, I have directed the accountant-general to look out for the most fit person in or out of the office; unless he was a man very expert at figures, he could not do the duty.

How are the assistants of the receiver-general appointed?—By the postmasters-general; but I believe always on the recommendation of the receiver-general. I do not recollect any instance having occurred in the office of the receiver-general.

Do they give any security?—Yes; the receiver-general gives 15,000*l.* security; the first clerk, 2,000*l.* A Government order originally, in constituting the office, required these securities to be taken, and from the inferior officers 200*l.*, including deputies; but we found that 200*l.* was not at all adequate, in consequence of the increase of revenue; and some deputies are obliged to give 500*l.*, and some 1,000*l.*; in Cork 2,000*l.*

£200 is the least?—£200 is the least that any deputy gives.

Do the surveyors make regular reports upon the state of the securities?—Yes; but the person we depend mostly upon is the solicitor, whose business is continually to ascertain the state of the securities, and to report to us; and every two or three months, or oftener if I require it, Mr. Thompson, the solicitor, makes a report to me, and I suppose he sends another to Lord O'Neill; he makes a report of each deputy, how much he is in arrear, what his former arrear, whether it is increasing or decreasing, what his securities are, whether they are solvent, and whether any security is dead, and makes observations upon whether they should be dismissed, or what proceeding he would recommend.

Is that a general report upon the state of all the securities, or only of those securities upon which he has any observations to make?—It is, in general, upon all the deputies who are in arrear.

Not including all the deputies?—No, in general not. Sometimes I send for a list of all the deputies, and desire him to return it to me, with his observations; in general, for shortness, it is only those who are in arrear he sends to me.

What length of time do you allow a deputy postmaster to be in arrear of his periodical instalments?—We are obliged to vary according to particular circumstances. Our great object is to take care that the revenue shall not be ultimately the loser, that there is sufficient security; and another object is by making the solicitor apply to the securities, to let them know that the deputy is in arrear; we find that the most effectual way of getting in the arrear, for they are then alarmed; and if they are solvent persons, they will make a great exertion. This [*producing it*] is a return made to me in September 1826; the first column contains a list of the towns; the second, the monthly instalments; that is proportioned of course to the revenue; the third, the probable arrear; we cannot exactly tell the arrear that may be due, because there are circumstances which may make a difference; the fourth column contains the sums which have been paid since these have been put to it on my coming to town; there was Dingle 45*l.* in arrear; he has paid but 14*l.* 10*s.* We

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order a person in that situation to pay up by the first of the month of October or November, the months in which we get it paid up best.

That postmaster at Dingle was eight or nine months in arrear?—Yes; but it is so small a sum, if I was to put him out, and to put in a surveyor to take charge of his office, it would cost more than the money due; therefore, when they are trifling sums, I endeavour to avoid that; the public would lose more than they would gain by it.

Do you ever proceed by civil bill in cases of such small sums as that?—No, we never have. He has paid two instalments since that account; and if that man has good securities, it would be useless to put the public to an expense for so small an amount.

Is your lordship aware of the total amount of arrears existing at present?—No; I have not added them up; a difficulty occurs. In some cases there is a dispute as to what the real arrear is, the deputy making claims; for instance, at Bangor, Colonel Ward, who is a privy councillor of large fortune there, is the security; we cannot lose the money by waiting until that is decided. Colonel Ward says the deputy is considerably overcharged; it is not thought worth while to send down a surveyor specially for such a matter, but he takes such a place in his journies.

Do you continue to pay the rides in the same way through the country?—We have latterly, in consequence of the high price of forage, raised them a penny a mile; it is now sixpence, I think, throughout the country, the double mile.

You have not thought proper to introduce the English mode of paying according to circumstances, and getting it done as cheap as you could in each particular district?—No; the system was established by Lord Clancarty at the rate of 6*d.* the double mile; I reduced it, about three or four years ago, to 5*d.*, when corn and every thing was very cheap; and latterly we have, as a temporary measure, increased it to the old sum, Irish currency.

It may be necessary to raise it in some counties, but not in others?—It may be so; whether it has been done in all cases I am not sure. Lord Clancarty laid down a system for the post-office, and the Government requested me, when I came in, to depart from it as little as I could; with respect to the system of account he had done very little; I have established that.

The remittances required from the postmasters are regulated, not by the actual, but by estimated receipts?—Yes; what we conceive they will have received, after deducting their salaries and allowances.

How long ago was that estimate formed?—The instalment put down was with reference to some years ago.

How long ago?—I am not sure how long ago; we had a rate of instalments made out many years ago, since I came into office; they had no system of that kind when I came in.

Must not the receipts have varied considerably since that time?—Yes, so they have; but it is still some guide to me and to the officers. I think that a new scale was struck a few years ago.

If a postmaster adheres to the old estimate, he is not considered in arrear?—No; he is allowed always one month's revenue in hand; but his account is settled and balanced every quarter in the Dublin office.

A postmaster adhering to the old estimate, where the receipts have increased very much, may be actually in arrear, though it does not so appear?—Yes; but they have actually decreased of late, and the balance at the close of each quarter is the third instalment.

Must not the increase of instalments be, in many cases, a permanent increase?—Yes.

Then has the formal official instalment been also increased where the receipts have undergone a permanent increase?—The instalments are only to guide us as to what may be expected; and were the instalments too high or too low, the last instalment or balance would reconcile the account.

Must it not mislead, if it is taken as a guide to the actual receipts?—We see by that something like it; probably the proportion is something like it; if 49*l.* was the amount in arrear, for instance, for Ballymena, we see the number of instalments that are in arrear.

But 49*l.* may not be the actual instalment?—No, it may not; it may be the amount of several monthly instalments.

How often do they furnish their accounts?—Every month the postmasters send up their accounts of postage.

Is there no time of the year in which they are required to pay off the actual balance due from them?—Every quarter they are called on to pay their balances; but it is often very difficult for the deputy, in so poor a country, to get in the money from the gentlemen of the neighbourhood; if a gentleman does not get credit at the post-office, and if the deputy calls for the money when it is not convenient, he will probably write up to us and harass him.

Have the postmasters any avowed permission to take credit?—No.

In Tyrrel's pass the monthly instalment appears 7*l.* 10*s.*; 117*l.* 10*s.* is stated as the probable arrear, and 167*l.* is stated as due, and nothing paid?—Yes; that is one of the cases we are looking into; there is no doubt the money will be recovered, but the deputy has been ordered to be dismissed; the payments in the last month have been very considerable; by writing to the securities, if they are solvent, they will make the deputy pay.

Are those stated in the list before your lordship the deputies over the whole country, or only the part over which your lordship has the patronage?—Over the whole of Ireland.

Belfast does not appear in this list?—No, because the postmaster in Belfast is never in arrear; he is one of the best deputies we have.

Cork does not appear in that list?—No, Cork is never in arrear.

A man appears to have been dismissed when 95*l.* was due from him; will that be recovered?—Yes; we cannot proceed against the securities until we dismiss the deputy; we never do until the deputy is out of office.

Have the clerks of roads undergone any change of late years?—No, they have not.

Who are the four clerks of the roads now?—Sir Edward Lees, Mr. Thomas Lees, Mr. Donlevy, and Mr. Leet; there have been but three changes in my time. Three persons died; Mr. Harrison, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Ball.

Mr. Donlevy is still a clerk of a road?—Yes.

What is considered his emolument as such?—I believe 400*l.* or 500*l.* a year.

That is in addition to his salary?—Yes; his salary as president of the inland office is 300*l.* a year; that is not sufficient; but having a clerkship of a road compensates; for otherwise after having served for such a length of time in a high situation as president of the inland office, 300*l.* a year would be inadequate.

What are the existing privileges of the clerks of the roads?—The transmission of newspapers.

Nothing else?—No.

The Irish or the English newspapers?—The Irish newspapers; I believe there has been some private regulation amongst themselves as to English newspapers also.

Are they entitled to that privilege by Act of Parliament?—Yes, I believe so; by the original Post-office Act of 1784.

Are they allowed to derive emolument for it?—Yes; it has been discussed in Parliament.

Is there any legal authority by which they do derive such advantages?—Indeed, I conceive it is; it has been discussed; and I never heard any doubt expressed about it in the House of Commons; any one has a right by putting a member's name upon the cover.

Even that is dispensed with now?—Yes, it is, by a late Act of Parliament.

They derive advantages from the facilities that the being in the post-office gives them for forwarding newspapers?—They derive very great advantages from that; persons suppose they get the newspapers more regularly through them, being in the post-office; formerly they had other advantages, for the hour of admitting the newspapers from others was limited, but that has been done away with.

Do you conceive that is an abuse?—No; I think they may as well do it as the proprietors; it is an easy way to the public of paying an old officer.

Is it not giving an advantage to those who choose to pay the clerks of the roads over those who do not; or for what service are they paid any thing?—They have some agreement with the proprietors of the newspapers. I conceive that I pay no more for getting my newspapers from the clerk of a road than from another person.

It must be a tax upon somebody?—It is a tax upon the proprietors, I imagine.

The proprietors must be inclined to pay this tax by some advantage they expect to derive from it?—The sale of their newspapers.

Is the privilege objectionable as holding out an inducement to the officers who enjoy it, to interfere with the dispatch of other newspapers?—It is impossible; if you were to see the manner in which those newspapers come into the office, and the manner in which they are sorted, you would be satisfied that no such unfair proceeding is practicable.

The express newspapers are sent out much earlier than others, are they not?—Those are English newspapers; and there they have some advantage by more early delivery, perhaps.

Is there any reason why the clerks of roads should have any privilege as clerks of roads; is there any use in it?—Yes; I think it one of the great inducements (and so it is stated in Lord Clancarty's representation to Government, and sanctioned by Government,) to persons to remain in the post-office, that there should be a few of those offices, which will be a provision for people in advanced life, and who consider, as they advance, that they shall have such situations ultimately, for long and faithful services. There are but those four situations, and they were no expense to the public till Government gave them some compensation for the diminution of their profits at the Union, and by subsequent regulations.

There are certain express clerks?—There are two express clerks; I believe their emoluments are about 350*l.* a year now.

They have the privilege of forwarding English newspapers?—Yes, they have; they have access to them sooner, when the mail arrives.

Has not that been a source of abuse?—I never heard it had; there has never been a complaint to me of it. I recollect the late Mr. Whitbread speaking to me once about it; but I inquired into it, and did not find there was any ground for that complaint.

Is there any separate account kept with Great Britain of the receipt in the Irish Post-office?—Yes; we pay every quarter to England the balance which is due.

What is comprised in that account?—The postage of English letters; we repay them the English postage, and they pay the Irish postage to us.

(107.)

What

Examinations.

No. 174.

Earl of Rosse.  
10th Oct. 1826.

Examinations.

No. 174.  
Earl of Rosse.  
10th Oct. 1826.

What is the advantage of keeping such an account between the two countries?—I do not think there is any advantage.

Is it not an unnecessary labour?—Indeed it appears so; but I do not like hastily giving that as a decided opinion. Sir Edward Lees or Mr. Freeling might point out some advantage of which I am not aware; there is no great trouble in it, and it shows how much this branch of the postage amounts to.

Your lordship is not aware at present of any advantage from that separation of the accounts?—No, I am not; it has been always so; and it distinguishes between the inland postage and that with other countries.

What is the authority for taking tolls upon a post-office conveyance?—A positive Act of Parliament; in the post-office Act a few years after the establishment of the post-office there is a clause which requires us to pay tolls to the proprietors of the tolls.

It appears, by reference to the Acts, that up to the 32d Geo. 3. there was a provision in each Act, that there should be no demand made at the place of toll; and in the Act of that year a provision was made requiring the postmasters-general to keep an account of all the tolls upon four-wheeled carriages, and to pay them quarterly to the treasurers of the counties; is there any direct enactment which makes it obligatory upon the mail-coaches or other carriages carrying the mails to pay the tolls?—There is no Act but the post-office Act; not the original Act, for we had no mail-coaches in 1784 in this country, when the post-office was established; but the Act of 1797.

Are all conveyances carrying the mail subject to tolls now?—No; for instance, mail-carts are not; it is only the four-wheeled carriages carrying passengers.

Is there any specific Act of Parliament subjecting those carriages to tolls?—No other than that I have referred to.

It does not appear in the Act expressly that they are to be paid; but it requires an account to be kept of the tolls to be paid?—Yes, it is so; and some years ago I objected to paying tolls for bridges under that Act; but an Act was brought in compelling us to pay tolls for bridges, not only in future, but for some years back.

How are the treasurers entitled to demand the payment from the post-office, if the payment is not made?—I do not know, except by the Act of the legislature in 1797, which orders that the payment should be made quarterly. We for some time under this clause paid tolls on bridges; but still, on reading the clause over again, it occurred to me that a bridge could not be considered a turnpike-road, and I refused to pay; but about two years ago Mr. Goulburn brought in an Act of Parliament to compel us to pay for the time past, as well as in future, on bridges.

That refers only to four-wheeled carriages?—Just so; we pay nothing on mail-carts or post-boys; but the tolls amount to a great deal of money; the toll from Dublin to Limerick comes to more in the year than the money for carrying the mail; I believe it is near one thousand pounds a year on the coach.

Has it ever been attempted to make a composition with the proprietors of the tolls for the payment?—We have been hoping there might be some regulation by the Government, or the Treasury. In some instances the same person is proprietor of the tolls and contractor for the mail; he can station his horses in such a way as to make more tolls payable than are necessary; for on every change of horses there is a fresh toll, provided they pass through a gate. I got a clause in an Act of Parliament to say that we should pay only once in the twenty-four hours for each carriage, and we struck off a good deal of the toll on the road to Kilcullen; but the Treasury made us pay back the money again to the proprietors of the road.

When a letter passes through Dublin from one part of Ireland to another, is there a re-taxation in Dublin; would the letter be charged first to Dublin, and then afterwards the rest of the way?—No; it is not charged till it arrives in Dublin, and then it is charged the whole distance.

It is not taxed a greater sum in Dublin?—It is taxed in Dublin the whole postage.

The distance is measured first from the place of departure to Dublin, and then the remainder of the way?—Yes; formerly if it was sent round it was charged accordingly.

Is not that a very unfair mode of charging?—Yes; but the Act of Parliament of 1814 has altered that; it now pays only for the distance it goes in the shortest line.

In short, it pays for the distance it goes?—Yes, it does, if that be the shortest line.

What power have the clerks of franking?—The powers are very limited in the office; we have latterly limited them very much; the clerks of roads have the power of franking, and Sir Edward Lees has the power of franking; but no one in the office has the power of franking but Sir Edward Lees, or, in his absence, the person who acts for him, the receiver-general, the superintendent of mail-coaches, and the four surveyors.

Has not the comptroller of the sorting office?—He had, under the Act, but we have taken that away.

Do the clerks receive their letters free?—Provided the letter is *bonâ fide* for themselves, and they open and show it, the postage is abated.

How is it abated?—It is done in the alphabet office, on the order of Sir E. Lees, written on the letter.

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It is deducted from the window money?—Yes; they have been always in the habit of receiving their letters free, but we apprehended they used to receive letters for other persons.

Is your lordship aware of the actual manner in which that charge is allowed to them; as the letter does not come free, it is of course charged in the deputy postmaster's account?—I am not aware of the precise manner, but it is done by the president of the alphabet office out of the Irish rebates.

There are certain periodical publications which are forwarded free from the post-office, are there not?—There are various charities that we have allowed, recommended by Government from time to time to us, to be forwarded.

Is that power of forwarding periodical publications restricted to those recommended by the Government?—No; I believe the express clerks furnish certain periodicals, reviews, and things of that kind, to their correspondents.

Gratis?—Yes; free of postage.

Is not that a very considerable addition to the weight; the letters and papers that they forward?—If there were many; but I never heard that the amount was considerable.

Have you ever had a return of the periodical publications forwarded by the clerks, either with or without permission?—I have seen returns of them; there were not many of them.

In what manner have you seen returns of them?—I was shown them in the board-room. I think the Commissioners, when they were here before, went into that subject.

Have you gone into that subject since, to ascertain whether the number was increased or decreased?—No, I have not.

Your lordship is understood to state, that a letter coming through Dublin would be charged at once for the whole distance; the Act of the year 1784 seems to speak differently?—The Act on which we go at present is of the year 1814; the 54th of the late King is that which regulates all our present postage, and under which the people of this country pay, except ship letters, and that is in the 55th of the late King.

The words of the Act of 1784 are, that the letter shall be charged, and pay the distance to Dublin, and be further charged and pay according to the rates from Dublin; so that it would appear there were at that time two charges of apparent distances; your lordship understands the practice to be otherwise?—Yes; since the 54th of the late King it has been otherwise.

With respect to ship letters, is it usual for captains of vessels and other persons bringing them, to deliver them to the post-office?—Yes, they do, and to the country post-offices.

Do they receive their payment?—Yes, they do.

With respect to the late changes which have taken place with respect to the conveyance of letters from England, was any communication made to your lordship by the English post-office previous to its adoption?—No, none; the first I heard of it was from the newspapers.

What opinion has your lordship formed of its practicability?—I doubt very much the expediency of sending the letters from Liverpool, and to touch at the Head: I doubt its ever answering. There was a very simple proposition made to us, and which appeared very economical, that the private packets would carry the letters to and from Liverpool, and that they should have two deliveries from the Head by two steam-vessels, one small and one large, one by night and the other by day. I think the present mode will not answer. I am told that those steam-packets cost near 100,000*l.*, and being large packets, they are a very great annual expense from the number of men and the quantity of coals; all that might be done for nothing, because the private packets could not be charged, if they carried His Majesty's mail, with port duties.

During the time it has been in operation, according to the returns which have been made to your lordship of the arrival of the English mail, has it been more or less regular to its time than before?—I should rather think less; but I did not compare the account.

Have any changes been made with relation to the internal communication, which would give to other parts of Ireland the advantage of that arrangement at present?—We are making one for Cork, which we get for nothing at present.

The English mail is now arriving at Dublin many hours earlier than it used to do, but the time of its dispatch to the interior continues the same?—Yes.

Therefore Dublin is the only place which benefits?—Yes; but Cork will receive the benefit.

Has it been under your lordship's consideration whether any new arrangement could be made with a view to expediting the English correspondence to the interior of the country at an earlier hour?—It is very difficult to regulate it. All the letters of Dublin have to go with those from England; nothing has been determined upon it at present; until they have finally determined at the English post-office what arrangements to make about the packets, it would be premature.

At the present moment the English letters lie eight or ten hours in the post-office in Dublin?—Yes, sometimes.

That is, if they arrive at their proper time?—Yes; but they do not in general.

## Examinations.

No. 174.  
*Earl of Rosse.*  
 10th Oct. 1826.

The Irish correspondence has been uniformly dispatched at eight o'clock at night?—It was formerly at eleven; but since the system of mail-coaches has been established, it has been changed. When I came into the office there were but two or three mail-coaches established.

The communication by mail-carts has been extended latterly, has it not?—It has, in some instances, where we could not get mail-coaches.

How has it been found to answer?—If it is a heavy mail, it is better than sending a boy.

It is considerably cheaper than a mail-coach, is it not?—No, I think not, except the tolls.

Is that done by contract?—Yes, it is; it is rather in general by temporary agreements.

Would it not be much easier to make contracts for conveyance by mail-carts than by mail-coaches, less capital being necessary?—On the great lines the passengers in the coaches pay part of the expense. We get the mails carried on the great lines, in general, cheaper than by mail-carts.

Speaking of mail-carts, the great lines are excluded?—Yes; except the Derry line, at present.

With respect to lateral communications?—The mail-carts would be cheaper than coaches; but in general we send them by horse-posts.

Has there been any project for establishing a line between Belfast and Sligo?—There has.

By mail or by mail-cart?—It was proposed by mail-coach or by diligence.

Has any progress been made in that?—I do not think there has.

Have any details upon the subject been before your lordship lately?—Yes, there have been different applications made.

From individuals who were inclined to contract?—From individuals who wished to have the line opened.

Is it considered to fall within the province of the postmasters-general to originate new communications, or to wait for suggestions on the part of those interested?—I think we have always waited for suggestions; indeed we have so many already upon the subject, that if we were to gratify every one we should have a mail-coach going by almost every gentleman's door in the country.

Have you any applications for new post-towns?—Frequently; numbers that we are obliged to reject.

Are there any at present pending for which you are waiting the Report of this Board?—No, I think not; we had for sometime a hesitation about making some of the three days posts, six days posts, because we waited for your Report; not having received it, and Lord Lansdowne, who was anxious, having applied to Mr. Lewis, and he having said there was no necessity for waiting for the Report, we have granted it in some instances, with the approbation of Government.

The sanction of the Government is necessary in those cases?—Yes, and that of the Treasury in England.

Have you an estimate made of the expense, and the probable return?—Yes.

If you decided to establish a new post-town, and it did not answer, do you afterwards reverse it?—I do not think we have in any instance taken away the privilege.

There must be many which do not pay?—There are some which do not pay, but they are in parts of the country where it may be desirable with a political view, which the Government might more properly decide than we should.

Do you think the communication might be much extended in different parts of the country without a sacrifice of revenue?—No, I think not.

The roads are very circuitous in many cases, are they not?—There may be a few cross-posts, where that is the case; but we wish to push on to the extremity, to the fishing coasts, to encourage them; the extremity of the county of Galway and Cunnemara, and so on. Mr. Martin complained once that his house was forty miles from a post-town; there is a post-town now near him, and one at Clifden beyond him, where there has been a church built, and a town formed; we think it has a great tendency to produce civilization.

What control is exercised over the solicitor's department by the postmasters-general?—The solicitor cannot institute any prosecution without the approbation of the counsel for the post-office, and his bills are regularly submitted to us, taxed and certified by the law officer.

Is not the sanction of the secretary sufficient for the solicitor to take measures?—No, I think not; it might in some small matters.

When those bills have come before your lordships, has it appeared that any heads of charge have crept into them which were matters rather for the secretary than the solicitor?—I think not; we think the solicitor a man who does not wish to extend his business beyond what is necessary.

The Commissioners have had an opportunity of looking at one bill of costs, and it appeared to contain charges for some correspondence which might have been carried on in

the secretary's office?—The correspondence with the deputy postmasters and their securities we look to him for.

Might not that correspondence be as well carried on in the secretary's office?—I do not think it would have the same effect.

In the solicitor's office every letter is paid for?—No; not for every letter to the deputy postmasters; he is allowed 100*l.* a year, which is all his salary for that correspondence.

One case which came under the notice of these Commissioners was a number of circular letters to postmasters, and for that a charge is made?—The secretary was doubtful whether he ought to be paid that money or not, whether it was included in the charge of 100*l.* a year. The solicitor made a representation to me, and it appeared to me reasonable that he should be paid; the charge was but 1*s.* for each letter.

Would there be any objection to paying the solicitor entirely by salary?—No, I think not.

What would your lordship consider a fair salary?—That I have never considered; he has been a great while in the office; he was appointed before my time; he was put in by Lord Ely.

Does he do any other business besides that of the post-office?—I believe he does very little; he keeps two or three clerks for the business of the post-office.

Have you any reason to believe he increases the number of letters written to increase his own emoluments?—Indeed I have not; for as far as I have had an opportunity of observing, he has appeared a very reasonable man; and where he might have instituted prosecutions against all the country deputies in arrear, unless he finds there is a probability of the Government gaining something by it, he advises us against it; he says, if I were to proceed it would be attended with such and such expense, and we are not likely to recover from that person.

Opinions of that kind might be as easily formed and acted upon by another officer of the department who is not specially paid for every letter which is written?—Another officer might not know what the expenses of those proceedings might be as he would do, and the small chance perhaps of recovering any thing.

When you see letters charged for in a bill of costs which are circular, and which might as well have been written by any one of the secretary's office, does not it appear an improper expenditure?—I know that Sir Edward Lees objected to that payment, in the instance to which I alluded; he thought it was included in the 100*l.* a year.

Does your lordship consider that a singular instance?—Sir Edward and the solicitor differed upon it, and both made their statements to me; I never recollect a similar occurrence.

Were those statements made upon a single instance in which the secretary had made an objection, or on the practice?—On a single instance; I think his charge in the bill was 21*l.*

Do you think that has occurred only once?—I do not recollect any other instance.

The solicitor charging 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* apiece for a large number of circular letters?—I believe he is always in the habit, under certain circumstances, of doing it.

On what principle can he charge for each one of those letters, all of which are printed; he might have given the advice in the secretary's office, and the letters might have been prepared there and signed, and forwarded without any expense to the office?—It was attended with no expense except the paper and folding and directing and sealing; and the clerks in the secretary's office have already as much to do as they have time for.

But still the office is put to a very considerable expense?—He assigned some reason to me for it, which satisfied me that these letters were not in the regular course of business; I do not recollect the particulars at this moment.

Are the solicitor's bills passed regularly by your lordship?—Yes; and also regularly taxed by the proper officer.

They are examined?—Yes, very fully; and I generally keep the bill a week or so till I have had time to look over it and examine it, and I send it back if there is any thing requires explanation. I recollect he mentioned that when he was first appointed, which was by Lord Ely, near thirty years ago, I believe there were then comparatively but very few postmasters in the country and very little correspondence, and he was allowed as a compensation for that 100*l.* a year.

What description of correspondence does he maintain for this 100*l.* a year?—He writes to the deputies and to the securities; to the securities continually, to let them know that they are securities for such a deputy, and that he is so much in arrear.

Are those letters reported?—No; but on that he forms his general opinion, and makes out his return to me of the state of the deputies.

He makes no general return of the number of his letters?—No; but if I speak to him, he says, I have written to such a deputy and such a deputy, and refers to his letter book.

On what occasions do you conceive he is entitled to charge for his letters; what is the distinction he draws?—He drew a distinction upon one occasion, but I do not accurately remember what it was.

Examinations.

No. 174.  
*Earl of Rosse.*  
 10th Oct. 1826.

Are there any defects in the law relating to prosecutions, or do you find it easy to get convictions?—We think the law is too severe for punishing frauds in our office; for instance, if a young man was to purloin a letter, we are never able to get a jury to find him guilty, because they think it is a pity to hang a young man for a breach of trust of that kind; but there is a law has lately passed, which we think an injurious one, in the 5th of the present King, that any person who is conveying a letter clandestinely in any one of those private carriages, caravans, or jaunting cars, is to be tried in the courts of Dublin; the expense altogether attending that is so great that we must give the thing up. I have been speaking about that, and there is now in preparation a bill which will be brought in in the ensuing session, which contains a clause to get that repealed. I believe that the law was never intended to apply to Ireland, for the Acts recited in it are English Acts; but Ireland has been slipped in; if they were apprised of that through the country, all the persons in jaunting cars, &c. might carry letters with impunity.

Does your lordship think any satisfactory check exists upon the bye-letter accounts?—We have checks, but I think it is very difficult to have them so completely so that there might not, by a combination among the postmasters in the country, be a fraud upon the revenue; but it is only by combination. The surveyors, by going to the different offices, if there is any suspicion, can make a pretty good guess, particularly by the revenue diminishing between particular towns; a surveyor suddenly takes possession of the suspected office when he is not expected, and opens all the bags, and if the postmasters have any private marks he may discover it. There was a system in the south; several of the postmasters or their clerks were in combination, and we were obliged to dismiss them.

Is your lordship aware of an application made by Mr. Ogilvie with a view to some communication by Ardglass to the Isle of Man?—Yes, he has made representations of that kind, but it depends very much upon the English post-office.

The proposition was, that he would provide a packet for the carriage of the letters; was there any objection to that arrangement?—No, certainly not; we have always been ready if any accommodation of that kind was offered on proper terms.

The Commissioners have received a representation from Mr. Ogilvie, that he had been referred by Mr. Freeling to your lordships; the subject has been under consideration?—Yes, it has been; we shall be happy to do every thing we can with propriety for the improvement of the place and the convenience of the persons residing there.

ROSSE.

Gentlemen,

Parsonstown, 13th October 1826.

In reference to some of the questions which you put to me last Tuesday, I beg leave to enclose a copy of Mr. Gregory's letter, recommending us not to fill up permanently any office which might fall vacant, as Government intended to revise our present establishment, in consequence of which we determined at the time to make as few changes as we could; and I also wish to observe, that postponing the retirement of Mr. Cullen, &c. could not in a pecuniary view be any injury to the revenue, as Mr. Cullen's retiring salary would be about the same as what he retains of his present salary.

I also find that it is not by the instructions of the Irish Government to the postmasters-general that one shall constitute a board, but by the patent which appointed us, and which I did not immediately recollect last Tuesday.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

The Commissioners of Parliamentary Inquiry.

ROSSE.

My Lords,

Dublin Castle, 29th May 1821.

I AM directed by the Lords Justices to signify to your lordships, that it being in contemplation of the Government to revise the present post-office establishment, their Excellencies desire me to suggest to your lordships the propriety of not filling up permanently any office in the department which may now fall vacant.

(Signed) W. GREGORY.

The Postmaster-General.



## Appendix, No. 176.

18th October 1826.

Sir EDWARD SMITH LEES called in and examined.

THE Commissioners have seen that for several years a certain increase of salaries has been suspended in the post-office, in consequence of a Treasury Minute in the year 1821 or 1822?—That has been the case.

No effectual steps have been taken to remove that suspension?—As far as the postmasters-general could do, they did, but no effectual step has been adopted; the postmasters-general have interfered on more than one occasion with the Treasury, by representing the circumstances of the officers.

Have they recommended that it should be taken off?—They have.

Are you aware of any official reason in the post-office for continuing that suspension?—No; on the contrary, there is an impression on the minds of the postmasters-general, that the post-office was not in the contemplation of the Treasury when those directions were received; that it was merely a circular measure that was intended to operate on other departments, and not strictly intended to apply to the post-office.

There is nothing applying to any of the individuals falling under the regulations that would make it proper to continue the suspension of the increase?—Not that I am aware of at all.

Have any new arrangements been made since the Commissioners were here in 1823, respecting your regular periodical reports to the postmasters-general; you make daily reports to the postmasters-general, do you not?—I am in daily communication with the postmasters-general; there are certain reports which go to them from the office daily.

Do the reports you make to them daily contain any thing more than a detail of the daily work; do they contain any other observations?—Yes; and whenever I feel it necessary to consult their lordships, I do so by letter.

Do duplicates go to each postmaster-general?—When received back from one, they go to the other; in most cases that is the general practice; in some cases I write by the same post a similar letter to each.

The returns of the inland-office are prepared in triplicate?—Yes; one for each postmaster-general, and the other remains with myself.

So that they may be said to go down separately from your report?—They do; they go as a matter of course daily, and a weekly return of the absences and attendances, and the hours of attendance of the officers.

When you wish to receive the commands of the postmasters-general on any increase which has been submitted to you, or which you wish to submit for their consideration, do you send a duplicate to each, or first to one and then to the other?—First to one and then to the other generally.

Suppose either of them returns a positive direction on any measure, is that still sent to the other?—In most cases it is, if it is a thing of any importance; in common-place matters, if I get the sanction of one postmaster-general, I may get the sanction of the other, or may not, according to my discretion; but in fit cases, and any thing like importance, I send it to both of them.

Do you mean to say in all cases of importance, or in most cases?—In all cases of importance I think I may say.

In case of collision of opinions between the two, what do you do?—There may be a difficulty there certainly; I would then either act for myself, or confidentially consult the Government.

Have you been in the habit of consulting the Government on those occasions?—I have done so.

Of late?—Not within probably these two or three months.

Have you within a year?—Yes, I have, certainly.

By Government, do you mean the Secretary of State?—Yes, Mr. Goulburn.

Has he given any decisive opinion?—He has given his opinion to me in the case I particularly allude to.

What was that case?—It was a strong case connected with the inland office, where there was an imputation that a very confidential letter connected with the water-guard service had been tampered with in the post-office; the commissioners of revenue made a strong remonstrance on the subject. I investigated it as far as I could myself, and I thought it my duty to state my opinion to the postmasters-general upon the subject; the opinion was not satisfactory. I should observe also, the Government itself had heard of the circumstance through some other channel; in the interview I had with Mr. Goulburn, I explained to him all the particulars, and he gave me his opinion.

Was he aware that the postmasters-general had differed in opinion?—I think he was; I apprised him that Lord O'Neill felt embarrassed in managing the department; but my impression is, that Lord O'Neill was then in Dublin; that after communicating with his lordship, the papers and draft of a minute were sent to Lord Rosse, and his lordship not having taken any notice of them, that I consulted Mr. Goulburn.

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Was not that the ground of your going to him, that there was a difference of opinion?  
—Yes.

Lord O'Neill, you say, had delicacy and difficulty in interfering in any thing of the kind; how do you mean to describe his difficulty?—In forming any decisions.

And taking any part in any case of difficulty?—Precisely so. His lordship has, on more occasions than one, represented to me his embarrassed situation, and that he did not find he was sufficiently supported.

By whom?—By his colleague.

Would that prevent Lord O'Neill deciding in the first instance?—Yes, it would certainly, and has done so.

Has your habit been in all cases to send first of all to Lord Rosse?—Not always; indeed it depends upon circumstances; there is no fixed rule; I generally send to Lord Rosse in any difficult case first.

Did Mr. Goulburn give his opinion at variance with that of Lord Rosse, or in conformity to it?—My impression is, that Mr. Goulburn approved of the minute I had sent to Lord Rosse.

How was it decided?—One officer was reprimanded, and the remainder acquitted.

What individual of the inland office was implicated?—Several.

Will you explain whether Lord O'Neill was apprised of this?—Lord O'Neill finally coincided with Lord Rosse.

Would you think it regular, after having obtained the opinion of Lord Rosse, and that opinion conflicting with your own suggestion, to have gone to the Government to take an opinion without first consulting the other postmaster-general?—I do not think it would be; and my impression is, that I did communicate with Lord O'Neill prior to any communication with Mr. Goulburn.

It must be presumed then that Lord O'Neill's opinion did not accord with Lord Rosse's?—I do not think it did at first, but that his lordship felt disinclined to take the responsibility.

If Lord O'Neill's opinion had been in concurrence with Lord Rosse's, you would not then have thought of going to Mr. Goulburn?—No, I would not, unless it was some very extraordinary case; indeed I think that was a very extraordinary case.

Would you, in any case, consider that there was an appeal from the concurrent opinions of the two postmasters-general, you being their secretary?—I should have felt great delicacy in doing so.

Would you have felt it at all optional in doing it?—It would, of course, have depended upon what the thing was; if there was any heinous crime, not in any of the ordinary details of official business, I might.

In any supposable case, you having ascertained the opinions of the two postmasters-general, and those opinions being in concurrence, would you have felt yourself authorized to resort to any other authority whatever to know what you should do?—The question is quite general, as I understand it. Suppose it possible that the two postmasters-general agreed to run away with any part of the revenue. In the ordinary course of things I would not go beyond the two postmasters-general.

It will come to this question, whether the two lords are the postmasters-general, or whether you are the postmaster-general, or whether there is a postmaster-general; have the goodness to state how far you consider yourself bound by their orders?—I consider myself bound to obey them in every direction they give me.

That directly applies to the case on which you have been questioned, which is, whether you would think yourself authorized, under any circumstance, to appeal to the Government, or any third person, when the postmasters-general gave you any directions for the guidance of your conduct?—If I received their joint direction I should conceive that sufficient for me.

What were the particulars of the case in the instance you refer to?—The letter bore every mark of having been opened; it contained some very important information to Captain Dombrain, from Scotland; the officer of the inland office through whose hands it passed had not observed the checks that had been established for the safe custody of that letter.

Was it a single letter?—It was a considerable sized letter; the postage was 6s. or 7s., therefore it must have been at least a treble letter; it was certainly detained somewhere for two days, and then had every appearance of having been opened.

Was it delivered by a letter-carrier?—It was.

Of course you knew by what letter-carrier?—Yes, we did.

From that letter-carrier to whom did you trace it?—We could trace it to no person, for the check had not been obeyed in its passing through the inland office.

What would be the checks which were omitted in that case?—The same checks which are still in force with respect to all double post-paid letters.

Was this a post-paid letter?—It was.

A complaint came from Captain Dombrain?—Yes; it was a second complaint which had been made by the same officer of a similar thing.

Who was the clerk who opened that mail; did it come from Donaghadee?—Yes; one of the Messrs. Parsons was one of the officers concerned, and two or three others, Mr. O'Neill, senior, and Mr. Nixon.

What did you suggest to Lord Rosse upon that?—I thought the case was so glaring, it having occurred a second time, that very strong measures indeed were necessary; and I suggested that those measures should be adopted.

What measures did you suggest?—I recommended that all the parties should be dismissed.

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Naming the parties?—Yes.

Having previously investigated the case?—Yes.

Were there many of them?—Three, I think.

Who were they besides Mr. Parsons?—Mr. O'Neill, senior, and Mr. Nixon, with Mr. Parsons, who opened the Donaghadee bag, the officers through whose hands it passed.

Have the goodness to state what was the reply of Lord Rosse to your suggestion?—I rather forget the exact nature of it.

But he did not approve of the dismissal or suspension of the parties you named?—No.

Did he give any reasons for not approving of it?—He gave another minute himself.

To what effect?—To a much lighter effect, reprimanding Mr. Nixon, and acquitting Mr. Parsons and Mr. O'Neill.

Upon the receipt of that answer from Lord Rosse, what did you do?—I carried their orders into effect; and I thought it important to write to both postmasters-general a very particular letter upon that occasion; I sent this letter to Lord Rosse through Lord O'Neill.

What was the result; what reply did Lord Rosse return to you?—I do not think he made any reply to the letter at all; I rather think he did not.

Had you suspended them before you wrote to Lord Rosse?—No, I did not.

You mentioned that you recommended suspension or dismissal; you suspended them immediately?—I spoke entirely from recollection; but I remember now I suggested dismissal, and did not suspend the parties.

How long ago was that?—In November 1825; the letter reached Dublin the 31st October; I reported to Lord Rosse the 4th November, and to Mr. Goulburn the 18th November.

That was rather an extraordinary case, was it not?—Certainly, I thought it a very extraordinary case.

When you wrote to Lord Rosse a second time, did you state any additional facts affecting the parties of which he had not been previously informed?—Perhaps not affecting the parties upon that occasion; but I brought to his lordship's recollection a similar case, and several instances of glaring impropriety in the same office.

Affecting the same parties?—Perhaps it affected some of them, but affecting the whole state of the office; it was not a solitary case, affecting the public and the crown.

You thought the office in a bad state?—Yes, decidedly so.

Does it remain so?—It is in a considerably better state within the last three or four months.

Did he consider that there was nothing deserving of suspension in the conduct of those officers as reported to him?—In his lordship's minute he made distinctions as to some of the individuals.

Did you intimate to Lord Rosse the opinion you had collected from Mr. Goulburn upon this subject?—In fact, the second letter I wrote I was afraid was almost too strong. After detailing the state of the inland office, and referring to my repeated representations, I stated my opinion that Government would expect measures of greater decision.

Did Lord Rosse express any disapprobation of your having appealed to the Government?—Not the smallest. I had not informed Lord Rosse I had appealed; his lordship was under the impression that Mr. Goulburn had spoken to me in consequence of other representations to himself.

Or Lord O'Neill?—No, certainly not.

You mentioned, generally, that the state of the inland office is very unsatisfactory at present?—It is greatly better than it was at that period, and for many years before.

What was the objectionable state to which you allude?—To answer that I would refer to my correspondence with the postmasters-general for some years past.

Of what nature were they?—Insubordination, negligence, and imputations of fraud and improper conduct.

Is there a sufficient number of hands to perform the duty?—There is, I should think, ample.

Is there a sufficient attendance?—They attended very irregularly.

Is there a sufficient attendance of officers to do the duty?—No, not on several occasions; mails were left behind day after day.

Have you represented this?—Frequently.

Have you fixed upon the individuals whose absence has occasioned this delay?—I have.

To what particular description of persons do you allude?—With some exceptions of some very good officers, I have complained of all ranks; I cannot at the moment name them all, but I am convinced that on many occasions there have been twenty officers absent. It was very frequent; it was not the circumstance of a week.

You are aware there are five or six of those individuals, or more, who are regularly absent on account of ill health; do you mean to include those in the twenty?—I think I have represented to the postmasters-general as many as one half of the office away at one time.

How many would that be?—Twenty-one or twenty-two; and part of the mails left lying for four-and-twenty hours from going to England.

How long is it since that has happened?—Within these three months.

A mail has been left behind in consequence of the absence of the clerks?—A great portion of the English mail has been left behind, to the amount of from three to five hundred letters.

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In what particular manner can it happen that a portion of the letters from England have been left behind?—A portion of the letters going to England in the morning, from their not being got into the British-mail office in sufficient time.

When you have reported those irregularities to the postmasters-general, have you proposed any specific measure to prevent their recurrence?—Measures of greater severity; I saw no other measures to prevent it.

No alteration of system?—No alteration of system appeared to me to be requisite.

Has any one of those recommendations of rigorous measures been attended to by the postmasters-general?—I do not recollect one.

No suspension has taken place in consequence of your recommendation of the necessity of it?—No.

Has any suspension or privation of salary taken place?—I do not think that there has.

The Board does not allude to common suspension, which merely is followed by a fine of 3s. or 4s. a day, but a positive suspension of the entire salary?—No, certainly not; an officer was fined two guineas on one occasion lately.

Then you consider that the postmasters-general have in short been deficient in their duty in enforcing the regular attendance and efficient service of the inland office?—I am quite certain that there has been far too great lenity.

Have they sometimes declined altogether to sanction any punishment in cases such as those you have mentioned where you have reported to them?—My representations have never been acknowledged at all, or attended to, in very many cases.

Does that apply equally to both postmasters general?—No, I must make a distinction; I have mostly recommended to Lord Rosse.

Then you attribute to Lord Rosse the neglect of those representations?—Many of them have never been acknowledged.

Has the same applied to Lord O'Neill?—No; I do not think that any of my letters to Lord O'Neill have remained unanswered. I was always more in the habit of communicating on the discipline of the office with Lord Rosse, as my correspondence book can show.

Is it your opinion that Lord O'Neill is less lenient in his administration than Lord Rosse?—Lord O'Neill in his communication with me has stated, that he was perfectly convinced that what I recommended was right, but that he felt considerable difficulty and embarrassment in the discharge of his duty; and, I think, if Lord O'Neill had not felt the embarrassment which he represented to me he did, no one of the representations I have made for several years past would have been requisite. Under Lord Clancarty's excellent system of strict discipline, Lord O'Neill had no difficulty, and felt no hesitation in acting.

Do you think Lord O'Neill would have taken upon himself those strong measures you recommended if he had not feared that he should be thwarted in them by Lord Rosse?—I am persuaded he would; he has so stated to me.

Has Lord Rosse stated as the reason for not adopting those measures, that he was waiting for the Report of the Parliamentary Commissioners of Inquiry?—Lord Rosse has for the last three years felt, I have no doubt, difficulty respecting those individuals who have been so long absent from indisposition.

The question refers to measures of discipline?—No, certainly not as to those measures; his lordship is of too lenient a disposition, and not being on the spot, does not know the persons he has to deal with.

A question has been put to you in respect of the increase of salary which would accrue to many of the officers of the post-office, some of whom are in the inland office, and you expressed an opinion that there was no individual objection to giving that increase of salary; are you aware whether that increase of salary would now, if given, fall upon any of those officers against whom you have made those strong complaints?—I did not understand the question to apply to any person guilty of neglect merely; if so, it would apply to several: there was one Mr. Mowlds, who generally has been a good officer; I represented him as one of the absentees. I have upon my recollection respecting Mowlds, a strong instance where he was concerned in an act of insubordination with Mr. O'Neill and a good many officers, which formed a subject of representation; he was suspended for that, and he expressed subsequently very great contrition, I believe very sincerely: I think that was the only instance in which I recollect his having been concerned in any circumstance of the kind.

There are, in the course of the list, some who appear to serve in the inland office?—Mr. Thomas Harrison has been one of the constant absentees for many years, though a most valuable officer in other respects.

Is he one of those of whose absence you have complained?—Yes, but not from wilful neglect.

His absence appears to be accounted for by illness, which incapacitates him from performing the duties of the inland office, though able to perform the duties of the other office?—Yes; I am not aware that he has come under observation; Mr. Devitt has certainly.

For what?—For absence without leave, and for great negligence in making up the accounts of the postmasters; in undercharging postmasters.

He has been complained of?—Yes.

Was he one of those whose suspension or dismissal you have recommended?—He was.

When you say suspension or dismissal, do you mean more than the enforcement of a common fine, under the form of suspension?—That comprehends suspension; suspension from payment and duty.

That is only the infliction of a fine?—That is all; he is suspended from his duty, and is fined.

He receives the remainder of his salary?—Yes.

By

By that interpretation of suspension, there is no distinction made between the case of a person absent from sickness and from misconduct?—No, there is not.

Have you represented that to the postmasters-general?—In different instances, where officers have been fined a larger sum than they would have to pay to the substitute, say one or two guineas; there have been fines of as high as two guineas on an officer lately.

Do you ever attend the inland office yourself?—I have sometimes; not generally.

Is the president always expected to be present?—The president or vice-president are always expected to be walking about the office.

Is the president always expected to be in his seat there?—Yes; it is always expected that the president and a vice-president shall be in attendance.

Is the president subject to any fine, in case he is not in the place assigned to him?—No; if he is in the office it is sufficient; his desk is merely to do his own particular business in; it is more convenient he should not be there always.

It is not considered that he has any better view of what is going on?—He sees the better, no doubt, for being somewhat raised, but he is not always there; I had rather he was not always; I have found him asleep there. I do not like being in the office; I think that should be left to the president and the vice-presidents under him. The postmasters-general gave an order, two or three years ago, that no person belonging to any other department should be in the office while the business was going on, unless under especial leave.

That did not, of course, include the secretary?—No, nor themselves.

Is it considered to be necessary that the door should be closed while the business is going on?—Yes, the door is ordered to be locked.

Did you ever try whether the door was locked?—I have myself.

Have you always found it locked?—I have in almost all cases.

Have you never found it open?—Yes, I have. I speak of the occasions on which I went lately.

Are you certain they did not expect you?—No, I am certain they did not.

The Commissioners have both been there on several occasions, and never found it locked.

Who should be at the door?—The messenger.

Whose duty is it to see that the door is locked?—I hold the messenger responsible for it.

Who has the key?—He has the key.

Is it locked from within or from without?—From without; our object in doing that was to prevent the officers going out of the room, and strangers from entering.

What are the regulations you have adopted, to which you attribute the improvement to which you allude in the inland office?—From the circumstance I have already mentioned, of the detention of so many mails in the office: about three months ago Lord O'Neill came to Dublin, and I represented the state of the office to him; he went to Mr. Goulburn on the subject; Mr. Goulburn was, unfortunately, not in the Castle on that day, and Lord O'Neill was obliged to leave town; and he gave me a general direction, if I found it necessary, to do the best I could myself, and if I found it necessary, to go and tell Mr. Goulburn again what his opinion was. I therefore made one effort myself, and gave very strong orders respecting the officers of the inland office, taking the responsibility upon myself, and recalled all those who were absent. I fixed a day, and ordered the president to consider as removed from the establishment a certain number of those absent officers, and to employ as permanent officers in their room, at the full pay of the lowest rank on the established officers, which is 70*l.* a year, in place of 52*l.*, charging those absent officers with that amount, in lieu of the sum that was the understood charge against them.

In short, you have increased the fines?—Yes; and I gave it to be generally understood, that Government was determined to remove from the inland office every officer who should in future absent himself without due cause.

Did you make any distinction when you enforced the fines between voluntary and involuntary absence?—I applied it to those officers who I thought were never disposed to return, and not likely to return; and I regulated the increased fines, leaving them out of their salaries a residue equal to their right as if superannuated.

Was not that inflicting it on involuntary absence?—Some of them may have been able to come back, and some of them did come back, in consequence, after a certain time.

Had you taken any previous steps to ascertain whether those absences had been voluntary or involuntary?—I had reason to suspect several of them were able to do their duty, and would come back, if proper measures were adopted, and they did come back immediately, and the evil was remedied.

Can you mention any one or two individuals, who, having pretended incapacity for attendance, did attend, in consequence of the increased fine?—I think there were not less than half a dozen came back, who were frequently absent, and are now doing their duty. I felt it necessary to take strong measures to enforce their attendance.

Can you mention any one of their names?—I think Mowlds is one; Devitt, Thompson, John O'Neill.

Is that the O'Neill who is in the penny post-office?—Yes; Mr. Stoker, Fisher, Paul, I think; Middleton, Davis, Devitt, Henry Leahy is dismissed.

Amongst those, you have not mentioned the individuals who have been regularly absent for whole years?—No, I have not, except Davis; he was absent for nearly two years.

Did he belong to any other department in the office?—No, I think not.

Was he absent from ill health?—He said he was ill, but I did not make any exception.

Do not you conceive that if an officer is absent two years, he must either be absenting himself

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himself from some interested purpose, or because he cannot appear from illness?—Certainly.

And that for such a long absence he ought to be entirely suspended, and to lose his whole pay if his absence is voluntary?—I think so undoubtedly.

Do you consider that Davis's absence was a voluntary or an involuntary absence?—He came back immediately; he found he could not do better; and he does his duty very well, I believe now; I do not hear of his being ill.

What other situation does he hold?—I do not believe he holds any.

Is he in any other office?—I believe not; he has no other situation.

Is he one of those to whom the increase would attach?—No, he is not.

Do you always require the certificate of Mr. Kerrin, the surgeon?—Yes, I do.

Do you consider that certificate as of any avail?—I believe he is very accurate.

Has not he given a certificate for two years absence of Mr. Davis?—I do not remember that he has. If they apply for leave under a sick certificate, I refer them to the order upon that subject. This case of Davis's is rather a singular one; he applied to Lord Rosse a year and a half ago respecting himself, and represented that he was very much embarrassed, that his health was bad, and that he could not afford to be absent. Lord Rosse considered his case a very peculiar one, and he allowed him per week so much out of the suspension fund to support him; it went on too long, I think, and he came under the general call which I thought it necessary to make; and when he found I gave orders that that should not be paid him any longer till he came back, the consequence was he came back, and does his duty very well.

Had he any certificate from Mr. Kerrin?—I dare say, originally, he had.

Is not he required to give a renewed certificate in case of the absence continuing?—I do not know that there is any rule respecting that.

Then what is the use of having reference to a doctor?—I do not think Davis is an established officer; I think he is an extra probationer; he is not an established officer.

Are you acquainted with the practice in England with respect to absences?—I believe it is the same; for I think that it was borrowed from the English system.

Are they equally subject to fines, and subject to equal fines, whether they are absent voluntarily or involuntarily?—I am not certain; but I know that the present system was established in 1808, after Lord Clancarty had visited the English post-office, and made himself master of the system there I think both in principle and in amount.

You conceive the enforcement of the greater fines has improved the attendance in the inland office?—Yes, and in general impressing upon the officers that they would be dismissed if they did not attend.

Has it been accompanied with greater regularity of conduct?—As far as I can understand and believe, the office is in a very different state to what it was; there was a great laxity of discipline, a great want of effectual control, and in many cases insubordination.

Do you attribute that in any measure to the increase of their salaries being suspended?—No, it was generally laxity of discipline among themselves, young boys; I think it was owing to want of control in the head of the office; the president, Mr. Donlevy, though a very excellent man and a most valuable man, is not the description of man fit; he has not energy and activity enough.

Has he been there for some time?—He has not been there this year at all, but I speak of years back.

Is he in attendance now?—He is not.

He was in the Bank of Ireland this morning?—I should be sorry to see him here again; he is a very excellent man, but it would be very well for the public if he had his full salary for life.

What would that be?—His salary is 300*l.* and his emoluments between 400*l.* and 500*l.*

Would he be entitled to retire upon the full amount?—I think he has been fifty years in the office this very month, and he is past sixty years of age.

Who would succeed to him?—It is not necessary that the office should go in succession in that branch of the department; it is required that no officer should be president unless he has served ten years in some branch of the post-office.

Who would have the nomination?—The postmaster-general.

Which would that be?—At the present moment Lord O'Neill. The patronage of the Dublin office goes alternately for the clerks and heads of offices: Lord Rosse appointed the last head of office to the dead-letter office.

Are there two classes for patronage?—Yes, in Dublin.

Are there not more classes, letter-carriers and so on?—Yes, they all fall under classes; they all come in under alternate nomination.

How many classes are there for alternation of patronage?—It applies generally to the heads of offices and all other situations; but letter-carriers we do not consider so much as patronage; they send up their names, and we appoint them when there are vacancies.

Do you mean that the alternate clerks in the inland office, the alternate clerks in the British-mail office, and the alternate clerks in the letter-bill office, are appointed by the same postmaster?—No, the appointments of clerks are the same to whatever office; there are only two classes, one class of heads of offices, and the other of clerks.

A vice-president in the inland office would be reckoned in those classes equal with a probationer?—Yes, he would.

If Lord O'Neill nominated a vice-president to-day, Lord Rosse would nominate an extra probationer to-morrow?—The probability is, there has never been an exception; the vice-president

sident has risen up in regular succession, though I am pretty sure the same regulation applies as does with respect to the presidents; I think there is also a period fixed in the regulation of 1808 for the vice-presidents that they must serve six years in some branch of the post-office; I will refresh my memory upon that.

Is it the practice in the inland office to check the taxing officers one against another; for instance, to take a packet of papers which have been taxed in the Ulster division to an officer in another division?—No, I think not; it is not considered as the usual practice in London; we have re-examinations where we have reason to suspect frauds in the postmasters below.

Would it not be better to make that a common practice?—I think the practice would in many occasions be a good one; if it was done generally, it might delay business too much.

If every officer knew he was liable to have it done, and that it should in one or two or three instances be done every evening, so as that he might be induced never to relax, would it not be an advantage?—I certainly think it would; I think good would arise from the dread of it, knowing they were subject to it.

Would it not be efficient if no night passed without it?—I think it will be very well to make it a common practice; one or two every night.

And that it should be stated in the report?—I will establish it as a practice certainly.

You have returns of the overcharges by the taxing clerks?—Yes, weekly.

Can you ascertain from those returns what each clerk has surcharged in the course of the year?—I am not certain that we can go back so far as a year; I am not certain that they have been preserved, but I know we can for a considerable period; I have not been in the habit of going beyond a week or a fortnight, and revising them to see the correctness of the different officers.

Do you find that that re-taxation adds considerably to the revenue?—Yes, it does.

What may be the amount of it in the course of a year?—I think on the average of the amount *inwards*, 3,000*l.* a year; in October the amount was 235*l.* 12*s.*

That is, that the postmasters short tax the letters to Dublin 3,000*l.* a year?—Yes; every letter going from one part of Ireland to another through Dublin, and to Dublin; I think that that yields 3,000*l.* a year; then the rebates must be contrasted inwards to see the effect of it.

It has been stated to the Board, that one officer has re-taxed letters and made surcharges to the amount of 1,140*l.* in less than twelve months on the Galway line?—That is the largest mail considerably.

Do not you consider that a very important duty?—I certainly do, a very important one; it has its disadvantages, though there is great benefit to the revenue.

What are those disadvantages?—I think it induces too great a prying into letters; there is a very close examination of them.

They cannot open the letters?—No; but they may see a vast deal of the letter by inspecting it closely; but it is done as a matter of revenue entirely.

A man would not be assisting in the taxing a letter by reading it?—No, but he is obliged to inspect it inside.

Do you think there is sufficient time to allow them to get at a great many secrets?—A clever fellow who had an object might do it.

Do not you think it necessary, for the sake of the revenue, to encourage that description of service?—In a revenue point of view certainly.

Is it objectionable in any point of view?—Only that it enforces upon the officer the necessity of looking at the inside of letters, more than in other respects he might.

Do you think that has been carried to an excess?—No; it is generally the principle I object to.

If that principle were promulgated in the inland office, might it not produce a great laxity on the part of the officers?—It would.

On the other hand, the public expect there should be no improper scrutiny into their communications?—They always know it; we prevent it as much as possible; in rebates of letters, we strictly prohibit the postmasters from taking any the most cursory view of letters; great difficulties have been started by individuals to the necessity they have been subjected to of exhibiting their letters.

This return has been given to the Commissioners by a taxing officer of the name of O'Neill; do you consider him an accurate officer?—I should think he is as much so as others; he has abundance of talent certainly.

What check have you upon the taxation of letters from one cross post to another?—None, beyond the acknowledgment of the postmasters themselves.

Do you think it possible to establish any?—I do not, satisfactorily; it is very difficult; it is quite out of reach; we are left in a great measure to the strict honesty of the postmaster; the accidental visit of a surveyor may detect a fraud.

Do the postmasters send up their bye dockets to you?—They do not.

Is there any use in their keeping them after a certain period?—No, I do not think there is; they may wish to have reference to them on occasions; they are extremely voluminous; they amount to many thousands in a day; it has suggested itself to me, that it might be desirable to have them removed out of their hands the next day, after the day's mail is dispatched, even though they are never examined, that they may suppose them to be examined; we strictly prohibit the postmasters from making any alteration in their dockets

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one with another, and we punish them if we discover them holding any communication with one another.

It has been stated, that the dockets are frequently signed, not by the postmasters, but by their assistants; is that permitted?—I do not know of it to any extent; we make the postmasters sign the dockets themselves generally; assistants may sometimes do it.

The Commissioners understand it is frequently done by assistants, and in the names of the assistants?—I was not aware of it.

Is it not contrary to the regulations?—Certainly it is; postmasters should sign all their own papers; we allow them a sworn assistant.

Constantly?—Yes.

In every case?—Yes, in every case.

Does that assistant give any security?—Not to us.

Does he receive any salary?—No; the person is generally one of their own family; we prohibit any person having access to the office but a sworn individual; they may have two or three, but they must be all sworn.

Is it necessary in all cases to have an assistant?—Yes; we hold them accountable from seven in the morning till eleven at night, and from eight in the winter till eleven at night; they are obliged to be always on the spot, or some person sworn.

Does that apply to every post-office?—Yes, to every office in Ireland; every individual has that direction; there are printed instructions containing that.

In the great majority of post-towns there is but one delivery in the day?—Yes; but we do not know when a person may go to the post-office to demand a letter; even on Sundays we do not allow them to make the excuse of Divine Service; we might probably pass it over if there was nothing very serious.

In what town except Dublin are there letter-carriers?—There are none under the authority of the postmasters-general; in some of the large towns the postmasters have letter-carriers employed by themselves.

In what towns?—In Cork, Waterford, Limerick and Belfast, I think there are letter-carriers; by the Irish law we are not bound to deliver as in England, we are bound only to convey.

Do they charge for delivery in that case?—They charge a penny, and pay the person out of it. In England there is a delivery of letters generally, even in Holyhead; I was surprised to find that to be the case.

Have you established any further check in the paid-letter office on the admission of the letters into the inland office, since the Commissioners were here?—Yes, we have.

Of what nature?—I was asked at that time, whether we could establish a check, and the President of this Commission suggested one, which he thought afterwards would not operate well, that the individual coming to the post-paid window should have his letter stamped, and afterwards put it in himself to the receiver; and on my being asked my opinion, I felt that that would open a door to very great frauds against the public, as well as against the post-office. A person very seldom comes with his own letter; he entrusts it to a servant; it occurred to me, he would pay the postage, get the letter, and he might put the letter into his pocket, and never put it into the receiver at all.

That would be the case, if the receiver was not under the eye of the officer receiving the money?—Yes.

Suppose you had the hole of the receiver in the window, and that in the very same place where the money is paid the letter was dropped down; was that suggested?—No; but since that period we have adopted one of our own, by obliging the officer to give receipts for the amount of postage on every letter post-paid. Our officer gives a receipt for the postage of every letter brought.

What does that contain?—It contains the day of the month, and the amount of postage paid, and the entry in the post-paid book must correspond with that receipt, and that checked off by the officer in the inland office, who checks the address with the actual entry in the book itself.

Is that always a special officer, or sometimes one and sometimes another?—Always a special officer.

Was it not suggested that it should not be always the same officer, that there might not be a possibility of collusion between the window-man and such officer?—I do remember that that was suggested; that applies to double paid letters.

You give no receipt for single paid letters?—No.

The others are not supposed to contain property?—No; but all letters are entered, though single, in the post-paid book.

What do you think of the suggestion of having the receiver immediately in the window, that the individual who has paid his money may put his letter in under the eye of the man who has received the money; would there be any objection to that?—The object would be to guard against the officer who has received the money; he would have access to that receiver inside.

Might not that be opened by a president or some other person, who may give the letters to some other clerk?—I think that would be an improvement, undoubtedly, if we could work it; in the present moment I see a difficulty in the room where the postage is paid at present, from the very walls not admitting of a receiver suitable.

The letter is entered at the time it is paid?—Yes; I have often wished myself that the officer receiving the money from the public could be more in view of the person paying for it,



it, and I have endeavoured to effect that, but it has always been opposed by the officers themselves, complaining of the exposure to air and cold.

By adopting a different kind of glass, that might be done?—I am convinced a considerable improvement might be made. Persons putting in letters often complain of their not seeing the person receiving them.

Might it not be open to this objection, that if a person comes with a paid letter, intending to defraud the office, by seeing the person to whom he has delivered the letter he might be enabled to swear to him?—The only inconvenience that might result from that, in my opinion, would be, that in the hurry the person might run away with the letter.

Would there be any objection to the orifice for the letter, the receiver, being in the window on which the money is paid?—No, certainly not.

And the letter put in directly afterwards?—Yes; I had rather almost that the person should be in the office itself. In Paris the person enters the office, pays down the money, and sees the whole transaction.

What is the number of paid letters in a day?—I do not think they amount to 150 English and 300 Irish letters.

They do not take up a man's time?—No, nothing like it.

In short, that arrangement is capable of any improvement which may be suggested?—It certainly is.

Have you any new checks upon the letter-carriers?—I think it was since the commission was here we put into force the whole of our checks on double letters.

Of what do they consist?—All letters sent from the interior of the country that are not single undergo a regular check, from the time they are put in until they are delivered in Dublin, whether they are post-paid or not; there is a register received each morning from the postmaster in Dublin, and all double letters, not franked, are checked from the bag-opener till they are delivered to the letter-carrier, and he keeps a check till he delivers them to the public.

Have you reason to suppose that has been effectual?—Most effectual. I do not mean to say there are not still complaints made of letters with money being lost, but when it has happened, it is in the instance of a single bank note being contained in a letter; and from the manner in which individuals in the country fold their letters, studiously to avoid the postmaster detecting a double letter, the check has been lost.

What ought to have appeared as a double letter has appeared as a single one?—Yes; complaints have been made of the loss of letters, where the check has failed, but, generally speaking, the check has proved itself of most valuable service.

Then you attribute the loss of that letter to the knowledge which existed in the post-office that that letter contained a remittance, but that the writer of it had taken pains to prevent its having that appearance, which would have occasioned it to be registered?—No; it was quite impossible to say, in many cases, whether the letter was ever put in any post-office, or stolen by the servant, which we have discovered; in other cases, whether it was afterwards delivered at the individual's house, which we have also proved on many occasions to have been the case.

Have you any information respecting the amount of bank notes which have been lost during late years; formerly it amounted to eight or nine thousand a year?—Before those checks were put into operation, I ascertained that the Bank of Ireland had paid to the amount of 12,000*l.* a year on duplicate bank notes, the counterparts of which were represented to have been lost in the post-office.

The parties lost nothing then?—No, except they lost their credit by the failure, with the expense of the bond of indemnity they had to give to the Bank. According to the last return I obtained from the Bank of Ireland, it was stated that they had in three months paid but upon five letters to Dublin, one of the letters containing the half of 100*l.*, and the others containing single bank notes; and I have not lately called for any other return, for my object being merely to ascertain the value of the check, whether it is worth continuing, as it is attended with expense, I was satisfied; I am quite decided upon the value of the check. The checks do not extend, unfortunately, to letters going to England, or passing through Dublin.

How is the money that comes into the dead-letter office, and is not claimed, disposed of?—It is applied at intervals to the credit of the public; there is a record kept of every transaction of the kind, so that at any period, however remote, the individual proving the property can obtain a return of it from the revenue; there was a sum of 300*l.* or 400*l.* lately applied to the revenue.

Do you advertise it?—We write to all the parties.

If you cannot detect the parties, do you advertise?—We never advertise.

Within what time had that sum accrued?—I think for many years; at least ten years.

What check is there upon the individual in the dead-letter office for the production of such and such letters?—The responsibility of the head of the office, besides the signature of the officer who has custody of the letters.

Is there no record kept of the letters delivered into his office?—A regular record of every thing which goes in.

Is he required by some officer afterwards to account for it?—Yes.

Who is the officer?—I think the present officer is Mr. Shiel; he is one of the senior officers of the dead-letter office.

Who keeps the account of letters delivered to the dead-letter office?—The alphabet for

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its own branch, and all the letter-carriers for themselves; there are regular books; it is on opening the letter afterwards that the money is discovered.

Supposing a letter is opened by the individual in the dead-letter office, that he finds money in it, and puts it into his pocket; how would that be discovered?—I cannot conceive the possibility, for it might be applied for by the owner, which is frequently done.

Supposing the owner does not demand it, and as you state that you have now appropriated 300*l.* or 400*l.* of dead-letter money to the revenue that may perhaps never be applied for; what check is there against the individual in the dead-letter office applying it to his own purposes?—I am not aware that there is any check, if he chooses to purloin it.

Suppose a letter-carrier and the officer of the dead-letter office were to be in collusion, that he sends in a letter to that person, and they open it, and divide the amount within it; how would that be detected?—The carrier may do it without going to the dead-letter office, if he chooses, and is not afraid of the consequences.

Would it be detected that that had occurred between the letter-carrier and the dead-letter office?—No; they might do it undoubtedly.

Ought you not to be able to trace it to the carrier?—Unless it came under our checks of double letters we could not.

Does not the person in the dead-letter office give a receipt for the letters?—The letter-carrier has a charge against the dead-letter office, containing the addresses of the letters and the amount of postage; and the dead-letter officer preserves a duplicate.

Are they examined and controlled?—The head of the dead-letter office has the control, and examines personally the letters.

The dead-letter office stands charged by a variety of officers with letters delivered into that office?—Yes.

How is the dead-letter officer obliged to account afterwards; taking all those letters, what control is there upon him?—There is none whatever.

Might not a controul be established upon him?—That is a matter worthy of consideration. I should think there might be.

Why should not there be an account raised against him in the office of the accountant-general?—The accountant-general has his check upon the whole postage; he knows the amount of postage left by unclaimed letters; the property is not discoverable until the question of postage is all decided as irrecoverable. It is with a view to destroy the letter that it is opened; and it is in that stage of the transaction that the property becomes discovered; then there is no check upon it but the integrity of the officer himself in the dead-letter office; the only check is on the postage.

Suppose a letter-carrier brings back a letter, alleging that he cannot find the person to whom it is addressed; he gets credit for the postage, and he delivers it into the dead-letter office?—Yes; and there it ends, as far as he is concerned.

Then how is the officer of the dead-letter office made to account for that letter?—There is no way whatever; he opens it to burn it, and if he chooses to apply the money to himself he may do so.

Might not the letter-carriers report, at the time they make over those letters to the dead-letter office, to the secretary's office, or the accountant-general's office, that they have done so, and then the dead-letter office be obliged to account to them for them?—It is done through the accountant's office; the letter-carrier gets credit for that amount.

Do you feel certain that nobody is charged for the amount of that postage?—No; it is taken off the whole amount as so much money lost to the post-office.

Why should not there be a regular account raised against the officer in the dead-letter office in this way, that when the letter-carrier is exonerated for the amount it becomes a charge against the dead-letter office until the account is liquidated in some way; would not that be a perfect check?—Yes, it would.

Might he not be required periodically to produce his letters to the secretary?—They come in thousands; the amount of the postage comes to from 12,000*l.* to 14,000*l.* a year, that are not released at all, but refused, dead, unknown.

Are they principally inland-letters?—A very large proportion; by far the greater proportion are from the interior of the country; they come up from the deputy postmasters.

Now and then they contain money?—Yes; it is the business of the officer to examine first that they have not been opened, and sent back surreptitiously by the public. I have frequently looked back into the matter of the dead-letter office, to see whether we could establish better checks upon it.

How often does the postmaster in the country send up his letters to the dead-letter office?—I think the rule now is once a fortnight.

If a letter directed to the country is not called for in a fortnight, it comes back to the dead-letter office?—Yes; I am rather inclined to think that the period is too short.

Is not the period in England three months?—No; it is the same there, I am pretty sure.

Are any steps taken in the country post-towns to make it public that there are such letters there?—I rather think there is not.

In England, it is a common practice to put the address up in the post-office; is there any such thing done in Ireland?—I do not think it is.

Would not that be worth trying?—I think it might.

Is there any list put up at the post-office in Dublin of the letters for which the persons are not found to whom they are addressed?—No, there is not.

Could not that be done?—I think it might be done.

The receipts of the penny post are increasing?—Yes, they are; I think it pays its expenses now.

Are not the officers entitled to some increase of pay in consequence of that?—It was understood, that when the penny post revenue should reach its expenditure, the officers of that department should be put on the same footing as the inland officers.

Is that the case?—It is not; it has been represented to the Treasury since the Commissioners came here.

Is there any objection to its being done?—No, I think not; except the increased expense, and that would not be large. I think the whole of the increased expense would be under 250*l.* a year.

How is the penny post conducted?—I believe it is very well conducted; its chief officer is very indefatigable, and never absent.

Do you think it is a fair principle, that their remuneration should depend upon the amount of the revenue?—When the reform was made, the penny post was in so low, I may say in so degraded a state, producing only 300*l.* or 400*l.* a year, that the postmasters-general, when they applied for an increase of expense, were anxious not to augment it still more; and the increase was made conditional on the increase of revenue.

Do you understand why it has not taken place?—I suppose that they are waiting for the report of this board as to the whole state of the post-office; as far as I see, the treasury appear to be disinclined to do any thing whatever with the post-office in Ireland till that is done. The superannuations also they seem disinclined to attend to.

Who are the individuals in the post-office whom you would recommend to be superannuated?—The inland office is the most particular.

Who are the officers in a state to be superannuated, by whose superannuation the office would be benefited?—I would recommend the president, and I would recommend Mr. Thomas Harrison.

On what ground?—He is liable to a very melancholy complaint of a nervous tendency.

Would you recommend that he should be superannuated from the whole office, or only the inland office?—Only from the inland office; I think that would be a desirable thing.

Does he ever go into the inland office?—No, he has not done these four or five years.

Is he an efficient officer as remittance clerk?—I consider him one of the most valuable officers we have in the whole building.

Why would you wish him to be superannuated?—I mean from the inland office only.

On what principle would you recommend a superannuation in one office and the retaining him on another?—I do not think it is possible he could do the duty of both.

What would he be entitled to?—He would be entitled to seven-twelfths of 200*l.* a year.

Are you not aware that it is an irregularity; that it is never done?—I am.

How would the law apply to a case of that kind?—I do not know that it would be illegal; though he may be disqualified from one duty, he may be able to perform another.

How would that be certified?—I think the postmasters-general might certify him from what their medical adviser states.

Must they not certify that he is incapacitated for the public service by ill-health?—He is incapacitated from the performance of the duties in that department; if he was to live probably only one day later than the president, he would then rise to the rank of a clerk of a road, and would have 300*l.* or 400*l.* a year more.

What is his length of service?—Thirty years.

His salary is 200*l.* a year in the inland office?—It is.

What is he in the receipt of now from the inland office?—Of 200*l.* a year, minus 70*l.*; he is one of the officers entitled to the full rate.

Is there any other officers you would recommend should be superannuated?—There is; Mr. Cullen, who has been absent a great many years; I know he has been very ill, labouring under a very severe attack of liver complaint; he is now appearing very stout, though on inquiry he is, I understand, unwell.

What is he besides?—He is a solicitor.

Do not you consider it objectionable to have a person employed in the post-office who has professional avocations besides?—Yes, certainly.

What is his salary?—I think it is 170*l.* a year, Irish.

What is his stoppage for absence?—£70 a year, Irish.

What would he be entitled to?—I cannot recollect the precise amount; it will be according to the number of years he has been on the establishment.

Is there any other?—Mr. Wall has been recommended to the Treasury five years ago for superannuation; that has not been answered.

On what ground has his superannuation been recommended?—He has been incapacitated by ill-health.

Is he in the same situation?—Yes.

But not of so long service?—No; he came in in 1808, I think.

Are there any other?—There is Mr. Robert Harrison, whose eye-sight is in a very bad state; he is in the receiver-general's office, and can do his duty there very well, but his eyes are injured, and it is very seldom in the winter that his eyes are not obliged to be guarded.

Are there any other?—I do not recollect any other.

Have you recommended by memorial to the postmasters-general that those should be superannuated from the inland office?—I have frequently mentioned it to them.

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Did you report to them that you think it necessary to the service?—I am sure I must have done.

[The witness was requested to furnish copies of any memorials upon this subject, and the answers of the postmasters-general, if any have been made.]

Has there been any decision upon this subject?—Lord Roese, I know, has felt considerable difficulty in acting.

Have you represented that to Government?—No; we have never made any representation since that on the case of Mr. Wall, and another officer, four or five years ago; the Treasury decided on one, and not the other.

Have you ever made any representation to the Government on the subject of superannuation from one office, and not from the other?—No.

Have you ever made a memorial upon that subject to the postmasters-general?—The postmasters-general have been addressed upon the subject of the necessity of filling up the inland office generally.

Are there not some of those who have situations out of the post-office?—A great many.

Will you mention any who have other situations out of the post-office?—The president has a very valuable office in the bank of Ireland; Mr. William Heron holds a situation in the Custom-house; George Mowlds is a solicitor; John O'Neill holds two situations in the post-office, and is also a solicitor.

Is he an active officer; does he perform both his duties?—He has been a good deal absent.

Is he regularly absent?—He has been for a long period absent at different periods, but he does his duty in both at present; in that case I would suggest that one of the offices should be abolished, his office of president in the penny post, and to give him some portion of salary for it; that I recommended for abolition some years ago; the recommendation was, that either that office or the office of collector, whichever first fell, should cease; I do not think there is a necessity for the continuance of both of them.

[The witness was requested to furnish a copy of his report upon this subject.]

How can Mr. O'Neill do his duty of five or six hours in the inland office, and give his attendance of eight hours in the penny post-office, and at the same time act as a solicitor; have you reason to believe that he neglects the public service, or that he is only nominally a solicitor?—The quantum of duty he has to perform in the penny post I do not think sufficient to occupy any man the hours he is there; his inland office hours are morning and afternoon.

Would he have any other office of the same emolument?—His salary in the penny post is 150*l.* of the late Irish currency. The window-man, whose salary was 90*l.* a year, is abolished; the collector not absolutely abolished. The person who discharges the present duty of collector was a clerk in the writing office; we reduced the clerkship in the writing office last year, and transferred the writing office clerk, Mr. Irvine, to the penny post, to make him do the duty of collector until some opportunity happens of disposing of him. If the office of president of the penny post was vacant, I apprehend the postmasters-general would appoint the man who does the duty of collector president, and make him do both duties.

As Mr. O'Neill stands second in the penny post now, if the comptroller were to vacate, would he not succeed to the situation?—Not necessarily so, I conceive; I rather think he ought to be very glad to be superannuated; he would have a very good salary, having been a good while in the office, and have time to attend to his profession.

Do you mean that he should be superannuated from both offices?—No; from the penny post-office; I consider that he is not wanted there; but that he should remain in the inland office, and not be allowed to practise as a solicitor.

Is there any other who holds another situation, or is in a profession?—The next officer, Mr. Cullen, is an attorney; the next officer, Garrett Wall, is a clerk in a private bank; he does no duty. Mr. Stoker is a clerk in Sir Abraham King's establishment.

Does he do duty?—Yes, he does; he is one of the persons I have been obliged to represent frequently; it is so difficult to find out whether they are ill or not.

When you have a surgeon on the establishment, where is the difficulty in finding that out?—A man goes to bed at night sick, or he may say he is sick, and he gets up not sick; there are so many grades of illness. Mr. J. Paul is a clerk in the imprest office.

Does Mr. Paul do his duty?—He does now. Mr. George Middleton is a gauger in the custom-house.

Does he do his duty?—He is doing his duty now. M'Conkey is a clerk in the custom-house.

Does he do his duty?—Yes, he does.

In those cases where individuals are in other offices, and have a situation in the inland office, the duties of which are only very early in the morning and in the afternoon, do you feel it objectionable to continue that species of double office?—I do; for I think it impossible that a man can go on any length of time with that incessant occupation. If a man is employed from six in the morning till nine, and from five to eight, being employed in the middle of the day in another occupation, I do not think many men can stand that for a continuance.

Can you offer a sufficient inducement in the inland office to enable a man to do without other occupation?—Appointed as the clerks are, from sixteen to twenty years of age, I consider that entering the office on 70*l.* a year, if the principle of increase for length of service was restored, and that young gentlemen whose families reside in Dublin, and not strangers from the

the country, were appointed, the salaries are sufficient. There is a certain proportion of the day a man may employ himself for his benefit; but I speak of the custom-house and the imprest-office, and other offices where the duty is unremittingly from ten to four; it is impossible that the public duty in the post-office can be performed by persons who have that severity of duty in addition, and I am quite convinced that a great deal of the inefficiency of the inland office has arisen from that double duty.

Could you so employ the officers in the inland office, up stairs or down stairs, as to give them a sufficient employment without over-working them, without their having recourse to other pursuits?—I have at this moment in view an experiment which I mean to put into practice, to see what employment we can give, by a new arrangement of our sorting business, to the officers in that office during the day, still discharging the duty they have now to do at night.

Would not that enable you to diminish their number?—I am going to make that experiment, in the event of our English mails coming in early in the morning. I am going to try how many of the inland officers will be sufficient to dispose of all that proportion of the business which becomes night business, between ten o'clock and five. I am thinking of doing it by classes. If I find I can do it by classes during those six hours, it will considerably reduce the number of officers in the inland office at night, and will have a great effect in more ways than one, and I think enable us to get out our mails earlier, and certainly with a great deal more correctness. It will have one good effect, of reducing the number of officers. I mean to begin with one taxing clerk, one stamper, and two sorters; and I will see how much business these four officers can dispose off of the English mails between ten o'clock and four; if I find four is not sufficient I will go on to six, and then to eight, and then divide them into classes.

Would not you be able by that means to unite the English-mail office, the inland office, the alphabet and the paid window, all into one?—I should be very glad to see that.

Under one comptroller or president?—Yes, and with one set of clerks, and probably with an increase of the number of vice-presidents. I stated this to the Commissioners on the last day of my examination, in the year 1823; I have had it in contemplation since the year 1822, after my return from a visit to the post-office in London.

Have you submitted it to the postmasters-general?—I have; they did not approve of it.

What were their objections?—Lord Rosse stated, that his direction on receiving the office was to follow strictly Lord Clancarty's system. It was in 1822 when I represented it to the postmasters-general, when those offices were in a very defective state, the inland office especially; the control of the British-mail office was almost totally abandoned at the time; the alphabet office in the hands of a poor superannuated old man, and the head of the letter-carriers office at that time in a state of derangement.

That was under Lord Clancarty's system?—Yes; but those appointments were not made by him; the individuals who had the offices were in that state; and I took that opportunity of giving in the plan to the postmasters-general.

[The witness was requested to furnish a copy of any reports he had made upon this subject previous to this Board having sat in Dublin in 1823.]

What is the state of the arrears of deputies?—They are at this instant considerably diminished from what they were for some years past, and what they were since the Commissioners came over; they are very heavy still.

The Commissioners have had a return, in which it appears that many deputies are ten and twelve instalments in arrear?—Yes, there are; the subject of arrears have given me great anxiety for some years past.

Whom do you consider responsible for sufficient activity to recover those arrears?—The mode adopted is this, the remittance clerk submits to myself at particular periods the probable deficiencies of all the kingdom, which I have been regularly in the habit of transmitting to the postmasters-general, and have been obliged to make very strong representations upon the subject.

Do not you transmit them to another quarter?—I also send them to the solicitor.

What do you send to the solicitor with them?—I send my remittance clerk's book itself at particular periods, attracting his attention to them.

With what instructions?—To recover as far as he possibly can; to make inquiries as to the state of the parties and their securities; but the essential part of the recommendation to the postmasters-general is, not to suffer the arrears to accumulate at all; as I have said before, for several years past it has been a subject of the greatest anxiety, and has been the subject of most constant, and, I am afraid, strong representations, so that they are considered more as importunities than any thing else, I fear.

What would you consider as the most effectual mode of preventing their taking place?—There is but one mode, to prevent any postmaster having more than a certain sum in his hands; Lord O'Neill is of the same opinion with myself, that as soon as a postmaster owes three instalments he should be put out of office; though the sum may be small, I consider the irregularity of that man, with reference to his instalments, greater than where the sum is larger, for it is more easily obtained; I am quite sure we should not ever lose a fraction by exercising proper care and discipline.

How have you been thwarted in carrying that into execution?—Lord Rosse has not acted in my opinion with sufficient energy; I have frequently brought the cases before him, and given him my opinion; it is right to say on the other side, that the dismissal of a postmaster

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entails a very large expense upon the public, in many cases equal to the arrear, in some instances more; there is a great delay in the appointment of a new postmaster, and a great delay in finding the security.

You could in that case recover the arrear?—If the parties are solvent.

Are you not assured by the surveyors of the solvency of the securities?—If any thing comes to their knowledge they will communicate it; but I do not think it is a matter that is particularly observed by them.

Are they not particularly instructed on every occasion to inquire into the life and solvency of the sureties?—It is a part of the duty.

Does it not form a part of their instructions to inquire into that?—I rather think it forms a part of their regular instructions when they are appointed.

Do they adhere to those instructions?—I have not upon my recollection any instance where they have represented any thing upon the subject.

Unless they have been specially instructed to inquire?—I have not any instance upon my mind.

What is the expense incurred upon the dismissal of a postmaster?—A surveyor must take possession of his office; and, I think, on the shortest average, from the writing for securities and instructions of the postmaster, from a month to six weeks frequently transpires, and that at the rate of 26*s.* a day, that, in many cases, would amount to the whole year's revenue, in many cases it will go beyond it.

Cannot you proceed against the securities without the dismissal of the postmaster?—Not well; I asked the solicitor yesterday, whether we could not make a demand upon a surety without dismissing the principal; the usual course is to close the account, and then to put the bond into suit; I cannot see why a man should not be called upon to pay that which is due; the answer the solicitor gave me was, that we must close the account.

Might it not be stated in any new bond you prepare, that the surety should be liable to be called upon, provided so many instalments shall be due?—Certainly, I think it might.

Would that render it much more difficult to procure sureties?—We have great difficulty in finding good securities; there was one thing suggested itself to me, which I mentioned as a remedy against arrears, rather a novel one I confess, but I do not see why it should not be tried.

What was it?—In consequence of the difficulty of getting solvent securities, gentlemen objecting to become sureties in consequence of the regulation of the Treasury subjecting their property to searches, what occurred to me was this: our bonds are all for 300*l.*, we are obliged, under the orders of Government, to take nothing less than 200*l.*, the majority now is 300*l.*; by comparing the security with the amount of the instalments, there are very few, if any, of the offices would come to any thing like the amount of the security; every postmaster on entering the post-office (miserable as their salaries are) is chargeable with 5*l.* at least, before they get possession of it; two guineas goes as fees to the secretary and chief clerk, the remainder to the solicitor; their salaries are 20*l.* a year; I suggested that those fees to the secretary and chief clerk should be abolished; make every postmaster, upon his appointment, lodge, as security for his good conduct, in the Bank of Ireland to the amount of one month's revenue, which would not amount to any thing like the present expenses of the parties: out of 440 postmasters there are not 100 whose instalments would come to 5*l.* probably; I would make him advance the same sum as he now is put to the expense of, or double the sum, to the credit of the post-office and himself, and let it fructify for his benefit; by that means there would be one month's revenue in hand, and if a man owes two besides that, I would dismiss him, and then there is a certain amount secured; if that was done, the amount of the bond might be reduced, and it should be a stipulation that any man who ever gets the nomination shall be a security for three or four instalments.

What do you mean by any person who gets the nomination?—The proprietor of the town who may be applied to by the postmaster-general to nominate.

Is that usual?—It was always the practice until within a few years, unless in towns of magnitude, where it is larger in amount.

Do you think that a good principle of selection?—I would never take it away from the proprietor of the place; he knows persons, and has an interest in the nomination of the most qualified person, and has the person always under his eye.

Why do not the deputy postmasters change about?—I think a vast deal of their utility depends upon their local knowledge of every person in the country, finding their residences and getting rid of dead letters.

It is not their business to deliver the letters?—It is; and therefore strangers cannot so well know the parties as residents would; they know the persons; they can get rid of the letters; and besides, another objection is the small emoluments of the office; persons sent from one part of the country to another part of the country on 20*l.* a year, they must either starve or rob: there is a melancholy instance of an office of 30*l.* a year; a respectable female sent into it sixty or seventy miles from her own home; she has been respectable, certainly, but unfortunately we have detected her in the commission of a fraud, in altering the accounts.

Who had the nomination of that lady?—Lord Rosse.

Where was she sent from?—From Banagher in King's County to Newbridge.

Had she been in the post-office before?—Her father, I understand, was a postmaster previously.

Are the Board to understand, those difficulties you represent form the reason that the

solicitor does not receive stricter injunctions to proceed for the recovery of arrears than he states that he does?—For the last two years Lord Rosse has been in communication himself with the solicitor, and not through me, about the deputy postmasters arrears.

Do you understand what the nature of his lordship's communications have been?—No; I have never seen them.

To what are the Commissioners to attribute, that he does not receive from you more strict injunctions upon the subject?—Because I cannot get the postmasters-general to proceed to dismiss them from their office.

Do not you think that the system of fictitious instalments has an injurious effect?—The principle of instalments was to make them remit more frequently; they used to remit only once a quarter. I do not think that has any effect upon us one way or another; it enables us to receive from them our remittances more frequently. I do not mean that that alters at all the principle of proceeding through the solicitor.

In your directions to the solicitor, you direct him to proceed for a sum which is probably due, not a certain sum?—We direct him to make every inquiry as to the solvency of the parties and the probability of its being recovered, for a letter from the solicitor in many cases will have a much better effect than one from myself; I have found by experience our letters have no effect at all.

Have his any effect?—Yes, I should think they have; I am sure they have in many.

You are aware that he writes a circular letter once a quarter, a printed letter?—Yes, he writes to the securities and presses them, and says the responsibility is off the post-office; that it is with securities themselves, if they do not take steps to oblige the parties to pay; and and on the other hand, he says, those securities may be themselves insolvent, and they do not care about it.

He writes for a supposed sum?—Yes; it is impossible he can know the actual sum until the party is dismissed and his account closed.

If the postmasters were required to furnish the actual amount, should not you know it then?—He can furnish that only once a quarter.

Would not that be positive data to go on?—Then the man must be dismissed at the quarter-day, and possession be taken by a surveyor at the moment.

May you not relinquish the fraction, and say, we must have this balance up to a certain date; might not the security be called upon for that?—I think he might, by sending a surveyor to take charge and close the account.

There is at present no account upon which the solicitor can proceed?—No, I think not, so long as the defaulter remains.

Might there not be such an account; if the postmaster were to furnish an account in which he acknowledged such a balance, would any thing more be necessary to enable the solicitor to proceed?—I do not think that any postmaster can furnish the actual amount up to a certain moment, at which he is making it out.

He may do it to a certain date?—Yes, he may; if the account goes to the 5th of July he might make up his account on the 5th of August.

If he states a certain balance, cannot you proceed upon that balance?—Unquestionably; if a man made out his account, and we conceived that account is a correct one, we might certainly do it.

What makes it inexpedient in your opinion that the postmaster should furnish an account?—Because if we took the postmaster's account as conclusive, we might lose, by it being a fraudulent one.

It does not follow that you take it as conclusive, but why should you presume it will be incorrect?—We might not so presume; but if we were to act on it under legal proceedings, it might be a bar to any further claim.

What difficulty do you see in the postmasters furnishing those accounts once a quarter, or at any stated period which might be fixed?—There could be no difficulty in the thing; a man might do it; he must naturally know it as well as we know it, for his account is composed of certain items of charge and discharge; strictly speaking, it is through himself that all the items on the discharge side must come, for his first entry in his discharge is his remittances; he knows all his remittances; he knows all he is entitled to for his riding work, and for his credits for insolvent letters, which comprise the whole; but for the charge part he must be checked in Dublin.

How is he apprised of his disallowances?—Those are received also from himself; we must take and we do take the admissions that the postmasters make in the dockets which go from Dublin, so far as relates to the Dublin part; and as to the bye-letters he has the whole of that under his own observation exclusively.

After they have been checked by the office?—He knows the amount he is chargeable with by the different postmasters; the check of the office in Dublin is essential to see whether the two accounts correspond together.

Could he make up his accounts before the bye-letter monthly check has been sent up to the office and returned to him allowed?—I consider he has the power of doing it, for it is and must be afterwards from that recapitulation of the dockets that the whole is composed.

Two corresponding deputies may not exactly agree?—With respect to the byeletters they may not, and that forms an essential part of the duty of the office in Dublin; but each deputy knows himself what he receives from the other postmaster, on the whole number he corresponds with; he knows the amount the postmaster has charged him with. The postmasters have certainly the same means of making out their own accounts that we have, but their doing so I cannot consider to answer any purpose.

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Sir

Edward Smith Lees.

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Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
18th Oct. 1826.

Have you ever required a deputy to make out his account?—No, never.

Can you mention any other department where there are sub-accountants in the receipt of revenue who are not required to furnish their accounts?—In the custom-house the collector must furnish the accounts, because the goods enter his own port, and no control is over him.

Is not your postmaster a collector in his degree?—Yes, but the letters go from Dublin to and charged on him; every part of the post-office is brought under charge by some other person; the stamp office comes nearest to ours; there is a certain quantity of stamps issued; the amount is known, and is charged from Dublin like letters.

Have you not frequent correspondence to clear up the differences, as to the accounts, when stated by the deputies?—With respect to bye letters there has been.

Is there a difference between the deputies and the accountant-general when he makes up the account?—No; that would occur between the postmasters themselves in the charges by the bye-letter office against them.

Do the monthly accounts of the postmasters ever come before you?—Yes.

Do you see the correspondence upon the subject?—Yes. I do not think there have been many the last quarter on supposed errors; when examined by reference to the different offices, the bye-letter office or the letter-bill office, it is always found that the parties are in error; there was an instance lately where there was a difference of charge.

Have you reason to believe that the deputy postmasters in general are able to make up their own accounts?—No doubt of it; they must know every charge against them; they go a great way to do it now; it is through themselves we are enabled to do it; we never get a final account from a postmaster till he goes out of office: we know quarterly his balances.

You have a quarterly account?—Yes; but we never get that settled till two months after; the circumstance of dead letters prevents the making up the account for a fortnight; if they were desired to make up a weekly account, they may say we have got so many letters on hand, and we may take that on their *ipse dixit* if we think proper.

They can state their account?—Yes; they can state their charge both for Dublin and bye letters very well; but if the thing is properly worked, I think it may be brought to a month.

Is not there another cause of fictitious balances being drawn with your deputies; is it not partly in consequence of letters being received free by the officers of the department?  
No.

Is not there an allowance made to them?—That has no effect on the accounts of the deputy postmasters in any part of our proceeding; that is allowed out of the charge of the alphabet specially upon the letter itself; it affects the receipt of the alphabet; every day the letter is charged like any other letter, against the individual by the alphabet.

With respect to the nomination of postmasters, you say you very often refer it to the proprietor of the town?—No; I say we ought to do it.

What is the practice?—The postmasters-general appoint whom they think proper, and in some instances are quite indifferent as to the nomination.

Do you observe any greater irregularity in any district than another; are they more regular in any one of the provinces than in the others?—I have not looked at the list with that view; I believe if the list is taken they will be found bad in all parts.

Do not you find a great many competitors ready for each vacancy?—No, I cannot say that there are.

Is there a difficulty in finding proper persons?—No, we find them with great ease; but they think the moment they are appointed postmasters they get something very magnificent indeed, and when they come to take possession of it they find that they have nothing but the public money in their hands. I would guarantee the public for a hundred a year against any loss if a proper principle were established.

What is that principle?—The never letting them owe more than the amount of two months; having one month's produce already in hand; reducing the amount of security, and making that security specially solvent.

What means are wanting to prevent that?—To dismiss them, and make an example of half-a-dozen, and sending their names to every postmaster in the country.

Why is not that done?—I cannot say as to that; I only feel that it ought, and lament that it is not.

The postmaster of Waterford is very largely in arrear?—Yes, he is.

What are the circumstances of that case?—His emolument has been affected for some years by the unfriendly feeling of the merchants.

In consequence of his surcharging letters?—In some instances, in consequence of that; he has made the merchants of Waterford his enemies.

Were they used to make him presents?—He had fees; that is the principal part of the postmaster's emolument in the large towns; but a statement was sent up to the Board by him within this last fortnight, he having got a very strong letter; it appears that his whole profits do not exceed 40*l.* a year.

By whom was he appointed?—By Lord Rosse; he was a most excellent postmaster; he was postmaster in the town of Ross, we found him a very valuable officer, and he was transferred on a vacancy from Ross to Waterford.

Is it a fact that very considerable surcharges took place immediately upon his arrival there, or soon after?—I think his re-charges have produced from 150*l.* to 160*l.* a year, in a revenue of 5,000*l.*, and his rebates amount to 10*l.* a year.

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Do they go on regularly producing that?—Yes; there are a good many rebates, but they come, notwithstanding, to that amount.

Cork ought to produce more, as the correspondence is greater?—Yes; if the postmaster at Cork was equally vigilant.

Do you consider that the whole postage is not received upon a large proportion of the letters?—The postmaster of Cork re-taxes to the amount of 200*l.* a year, with a revenue of 13,000*l.*, and rebates 40*l.* a year.

Are they at Belfast?—At Belfast they are considerable also. At Belfast and Waterford there is a considerable increase, but there are also considerable rebates. Belfast produces from re-taxation very nearly 200*l.* a year, from a revenue of 11,000*l.*, and the rebates come to 26*l.* a year.

How long is it since the postmaster of Waterford was removed from Ross?—I think he has been there for these sixteen years.

The present postmaster of Ross appears to be more in arrear than most of them?—Ross is very large also; there was some reason for giving time to Ross; there was an over-credit four or five years ago, inadvertently made to Ross, under the head of riding duty, for a ride which had ceased, and in examination of his account, the thing went on for eighteen months to his credit, while the ride had ceased.

Could that have occurred if he had furnished his account?—I think that the postmaster was aware of that.

Could that have occurred if the postmaster had furnished his account?—Yes, on the same principle.

Not without an attempt at fraud?—My opinion is, that his concealing it was not to be justified.

Could he have claimed that over-credit honestly?—It might have been a stronger case against him, and certainly would.

If he had furnished his account with that over-credit, would it not have been detected by the accountant-general?—No; because in making up his account he would have taken credit for that just as easy as he had continued to receive the credit, not performing the duty.

Would not it have been examined by the proper officer here, and the difference or improper claim have been ascertained?—Yes; it would have been examined, but the error, from inadvertence, might have escaped detection.

The deputy postmaster of Dundalk appears to be considerably in arrear?—That was a new appointment; that is the arrear of the old postmaster.

Are there the same sureties?—No.

Do you mean that the balance of the former postmaster has been transferred to the present?—No; but it will come in this quarter, and be furnished to the late postmaster.

Will the sureties be proceeded against?—No, I do not think that will be necessary; the man has given up the office; his brother has been appointed; he has come into property, I believe.

If he is a solvent wealthy man, why has he allowed this arrear to accrue; the instalment is 74*l.*, and the arrear appears by the book to be 409*l.*: according to the solicitor's statement of his practice, he must have been twice written to; that is, once in each of the two quarters during which this has accrued, and he has not answered those applications, as appears from this book?—No, certainly not.

What letters coming from Scotland to the inland parts of Ireland come through Dublin *via* Donaghadee?—All south of Dublin itself.

If they are going to Sligo, how do they go?—Those go by the north, and, I think, all as far as Galway. I think those to Galway go through Dublin.

How is the postage rated?—According to the scale of rates, by distance, from Donaghadee.

Are they re-taxed in Donaghadee?—They are re-taxed, and all brought into charge at Donaghadee, and the postmaster furnishes a quarterly account to the accountant-general of the amount.

Suppose a letter dispatched from Edinburgh to Galway; what does the Edinburgh postmaster tax?—He taxes to Donaghadee, including the water-carriage; then it is re-taxed on to the town to which it is going, at Donaghadee.

Is it taxed by the route through Dublin?—No, not unless it goes through Dublin.

Take Cork, for instance; would it be taxed according to the whole distance that letter travels?—Yes, according to the whole distance from Donaghadee to its destination; that formerly was not the practice; it was charged a new letter to Dublin, and then from Dublin to the point.

There were then three taxations for short distances?—Yes.

Now there is one in Scotland and one at Donaghadee, which carries it through?—Yes.

But still it is taxed according to the road it goes, supposing that to be a circuitous route?—Yes; there are certain towns with which the postmaster at Donaghadee keeps an account of letters passed immediately to those towns.

Do you recollect the names of the towns?—There are 150 of them; there are printed lists of them in the office here, and the postage marked against them.

Are there any applications before you for naming new post-towns?—There are several in the office at present.

Are any of them populous places?—Some of them are. We have the reports ready upon some of them; we have not gone through them.

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Sir

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Sir

Edward Smith Lees.

18th Oct. 1826.

Is there any reason for the delay?—Yes; our opinion is, that the Treasury do not wish to enlarge any part of the establishment till the whole is fixed.

Are they likely to pay?—Some of them are; some not, I think. I dare say there are not less than from thirty to fifty; they are not confined to any one district.

Do the postmasters wait for the report of this Board to make their decision with respect to those?—They wait, in fact, till the Treasury decide upon the establishment as it now stands. The Treasury, we presume, are waiting for the report of this Board.

Do those applications all go to the Treasury?—Yes.

What part does the Irish Government take in the arrangement of the post-office business?—I do not understand that the Government here decide. We communicate with the Lord Lieutenant, and the Lord Lieutenant with the Treasury.

The Treasury would not take upon themselves to canvas the opinion given here by the Irish Government upon the eligibility of post-towns; that can be grounded, of course, only upon the probability of its paying?—In making the application to Government, we state the expense and the returns, with a view to repaying. The usual course is, to desire the postmaster to give the amount of letters for a certain time, and the surveyor's report upon the probability of the thing succeeding.

Are there any applications for new mail-roads?—I am not aware of any now.

Does it ever happen that you indict roads?—Never; we have no power, unless there is great abuse; we may then go to the Court of Chancery; it is a very tedious and expensive process.

There is a defect in the law with respect to ship-letters between England and Ireland, is there not?—There is; the defect operates very injuriously, I should think, inasmuch as there is no penalty that prevents any vessel, or individual on board a vessel, carrying letters in private ships between the two countries at present.

Have you detected any persons carrying letters privately in Ireland?—Yes, frequently.

Have you recovered any penalties?—Yes, a great many; at present the Act is in abeyance; there is a draught of an Act of Parliament now going before Government upon both those subjects. On a former occasion we attracted the attention of the Treasury to the ship-letter Act, but nothing has been done.

Are not the rates of postage between England and Ireland very oppressive?—Very much so.

How do you apprehend they came to be fixed at those high rates?—The inequality of the charge by the letter on its arrival in Ireland being subject to the distinct Irish rates in addition to the Scotch rates, and the same increased charge applies to letters from Ireland to Great Britain. Since the Commissioners were here before, the Treasury have referred the matter to the postmasters-general in both countries, and under their directions there has been a communication. The Irish board has submitted the result to the Treasury of what would probably be the effect upon the revenue if one fixed standard was made for the letters passing between the two countries, in lieu of the present distinct charges; we gave in that return since Parliament rose.

Have you received any communication in consequence?—None; the matter is under regulation, I believe, now, and will form the subject of some parliamentary discussion by and by; the estimated loss is very great.

You mean that that would be produced by reducing the letter to the Irish rate?—Our calculations were made upon the English rate, that which is chargeable according to the English rate for the gross distance, not bringing the Irish mile into English miles; if they were brought into English miles the rate would not be any thing like the reduction; it comes to 37,000*l.* a year at the lowest calculation.

Is that confined to the correspondence between Ireland and Scotland?—No; taking the whole together, England, Scotland, and Ireland. I had an account taken of the address, distance, and postage of every letter which came into Ireland for one week, to Dublin, Donaghadee, and Waterford, and have got the account; and upon that week's postage, which occupied very large books, we made our calculations; I tried it in various ways, and I am satisfied the loss would amount to 37,000*l.*

Do not you think the excessive rates occasion a good deal of evasion as between Scotland and Ireland?—I have no doubt of it; I am convinced that every evasion which can take place is availed of; but in many cases the charges are so high it is almost prohibitory of any correspondence at all; we pay more for a letter at present going from Scotland into the interior of Ireland than for a letter going to the Mediterranean.

What is the postage on a letter from Edinburgh to Dublin?—I think it is 2*s.* 1*d.*

What would be the charge from Glasgow to Belfast?—That is about 100 miles; I think about 1*s.* 6*d.* or 1*s.* 7*d.*

What would be the charge for the same distance in Ireland?—10*d.* Irish, 9*d.* English.

On a former occasion the Commissioners asked you respecting the necessity of the remittances passing through the hands of the remittance clerk, why they should not go immediately to the receiver-general?—The object of separating the two was, that there might be some intermediate check.

Is there any advantage in that, in your opinion?—If it can be supposed that the receiver-general and the remittance clerk would connive, there is no advantage in it.

If the receiver-general was directed to communicate to the secretary each day the amount which he had received from each postmaster, would not that be a sufficient check?—Certainly; it might be done in a better way perhaps; the amount might be entered on the letter-bill in the morning, and the letter-bill clerk make a return to the secretary's office of the amount.

If the postmaster were required to furnish his account periodically, and to claim his credits for all remittances he had sent, would not that be another check upon the appropriation of the remittances here?—Yes, it would, certainly.

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Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
18th Oct. 1826.

You have no foreign post-office here?—No.

All letters going to foreign parts are considered by you as English letters?—Yes.

Letters going to the continent must be post-paid here?—Yes; they are paid in advance.

To Dover?—I believe the sum we take, under the direction of the English post-office, includes more than the English postage, which is but 1s. 4d. from Dublin to Dover, and 2s. 3d. from Dublin to Calais.

Do you account to England for the whole of the foreign postage?—Yes; the postage of a letter from Dublin to France is 2s. 3d.

Are foreign letters paid for at the same office as British paid letters?—There is only one office for paid letters.

What is the nature of the money accounts you keep with England?—We are charged by them in their letter-bills with all the postages upon the letters that come in, and we keep an account of all the interior rates upon the letters going out, such part of them as belongs to the post office of Ireland.

Whether paid or unpaid letters?—Yes.

Do you make a quarterly or half-yearly account?—A quarterly account.

How is the difference paid?—We remit the difference as soon as we ascertain the amount of the balance to each quarter.

Has any plan been suggested for abolishing that exchange of accounts?—I think the postmasters-general recommended it to the Treasury some years ago

So that whatever is received in Ireland should go to the Irish revenue?—Yes; that each should collect an account to the Treasury for that which was received.

Is not there an expense attending upon the present mode of account, by a charge in the receiver-general's office upon it?—Yes; there is a charge of one per cent. upon the amount remitted; he is responsible for the bill he takes, and for his trouble, and I suppose for the commission to his banker in London; it is the usual charge made by all individuals.

EDWARD S. LEES.

### Appendix, No. 177.

Friday, 20th October 1826.

SIR EDWARD SMITH LEES again called in and examined.

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Sir

Edward Smith Lees.  
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THE Board wish to receive any information you may be in possession of respecting any arrangements which have been in agitation for improving the communications between the north and south and between the east and west?—I am not exactly aware of any particular propositions of late.

There is nothing at present in agitation?—No, nothing at all, except an application from Cork for the acceleration of the Cork mail from Dublin; the merchants applied first to have the present coach, which travels from Dublin to Cork by Clonmel, and which leaves Dublin at night, transferred to the line by Cashel, to make the Cashel coach the night coach and the Clonmel coach the day one, in order to give increased acceleration to the British mails from Dublin. The postmasters-general did not conceive it right to acquiesce in that proposition, because it would have so interfered with the cross-communications that connect the two lines together, in the first place; and in the second place, would either have delayed the letters for Clonmel and Kilkenny, or would have subjected us to increased expense by communications to supply those towns; in addition to that the merchants, pending the decision upon that point, asked the postmasters-general to interfere with the contractor to expedite the mails upon the Cashel road, that now takes twenty-four hours: while we were in communication with the contractor upon that subject, they made a further communication to us, that in the event of the contractor acquiescing in that proposition we would pay attention to a new proposition which they received, and which they referred to us from an individual in the county of Cork, to run an additional coach between Dublin and Cork, at an accelerated rate of travelling beyond what either of our present contractors had agreed to.

Did they wish it to take a mail?—They wished us to send a mail by it; any mail which might come from England after the present Cashel coach would have been dispatched from Dublin.

When does the present Cashel coach leave?—At eleven o'clock in the morning, it formerly left at seven; we altered the hour to eleven, to take the advantage of sending forward so many more British mails, which we have been repeatedly successful in doing since; the gentleman who proposed this to the merchants at Cork was in Dublin in the course of the last week; that point has not yet been decided whether we will give him the mail or not, the contractors seem to consider that it is an infraction of their contract if we encourage another man; that point remains to be discussed; they have volunteered in the interim to

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give the additional time, free of all charges to the public, that the merchants first applied for, which will take place immediately, namely, to give them their English letters at nine in the morning in the place of eleven; that is, they propose an acceleration of two hours without subjecting us to any expense; when we first proposed it to them, they said they thought they ought to have compensation; we told them that under the present circumstances we could not promise them any compensation at all.

When would they leave Dublin in that case?—At the same hour as at present, eleven in the morning.

Which of those coaches would have the English mail?—The one which leaves at eleven o'clock. The proposition of the other man was, that he would travel in twenty hours; there was no arrangement as to the time of its leaving; that would all have been to be arranged in the event of the postmasters-general entertaining the proposition; if the mails were to be delivered at nine o'clock in the morning he would leave at one. The answer of the postmasters-general to that proposition, I think, will be, unless they consider it to be an infraction of the contract, that so soon as they are persuaded that the new contractor is a sufficiently solvent man, and that there is a certainty of his establishment being a permanent one, they will avail themselves of it, as far as they find it necessary for the interests of the merchants.

Are there any arrangements in preparation for improving the communication by cross lines; by an extension of the lines of communication?—No, there are not at present any before the postmasters-general.

Unless something is suggested to you, you do not of yourselves originate any extension or any addition to the existing lines of communication?—We have not been in the habit of doing so frequently; there have been, of course, from time to time great alterations.

Do you think any of those new lines are likely to answer?—There has been one subject before us for several years past, a direct communication from Belfast to Enniskillen and Sligo; we have accelerated the English letters through the north and west of Ireland lately by the alterations we have made.

Are there any counties through which a mail-coach does not pass at all?—I think that if they travel through any part of Roscommon it must be a very limited part, and a great part of Mayo; the north-west part of Mayo there is no mail-coach; there have been applications lately for a mail coach from Derry to Sligo; we have permission of the Treasury to go to a certain extent for the mileage of that, but have not been able to succeed in getting that established.

The establishment of the clerks of roads continues on the same footing as three years ago?—Yes, there has been no alteration.

Do you consider that that establishment, as it is at present, conduces to the general convenience of the public?—As to the convenience of the public, I do not know that it operates in any particular manner; it is more as an advantage to the individuals who possess the privilege of circulating the papers.

If those individuals had the same advantage in another shape the public would not suffer?—Not the least; because they can get their papers as they do at present, in a far greater proportion, from the editors themselves; all the restrictions which formerly operated against the editors of papers, and which originally led to the creation of that privilege in the post-office, as well as certain individuals in the Castle, have been removed several years past.

Can the editors now forward their papers with the same facility as the clerks of the roads can?—With the difference, that the clerks of the roads can put their papers in if they get them from the editors as long as they can get them into the mail-bags, by the presidents of the different establishments, or the persons they employ in making up their papers; there the post-office suffers great inconvenience.

In what manner?—From the delay with which the editors supply the papers at night to the clerks of the roads themselves; they merely supply us with such papers as they cannot get rid of themselves, and very often our papers remain an entire night unforwarded.

Do they not supply you with a certain number?—Yes; but they send them in frequently at so late an hour, that the mail would be delayed if they were put in.

May it not happen, that the mail is delayed to afford an opportunity for the clerks of the roads papers going?—We take care that shall not happen; if such a thing was to be reported, as that the mail was delayed for that, there would be a very severe reprimand on the president of the inland-office.

Has it frequently happened that they have been left behind?—It has, frequently; a great many persons have been inconvenienced by it.

What can be the object of the editors in creating that delay?—Because they have a great number of their own to make up, and they take care to get their own in before they will supply a single sheet to the persons in the post-office.

If the clerks of the roads had not that privilege it would ensure an earlier delivery of the newspapers from the editors; they would then take care to have their own in at the proper hour?—Certainly, I think they would; in proportion as the English mails come in earlier in the day, all the difficulties which the clerks of the roads and the editors have to contend with will be removed, for they will go earlier to press and be delivered earlier; it was the waiting for English intelligence which occasioned their being so late.

Will that have a good effect, likewise, in reducing the possible temptation of the express clerks to delay the mails, or to forward their own in preference to others?—If we succeed in getting

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getting the English mail to the time we propose, it will extinguish our privilege entirely, I think.

Will you state by what means?—Because the chief supply arises now from all the club-houses and coffee-houses and public institutions in Dublin, who get their papers express, and pay a high premium to the clerks of the roads and the express clerks; the moment the arrival of the English mail becomes more certain, they will get their supply in another way, and not through us, and they have given notice to us that they will do so.

Does that refer to the country supply?—No; chiefly to the Dublin supply.

Why should not it refer also to the country supply?—Not to the same extent.

The papers will always be in time for the country?—Yes.

Were they not formerly frequently arriving nearly at the time of the dispatch?—Yes; that will in some degree bear upon the privilege of the clerks of the roads; in fact, it will deprive the clerks of roads and the express clerks of all the advantage which they have possessed hitherto, and now possess over the public, as far as English newspapers go, by putting them on a perfect equality with every other individual in the country.

Is the post-office at all times open for the putting in letters for England or for the interior?—At all times; except when the mails are making up, from seven o'clock till eight in the evening.

That is for the interior?—Yes; the English receiver is always open.

Has any regulation been made by the postmasters-general to limit the authority that the secretary has exercised in the case of suspension of clerks?—No.

What is the power you at present possess in that respect?—I exercise the power of suspension myself if any great irregularity comes before me, until I can communicate with the postmasters-general; but in most cases I send down the minute in the first place, unless it be some very glaring instance, if there is any thing like a fraud, or any strong instance of very insubordinate conduct.

Might not there be very great inconvenience in the absence of the postmasters-general, if there were not the secretary or some one who could exercise such a discretion?—Yes, I think many things might occur; undoubtedly if it was any high officer, I should consult the Government if the postmasters-general were both away.

With respect to the subordinate officers, is it not necessary that they should feel that some person has the power of visiting them pointedly for any misconduct?—I think it is necessary.

Is there any officer besides the secretary to whom you think such a power could be confided?—The person actually in the authority in case of secretary being away; I think there should be a power vested in him, of suspension.

If the secretary is away there is a pro-secretary?—The next officer in the secretary's office.

Of course it is considered that he succeeds to the power of the secretary for the time?—In a great measure.

It has been stated, that errors which sometimes occur in the deputy postmasters accounts are corrected by charges made in the accounts of incidents, without appearing in the accounts of the deputy postmasters themselves; is that so?—If we have discovered that credits have been erroneously made to deputy postmasters in any branch of the service, that they were not entitled to, our mode of bringing it to charge against them is, to add it to their docket of expenses, then it becomes amalgamated with their general account of postage. I am not aware at this moment of their receiving credits for any overcharges against them in their incidental accounts.

The case supposed is a case of a deputy postmaster being overcharged, and the error being discovered, would it then be regular to reimburse him by a warrant, which warrant would be charged on incidents, the amount of which would not appear in the postmasters accounts?—A circumstance of that kind might occur, and would be allowed by a regular warrant, signed by the postmasters-general, in his favour for the amount.

Where would that be charged?—It would be charged on the general incidents of the post-office.

Then it would not appear in his account?—The amount would be charged against the general incidents of the post-office.

Then that postmaster's account never would stand corrected in the books?—It is not very material.

That is the effect of it, is it not?—That has happened, I think, in one instance within these two months; I am not aware of any other.

The result of that course of settling an error is, that the postmasters account does not stand corrected in the post-office account?—I conceive that would be a better way than altering his account; if we find he has been overcharged a sum of money by error, I think it would be better to repay him that by a warrant, signed by both postmasters-general than to alter his account.

Does not that give a false account of his receipts?—The account had already been falsified by error; it is only a different mode of giving him back his money, and that too in an open public manner, in place of a concealed one.

It may be indifferent to his pocket, but in the statement of the public accounts must it not give a false amount?—In the instance I allude to, my impression was, that it was better fairly to bring it before the board, and to let the postmasters-general sign the minute themselves, than to give it under my own hand in a credit in the postmaster's account at the end of the quarter.

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The effect of that is to bring under the head of incidents in the post-office accounts that which is not an incidental expense?—Yes, but it is open to immediate explanation; in the other way it may not be open to explanation, for it may be amalgamated with their accounts.

It might be corrected by a deduction to that amount in the next charge against him?—Then it would never appear at all; if once the docket itself came to be destroyed, which would be in a very short time, there would end the transaction, and that docket would be a false instrument.

At all events, some mode should be devised which would establish the accuracy of each postmaster's account in your department; you cannot now give a true copy of that postmaster's account?—I see the effect of the observation.

How could you vouch that in the statement of the public accounts as a charge for incidents, when you came to submit your accounts for audit?—The minute that is attached to the warrant explains the transaction openly, and if any question should arise on the part of the imprest officer it will appear; in the one case it will never appear at all afterwards; it will have been added to his account; it would have been the easiest way to have done it so: I might have deducted it from the next docket, and there it would have been concealed for ever.

Do you recollect what account it was in?—I cannot recollect.

Was it Rathcoole?—Indeed I cannot say; I do not think there was another instance of the kind; it appeared at the time to be the most simple way of remedying it.

In that case how was the error ascertained?—I think it was the letter-bill office discovered it themselves; we were satisfied of the thing, and made a minute of it. It appeared to me that was the most open and fair mode of rectifying it; it is a thing that will probably never happen again.

You mentioned the other day, that there was an objection to a too strict examination into letters, for the apparent and avowed purpose of ascertaining whether they were single or double or treble letters; did you wish to point the attention of the Board to any particular facts or persons whom it would be dangerous to admit into that degree of confidence, in making those reflections?—No, except that it might apply to those professional men in the sorting office, those who are solicitors.

Has it ever been objected to by the public, that persons of that description are admitted into the post-office, and have the means of obtaining information that may be made use of out of the office?—No; the public perhaps are not aware of the circumstance.

What is the objection you feel to it?—Because I think it gives them a perfect knowledge of the names and residence of individuals against whom they may be concerned in serving process; it gives them an undue advantage over individuals, and gives them a particular advantage in their profession over others.

You do not feel any other objection?—No.

Are writs frequently sent down by post?—Frequently.

Might not a solicitor, knowing that a letter was to be sent down containing a writ against a client of his, tamper with that letter?—He has the full power of doing it. I have some idea of our having had some particular case of that description before us not a great while ago; I cannot call it to mind; but, generally speaking, the sorting officers of the post-office, and every part of the department connected with the distribution of letters, ought to be kept as exempt as possible from all distinct professions and private interest, either mercantile or any other, but particularly of a legal nature.

Have you any reason to consider, that the fact of the nomination of the deputies being in the postmasters-general has occasioned a degree of injurious lenity in acting towards them, which has obstructed the public service?—I think there have been some instances where a sufficient severity has not been exercised, at different periods.

There are several deputies now considerably in arrear. You have stated that you have often recommended they should be suspended or dismissed when there were two or three or four instalments due; is that now carried to a great extent; are you of opinion, that there are many postmasters who, on that account, ought to be dismissed, but who still hold the situation?—There have been a great many for some years past owing considerably more instalments than three. I have been of opinion these seven years, that several of them ought to have been dismissed who are still in office.

Has any measure of just severity been used towards them, by way of example?—Not against those.

When was the last instance of any dismissal of a deputy?—I do not remember the exact period; but some have been dismissed since the Commissioners were here, on account of arrears.

Have the balances been recovered?—No doubt some of them have.

From the sureties?—Yes, certainly.

What have been the reasons for the forbearance observed in those cases, where officers in arrear have been permitted to hold their situations?—That has rested entirely with the postmasters-general.

Is there one rule for all the deputy postmasters upon that subject?—There is no fixed rule. Lord O'Neill has been of opinion, that as soon as a postmaster owes three instalments, if he does not discharge them, he should be dismissed.

Has Lord O'Neill acted up to that opinion?—He cannot act up to it, unless he is joined by Lord Rosse.

A deputy cannot be dismissed without the two postmasters-general joining?—No.

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Do they sign a minute to that effect?—Regularly.

Do you suppose that Lord Rosse is indisposed to join Lord O'Neill in that opinion?—I can only judge from the facts.

Would the Commissioners be justified in understanding that it is Lord O'Neill's opinion, that certain postmasters should be dismissed, but that Lord Rosse differs from that opinion?—I presume he must differ, because he is aware of Lord O'Neill's opinion, and he has not acted upon it.

Has it been put before him?—Yes, regularly; I have never withheld the returns of arrears a single post.

Do you communicate to him any invitation on the part of Lord O'Neill to dismiss such and such a deputy?—I have communicated that opinion to him, and have represented to him the names of the defaulters.

Has it been communicated to him that Lord O'Neill was of opinion such a postmaster should be dismissed, and has Lord Rosse declined uniting in the dismissal of such a postmaster?—Lord O'Neill's opinion has gone before Lord Rosse.

Would it not be easy to lay down a line which should limit the forbearance?—Perfectly.

Can you state any reason why it should not?—I conceive over lenity; Lord Rosse alluded, when he came up last time to look over those arrears, to the great expense; it would in many instances exceed the arrear.

In what parts of the country are there the worst instances?—They are dispersed over the whole country.

You cannot say it is chiefly among individuals appointed by Lord Rosse that the defaults have taken place?—No, by no means.

Do you think that it would have any effect if the appointment of the deputies were in the Government, reserving to the postmasters-general the power of dismissal for improper conduct?—Yes, it might. Upon general principles the patronage being united with the control, and the appointments being alternate, might be deemed to be objectionable, by creating over lenity or over severity. I had much rather, myself, for the welfare of the establishment, that the old principle of the postmasters-general was invariably adhered to; that was, with the exception of large offices which were the subject of patronage very fairly and properly, that the chief proprietors of towns should be applied to to nominate the persons most fit for the office the moment a vacancy fell, unless it was an office of 30*l.* or 40*l.* a year. I regularly applied to the proprietor of the town in the name of the postmasters-general whose turn it was to nominate an individual.

Even without reference to the individual case, supposing it was a small town, to the postmaster-general?—I scarcely ever troubled him with a letter; it was an understood thing, and the compliment was paid in the individual postmaster-general's name.

When was the change made?—I think within these fifteen or sixteen years.

Do you think that the change has been attended with a bad effect?—I attribute many of our arrears to that in a great measure; and besides it is particularly offensive to the proprietors of the towns sending a person under their nose whom they do not know; and it is productive of another bad effect; it is impossible that strangers can go and exist upon the sum allowed by the post-office; they must find other means of livelihood, and that gives them an interest in other matters that should not belong to a postmaster; individuals have frequently complained of that.

The gentlemen in the neighbourhood?—Yes.

In reference to the expected Report of the Parliamentary Commissioners upon the Irish post-office, have you any particular points that you have not been questioned upon to which you would wish to draw their attention, either in reference to your former examination or your present?—The paper I sent over to the former secretary of this Commission, by direction of the Commissioners, contained in detail what occurred to me upon the office, and each branch of it in the shape of improvement.

You have no additions to make to that?—

#### IMPROVEMENTS suggested for consideration.

No. 1. British letters arriving on *Saturdays* for the country districts of the penny post, and which, if the mail arrives after twelve o'clock, are not delivered until *Monday*, should be delivered the same day, or on *Sunday*, by probationary letter-carriers to be employed for that duty.

No. 2. The receiving-houses in Dublin to receive postage in advance on letters for Great Britain and foreign parts.

No. 3. The postmasters-general to provide and have kept in repair the mail-coaches, and contract for the conveyance of the mails with the deputy postmasters.

No. 4. Mail-coaches to be exempt from toll duty, or the postmasters-general to be empowered to repair the roads, and recover the expense from the trustees.

No. 5. The Holyhead packets to land the mails at *Howth*, where they can be delivered before seven A.M.

No. 6. The letters for Belfast, and the intermediate towns, to be prepared separately in London from the remainder of the mail, and to be conveyed from *Howth* direct to *Swords*, and meet there the morning mail-coach for Belfast.

No. 7. The letters for the interior of Ireland to be taxed in London with their *full* postage, in place of being charged with only the postage to Dublin.

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No. 8. The letters for the Lord Lieutenant, and other state officers, to be made up in London, and thereby expedite the delivery of the mail in Dublin.

No. 9. The British letters for the interior of Ireland to be *prepared* for dispatch from *Dublin* in the *morning*, in place of being reserved over until *evening*.

No. 10. The number of mail bags prepared in the inland office to be reduced to the number of post-towns at the *Union*, namely, 288; and the remaining 144 to be made subordinate or branching offices.

No. 11. The establishment of the inland office to be proportionably diminished.

E. S. L.

No. 12. That in all branches of the department, but particularly in the inland office, the promotion of officers should not be regulated exclusively by seniority; but should be coupled with efficiency and *recorded* good conduct.

No. 13. That no postmaster should be appointed in any town that has not been a resident in it.

No. 14. That no stranger from the *interior* shall be a letter-carrier in Dublin.

No. 15. That every gentleman recommending a person to any situation must be one of his securities.

E. S. L.

There are certainly some other things that have occurred since that, which I have not perhaps sufficiently well enough matured to bring forward. In the last return I obtained from the Bank of Ireland the whole sum they had paid for that quarter for lost notes was 550*l.*, for every letter to and from England, to and from Dublin, and through the interior of the country; of this amount and number there were only four letters, three containing a one pound note each, the other containing a half of a hundred pound note, directed to *Dublin*.

What was the amount of lost notes paid by the Bank of Ireland in 1823?—£12,000.

In cases of difference between the heads of two departments in the post-office, will they refer to you for a decision?—They very frequently go direct to the postmasters-general, without coming to me.

Is that their constant practice?—It has been very frequently their practice, too much so.

It would not fall to you to try to conciliate before they referred to the postmasters-general?—In the regular way it would come before me for their lordships information.

Does it so?—Sometimes it does; but all the officers have got into the habit of communicating direct, principally with Lord Rosse.

What does he do with those communications?—He sometimes answers them himself; latterly he has sent many up to me, but I do not remember any particular communications of late; for some months past Lord Rosse has sent to me many communications which had been sent to him; my own opinion is, that that practice arose out of their feeling that Lord Rosse was not at one period on very good terms with me.

You stated that it was not your habit to go into the inland office?—When I am in town I sometimes go in, though I have always felt disinclined to do so, and for official reasons wish to discourage every person, not connected with its responsibility, from entering it; and have often wished that there was a means of viewing its proceedings without entering the room.

Do you go into the other departments to see how they go on?—Yes, very frequently I go; if there is any thing particular I send for one of the officers to come to me; I generally see every officer; I do not suppose there is a day I do not see almost every officer in the post-office at some part of the day.

What is done with the money collected for fines?—It is lodged in the hands of the chief clerk in the secretary's department.

At whose discretion is it disposed of?—In almost all cases the paper is signed by the postmasters-general; if there is any thing very sudden, such as the burial of a mail-guard, which requires the advance of a guinea or two to bury him, I give the order myself; for any thing else I make it a point to ask for the postmasters-general's directions.

Is there a debtor and creditor account made up for the postmasters-general?—Whenever they look at it the account is always ready.

It is not sent to them periodically?—No, it is not; the fund is nearly extinguished now, I am glad to say.

EDWARD S. LEES.



## Appendix, No. 178.

Wednesday, 11th October 1826.

Examinations.

No. 178.

Mr. T. G. Harrison  
11th Oct. 1826.

Mr. THOMAS GEORGE HARRISON called in and examined.

WHAT is your situation in the post-office?—I have two situations in the post-office; one in the inland office.

What are you in the inland office?—Inspector of franks was my last duty in that office when I did attend there.

What is your other office?—I am *senior* clerk in the secretary's office.

You are called remittance clerk, are you not?—I am not so on the establishment, but that is my duty.

You are inspector of franks in the inland office?—I do not think that I am so described in the establishment, but as first taxing clerk.

What is your salary in the inland office?—£184 a year.

What is your salary in the secretary's office?—£184 a year.

What is your attendance in the inland office?—I do not attend there at all now.

Why do you not attend there?—From ill health. About the year 1821 I was obliged to give it up altogether. I had Dr. Cheyne, and our post-office physician, and Surgeon Doyle attending me. Whatever it was, whether it was the inhaling of the gas, or the situation of the office altogether, I cannot say which, I got an affection both in my head and my stomach, that I used to faint imperceptibly, and I was so bad for a year or two that they were very apprehensive it would destroy me altogether; I was obliged to give it up.

Since what time have you given it up?—About the year 1821, I think.

You have not attended at all in the inland office since?—No, I have not. The surgeon of the post-office could explain the nature of my disorder better than I could.

Have you continued your attendance in the secretary's office?—Yes, perfectly; regularly; quite regularly.

Has your attendance there never been suspended on account of health?—At that period I think it might be for two or three days, or a week, but that was the utmost.

You were not subject to this illness except when you were in the inland office?—I presume it was that office which brought on that illness.

Were you constantly well when out of that office?—Yes.

And able to give constant attendance in the secretary's office?—Yes; but to this hour I have some of the effects of what I got attending the inland office.

Were any other of the clerks of the inland office affected in the same way?—There are some of them who do not attend the office through illness.

Were any other of the clerks in the inland office affected in the same way as you were?—I do not know.

Did you ever ask them?—No, I never did; I know some of them have been ill as well as I; we have been comparing with one another, one would say he was bilious, and his head was affected, but besides that I never asked any questions.

Have any of the others had those imperceptible fainting fits?—Really I do not know.

You describe yourself as affected in a very particular manner in this office and no where else?—I speak of the effects of my illness before I gave it up; one morning I was lying in a dead faint in my bed, and I had three physicians in the room with me before I recovered.

What was the nature of the attendance in the inland office which affected you so much?—My attendance was from six in the morning until eight or nine, and from five in the evening until eight, when the mails went off.

At what time did the mails go off?—At eight o'clock; but in fact I went through severe attendance during the rebellion, and all the troublesome times here; I have attended that office from six in the morning till four o'clock the following morning, giving unlimited attendance there.

How long have you been in regular attendance on that office?—I suppose about four and twenty years; I have been upwards of thirty years in the office altogether.

What is the whole salary you receive from the post-office, deducting the fines you pay for your nonattendance in the inland office?—About 323*l.* a year; there was an item which I did not mention.

What other emoluments have you?—I have 20*l.* a year Irish, as storekeeper, attached to my situation in the secretary's office as *senior* clerk; Mr. Thomas Lees is the chief clerk, and I am next to him.

Is that included in the 323*l.*?—Yes, it is; in fact there is more stopped from me out of the inland office than if I had been superannuated.

What do you receive from your situation in the inland office per annum?—£120.

Exclusive of the stoppages?—Yes; I have that for my thirty years service.

What is the full salary of your situation in that office?—£184 12*s.* 4½*d.*; and there is 64*l.* 12*s.* 4½*d.* deducted.

How long have you been in the secretary's office?—Since 1808 I have been in the secretary's office; I was transferred from the receiver-general's office into the secretary's office.

When did you go into the receiver-general's office?—About the year 1804.

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 Mr. T. G. Harrison.  
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Have you always held two situations in the post-office?—Ever since the year 1804.  
 Up to 1804 you had only one?—Up to 1804 I had only one; the salary at that time was but 50*l.* a year Irish.

When was the last increase of your salary in the inland office?—On my arriving at my twentieth year.

When was your salary in the secretary's office last increased?—On my twentieth year; our services were all admitted at the time Lord Clancarty made the regulation in the office.

Did you count your services in both offices at the same time?—Yes.

You had not been in the secretary's office twenty years at that time?—No, I had not.

How long had you been in the secretary's office at that time?—Since the year 1808.

When did your twenty years terminate, upon which you got the increased salary?—It terminated in 1816.

In what year did you come into the post-office?—In 1796.

When did your twenty years terminate?—In 1816.

Are you an accountant; are you accustomed to figures?—Yes, I am; it was in 1816.

Then in the year 1816 you had an increase of salary in both offices?—I had.

But you had not been twenty years in both offices?—No, I had not.

How long had you been in the secretary's office in 1816?—I was in the receiver-general's office before that time.

Did you receive an increase upon your situation in the receiver-general's office in 1816?—Yes.

How long had you been in that office?—Since the year 1804.

That was twelve years?—Yes.

Those twelve years were counted for twenty?—The whole establishment was put upon a certain gradation of salary, and we were all admitted into that, having been so many years in the post-office.

Was that in consequence of Lord Clancarty's regulation in the year 1807?—Yes.

How much did that increase bring to you upon the whole?—Without having the book here I cannot state that. Mr. Burrowes, who keeps those accounts, can state that better than I can.

You do not remember what addition was made to your salary in the year 1816, upon the whole?—I dare say it was about 165*l.*, as well as I can recollect.

When was the last increase?—When I had been twenty years in the office.

That was in 1816?—Yes.

Then you have not had any since that?—No, not a farthing.

Are you entitled to any increase?—No, not a farthing.

Can you state the amount of the increase upon your situation in each office separately, in the year 1816?—I think my salary in the inland office was then 150*l.* Irish, and in the receiver-general's office 125*l.*, the gradations did not run in the same way.

What was the amount of the increase?—£65 a year in the receiver-general's office, and about 100*l.* a year Irish, in the inland office at that time.

You receive all the remittances?—I do.

To whom do you give them?—To the receiver-general.

Immediately?—Yes.

What correspondence do you keep up with the deputies?—None in the world, but sending receipts; I know nothing about the correspondence of the office.

You do not acknowledge the receipts, do you?—I fill up the receipts, and send them for the money received.

Is that all your duty?—That is all my duty.

What part of the day does that occupy?—It occupies the whole day long.

Do not you make entries of those receipts?—I enter the remittances.

State what you do throughout?—I receive the remittances from the deputy postmasters; I enter the remittances when they are complete, that is, on the arrival of the second halves of the notes, in the cash-book; I pay over those remittances, as I receive them, to the receiver-general; I send receipts for them to the deputy postmasters; I post those remittances into a ledger for the information of the postmaster-general and the secretary; and I, when called upon, make a return of any deputy who appears to be in arrear.

Do you make any periodical return of deputies in arrear?—Always; every quarter I make at all events, and at other times whenever called upon.

Do not you make some other entry you have not yet mentioned?—I am not aware.

Is there any entry of the estimated instalments each postmaster should remit in your book?—Yes there is.

Is that entry made by you?—Yes; that is given to me, originally made out by the accountant-general.

Do you mean to say that entry is made by the accountant-general in the book?—I enter it in my book from the record I have.

Have you now stated all the entries you make?—And the balances also, which are handed to me by the receiver-general quarterly.

What do you mean by the balances being handed to you?—The balances due by the deputy postmasters the preceding quarter; I enter that in the ledger.

You enter each balance against each postmaster?—Yes; under the head of his town.

What more do you do on the subject of that balance?—I add up the total of what their balances and the instalments come to in the quarter, and see what they have remitted during the

the quarter; whether they have always paid the amount which is required from them, according to that statement.

If according to that statement you find a short remittance, what do you do?—I make a return of it to the postmasters-general.

Or to the accountant-general?—No; to the postmasters-general, through the secretary.

Are the Commissioners to understand that the amount of the instalments entered in your book, and the amount of the balance you enter, is stated to you by the accountant-general, from the amount which each postmaster should remit?—The balance he should remit is, and also the instalments; but the latter is only an average statement, and his office may not produce that much, or it may produce more.

You state that you add together the balance and the instalments, and you were understood to state that that is the amount the postmaster should account for?—He is to account for that; but if he accounts for his balance, and is short of his instalments two or three pounds, that rests between him and the office afterwards, when his account is closed, to see whether he withheld any of his revenue, and why he withheld it; if he has not received value for it, for those instalments are merely the average sum, they are not actually what is due by him, but they are supposed, from an average statement, to be the net produce of his office; in a market town or an assize town sometimes the revenue will be greater than at other times, and it will be all regulated by that.

Do you know from what accounts the balance as stated by the accountant-general is formed?—From various accounts which the postmaster has, after giving him credit for his salary, for the bye and dead letters, for his riding duty, and for whatever incidents he pays out of his office, and for which he is allowed, and the accountant-general gives him credit against the receipts of his office, and then the balance is struck.

How does the accountant-general charge him?—The accountant-general charges him from the documents he gets from the various branches of the office; there is the letter-bill office, and so on.

Is there any entry of instalments in the accounts kept by the accountant-general?—No.

For what purpose is this statement of balances given you by the accountant-general?—For the purpose of seeing that the deputy postmaster remits that, and for the purpose of having that information for the postmasters-general and the secretary.

The instalments are monthly instalments?—They are.

Are they ever changed?—They are sometimes changed; they have got lately an order, some of them, to pay once a fortnight; those that average more than 20*l.* have got a letter to desire them to divide the instalments, so as not to allow any money to remain in their hands.

When a balance is stated to you, and you enter it in your book, and a remittance does not come, you make a return that that postmaster is in arrear?—I do.

What do you return him to be in arrear?—The full amount of that balance; and if there is an instalment due, if it is after the day of the month that he should have remitted that instalment, I add that to the balance, and report him to be that much in arrear.

If you make a report of a postmaster in arrear in the middle of a month, do you add any thing on account of his instalment to the amount of the quarterly balance?—Certainly I do, according to my book.

In such a case how much of the instalment would you add to the quarterly balance?—I would add the month's instalment.

Would you do that if the month was not concluded?—No; I would not add any thing in that case.

If at the end of three weeks after the termination of a quarter, of which quarter the balance had been stated to you, you would not add any part of that month to the quarterly balance?—No, certainly not, for it had not become due then.

Do the monthly instalments generally exceed the actual receipts by the postmasters, or fall short of them?—Some of them do exceed the amount, and some of them do not; they vary very much.

Do you mean to say that the instalments vary very much from the actual receipts?—They vary in a certain degree; I cannot say in a considerable sum, but they vary in a degree.

Did you ever try whether the whole amount of the monthly instalments exceeded the whole amount of the monthly receipts, or fell short of it?—I never did; in fact I have not the means of doing that.

If you were to take three monthly receipts and compare them with the instalments, would not the result show that?—Yes; but I have no means of getting at that information, unless I was to go about from this person to that person to ask questions.

Have you any opinion whether upon an account so stated the amount would fall short or exceed the monthly instalments?—I cannot state that.

You have no opinion upon that?—No, indeed, I have not.

According to your recollection, which is the least accurate estimate by amount of instalment as compared with the actual receipts which the postmaster sends in the course of the year; in which case is the sum the most different from the instalment with which he is charged; is there any one you remember where they differ exceedingly?—I cannot state that; there are such a number of them that it is impossible.

Do you know when the instalments now in use were fixed; have they been changed in your recollection?—Yes, they have; they commenced in my time, for there were none when I first had the charge of the remittances, and the deputy postmasters paid but

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once a quarter; Lord Clancarty first instituted instalments from the English post-office instalments.

Have the rates of the instalments been varied since that?—Yes, they have.

Has that been done frequently?—No, only once.

Were they increased or decreased when the change was made?—There was an increase.

Who regulated the rates as they are now fixed?—I suppose the accountant-general; they were handed to me by the order of the secretary.

You suppose the accountant-general fixed the rates of the instalments?—The rate of the instalments was made out from an average made of each town.

Do you know who made out that?—I cannot tell; I have merely a certain line to pursue, and beyond that I know very little.

You were asked whether you were entitled to any increase of salary in consequence of any prolonged term?—By one rise in the inland office.

By the present regulations of the post-office shall you be entitled to any increase of salary?—By getting a step in the office I should be entitled to an increase, but not by length of time, if I remained for fifty years.

Not unless you got to one of the senior situations?—Just so; and twenty years ago I could have retired better than I could two years ago.

You consider your health to have suffered from your attendance in the inland office, combined with your daily duties?—No, I do not think the day duty ever did me any harm; I think, so far as the day duty goes, I should be miserable if I had not any thing to do; but I think the other duty injured my health very much; it became a shocking place at night, inhaling the breath and the gas, and the stench of that inland office was a most abominable thing.

Is it better now?—I cannot say; it was so bad when I left it, that the moment I got into the fresh air, I felt inclined to retch and be in a shocking state always; I have often gone out of the office to draw in the fresh air; and the difference of attendance was very great in that office; for according to the old system, before Lord Clancarty altered the arrangement, the duty of the officers was merely on alternate days, and we had a day of rest instead of being at it morning and night; for fourteen years in my life I enjoyed that, and then I was made to attend double duty, at the time the increase of salary was given for length of service, and for that we were all put on every day to double duty. In respect of the increase we got, it was as much for double duty as for length of service; it was formerly only every second day, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, before that in the inland office, on the old system.

Was there double the number of persons belonging to the inland office at that time?—No; the whole system was newly arranged at that time.

Do you consider that if a person is subject to do the inland office duty every day, he ought not to be employed in any thing else during the remainder of that day?—Really I do not know; some men's constitutions are better than others, but the duties of that office are certainly calculated to knock them up.

From your experience, what do you think would be a better arrangement for the performance of the duties of that office?—I think that if they had, some of them, as they get old in the office and less able to do their duty, an alternate duty, it would be much better for them if they had one day to shake off the effects of the former day to themselves.

That is, that they should attend three days in the week?—Yes, alternate duty; there are a number of them, I dare say, would stand it much better than they do; the sickness in that office is considerable; the heat, the smell of the gas, and every thing combined, all shut up in that room together, it is dreadful.

Is there any complaint made of its manner of ventilation?—I believe there has been.

Have the complaints increased since the gas was introduced?—I do not think their health was so subject to being injured by the candles as it has been by the gas.

Is the roof considered too low?—The roof is pretty lofty, but it is in a bad state; when all the lamps are lighted together, the heat and the light are very injurious.

How long do the remittances remain in your hands till they are transmitted to the receiver-general?—Till three o'clock.

Do you keep no half notes?—The half notes are locked up in an alphabet.

How often are the half notes completed and handed over to the receiver-general?—Every day, on the arrival of the corresponding halves.

As they come to be completed?—Just as they come up to be completed from time to time.

Supposing a postmaster sent you an order on Dublin for a part of his remittance, and the rest is made up in half notes, how do you do in that case?—It lies with his half notes, and all goes in together on the arrival of the corresponding halves.

Does that frequently happen?—No, it does not; for when they send an order on Dublin, they send it generally, or indeed always, for the amount they have to remit, and very often they cut the order in two; when they are sending half notes, they send it with the half notes.

Of what do the remittances principally consist?—They consist of pensioners bills, money orders, prize drafts, bank notes of all descriptions, bills, post-bills, drafts, army receipts, soldiers wives receipts.

Do you hand over to the receiver-general exactly what comes into your hands?—Exactly, with the letter of the deputy-postmaster.

You never change any of the orders, do you?—No.

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Who gets them accepted?—He does.

Is an order cut in two valid?—No; I never knew them refuse any on that account.

Do you open the remittances?—I do; they are sent up to the office in a bag.

Are they distinguished in any way on the outside?—Yes.

What is the distinction?—The word "Remittance" is written on the outside of the cover, which is entered on his docket.

Do you give any security?—I do.

Have the goodness to state the amount?—2,000*l.*

What are the daily receipts on an average?—They vary from 20*l.* to 700*l.* or 800*l.*

Do you ever receive so little as 20*l.* in a day?—1*l.* in a day; one man will send up a remittance of 1*l.*

What is the average total amount you receive in a day from the postmasters?—About 500*l.* each day.

Is it not more?—No, it is not.

Do you mean to say that you never received more than 500*l.* a day from the postmasters?—Yes, I have; for the postmaster of Cork sends up bills on Dublin, and his bill will be 400*l.*; he draws upon Connolly, Maxwell and Fortescue; he draws a bill for 440*l.*; he sends up his remittances in bills, and Belfast in the same way; where they have commercial intercourse, they generally send up bills.

What is the largest amount you have received in any one day?—I dare say I have received 3,000*l.* or 4,000*l.*

Never more than that?—No, I do not recollect that I have.

Is the same day fixed for the remittance of all the postmasters?—The same day is fixed for the remittance to Dublin.

What is that day?—The 10th of the month and the 24th of the month; those that pay once a fortnight remit on the 10th and 24th; those on the 24th are only monthly remittances.

What regulates whether the remittances shall be once a fortnight or once a month?—According to the amount of the revenue received at the town.

What is the amount which decides whether they shall remit once a fortnight?—Those receiving 20*l.* a month will be required to remit twice in a month.

All monthly sums under that would be taken at the end of the month?—Yes.

Does it happen that you receive remittances on other days, or is it only twice a month you receive those remittances?—On other days; for some of them are not correct in sending up their remittances on the very day they should do so, nor do they do so.

If all the remittances were made on the appointed days, namely, the 10th and 24th of each month, what would be your occupation on the other days?—My occupation would be posting up those remittances into my ledger, sending them receipts, and making returns.

Must not the remittances be posted up daily?—I am speaking of the posting up for the information of the postmasters-general.

What do you post from?—From the cash-book.

You keep a ledger besides a cash-book?—Yes.

How does the ledger differ from the cash-book?—The ledger has in it the balances and the instalments, and the cash-book has merely the daily receipts.

Are they pretty regular in remitting on the appointed days?—Since they got this letter, they appear to be a little more alarmed than they were; they commenced yesterday, and they seem to be, as far as I could judge, beginning to be a little more regular than they were.

To what letter do you allude?—A circular letter, saying that in future if any postmaster did not remit on the day appointed, unless he was able to give a satisfactory reason for not doing so, his securities would be called upon, and he himself would be made answerable.

What is the date of that letter?—It was the latter end of September, within the last three weeks certainly.

If it happened by any accident that a remittance was mislaid in your office, and did not reach the hands of the receiver-general, how would that be discovered?—If such a thing was to occur, the man who sent it would make application to the secretary, I suppose.

He not receiving an acknowledgment, would make an application to the secretary?—Yes.

If the acknowledgment had been sent, and the remittance should have been afterwards mislaid, how would that be discovered?—That could not be the case, for the acknowledgments are written from the cash book in which they are entered.

Could not the remittance be mislaid notwithstanding?—No; for as soon as the remittance is entered it is put into a canister.

Suppose it was not put into that canister by any accident, how would that be discovered?—The thing is impossible.

It would be perfectly possible for you to put a remittance into your pocket if you were disposed, would it not?—Yes; but that would be very soon discovered, for the postmaster would not get credit for it.

You mean to say, that when the postmaster came to settle his quarterly account, it would be discovered, if he had not got credit for it?—No doubt of it.

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Suppose you put into your pocket a remittance received at the beginning of the quarter, and brought it to account at the close of the quarter, would it ever be discovered that you had done so?—So far as this, that my book would discover it, for my book must show whether the remittance has come from that man or not.

What return do you allude to?—The return of those who remitted, which is now required to be made once a month.

How long ago was that made?—Since this new regulation; once a month and once a fortnight there is to be a return made of every postmaster who does not remit, and that return must agree with my book.

Prior to this new regulation, if a remittance had been withheld for six weeks, for instance, would its being withheld have been discovered before the expiration of the quarter?—It could not be discovered.

Do you hand over the remittance to the receiver-general himself personally?—No, to his first clerk, Mr. Symes.

You mentioned that it was a part of your duty to take care of the stores, what are considered stores?—The stationery, that is the denomination of storekeeper.

Do you keep the whole of the stationery used in the post-office in your custody?—I do not; I countersign the order from any of the officers who want stationery, and it goes to the stationer.

You have no stores actually in your custody?—No; I have a large press. It was the custom to keep them in it, but from the facility it might afford to any of the officers who were asking for that which they were not entitled to, I never put it into that; but every head of an office who gets stationery must apply for it, and afterwards sign the account when it comes in, and I countersign that order to see that it is all right.

Who has the actual care of the stationery, in whose custody is it?—It lies in the custody of the patentee, Sir Abraham King; it is never sent for, good, bad, or indifferent, but as it is required. I keep no store at all.

Suppose they want a supply in the accountant-general's office, what is done?—The accountant-general writes, "Send for the use of this office half a ream of letter paper, a quarter of a hundred of pens," and so on; I countersign that, and it is sent off to Sir Abraham King; the stationery is there made up and sent in.

You know nothing of it but from the order that comes from the accountant-general in the case stated?—That is all.

Is it the same with respect to all the other departments?—Yes.

How is the secretary's stationery supplied?—I send for a couple of reams of paper, or a ream of paper, and keep it in the press behind me, and when any of the clerks want paper, I hand it out, and when that is out, I send for more.

The supply of the secretary's office depends upon you?—Yes.

You send for it at your own discretion?—Yes; and I am very proud to say that the saving in the stationery in the office has been very great.

What check have you upon Sir Abraham King's bills?—The order comes back with the account to the office; the orders are all checked off, when the account comes in, with his account, and I for the secretary's office sign my name, and all the rest of the gentlemen of the office, instead of getting it in, in bulk, sign for the quantity of stationery which has been used in their several departments.

Who besides the accountant-general could issue orders for stationery?—The receiver-general can write an order for stationery if he wants it; that comes to me in the same way—the letter-bill office.

Who is the officer there who can order?—Mr. Beare, I think, is the officer. There is the superintendent of mail-coaches, and the bye and dead letter office, and the inland office, and the penny post, they must all write their order for what stationery they want.

For the use of the office, or for the use of individuals?—Not at all for the use of the individuals; that would not be sanctioned.

How do the individuals get paper?—Individuals are not allowed paper at all.

By whom is the paper you have in your custody ever used?—It is used in the office for writing by the secretary, and by Mr. Crofton the clerk, and Mr. Thomas Lees, and Mr. Burrows.

What officers have a claim for that paper?—Only those who use it for writing for the office, that is merely to get it as they want it; for instance, in writing all the letters for the correspondence from the secretary's office, they get paper for that purpose from me.

Do the inland office get any paper from your store?—No, not at all; mine is for the consumption of the secretary's office.

How is the solicitor supplied?—By an order in the same way; he signs the order for his stationery in the same way.

Have the alphabet office any claim for stationery?—They get what stationery they require in the same way.

Is there any other office you have not named which has a claim for stationery in the same way; do the British-mail office?—Yes; but it is very trifling the quantity they use.

Are the printed forms comprised within the name of stationery?—No, not at all.

When an order is sent for printed forms, who keeps that?—The printed forms come from Messrs. Thom and Johnson, the printers; the orders pass through my hands to receive my signature for what they want.

Orders

Orders for printed forms pass through your hands in the same way as orders for stationery?—Yes, any thing connected with the office; they send for a certain number, which I countersign.

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Do you make a record of those orders in your office?—No record at all.

What is the use of their passing through your hands?—Merely to be a check upon them, to see that they do not get more than is absolutely required for that particular purpose.

How is that check effected?—A man wants a certain number of given forms to send to the deputy postmasters; I know there are 420 odd post-towns; if he were to order more than the number specified, I would not sign the order for them, if he was to give an order for more than are absolutely requisite.

How can you tell what is requisite?—In such a case as that I could tell.

It does not always happen that he wants to write to all the postmasters?—I am speaking of particular forms, sent for particular purposes.

Such as what?—Printing tickets for postmasters.

Four hundred and twenty tickets would do nothing?—No; but there are a greater number of those printed.

Have you any means of knowing that a certain supply of tickets has been consumed before you sign a new order for tickets?—No, I have not.

Have you any means of knowing that any part of the stationery or printed forms for which orders pass through your hands has been really used before a new supply is called for?—Except those particular cases, such as tickets that are wanted, I really have no means of knowing they have been all used.

Do you ever alter an order?—I have never had occasion to alter an order.

Have you always signed for the full contents of the order as it came in?—I have never seen yet what I considered an overplus of any kind asked for.

Was the supply of stationery always managed in the same way during your experience?—It was got indiscriminately before I had the management of it; it was got in in store, and lay in the office in store.

Why did not that continue?—This I thought was a better plan.

Was it at your suggestion the change was made?—So far as the plain stationery went it was my own idea; I thought I could certainly prevent the possibility of any person looking for it or asking for it.

How had the stationery been delivered out before you had the store?—I suppose as it was applied for.

Cannot you speak from your own knowledge?—No, I cannot; for at that time I was not in the office.

When you proposed a new system, did not you know what the old one was?—I did know it at the time; but I was not in the office to see. I knew the system was to have the stationery in store.

In what way was it delivered out of store?—When it was wanted it was applied for out of store.

To whom was the application made?—To the person who had got it.

Who was that?—At that time there was Mr. De Joncourt.

What was he called?—He was in the secretary's office; he has been long out of the office.

It was his duty to deliver out the stationery to the different persons requiring it?—Yes.

Was that the practice up to the time of your taking charge of it?—Yes.

Whom did you consult on the change?—I never consulted any body.

Did you make the change without authority?—Being the storekeeper, I thought it was the same thing to them to send to the person having the paper, Sir Abraham King being the patentee, for them to bear the responsibility of what they got, if they got any thing beyond a certain allowance; and it besides that prevented their coming to apply, from the facility it would afford if there was a store, "Please give me a sheet of paper for this " or the other."

Can you then undertake to state that the stationery which has been supplied to that office has been *bona fide* consumed within the post-office for post office purposes?—I should presume it was.

Can you undertake to say it was so?—I have no reason to state otherwise.

Have you any reason to state that it is so from your knowledge?—I can almost undertake to say that it was; I have not an idea to the contrary.

Do you mean to state deliberately, on consideration, that what you do constitutes any check on the supply of stationery?—I am convinced of it.

In what way?—Because, from the quantity of stationery they get in the first place, I do not conceive they could make use of it in any other way but in the office; a man getting half a ream of paper and half a hundred or a quarter of a hundred of pens for the use of his office, and that once a quarter.

Is there any limit to the supply of any of those articles, from the average of what they have been used to consume in the preceding periods?—I really do not know; their limit is very trifling.

State what you mean by saying their limit is trifling; is there a limit?—I do not mean to say there is a limit, because if the public service required it they would have it.

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Is there any understood limit to the supply of the different departments, any regulated limit?—No, certainly not.

You sign for all you are asked to sign for?—I sign for all I am asked to sign for; if I saw any person asking for that which I conceived they did not want, I most undoubtedly would report.

But you never have had occasion to make any representation of that kind?—Never during my service.

Are there many particular articles called for?—I apprehend so.

What are the allowed articles under the head of stationery?—Pens, ink, wax, wafers, pencils.

Nothing more?—There is red tape.

Are there no books of any kind?—There are; all books not printed or wanted for the office.

Are the books lined?—Yes.

Are there any printed books?—They come from the printer, any books printed in any way.

These are ordered also under your name?—Yes.

What printed books do you permit to be ordered?—Books for the accountant-general's office, for instance, headed for particular service.

Are any almanacks, or directories, or pamphlets supplied?—The almanacks have been all knocked off except the postmasters-general and the secretary.

Any penknives or seals?—Yes, there are penknives; any man is allowed an office knife, valued 3s. 6d.

Each man?—If he wanted a knife, he can write an order for it.

Anything else besides penknives; paperknives?—I should imagine if they wanted such a thing they would get it.

Is there any list of articles that you conceive yourself authorized to order; any known, ascertained list of articles?—So far as those go.

Is there a list in your office, or in any department, of the articles which may be required to be supplied?—No, I believe not.

Can you undertake to say how many knives you have ordered within the last year?—Indeed I cannot; there might be four, five, or six for different persons in the establishment.

Not more than four or five for the whole establishment?—No, they would not call for them in that kind of way; but one officer might want a knife in one department.

Can you mention the quantity of any other article you have ordered within the year?—No, indeed I could not; every person that gets these things is obliged to account for them themselves.

What proof is there that the articles you have signed for have been actually supplied?—By the signature of the party that received them when they came in.

What do they state on the account?—The articles supplied to the different offices are all stated in the account of the stationer, and the office that has been supplied, and the head of that office is obliged to sign his name to that account, as having got those articles.

Does it never happen that any other person but the head of the department signs the order?—If the head of the office was absent from the office, the person in his situation during his absence would sign for the office; but nobody, during the presence of the head of the office, is recognized or would be recognized.

Which of the departments sends the most orders to you for signature?—I believe the inland office has the most for printed articles.

Are you the only person who is empowered to countersign these orders, or does any other person do it?—No, no other person will countersign an order; if an order for printing a thing goes, it goes from the head of the office.

Has this arrangement you have introduced received any sanction from the postmaster-general or the secretary?—It did not require to receive any authority, for the business was to get the stationery in from the person who supplied the establishment.

Have the postmasters-general or the secretary sanctioned this arrangement which you have introduced; that is, the substitution of orders given from time to time for the stock brought in and delivered in to the different departments as it was called for?—It has obtained the sanction of the secretary.

In what way?—He has acknowledged it by seeing the thing done.

Are the stationer's accounts brought to you?—Only to receive my signature for the part of the stationery that has been received under the head of the secretary's office.

Who then checks the stationer's accounts?—There is a letter from the Lords of the Treasury comes once a quarter, stating "for such and such articles you will take care that the patentee does not charge more than so and so;" this is checked in the office by me, and every officer in the department signs for whatever he has got in this list, and it is checked by that statement sent from the Treasury.

You mentioned before that there is no specification of the articles?—This is only a check from the Treasury.

You state that there is a list of prices of articles sent?—Yes.

Are any articles supplied which are not mentioned in that list?—There is Irish stationery mentioned in that list, of which they say we do not know the prices, and the stationer here charges the Dublin price, whatever that is.



Are any articles ordered for the use of the post-office which are not mentioned in that priced list?—I am not aware that there are any articles.

You are not able to say that there are not?—No; but I am not aware that there are.

Who examines the bill?—The accountant-general examines the bill, and it receives the sanction of the secretary's signature, and then the postmasters-general.

How often does Sir Abraham King send in his bill?—Once a quarter.

Examinations.

No. 178.

Mr. T. G. Harrison.  
11th Oct. 1826.

THOS. G. HARRISON.

## Appendix, No. 179.

Saturday, 14th October 1826.

ROBERT SHAW Esquire called in and examined.

YOU are accountant-general in the post-office?—I am.

Has any change taken place in your office since the Parliamentary Commissioners were here in 1823?—No; I am not aware that there has.

No alteration with respect to the mode of keeping the accounts or controlling the accounts?—No further than, from my having been longer in the office, I have taken a more active part in the accounts myself.

You understand them more?—Yes; I quite understand the accounts, and have a perfect control of all myself.

What is your attendance?—I attend till three o'clock every day.

From what time?—From perhaps eleven or twelve.

Every day in the week?—Every day in the week except Sunday, with the exception that there are occasions on which I have been absent on Monday; that is not at all a regular thing; but if any day in the week I am absent, that is the only day on which I feel that I can absent myself without inconvenience to the public.

What is the reason that Monday is less a day of business than any other?—It is not less a day of business; but Monday is the day on which the post-office account is closed, and the bank do not pay any post-office drafts, nor do we pass any drafts through our office for payment on that day.

Do you still continue the payment of 100*l.* a year to Mr. Mills?—I do.

On what account?—I thought that the Report of the Commissioners would be out soon, and that it was better not to make any change till the Report came out. I spoke to Mr. Mills upon the subject immediately after the Commissioners were here, and told him I felt quite at liberty to withdraw it if I chose; but waiting for the Report appearing, I did not think it necessary to make any alteration.

How could the Report affect any private arrangement of that kind?—I did not know what change the Report might have made; and one other reason that prevented my taking it away entirely was, that I felt that while this was continued, in case of my absence, it was not necessary for me to make any further remuneration to Mr. Mills. In the case of my predecessor, Mr. Prior, Mr. Mills had been for three years receiving a sum from him in consequence of his absence.

Was his absence a continued absence?—I believe so; I am informed his absence was in consequence of illness, and that he was a long time from the post-office. During absence all my officers are obliged to pay substitutes; and I considered while this was continued to Mr. Mills there was no necessity for further remuneration.

Has Mr. Mills been constantly present?—He has made occasional absences, but he is in general very constant in his attendance.

Has the particular ground of your giving this 100*l.* a year to Mr. Mills been that of your occasional absences?—That has been the chief ground; the feeling which has led me to continue it; for when I was absent, previous to his having this, he complained that he had had no remuneration.

Were you absent for any time?—Yes.

Have you been absent for a considerable time together?—Not more than two months, except on one occasion, when I was absent near three months.

What absence had you last year?—About two months at one time; I was not very well and went to England; and this year I have had, perhaps, ten days and three weeks at a time, but not longer, for two or three different periods.

This gift of 100*l.* a year to Mr. Mills was not in consideration of his doing the duties?—No, certainly not. Now, when I came in, Mr. Mills had been for many years in the office conducting the business; he was perfectly conversant with the whole of the duties; and when I came in I had not of course sufficient knowledge to say that I should take the whole of the accounts out of his hands, and take the responsibility upon myself, till I should have acquired a knowledge of them. Lord Rosse recommended that I should make him an allowance, and I felt that he would be discontented from enjoying less under me than he had under my predecessor. It was his intention, he said, to apply to the Government to have his salary increased.

What is his salary?—One hundred and twenty pounds a year, I think.

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No. 179.

*Robert Shaw, Esq.*  
14th Oct. 1826.

Do you conceive that is sufficient for his services?—It appears to be a small compensation for his services; but it is, I believe, in proportion to the general scale of the post-office payments.

Has he any other situation in the post-office?—No.

Has he any out of it?—Not to my knowledge.

Did he receive 100*l.* a year from Mr. Prior?—I cannot state the amount of remuneration given by Mr. Prior, but it was to a large amount for three years, so that when I came in he was suffering under loss of income, and of course he did not like that.

From whom did you receive your appointment?—From Lord Talbot, through Mr. Grant.

Yours is a Government appointment?—Yes, it is.

You were not even recommended by the postmasters-general?—No, I was not.

Have you any correspondence with the deputies upon the subject of their remittances?—No, I have not; that is a subject on which I have often wished to be allowed to correspond with them, but the Board have decided that it is not the province of the accountant-general so to do.

What is the foundation on which you think it would be advantageous to the service if an immediate communication between the accountant-general and the deputies were allowed?—I keep the accounts of the postmasters and furnish them with a copy of them quarterly; it would be an advantage if immediately on the receipt of their accounts they should find any error, that they should let me know in what they conceive it to consist. Suppose a postmaster complains, a letter may come into the secretary's office, and there, in consequence of a great deal of other correspondence, it may lie for some days unanswered. I have reason to think that complaints sometimes come which are not attended to immediately.

How should you be able to clear up those accounts?—An instance occurred the other day, where a postmaster was overcharged in the amount of his general letters. Suppose that he had immediately sent up to us, we should have found out where the error was, and had it corrected, perhaps in a different manner from that in which it was corrected.

How many accounts do you make up for the deputies?—I think there are 470 each quarter.

Why do not the sub-agents furnish their accounts to you instead of receiving them from you?—We should have no mode of checking them if they sent up an account of letters received or sent by them; we should have the letters, and be able to ascertain whether it was correct or not.

Supposing you kept the same account as you do now, but that they furnished you with their account?—They might furnish us with a statement, but that would not be a statement which we could present to the Board as a true account. The mode in which they are now framed forms a check upon the postmasters.

If a postmaster is called upon at the end of a quarter to state his account with your office, can he do it?—I suppose he can.

If he can do it, why should not he do it?—I do not see any object in it; we must still make them up. I do not think the postmasters could be entrusted entirely with the making up those accounts, unless it was seen by some one that they were correctly formed.

Why should not they furnish an account, and you by means of the check you keep see that it is a correct account?—I do not think that that would save any trouble.

It would save your making up 400 accounts each quarter?—That would merely save the labour of transcribing them, for we must still be obliged to frame them.

Do you suppose the deputy postmasters actually keep an account?—In many instances I believe they do, for I have heard of their sending up letters to say that such a thing has been overcharged or not credited.

Do you think that in many instances they do not keep an account?—I do not apprehend they keep in many instances a regular debtor and creditor account; but I apprehend they keep an account of the charges against them, and their remittances.

Do you not apprehend it is desirable that each postmaster should keep an account to establish a responsibility?—I should apprehend that would be a very good arrangement.

It is usual for the sub-accountants in all other departments to furnish their own accounts, and not to be furnished with them?—There are instances in which I think they would be very liable to mistake; for instance, where they send up bills at the end of the quarter where they have not become due, they think they are to have credit for those bills though not paid.

That is only a question whether it should come into one account or another?—Yes.

Is not that point regulated?—Yes, it is regulated; but a great many of those postmasters are not very well informed about that.

Is that for want of instruction from the department?—No; I should think that any one who has been any length of time in his office, and is a man of intelligence, must be capable of framing them; but there are many persons who hold the office who are not sufficiently conversant with accounts to make them up in a correct manner. There have been large sums advanced by many of the postmasters on account of soldiers wives receipts, which by their instructions they are obliged to pay, which sums have not been allowed to them by the post-office, from the difficulty, as I understand, of getting those receipts paid them at the army agents.

Who would stand to the loss of those?—The deputy postmasters are the people who are actually now at a loss for them, for they have no credit for them, and their balances are proportionally large.

What measures have been taken to clear up that with the different public offices from which they are issued?—There has been a sum of money received on account of a large number

number of them, but they have not been debited or certified by the army agents, I believe, sufficiently to appropriate those to the different individuals to whom the money should be allowed.

Do you conceive the settlement of that part of the deputies accounts is in progress?—I conceive it is; I have had occasional communications upon the subject with Sir Edward Lees, and Lord Rosse upon the same subject. I hope at no distant time it will come in to the credit of the postmasters.

Do you think that adds considerably to their apparent balances?—In many instances it does, where regiments are constantly passing through a town. We have no mode of knowing in our office the number of soldiers wives receipts that are paid; we get no intimation of them.

You must take the account of those payments from the postmaster himself?—The postmaster himself sends up a regular receipt, as I understand, from the person to whom he gives the money.

To whom does that go?—That comes up to the remittance clerk at the post-office; but in the way in which they are now managed the postmaster does not get credit for them; the post-office will not allow them till they become actual money.

What has been the principle of the objection to allowing those by the army agents?—I am not aware. The manner of arranging them is, I believe, that the woman, when she leaves a town, is to have a certain portion from each postmaster, and as she goes on is to bear on her bill the amount she receives from each; and till her journey is over, the thing cannot be paid; and in many instances those persons have not at the end of the route sent up their bill for the whole.

Does it ever happen that any of them are lost when small sums have been received upon them?—I merely speak from what I have heard upon this subject; I do not know that in the transmission of them to the post-office they have been lost.

May they not have been lost while still in the possession of the holder?—I think they may, very probably.

Is it your understanding that the person receives money without giving an acknowledgment to the postmaster?—She gives an acknowledgment; but these acknowledgments are not to be paid till the bill for the whole comes before the Board; and I believe some of those receipts have been lost after their coming to the post-office; I have heard of their being sent to Mr. Read, the army agent, where many of them were mislaid.

A proof of their having been left there may be made in that case?—Yes, certainly; but many of them, I am afraid, are not recoverable.

Do you receive from the secretary's office all the letters which come up from the deputies on the subject of their accounts?—I believe they are not all communicated to me.

They are not necessarily all brought to the accountant-general's office to be examined with reference to all their doubts?—It has been regulated that they should be so. Such an arrangement was made by Lord Rosse lately on my having had a communication with his lordship on the subject. I believe since that time they are all sent into the office.

What is the general nature of what may be called the disallowances on the part of the deputies; that is, when they do not acknowledge your account to be correct; can they quote an overcharge on a particular letter?—The manner in which they are charged is monthly; we charge them the general letters each month, and if they conceive they have been overcharged in a particular month, they write to say so.

Can they describe on what particular letter they have been overcharged?—They state that they have been so much overcharged.

Without being able to enter into the particulars?—I rather think they do not enter into the particulars.

Would not their being obliged to keep an account of their own, enable them so to enter into particulars that you would at once be able to settle the difference?—If they complain of an overcharge in a particular month, we are obliged to refer to the office from which we receive the document giving an account of their letters for the month, and in that office they would be able to ascertain. I should not be able to form, from any documents in my own office, an accurate knowledge of their accounts, by their mentioning in what particular letter they were overcharged.

Would there be any objection to making the letter-bill office a part of the accountant-general's office?—I do not conceive that the business would be of the same nature at all; we should then have some of the original documents in the accountant-general's office.

Upon which you would make up the accounts?—Yes. The accountant-general's office now appears to be a check on all the other offices, making each responsible for the revenue they receive; if we received the letter bills in our office, I conceive we should have those things without a check, further than our own account.

What responsibility do you speak of?—The amounts charged.

Nothing is done in your office but the compiling the general accounts?—The compiling the general accounts from the accounts furnished from each of the offices.

Suppose an officer in the letter-bill office were to alter a docket, so as to make the charge against a deputy postmaster less than it should be, there being collusion between him and the deputy postmaster, and were to send that to your office, would it be detected?—If there was a collusion between the letter-bill office and the postmaster, I do not conceive that we should be able to discover it.

Would it be discovered in any other office?—Yes; I think there are checks established in the letter-bill office that would prevent it.

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No. 179.

Robert Shaw, Esq.  
14th Oct. 1826.

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No. 179.

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The case supposed is a clerk in the letter-bill office being in collusion with a deputy postmaster, and altering the document; would that be detected in any other office?—I do not think it would be detected by us.

Into what other office does it go?—The secretary's office receives the account from us.

Is there any thing in the secretary's office that would enable them to detect it?—I think there is that system of check established upon the letter-bill office which would enable the secretary to detect it.

Does it occur to you what it is that would enable the secretary to detect such an error?—No.

Does the secretary keep any accounts against the postmasters?—All the accounts pass through him.

You mean all the remittances?—Yes.

Any thing more?—The other accounts do all pass through his office, I believe.

Then he could not by means of the remittances detect such an error as is now supposed?—No, I do not suppose he could.

Is it any part of your duty to compare the documents sent down to you from the letter-bill office with the original dockets?—No, it is not.

Nor the duty of any other officer?—I am not aware.

Is it the practice of any other officer?—I do not know.

If those documents were sent to your office, could not you establish a check upon them?—Certainly, I could establish a check upon them, if they were; but it would cause a great increase of business in the accountant-general's office.

Those bills would only have to be examined over again?—They would have to be compared with the return sent to us.

Suppose the letter-bill officer did in your office what he now does in the other office, and the entries were made there from the original documents, and there was no intervening document as between his office and yours, would there be any increase of business upon the whole?—Certainly; the comparison of all the bills would cause a great increase of business.

If the strength of the letter-bill-office was brought into your office, and the business done under your inspection?—In that way I have no doubt of our establishing a sufficient check upon the officers there; but I should imagine there is a check already.

Can you suggest what that check is?—No, I am not aware of it; it is my desire that my office should be as efficient as possible.

At present, you must be aware that it is no check upon the fidelity of the accounts, except the arithmetical accuracy of them?—It is a perfect check upon the receiver-general as to all the monies paid into his hands.

Have the goodness to state how it is a perfect check on the receiver-general?—All the revenue collected during the week is charged against the receiver-general.

Still, the accuracy of your account all depends upon the accuracy of the person by whom you are enabled to make out that account; for instance, the remittance clerk, if he does not give you an accurate account, your account may be wrong?—Yes; it is a check upon the treasurer; the remittance clerk sends us in his book in which he makes all his entries; one will not suppose that he would pay more money to the receiver-general than he acknowledges.

You have nothing in your office which will enable you to say whether the account you receive from the remittance clerk is correct?—No; but in speaking of corresponding with the postmasters, I conceive it would form a very perfect check if the postmasters were allowed, on sending up a remittance, to correspond with us, to say such a remittance had been forwarded; those notices from them could be compared with the remittance clerk's books; it is not to be supposed the postmasters, if they were allowed to write in this way, would not give us the whole amount of what they send up.

With respect to the existing system, there is nothing enabling you to decide whether you have a true account furnished to you?—I think there is every reason to suppose it must be correct; for the deputy postmasters, if they send up money, and find they are not credited with what they send up, will of course make a complaint.

They send that only at the end of the quarter?—Just so; until the account at the end of the quarter they cannot tell whether the money is placed to their credit or not.

Suppose the remittance clerk were to suppress a remittance, how would that be detected?—It would be detected at the end of the quarter.

Not before?—I do not imagine that it would; but it would be immediately detected if the postmaster were allowed to send a letter to our office. I do not conceive that under the present system there is any check till the end of the quarter.

The postmaster at present furnishes no account himself?—No.

Suppose the remittance clerk should suppress a remittance, and before the end of the quarter should bring it forward, would it ever be detected that that had been suppressed for a time?—I do not apprehend we could find it out, for the remittance clerk would be likely to enter it in his book upon the same date that he paid it in.

That could not be detected?—No.

Would it be possible, if the postmaster were to furnish his own account, with the dates of his remittances?—I should think so, if he furnished that either at the end of the quarter, or if he at the time furnished us with an account of them.

What communication have you with the receiver-general directly?—I cannot say that we have any direct communication with him.

Or with his office?—Every bill that is paid, and draft, comes from his office into mine; at the end of the week he sends us in all bills which have been paid during the week, attached to the warrant.

Those are the incident bills?—Yes; and they remain in our office as vouchers for the payment of them.

Does he furnish any general account to you?—He furnishes a general account of those receipts and payments as a mere abstract.

In totals?—No; he furnishes us an account of receipts and payments of each week under separate heads; we do not follow further than it corresponds with the different documents we have had before.

How often does he do that?—Once a week.

Could you tell to-day, if you were asked, what balance should be in the receiver-general's hands?—I could not tell so accurately, for there has been such a large sum of cash received at the close of the quarter, it has not been made up.

Could you at any particular time state, on being asked, what balance the receiver-general had to account for?—Not till the end of the week; but at the end of the week I could state it accurately.

From his own statement?—No, not from his own statement, further than that statement in general agrees with the check prepared by me.

Then there is an account in your office?—Yes, totally independent of his account.

And he furnishes you an account weekly, which should agree with that account?—Yes.

Is there a comparison weekly?—No; he sends us in the bills, and at the same time he sends in a small slip of paper to tell what he makes his account.

What is done with that slip?—I in general tear it.

What steps are taken before it is torn; what use is made of it?—I make up my account, and see that I agree with him.

Does this slip state the balance as against himself?—It does.

Is there any corresponding balance to be found in your books?—Yes; our balances are struck quite independent of this little account; he merely gives it in as an account of what he makes it.

Is there any record which will show whether the balances stated by the receiver-general himself agree with those he stood charged with at any moment in your book?—I think he keeps a weekly account.

There is no account of that in your office?—No; but I do not conceive there could be any error in our weekly account, but that the balance must be as stated.

You are understood to state that it is ascertained that the state of your accounts agrees with the weekly slip, as it is called, sent by the receiver-general?—In some instances it does not agree.

Means are taken to ascertain whether it agrees or not?—Yes, and how it differs.

How has it been found to differ?—Sometimes when the Bank of Ireland do not pay a halfpenny we have entered a bill as so much, the Bank has paid a halfpenny less, and in that way there have been differences discovered. Three or four weeks ago I was making up a weekly account; there had been a payment by the receiver-general, of which we had notice; by some mistake he had not taken it into his account, and we charged it against him.

Do you make any report weekly, or at any other period, of the state of the receiver-general's account?—I furnish my weekly check to the postmasters-general, in which the receiver-general's account is fully stated.

Is the book of the bank produced to show that the balance stated by the receiver-general is actually there?—Yes; I never pass a weekly account without seeing in the bank book that the balance there stated is in the bank: there in general is a small balance in the receiver-general's hands; and supposing he charges himself with too little or too much, we always take out the actual deficiency between the other payments and the balance in the bank, and charge him with it.

With the exception of that reservation, sometimes you ascertain the balance is in the bank with which the receiver-general charges his account?—We are perfectly satisfied of that, by comparison with the bank book. I do not conceive it possible the receiver-general could have a shilling in his hand at the end of the week without its being stated to the postmasters-general.

Would it not be perfectly practicable to make that check daily?—I do not think that it would; for in the first place, the balance in the book we never could ascertain until the week's account was made up on Monday, when we get the book from the bank; on that I then accurately ascertain that it is right.

Why should not the receiver-general produce the book daily, with the receipt in it?—He might do so; but there are some of the payments which we receive an account of only once a week; the penny post, for instance.

You charge the receiver-general only once a week with the receipts from the post-office?—That is all.

Why is that; do not they pay over daily to him?—That I am not sure of; I do not know whether they do or not.

The receiver-general is expected to lodge his money daily in the bank, is he not?—Yes; there is a great difficulty in getting the silver off; many payments are made to him in silver, and when he has a large sum of money, sometimes 10,000*l.* or 12,000*l.*, it is very difficult to get it off.

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No. 179.  
Robert Shaw, Esq.  
14th Oct. 1826.

Does the receiver-general furnish any account for final audit?—I fancy not.

How far do you consider yourself responsible for the accounts which should be surrendered for audit to the Commissioners of Imprest Accounts?—I conceive I am the person responsible for the accounts.

Do you conceive that the delay which has occurred in the surrender of those accounts is at all attributable to you?—I think not; for previous to my coming into office the accounts had not been audited for some time. I felt anxious that they should be audited, and, at extra hours, for the year subsequent to those which were audited, had the accounts prepared, and I wished to have sent them in to the Audit office, and they have made some difficulties about receiving them.

Are the Commissioners to understand that the accounts for all the years which have elapsed since you came into office are in a state of preparation?—They are all closed, ready for preparation for the Audit office.

Only requiring to be transcribed?—The year subsequent to that sent in is prepared in my office; but we had not thought necessary to go on until that year was audited.

If the Commissioners should on Monday call for the accounts, for what years should you be prepared to send them in?—I am not competent to say; I forget the immediate date; but for the year subsequent to that which has been sent in.

In how short a time should you be enabled to send them in?—I could send one year immediately in; the others would take some time to prepare.

To send in how many years accounts?—We have a year's accounts ready, which would only require to be arranged, with the different vouchers, for sending in, that could be sent in in a very short time.

The subsequent years are not in a state of preparation?—The subsequent years are not in a state of preparation. I mentioned to the secretary of the Audit Board that we had a year ready, and that if they would take them from us, and let us go on with our balance, I would send them in; but they will not let us do that.

What is the difficulty they have made at the Audit office?—There were some disallowances made in the Audit office.

Was it merely disallowances respecting surveys?—Surveys and the estimates of roads, and I think one or two other subjects.

What other subjects are there besides those?—I cannot immediately recollect what the others are.

Upon what authority is your charge against the receiver-general for the penny post made?—Upon the authority of Mr. Baynes, the comptroller of the penny post, who gives us weekly the account of the sums paid by him to the receiver-general.

Is that an account of his receipts during the week?—Yes.

Does he state what is in hand?—No; he furnishes us with an account of the total amount during the week, and we have also a return stating the amount of deficiencies in the hands of letter-carriers.

Does the comptroller of the penny post-office state whether it is the receipt during the last week, or the receipt for a week, or does he merely state that he has remitted a certain sum?—He sends us an account for the week ending such a day.

In Mr. Mills's evidence in the year 1823, he stated that the only evidence the accountant-general receives is the letter from the comptroller of the penny post that he has paid in such a sum on account of penny postage, but it does not state whether it is the amount of the postage for the week, or how much it is deficient?—Since that examination of Mr. Mills the arrangement has been altered. I had a communication with the secretary upon the subject, and stated that I thought it would be desirable that I should have a weekly account of the receipts, and since that time an order has been made that we should have a weekly account.

So that there is no balance in hand except deficiencies?—There is no balance accruing from week to week, except letter-carriers deficiencies, and I have seen at times, with those deficiencies, a sum in the hands of the collector; but the balance in hand on account of the penny post is never stated to be to a large amount; I suppose 20*l.* is the utmost I have observed in any week.

Are there any other points in which the practice in your office has been altered or corrected since the Parliamentary Commissioners were here?—I am not aware of any change except that of the penny post.

How many years accounts are there in arrear at this moment?—I do not immediately recollect the number of years; none have been audited since I came in, except an account of the Dunmore harbour.

Is there any thing in the state of your office to prevent the furnishing of those accounts?—No.

Who is responsible for the custody of the vouchers which ought to accompany those accounts?—They are in my office.

Are you aware, from your own knowledge, whether all the vouchers are there for all the years of the arrear?—I cannot say; I could ascertain.

Have you ever become informed whether that is so or not?—I rather think they are all there.

Is it the practice for accountants to send in the accounts, or to wait till they are required?—I believe the habit was to wait till they were required; we have a year now ready, which we wish to send in, and I made an application to the Board to receive it, and they did not choose to take it.

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Robert Shaw, Esq.  
14th Oct. 1826.

When was that?—I think a year and a half ago.

Was any reason alleged for refusing to receive it?—They were not at the time authorized, as they stated, to receive it, and they did not choose to be responsible for the different vouchers we might send in.

Has there been any correspondence with the Board of Accounts upon the subject?—No, I think not; not from me; I have spoken to the secretary upon the subject.

Who is the organ of communication upon that subject?—The conversation I speak of was between Mr. O'Brien, the secretary, and myself; and the secretary of the post-office, Sir Edward Lees, I have communicated with upon the subject.

Is the balance of each year brought forward in your accounts?—Yes.

Do not you think it would have been well to have had the accounts in a state of actual preparation to have tended to the Board of Audit?—It has always taken a great deal of extra time preparing those accounts for audit, a great deal of extra attendance; and we did not wish to go on with the audit till we saw that our balance was allowed.

Can a disallowance on a former account be a reason for not preparing a subsequent account?—We have the subsequent year actually prepared, taking our own balance.

What is the year, the account of which you have actually prepared?—For the subsequent year to that in which the stop took place.

Can you state that year from recollection?—I cannot.

You do not know how many years of your own occupation of the office are in arrear?—For six years since I came into office the accounts have not been audited.

You have held the office six years?—Yes.

No account has been prepared for audit during that time?—No; except for the year that I before stated; it was previous to my coming into office, in 1816 or 1817, that the last was audited.

Have you received any instruction or any authority for withholding, and not having those accounts prepared?—We had directions to prepare some of the accounts that were in arrear some time ago, and we prepared a year's accounts, taking up the balance from the former account, and the Audit office was not ready at the time to take it; and this being done at extra hours we have not continued it.

You would be more peculiarly responsible for the accounts during the period you held the office?—Yes.

If it became a question before Parliament, why those accounts were not prepared, should you be prepared with any answer?—I am very anxious they should be audited for the period since I came into office.

Have you had them ready for audit; you cannot of course compel the Commissioners to audit them?—The difficulty was the taking up the balance.

Might not the first line be omitted in the preparing?—We have them all ready for preparation; our accounts are made up in our own office at the close of every year.

Suppose to-morrow a notification came from the Commissioners of Audit, "We allow all the balances as stated; give us the account for six years;" what would be your answer?—We should furnish them to them with as little delay as possible.

Is it a question of an allowance for extra labour?—It is.

Is there an unwillingness in your office to bring up those accounts because they are not to be paid for it?—No; but I should think it would be very hard upon an officer to be obliged to attend at the hours that would be necessary in preparing those accounts, without some additional remuneration.

Were they paid extra for the last year they did prepare?—They were.

How much?—I forget the actual sum; but they always have been, as long as the record of the account continues, for preparing those accounts for the Audit office.

When was that year prepared?—It was prepared in the year 1824, I think.

Since the Commissioners were here?—Yes.

What were they paid for that?—I can ascertain it in a moment; but I cannot remember it.

Was the whole office paid extra?—I was not; all my officers were.

By whose authority?—The postmasters-general.

Has there been any difficulty?—I rather think there was a difficulty about the payment of it; that the postmasters-general felt a difficulty.

Did they say that they never would allow it again?—I think they said that they did not know whether they had authority to grant it.

But they did allow it upon that occasion?—They did.

But with difficulty?—As well as I recollect there was a difficulty about it.

Has there been any correspondence upon the subject since?—Not since that period; we have mentioned to the secretary that we had a year's accounts prepared, and that we waited for further directions to know whether we should go on with them or not.

Are the Board to understand that by further directions is meant a promise that they will have an extra allowance?—No, of course not; whether there was an extra allowance or not, I should consider it the duty of the officers to prepare the accounts.

What directions do you require?—We stated that there was one year ready; that we wished that could be examined or go into the Audit office before we went on, to know whether we should go on or not.

Was it a direct application to the postmasters-general for directions whether you should proceed or not?—I think it was.

Or was it a statement that there was one year ready, without waiting for renewed orders?—

(107.)

I think

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 No. 179.  
 Robert Shaw, Esq.  
 14th Oct. 1826.

I think we stated that one year was ready, and that we were anxious to know whether we should go on or wait till that was audited.

Do you give any security?—Yes.

To what amount?—A thousand pounds, I think.

Do you know what is the amount?—I believe it is a thousand pounds; I saw the bond at the time it was executed.

Who is your security?—My father, Sir Robert Shaw, and Mr. T. Lees.

Do you conceive the clerks in your office are entitled to any extra pay for preparing that part of the arrear of the account which has accrued within your own time of holding the office?—I should think they are; the accounts could not be prepared for audit without its being done at extra hours.

What do you consider as extra hours?—They come at seven o'clock in the morning and stay till nine, and attend two hours in the evening.

Out of which how much would they occupy as extra hours at the book?—The hours of my office are from ten o'clock to four.

Then if they were occupied an extra time in consequence of the arrear, should you consider they were entitled to a remuneration?—I should.

Could not you prepare the accounts for one year without calling for their attendance at extra hours?—I do not think it could be so; for the amount of business of the office in general calls for the attendance of the officers during the whole time they are there.

Is it constant regular business?—There is constant daily business which each officer is required to perform, and I do not conceive they could perform it without attending extra hours.

To what amount is the establishment of your office?—Three clerks.

Have any of the clerks any other duty?—The third clerk has another office in the inland office; Mr. Devitt.

Does he attend regularly in your office?—Yes, he does.

Does he attend the inland office regularly also?—The attendance there required is in the morning and the evening.

Does he attend on those occasions?—I believe he does; I have no knowledge that he does.

Is he an intelligent officer?—He is.

Is he a willing officer?—Yes, he is very willing; he is, perhaps, the least clever of the three, but he is willing.

How do you receive notice of payments for expresses?—Mr. Lees sends us his book, in which he states that such payments have been made; but they very rarely occur, and I am not surprised at it, for an express is the slowest way in which a man could send a letter.

How is that explained?—I do not know; the regulations under which they travel were made when the roads were not in the state in which they are at present.

Do they adhere to those old rules?—I should conceive they do, for they are very slow.

Do you nominate your own clerks?—No.

With whom does the appointment rest?—With the postmasters-general.

You are a patent officer?—Yes.

Have you any power of suspending from office?—No; no further than in case of the absence of one of my clerks, I have the power of calling in another officer late in the day; but I find that in general the bringing in of a substitute not understanding the business generally gives more trouble than he is of use.

Are absences frequent of the clerks in your office?—No, they are not.

Have you any system of fining in your office?—I do not fine; but for late attendance they may be fined.

At whose discretion?—The secretary's.

Are they subjected to a system of fines?—There is such a power, and I have heard in some few instances of their having been fined; but I do believe it is very seldom used.

Do you imagine the secretary has any control over you?—I imagine I am to receive directions through him from the postmasters-general; that I am amenable to them.

It is stated, among the duties of your office, that you are to examine the book containing the account of the lodgments, and to report the nature and cause of the deficiency, or the short lodgment of the revenue, weekly to the secretary; is that done?—That is reported on the weekly check; if there is any thing unusual, I put a note at the bottom of the check.

Does that mean any deficiency in the bank book?—In case the balance in the bank is less than it should be.

From what does that happen?—I do not remember instances of its having occurred, except in the instance of the silver which the receiver-general has in his hands, or a deficiency of the letter-carriers, or the alphabet; those are the deficiencies which are entered in the check weekly.

You charge the receiver-general, and therefore the bank, with the whole of the receipts?—Yes.

Then you account for any deficiencies under those heads?—Yes; if there was any deficiency that was not accounted for under those heads, I should immediately consider it my duty, being upon the spot, to go in to Sir Edward Lees, and speak to him upon the subject.

How



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No. 179.

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How are you kept sufficiently informed from those quarters of the nature of the deficiency and its extent?—The letter-carriers returns are sent up to us from the comptroller of the penny post, and from the inland office they send us the amount in the hands of each letter-carrier; we consider their signature as sufficient authority.

Do you take their signature for the deficiency also?—They send us an abstract, with the name of each letter-carrier, and the total amount of the deficiency for the week, signed by themselves.

The balance in the hands of the alphabet office keeper is sometimes smaller than at other times?—It is so.

To what is that owing?—He states that to arise from delay in payments from the merchants and the public officers.

Does he convince you that his report must be correct; does he send you any document?—He does not; he in general sends in a letter stating his amount of deficiency, and the amount of the deficiency in any public office; on the custom-house there used to be in general a large deficiency.

He does not satisfy you of the correctness of his statement by any documents?—No, he does not; he is of course made responsible at the end of the week; his security is large enough for any balance he can hold in his hand.

What is the extent of the balance you would consider he might hold?—Five, six, or seven hundred pounds, I think.

It appears in his book 900*l.* in one instance?—That is very rare; I do not remember a balance to that amount; we debit the receiver-general with any deficiency except those.

Do you examine the bills for incidents any further than seeing that the calculations are correct?—We have no authority over the bills; they come in to us certified by the secretary, and we merely examine them as to calculation, and see that the bill has not been paid before; we enter an account of them weekly.

How is the supply of stationery in your office regulated?—We order it as we want it.

Who orders it?—I do.

Is it all ordered in your name?—Except in case of absence.

Supposing on any day, Mr. Mills, or any other of your officers, were to consider a supply necessary, could he write an order for it?—No, they must come to me for the order; in case of my absence Mr. Mills orders it.

Are they ever allowed to take stationery out of the office?—I am not aware that they do; I have never seen them do so.

You do not understand whether it is an allowed practice of the office to take stationery home for their own consumption?—I rather imagine that they do so, and that that has been the habit.

Is that to any great extent?—No, I think not; for when each officer asks me for stationery, I mark in the order-book for whom it is, and I should not give him another till he might have used what I had given him before.

They come individually, not for a supply for the service of the office generally?—No; they ask for pens and paper, and so on.

In what cases has it occurred that balances have become due to a deputy postmaster?—That is in case of an office not paying its own expenses; some offices where they pay mail-carts on a long line of road; in that case there is a balance becomes due to the postmaster.

Does that continue any time in any instances?—No, it is generally paid at the end of the quarter.

Is this [*an Account being produced*] the form of the account for audit?—It is.

You have never attended at an audit of any of the accounts in the Post-office?—I have attended at the audit board for the Dunmore account, but not for any other.

Why is that a distinct account?—The postmasters-general have taken upon themselves the management of it; while the harbour was building, it did not appear to belong to the general post-office accounts; it was not a regular account of the post-office; it was out of the usual course.

In what manner are the balances in the hands of deputy postmasters and collectors vouched in the account sent to the board?—Whatever remains due to the post-office in making up their accounts we strike the balance.

How is the accuracy of the charge vouched; is it vouched in any way?—Not further than by making it up in our accounts.

Speaking of it as an item as it stands in the public accounts, is there any voucher as to the account sent with it?—It is taken on the faith of the accountant-general's signature.

With the addition of the signature of the postmasters-general, is it not?—No, I believe the postmasters-general do not sign the Parliamentary accounts.

Is it the same account which is submitted to the Commissioners of Audit?—The account submitted to the Commissioners of Audit is much more voluminous.

What are the vouchers there alluded to as accompanying what you call Parliamentary accounts?—They have an abstract of the balances of the different post-towns sent.

There is an answer in your former examination in these terms, "I compare every postmaster's account with the original documents forwarded to me:" what are the original documents?—What I consider the original documents are the documents furnished to my office from the inland office and the other offices; that they are compared by me with those documents, on which I frame the accounts.

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No. 179.

*Robert Shaw Esq.*  
14th Oct. 1826.

You have already stated, on a former examination, that the accounts of the ship letters come before you for examination; in what manner do they come before you?—They come before me quarterly, with the incident accounts from the deputy postmasters.

Do they come direct to you from the deputy postmasters?—They come through the secretary's office.

What is the nature of the examination they undergo?—That the numbers are correctly stated; the captain of the packet gives a receipt to the postmaster for the number of letters he has been paid for.

Does that calculation take place in your office?—Yes, it does; these remain with us as vouchers.

Those may be considered as original documents?—Yes.

Was that always the case with respect to ship letters?—Yes, as long as I can remember.

There is a ship-letter office, has that no connection with the accounts?—No.

What is done at the ship-letter office?—I really cannot say.

The accounts you speak of are the accounts of money paid to the captains of ships at the outports, who have given in letters to them?—Yes.

ROBERT SHAW jun.

## Appendix, No. 180.

14th October 1826.

Mr. GEORGE D. MILLS called in and examined.

No. 180.  
*Mr. G. D. Mills.*  
14th Oct. 1826.

THE Commissioners have before them some copies of correspondence you had with other officers belonging to the post-office, respecting the mode in which you make up your quarterly accounts with the deputies, and on matters relating to the manner in which the accounts are kept in your office; will you state generally the manner in which you propose any alterations shall be made for the carrying on that service?—I think I have stated in the Report itself every thing which I conceived as improvements in that branch of the accounts, and have stated the grounds on which I proposed them.

Have you any other suggestion to offer than that contained in that Report?—I should have observed, that some parts of that Report have been partially attended to.

The Report was dated the 5th of July 1824; what improvements have been adopted in the office since that time?—They have returned the bye-letter postage, with which I found great fault, in abstracts, not of course in printed abstracts, (the documents are not printed yet,) but in written abstracts, such as I pointed out.

From whence have they returned that?—From the bye-letter office.

Instead of what?—Instead of the small book they returned, their habit was to send, in this book every month the name of the town and the month, with the amount of postage: it was returned by us again; and so it went on to the end of the year, after which it remained with us to go in to the audit office; but we had no proof of the accuracy of the account from the moment it left us; when we lost sight of it we could not be responsible for it, it went through the hands of so many officers and others: it was correctly copied by us, but we could not be accountable for it after it left us; and yet it went in as our voucher for the debits we made against the postmasters for the bye postage.

How does the sending in the abstract correct that?—The abstract does not quit us, it is only for one month; they send in twelve abstracts in the year.

You only make the entries on account of bye letters once a month?—That is all.

It follows, that you cannot state a postmaster's account at any intervening moment?—No, not of ourselves: the returns are monthly returns, furnished by the postmasters of the bye revenue; the office here has no knowledge until it gets the monthly account from the postmasters.

What objection would there be to bringing in all the accounting officers under one department; that is, all the accountants, all the officers who keep accounts in the post-office establishment: why should not they form one establishment under a superintendent?—The thing might be done; but I think it is a great deal more correct that they should have no communication whatever with one another.

Have they not constant communication with one another now?—Certainly not, so as to affect the accuracy of the accounts.

You make up your accounts only by accounts from the other offices?—Yes; but we have no reference to the vouchers unless when we demand to see them officially.

Do you think that an advantage?—Yes, certainly.

That does not prevent your knowing the accuracy of any one account you have?—No; until Mr. Shaw's appointment, in case of any doubt arising in the mind of the accountant-general, there was a reference to the individual himself in charge of the voucher; if the whole were connected there must be a numerous body of clerks.

Suppose the original vouchers, instead of going into each of those offices, were brought into the accountant-general's office, from which one account would be at once raised?—That would answer in some instances, but it would not answer in the whole, because there

are a variety of other branches; the accountant-general's office at present has a multitude of accounts.

Suppose those original documents were all sent in to the accountant-general's office, what would be the objection to that?—I do not see any objection to it further than that I have stated, that where there is a multitude of hands, and where those various vouchers can be classed and kept separate under the care of separate and responsible officers, it is more likely the account would be correct than under the care of one officer who may be absent occasionally.

Could not they be classed under one officer having the control?—I conceive it is better as it is.

What do you think to be the existing control of a postmaster's account?—The control on what we call his general and post-paid letters, his letters from Dublin unpaid, and paid to Dublin, is established in the Dublin office, the general post-office here.

In what department of it?—It is considered a branch of the secretary's office; it is called the letter-bill office.

Where is the efficient control applied to the account of a deputy postmaster at present, according to your principle?—So far as the general and post-paid letters in the secretary's office, or that branch of it called the letter-bill office.

What is the control you apprehend to be exercised in that office?—The examination of the daily dockets.

What examination do you suppose takes place?—The docket has two columns; the postmaster has one to fill; there is one filled sent to him; any difference between the two he must account for, on the face of the daily return of postage.

Is it your understanding that an actual examination between the docket retained and that sent to the letter-bill office is made;—suppose the postmaster alters it?—It is on a sort of paper where it cannot be altered with ease; he will not add to it, and it is not likely that he can diminish, for the paper will tear away.

Do you know whether the entries are made from the docket returned by the postmaster, or from the other?—The docket returned by the postmaster.

Then if the postmaster makes any correction in it, what is done in the letter-bill office?—They keep to that which the postmaster swears to having received.

There is no affidavit attached to the docket?—To the monthly return there is.

The daily returns are not sworn to, are they?—They are in the monthly return.

The entries are made in the letter-bill office from the daily returns?—Yes.

Those returns pass on to you?—In the monthly accounts only.

If the postmaster professes to make a correction, that makes a false entry in that docket and it is copied by the letter-bill clerk, what check is there upon that?—We have no check whatever upon that.

How could that be checked in the letter-bill office?—By a proper attention to their duties.

To what could the letter-bill clerk refer for the purpose of checking that?—Nothing but the document itself.

You mean the docket sent up to the letter-bill office?—Yes, which is the docket sent down from Dublin, with the charge made upon it against the postmaster.

Would not he have a slip to compare it with?—I believe they have an entry in the inland office; whether this would bear them out in the comparison I cannot say, for I have never examined it for this purpose.

Is not there a slip sent up from the inland office to the letter-bill office?—That is the daily docket.

Is not there one sent to the postmaster, and one sent to the letter-bill office?—The one sent down to the postmaster is the same that is subsequently sent to the letter-bill office; there are two, one called the white docket, and the other the red docket.

The question refers to the white docket?—That contains the unpaid sent to the deputies from Dublin; that is, what the deputies are to receive money for.

How is the postmaster charged on letters sent down from Dublin to him?—When the amount of the postage on the bundle of letters in his office is known, it is entered in a white docket that is sent down with the letters to him; his first duty on receiving this is to see if he is correctly charged; should he be under or overcharged, he has a column to correct the account, and has another column in his account in which he enters the correction; he returns this docket by the next post, with the red docket, to the inland office, and from that they are sent to the letter-bill office.

Your understanding is, that after it is returned to the inland office, it is sent to the letter-bill office?—Yes, I know this to be the practice.

Do you understand there is no communication from the inland office to the letter-bill office but that by means of the docket returned to the postmaster, and sent up to the letter-bill office?—There is no other communication that I know of on the subject in question.

Have you a knowledge of the documents in the letter-bill office?—I have seen most of the documents there, unless they have introduced any others very lately.

Is not there a slip sent up every day, showing the charge against every postmaster in the country?—Those are the slips that are or have been posted from.

Are there not others besides those that go down to the postmaster?—There are only the two daily returns that I know of, one the postmaster sends up, and the other that is sent down to him for his office stamp and signature.

(107.)

When

Examinations.

No. 180.

Mr. G. D. Mills.

14th Oct. 1826.

Examinations.

No. 180.  
Mr. G. D. Mills.  
14th Oct. 1826.

When the letters are sent off to the country, is there not on that day another docket or a corresponding docket sent up to the letter-bill office, to enable the proper officer there to charge the postmaster with the amount of it before the return of the docket from the country?—Not that I am aware of; all I have ever seen are those which have been sent down to the postmaster, and returned by him, and those which have been sent by him, containing the amount of the post-paid letters.

You have never officiated in the letter-bill office?—Never.

What do you call that paper [*a paper being shown to the witness*]?—That is a slip, but I never saw them post from any such return as that; they post from the original documents, which the deputy signs; such has been the practice.

In doing that, they adopt any alterations which the deputy makes?—Yes, they enter from his statement.

Do you, as an accountant, consider that a satisfactory mode of raising an account against the deputy postmaster?—I certainly do.

Is it not leaving to him to make the account pretty much against himself?—It must be in a great many instances; the charges both in the general and bye letters are at the mercy of the postmaster in a variety of instances.

Must not the slip be a better document to raise the charge upon, provided there has been no inaccuracy in the inland office?—No doubt of it.

Is the slip less likely to be accurate than the docket?—Undoubtedly it is, because the parties who prepare the slips do it in a very great hurry, just at the moment of the dispatch of the mails, and are liable to error; the postmaster, if overcharged, is more likely to look to that overcharge, and therefore if they are both honest, it is more likely that the postmaster will make a correct charge.

The postmaster has an opportunity of correcting the contents of the docket?—Yes, and he has more time to do it.

The clerk in the inland office has equal time for both; one is made up from the other?—The paper just shown me I never saw in use; in the letter-bill office I have always seen them posting from the red and white dockets.

How long have you known the practice in the letter-bill office?—Probably I should not say that I do know the practice; but I have observed, whenever I have had to make any inquiries in that office, what the system was.

How long have you been in the habit of making any inquiries there?—For many years.

For how many years?—These seventeen years.

Do you understand it to have been always the same during those seventeen years?—Yes, always; so far as I can speak to it, from the observations I have made.

You have no correspondence with the deputies?—Not now.

Have you had?—Always, till Mr. Shaw's appointment.

Was it altered at his suggestion?—I believe not.

What was the occasion of its being altered?—Indeed I cannot say; the first objection I believe to have been advanced against it was at the time I brought in some letters, in reply to complaints of postmasters, respecting their accounts; and Mr. Thomas Lees was of opinion that my office should have no correspondence with the postmasters, and from that time it ceased, by order of Sir Edward Lees.

During the whole of Mr. Prior's time did it go on?—Always; he made it a most particular point of his duty that the complaints of the deputies should be attended to, and that whenever they complained of an error, we should refer to the original documents or accounts.

How did you get at the original documents?—The accountant-general always exercised the authority of sending for the head of the department where the original document was, and of requesting him to attend him with it.

Was that always attended to?—Always, during the time that Mr. Prior attended the office.

Was Mr. Prior in attendance for some years before he vacated?—He was not; he was absent for a time.

Then when you speak of Mr. Prior doing so and so, you mean yourself?—I obeyed Mr. Prior's directions; I exercised the same authority when he was absent, and I acted for him as he did for himself when he was present.

For how many years was that?—I suppose for about six years out of ten.

Are the applications from deputies to have their accounts altered frequent?—I cannot say what they are now.

Are applications to you to alter the account frequent from the secretary's office?—I never knew an instance of a postmaster's account being sent to the office I belong to from the secretary, that is, for an error committed in my office.

What is the process of correcting an error, now that the immediate communication is put a stop to?—I do not know, indeed.

Supposing there had been an error detected, you do not know the result of it?—No; for should a deputy forget himself so far, or leave himself in the power of being fined, by writing to the accountant-general, I turn up the corner of his letter, and refer it to the office in which the error would be if the deputy were right in his statement; but the general reply to me now is, "the postmaster has been answered," so that I remain in ignorance whether the error is corrected or not.

How

Examinations.

No. 180.  
Mr. G. D. Mills.  
14th Oct. 1826.

How are they enabled to correct the account?—How they now correct the account thus an error I do not know.

It goes to the office wherever the error is supposed to have originated, probably?—They cannot correct the old account except in the new; and on the face of the account in our books there is no correction; so that if the postmaster has been overcharged in one quarter, he must be undercharged in the next, to balance it.

How does that overcharge appear?—It does not appear with us in our books.

Suppose a postmaster discovered an error which had taken place in the letter-bill office, and wrote to have that corrected, would not the secretary refer that to the letter-bill office?—I conceive so.

Would not there then be a communication with you to correct any error in the account which had been made to appear?—A case of that kind has never happened, except one, and that was a very important one; there a postmaster was overcharged 10*l.* in his month's account, and the way in which that was corrected was a warrant of the postmaster-general to draw from the incidents of the post-office of Dublin 10*l.* to reimburse him, instead of the error being corrected on the face of the account itself.

When was that done?—In the course of the present year.

In case of what post-town?—Rathcoole.

To what account was that 10*l.* placed?—To the incidents of the Dublin office, leaving the revenue of the office 10*l.* too much, and the incidents of the office 10*l.* likewise.

How had the error occurred?—Through the officer of the letter-bill office.

What was the error?—He overcharged 10*l.* in copying.

Is that the only instance of an error you are aware of?—It is the only instance of an error being corrected in that way. I would have suggested another mode, had the matter been submitted to my office.

In what other way have such errors been corrected?—Any errors which have been corrected, have been corrected, if overcharged, by deducting from the following month or quarter; that is the only way I know of.

By giving the postmaster credit for so much as is overcharged in the previous period?—By crediting him on the subsequent return, or in other words, by debiting him with less in the subsequent quarter by so much as would meet the error or overcharge in the former.

You think those corrections are made in that manner at once in the secretary's office, without their being reported to the accountant-general, to be audited in the account?—I do not know of any such things being done in the secretary's office at all; and if done in the letter-bill office, I am entirely ignorant of the fact; but I say, if done, they can be done only in this way, as they do not appear upon the face of the account as errors. I have no knowledge that such is the case.

In respect of the particular case of 10*l.*, that came within your knowledge?—Yes, when the warrant was presented for entry.

Did not the accountant-general countersign that draft for 10*l.*?—Yes.

He signed the receiver-general's draft for it?—Yes.

By what authority?—The warrant of the postmaster-general.

What was expressed in that warrant?—It was in this form: "Mr. Swan, pay the postmaster of Rathcoole 10*l.*, being so much overcharged to him in his general and post-paid letters," for such a month as it occurred in.

Was not the draft of similar tenor?—It was; that was the warrant; the draft was to pay the individual.

From what account do you make your entry?—From that warrant.

There is nothing about incidents in the warrant or the draft, as you state it?—We have no other account to put it to.

You state that in other instances overcharges have been corrected by making undercharges in the succeeding account?—I do not say that they have been, but I say it is the only mode that could be adopted where such things were required, as they never appear upon the face of the accountant-general's books.

Have not such things been required?—They have, certainly.

Then they must be corrected in the way you state?—Yes.

Then it amounts to this, that the allowances for overcharges do not appear in the accounts of the accountant-general's office?—They do not appear in the accounts of the accountant-general's office, so far as relates to the item of account alluded to.

In what accounts do they appear?—Upon the face of the account in the letter-bill office, and upon the face of the dead-letter office vouchers.

Then the officers in the letter-bill office do not give you perfect copies of their accounts?—They give us, I presume, the sums that the deputies should be debited with; for instance, had that 10*l.* not been corrected in that way, it would have been deducted from the next month, and the balance only brought to debit.

What would have been communicated to your office by that?—No part of it but the figures.

What figures; the figures expressing the error?—The balance, after deducting the 10*l.*

Who usually prepares the warrants for payments?—The minute clerk in the secretary's office.

For all payments?—Yes; for payments drawn from the bank by draft of the receiver-general: there are other warrants, the warrants of the postmasters-general for the allowances and salaries to the postmasters and letter-carriers.

Examinations.

No. 180.

Mr. G. D. Mills.  
14th Oct. 1826.

In what state is the audit of the accounts of the post-office; when was the last audit?—For the year ending the 5th of January 1817.

What has prevented the accounts of the subsequent years being audited?—I understand the disallowances made in the last accounts that went in. The Government or the commissioners of account obtained the opinion of part of the law officers that they were right in making the disallowances; the postmasters-general stated a case for the opinion of another branch of the law officers of the Crown, which opinion was favourable to the post-office, that these disallowances should not have been made; and in consequence of that, further accounts have not been audited; the postmasters-general do not wish to send in any other account, unless with their own balance; the commissioners of accounts will not receive it without their balance, as stated by them.

How can they refuse to receive it; they must receive it before they can see what the balance stated is?—I am not aware of the powers they have.

Has it ever been tendered?—They will not receive it unless they are ordered by His Majesty's Government; they always demand it.

Do you wait for their application?—Yes; they will not receive it otherwise.

If the account is made out and sent with the vouchers to their office, do you mean to say they would refuse it?—Yes; they would not give a receipt for the vouchers.

Why do you say so; has it ever been tried?—From the statement of their own officer.

To whom?—To me, frequently.

Have they ever stated any thing of that kind in writing?—No, not that I am aware of.

Could the furnishing of those accounts in continuation at all affect the question of the present disallowances?—It could, certainly; because if the postmasters-general furnished such an account as they would furnish, they would take up their own balance, or else charge themselves with the disallowance, feeling themselves liable to it.

Supposing they make up the account with their own balance, and go on year after year, and submit the annual account for seven years to the commissioners, the question of the disallowances might still remain suspended, might it not?—Yes; but the postmasters-general, I understand, do not wish to have this account remain undecided, and the former disallowances charged against them.

Is it owing to the choice of the postmasters-general or the commissioners that the accounts are not sent?—I believe it is the most anxious wish of both the postmasters-general, and I speak of Lord Rosse particularly, to have the accounts decided upon and promptly audited.

You say the commissioners will not receive the account?—Unless they are directed by His Majesty's Government they will not.

Under what authority do you say that?—It is the regular known practice of their office.

Is it their practice to reject an account?—Not to reject it; they will not, perhaps, turn it out of the office, but they will not examine it, nor acknowledge the receipt of its vouchers.

That you consider as not receiving it?—Undoubtedly.

That would not prevent the post-office furnishing it?—No, certainly not; if it were prudent so to do.

Is the form of account for audit among those you have furnished to this Board?—It is not.

Why has not that been sent?—The charge and discharge of the account for audit takes 100 pages and upwards.

Does the form of it occupy that?—The form of it is the abstract of the general Irish account.

Is there any account showing the heads under which the receipt and expenditure are finally audited?—This is the abstract of the account [*producing it*], without stating the balance.

Is that what you call the Parliamentary account?—No; it is a statement of the general Irish account.

This appears to be a quarterly account?—That is an account for one quarter; the four quarters are put together in a similar form.

Does this account contain all the heads under which the account is submitted for audit?—No, certainly not; that is an abstract; under the head "Incidents," for instance, there may be forty different heads.

Are all the general heads of charge and discharge comprised within this abstract?—Yes, they are, in the manner I have stated.

Do you consider the arrears very great; beyond what they ought to be?—They are certainly much above the amount.

Are they greater than they have been?—They are. I understand there are claims that are not yet answered, which would reduce the arrears of the deputy postmasters very much; those claims for soldiers wives receipts which have not been allowed to the postmasters for a number of years.

Have you any documents to show the amount of them?—No; all I know that I can speak to is, that I saw a draft for nearly 1,900*l.* for those monies which had not then been presented for payment by the receiver-general's clerk, as he was ignorant of the real parties to whom the money is due.

A draft

Examinations.

No. 180.

Mr. G. D. Mills.  
14th Oct. 1826.

A draft from whom?—It is a draft upon the bank from Sir William Burdett, an army agent.

What steps are taken to ascertain the individuals to whom that money belongs?—I believe the receiver-general's first clerk is arranging the accounts.

Has he the means in his hands of coming at the truth?—He should have them.

Is there any other cause to which you attribute the increase of arrears?—There is; the wretchedness of the times and the poverty of the salaries to the postmasters.

Do you consider the postmasters as much underpaid?—I think they are the very worst paid persons in any service, public or private, that I ever saw.

You stated in your report that there is a very great excess in the last payment in a quarter, that the last payment is equal nearly to the former eleven?—That is the fact.

You have observed that to be the case?—I have; for instance, 9,000*l.* or 10,000*l.* or 11,000*l.* will come in the last week, and perhaps the whole remittances of the quarter will not exceed 25,000*l.*

Are you aware that any notice has been taken of that?—Indeed, I am not.

Has that been a common practice of late years?—Of late years it has been the practice.

You have stated, that the accounts referred to introduce all the general heads of charge and discharge included in the accounts submitted for audit; under which head do the balances from postmasters come?—They are embraced in the balance of the account; that account embraces the balances, without the statement of the heads of each balance.

Point out under which of those heads the balances of the postmasters will appear?—In the balance of the account.

Without any specification of the amount of those balances?—Certainly.

It does not appear before the commissioners of accounts what amount of balances is due from the postmasters?—That form is only an abstract of the account; the charge and discharge of the account which is furnished to the audit office is upwards of 100 pages; this is merely an abstract of the account, which is fully and clearly detailed to the Commissioners.

Under which head would the balances of the postmasters be included?—It would be included under the general head of balance.

Under which of the heads would the balances due by the deputy postmasters be included?—The whole of the balances due by the deputy postmasters would be embraced in the item "balance," which balance would also embrace all the debts due by the post-office.

If it is included in the balance resulting from those heads, it must be included in one of those heads?—The balance of the former year will embrace all the balances due from the post-office at that period; on one side are the charges against the postmaster, and on the other side the balance when it is due by him.

Do you mean that the balances due from the postmasters are included under the head of receipts?—The postmasters are charged with the revenue; the deficiency between what they pay and what they are charged with is embraced here as a balance.

Does the account which goes before the commissioners show the amount actually received?—Yes; I take the balance of the former year, and the accruing revenue.

When you speak of accruing revenue, do you include what is due from the postmaster?—What he has paid is on this side of the account [*pointing it out*].

Is there any distinction between that paid over by the postmasters and what actually remains due?—This account does not show that the balance at the close contains each individual balance due from the deputy postmasters.

Is that the case with respect to the account submitted for audit?—In the accounts submitted for audit, every farthing due, with the name of the town and the postmaster, is stated fully and particularly.

Then that account must vary in its general form from this?—It must vary in form, because that account comprises one hundred pages.

For what purpose is this account made up?—This is the general statement of the whole accounts of the office embraced for one quarter.

For what purpose is this made up?—To show the balance of the postmasters-general.

To whom is that submitted?—It is not submitted to any one; it is kept in the accountant-general's office.

Is not this a copy of some book in the office?—It is; of the "General Irish Account."

For what is it copied?—For the purpose of preserving a record of the accounts.

Are not the books the records of the accounts?—Yes; but the books are in various branches; this comprises the whole thing; this form is a classification of the whole accounts.

For what purpose is that made up?—For the purpose of showing the whole accounts of the office at one view.

What form does this go through; who signs and examines it?—It is not signed.

Is it examined?—I keep that account.

By whom is it prepared?—It is prepared by me.

Is there a series of accounts for a number of years under this form?—There is since I came into the office.

Are they signed?—I do not know that they are signed.

Do they go before the postmasters-general?—They do not, unless when called for.

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Do

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Do they go before the secretary?—No, they do not, in that form.

Do they go before the accountant-general?—The accountant-general of course has full power over all the books in the office.

Do they go before the acting accountant-general?—They always did in the time of the late accountant-general.

Has such an account gone before the present accountant-general?—Yes, it has.

Has he examined it?—I cannot say that he has.

Did such an account go before the preceding accountant-general?—Yes; he frequently prepared it himself, and made all the entries therein.

Did he sign it?—No; I know that he was not in the habit of signing such accounts in the office books.

This form is gone through every quarter?—Yes; and the four quarters stated in one at the close of each year.

Is any other use made of it than that you have mentioned?—At the close of the year that is the account we extract the amounts from for Parliament for the general statement of the account.

Will you produce any account you extract from this? would the balance of the account submitted for audit at the end of the year be the same as that which would appear on the last quarter of the year on this account?—Yes, it would.

You state that in the accounts submitted to audit, there is a distinction between monies actually received and the balances remaining due from each postmaster?—Yes; there is a very great distinction.

How is the charged side of that account vouched?—By the original documents.

What do you call original documents?—The documents furnished from the letter-bill office, and the other offices, and sworn to.

Do the respective officers swear to those accounts?—Yes.

At the end of each quarter?—No; but when the accounts are prepared for audit, their respective affidavits are attached to the account before it is submitted to the audit board.

Who is to swear to the account for the year 1818?—The parties who were then in office, if now living; if not, their successors.

You say the parliamentary account is an extract from this quarterly account?—It is; I mean the general statement.

Where is the balance in the bank to be collected from this quarterly account?—The balance in the bank is embraced in the balance at the foot of the account now before you.

Does it appear as a particular item?—No, it does not, in this account.

Then how can you extract it?—Because we have all the particulars in detail in several other books, of which this is an abstract only.

That must be from other books, and not from this?—From other books certainly; many others.

You were understood to state that the parliamentary account is an extract from this account?—It is embraced in this account; the balance of both must be the same.

You must go to some other document to obtain that balance?—Yes, certainly; to a variety of other documents.

So the next item in the parliamentary account is the “balances due from the deputy postmasters;” you cannot get that from this quarterly account?—We cannot get the particular amounts.

Can you get the gross amount?—Certainly not without referring to the distinct account of the several balances.

What can you extract under that head of balances due from postmasters?—We cannot extract it from that.

The next is “balances due from deceased and dismissed deputies;” do you find that in this account?—No, certainly not; that does not distinguish it; but we find it in detail in its proper place in the general ledger of accounts.

Are these accounts laid before Parliament every quarter?—Every year they are prepared for that purpose.

This is intitled, “Form of the quarterly and annual accounts laid before Parliament and the Treasury”?—It was once or twice required quarterly for the Treasury; now they get only the particulars of the expenses of the collection quarterly.

Do the Treasury get any copy of the quarterly account?—No; no identical copy of that in your hand.

Is this which you call the parliamentary account the only account furnished to the Treasury?—That is the general statement furnished at the end of the year, but that is accompanied by a great number of vouchers, containing a detail of the entire, under the proper and distinct heads.

What do the Treasury do with this account?—They submit it to Parliament; it is included in the Finance Accounts, and particularly detailed.

Do the Treasury in Ireland make any use of this account?—It is furnished to the Treasury in England, not the Treasury in Ireland.

How long has it been submitted to the Treasury in England?—About four years in its present form; it was submitted in another form for many years.



How are the balances which remain due by deputies or others vouched in the account submitted to audit?—The balances are struck in the accountant-general's office from the returns furnished to it, and the original account in which this balance is struck is submitted to the audit office; we call it "the postmaster's ledger of accounts."

Is it vouched in any way?—All the vouchers from which the accounts are prepared are sent in at the same time.

Is there any thing to vouch the balances due from postmasters to be a correct charge?—Yes.

What is the nature of that voucher?—The documents from which the accounts have been prepared.

That is the returns made from the letter-bill office, and so on, is it not?—Yes.

Are there any separate documents taken from several offices which will show the balances due from the postmasters?—The separate documents taken from the various offices will show for a certain period the balances due, but that will not include the previous balance.

That will not vouch the general balance contained in the account submitted to audit?—No, certainly not; it will contain the charge and discharge for the period for which it is stated; the balance before will have been audited.

Could the commissioners of audit by possibility tell whether 1,000*l.* too much or too little was taken credit for under that head of "Balances due from Postmasters"?—Undoubtedly they could; that is, if the returns furnished to the accountant-general be correct.

What returns?—The various returns from which he states the post-office accounts.

State the returns which will show to the commissioners the balance due from any given postmaster?—The general and post-paid letters, and bye letters, the returns from Waterford and Donaghadee (signed and sworn to), the credits for riding work, general salary, bye salary, night salary, and so on: the bye returns, the general returns, the credit given by the postmasters-general for expresses, incidents, and ship letters, and so on.

Do you mean to say that the commissioners, in order to ascertain the accuracy of this, must make out a balance from all those documents?—Undoubtedly; or compare the entries made by us with the statement of our accounts.

Is there any verification in any case by a postmaster of the balance due from him?—The postmaster is never called upon to acknowledge the balance.

Is there ever in any instance a verification by a postmaster of the amount of the balance due from him?—Certainly not.

You state that the accountant-general is obliged to state the balances which he is aware are false?—No doubt. The accountant-general is aware that the postmasters have paid a vast deal of money to soldiers wives, for travelling expenses, by order of the postmasters-general, in obedience to the warrant of the Lord Lieutenant; and he is also aware, from the statement of the remittance clerk, that such monies have not been credited to the postmasters; therefore the balance he states must be a false balance, as those people are entitled to the credit which they have not received, and which he has not the means to give.

Is that the only ground on which he is bound to conclude that the balances are incorrect?—When a postmaster states that he is not chargeable for the revenue for the period for which he is held accountable, if the accountant-general has reason to believe that the deputy postmaster's statement is right, he must believe that the balance is wrong which has been struck against him.

Is a postmaster in any case called upon to state the amount of his receipts and expenditure, and his claims?—No; though he does not do that in one form, he does it in detail; he debits himself with his general and post-paid letters; he debits himself with his bye letters.

How do you mean that he debits himself; do you mean that he sends an account?—He signs the detail of accounts, and acknowledges having received so much money.

You speak of the dockets?—I do; and of his bye-letter postage.

Is it your impression that it is the habit of the postmasters to keep accounts?—Indeed, it is not; quite the contrary. I believe there are many postmasters who do not know the credit side from the debit side of the account furnished to them by the accountant-general.

Do you see any reason why a postmaster should not be obliged to state his account, and verify it?—I do not see any reason why he should not, if directed so to do; but I do not see the utility of it.

Might it not be a check upon the office?—It would be a great satisfaction to my office to know that the returns furnished to it were correct, and acknowledged so.

Might it not be a check upon the remittances?—Undoubtedly it would.

Suppose the postmaster was required, by stating the account, to claim credit for all the remittances he has made during the month, would not that prevent the suppression of any of those remittances?—Certainly it would, in my opinion.

Would it not save a great deal of trouble if the postmasters were called upon to furnish their accounts, instead of their being furnished from your office?—No; it would occasion a great deal of trouble if we had to examine all their statements with those we prepare from the original returns, and to satisfy each postmaster that his account was correct or incorrect.

Must not you do that equally, if you prepare the account?—No.

Is your account binding upon the postmaster?—If the account is prepared according to the accounts we have received, it is presumed to be correct, and the postmaster must adhere to it, unless he can prove it otherwise.

Examinations.  
 No. 180.  
 Mr. G. D. Mills.  
 14th Oct. 1826.

Suppose the postmaster objects to the account as incorrect?—It is the duty of the accountant-general to satisfy him to the best of his power.

Does he get that satisfaction at present?—He does not from the accountant-general.

Does he express dissatisfaction at not getting it?—Those who have been fool-hardy enough to write to me have done so, but now I have no communication whatever with the postmasters.

Why do you call them fool-hardy?—Because they are told not to do so.

Are they told never to make any observations upon the account?—No; they are told if there is any reason to find fault with the account, to apply to the secretary, and not to the accountant-general.

Do they apply to the secretary?—I cannot say.

Would there be a reference to you in that case?—There should be; but I believe it has not been always the case where they have referred to the different offices.

Have the goodness to mention an instance?—I am speaking of the principle where the postmaster has complained of his account being wrong; that account or his complaint should go to the accountant-general, and he should apply to the different offices, and examine those items.

Does it happen that the deputy postmasters complain of their accounts not being accurate?—Frequently I have known it.

What has been the result?—Where an error existed, to have it rectified; where an under-credit, to have it corrected the following quarter.

You think it would not be a good plan that the postmasters should be required to furnish their accounts?—Indeed, I do not see the advantage of it; it would be much better, I think, if they had the power of applying to the individual who signs and furnishes their quarterly accounts, and to point out to him such errors, or supposed errors, as they may suppose to exist; and that he should satisfy them whether their statement was correct or not.

Is it not the common course of all public departments that the sub-accountants furnish their accounts?—They do; the deputy postmasters furnish their accounts, but not the general statement of the quarterly account embracing all the heads.

You mean that they send up those daily dockets?—Yes, just so; and their monthly returns.

That is not furnishing the account itself; they do not furnish that, for the greater part is made up against them?—They fill them up; it is from their own figures that the charge is made; they insert the charge in those dockets themselves and in their monthly returns, which they swear to.

The charge is inserted for them?—Yes; but it is from the postmaster's column that the charge is made.

You state that you conceive considerable inconvenience is felt in the accountant-general's office from certain printed forms formerly in use not being at present adhered to; is that a serious inconvenience?—It is a very great inconvenience.

In what manner?—They are much more difficult to read, and much more liable to error; in their first entry of the account, and in the comparison afterwards, it is much more liable to error than a printed account; the printed form would last for many years if there were no alteration in the post-towns.

What has been the occasion of the alteration?—I believe it was for the purpose of effecting a saving of the expenses; I believe it was represented so to Sir Edward Lees, and he adopted it.

Are they written forms; is the whole body of the form written at once; are they prepared in what is called the writing office?—That is the office in which they are prepared.

Are they written carelessly?—Indeed, in many instances, shamefully so, I conceive.

G. D. MILLS.

### Appendix, No. 181.

16th October 1826.

GRAVES CHAMNEY SWAN Esquire called in and examined.

No. 181.  
 G. C. Swan,  
 Esq.  
 16th Oct. 1826.

IS there any alteration in the management of your office since the Commissioners were last here?—There is not. I must throw myself upon the indulgence of the Commissioners, being extremely indisposed, having a certificate of a physician.

(The witness produced the certificate of a physician, that he was unfit to attend to any official duty.)

Is there any person in your office who will be able to give full information as to the state of your office?—Yes; Mr. Harrison will be competent to answer every question with respect to the office.

(The Commissioners intimated that they would not, under the circumstances, trouble Mr. Swan with any questions.)

Mr. ROBERT HARRISON again called in and examined.

Examinations.

No. 181.

Mr. R. Harrison.  
16th Oct. 1826.

Mr. SWAN, having represented to the Board the state of his health, incapacitating him from the performance of his duties, has referred to you, as being capable of giving an account of those duties. What is your situation in the receiver-general's office?—Junior clerk.

Who is the senior?—Mr. Symes.

Is he in attendance?—He is.

Can you understand why Mr. Swan did not mention Mr. Symes?—Mr. Symes is out a good deal, changing notes and making lodgments in the bank, and I am always there.

Do you receive the monies?—No.

Who receives those?—Mr. Symes.

But you are acquainted with the routine of the office?—I am.

Have the goodness to state to the Board in what different manner you receive monies in the course of the day?—From the deputy postmasters through the remittance clerk, from the letter-carriers, from the penny post, the alphabet, and the post-paid window.

Do you receive for ship letters?—The postage on ship letters is collected together with the other revenue of the post-office, and paid in same manner. I do not recollect any payment on account of ship letters in particular.

What do you receive from the remittance clerk?—All the remittances from the country, of whatever description; it is paid to the senior clerk in the office, Mr. Symes.

Of what do they consist?—Of bills of exchange, post bills, money orders, bank notes, great quantities of silver now, small drafts, pension bills, and prize drafts.

What entries do you make of those receipts?—We enter them in detail.

You have an account with each deputy, have you not?—We have, of the money received.

Do you mean that you enter every different part of a remittance?—Yes.

What is the necessity for that?—There are a great many of those returned, and if we have to take them off, we would not know what to take off unless we did so; there are a great many bad drafts and forged bank notes.

When do you make up the charge against the deputies?—We do not make up that; that is made up in the accountant-general's office.

When do you complete the amount of the sum you have so received?—At the end of each week.

Do you furnish any account to the accountant-general's office?—Yes.

Does that state the detail?—No; the amount remitted by each postmaster; the amount actually received and lodged in the bank.

Are those documents you receive, which are at times not valuable, and which you are obliged to return to the deputies, numerous?—Sometimes, at the end of the quarter, a great number; perhaps in one week's remittances there will be twenty or thirty little things to return.

What per-centage will they amount to?—Perhaps the whole of them would not amount to more than thirty or forty pounds for the whole week.

At what periods do the largest remittances come in from the deputies?—On the 24th of the month; his month's instalment on the average, struck by the accountant-general.

What was due on the 24th of the preceding month?—Yes.

Have you observed any difference between the accounts remitted monthly?—Yes; the deputies who have not remitted more than once during the quarter will endeavour to make up the balances of their remittances at the end of the quarter.

Of those deputies who are ordered to remit twice in the month, are their remittances each month pretty nearly of the same amount?—Yes.

Do you find that the last quarter of the month is greater than the previous quarters?—Yes; the two first are the average amount, the last is the actual balance.

How ascertained?—By the accountant-general's account being furnished to each deputy.

It is your understanding that the accountant-general furnishes his account, and the deputy is required to remit the balance of that account?—Yes.

When is it furnished?—Generally about six weeks after the quarter.

Then he calculates the balance in that quarter at that time?—Yes.

Each officer is obliged to remit each month?—Yes.

He has not received the account of the accountant-general till the actual termination of the quarter?—No, nor for six weeks afterwards.

You stated that the third monthly remittance is larger than the former?—Yes; there are two instalments struck; one the 24th of October, one on the 24th of November; and I count by that time he gets his quarterly account, and then he remits the actual balance due.

Is the amount of the quarter not received till he gets his account from the accountant-general?—Certainly not; which he receives before the third instalment becomes due.

When does the quarter end?—On the 5th of the month; but the first instalment becomes due on the 24th of the same month.

Up to what day are the quarterly accounts made up?—The 5th of each month.

When would the deputy postmaster be expected to remit his balance up to the 5th of October?—About the 24th of December next; he will not get his account till November;

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No. 181.  
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when I say six weeks, it is generally above that time that he gets it; if before the six weeks, he remits it as his second instalment.

Is the deputy postmaster not expected to make his month's remittance till he gets that?—He is supposed to remit whatever money is in his hands; he is compelled to remit a certain sum on the 24th of October.

Without reference to the monthly account, he makes a remittance for each month?—Yes.

At the end of the six weeks after, or as soon after as he has received the account of the accountant-general, he is supposed to remit the balance as it appears by the account of the accountant-general?—Yes.

That would be the 24th of November?—Yes; he would pay another instalment on the 24th of December.

There is another instalment due on the 24th of November?—Yes.

That he must have remitted, must he not?—Yes, he must.

And so for the 24th of December?—Exactly; just the same.

What makes the interval so long as six weeks?—It takes a great deal of time for the accountant-general to collect the different documents to make up the account from.

Those are all accounts for transactions which have preceded the turn of the quarter?—Yes; but they are a long while getting them afterwards from the letter-bill office, the dead-letter office, and the deputy postmasters incidents, and so on.

Is it the 24th of November or the 24th of December that the accountant-general would write to the deputy to give him notice of the balance due on the 5th of October?—About the 24th of November.

How soon would he be expected to pay it up?—Immediately after.

What is the communication between the remittance clerk and the receiver-general?—He pays in the remittances to the receiver-general.

How is it managed?—The remittance clerk hands each day's remittance, with the book, to the receiver-general's office.

Does the remittance clerk ever pay over more than once a day to the receiver-general?—I have known him pay three or four times in the day.

What was the occasion of that?—Where the business was very heavy, to give the receiver-general's clerk time to separate the bank notes and the private bankers notes, and so on; to get them lodged in the bank as quickly as possible.

Do the remittances all come into the hands of the remittance clerk at the same time?—Yes; each day.

Does he receive no remittances by the mid-day mails?—I am not aware that he does.

Do you know in your office whether the remittance clerk gives over to you all he receives in each day or not?—We cannot tell that in our office.

Does he bring his book into your office with the money?—Yes, he does.

That book does not enable you to tell whether he pays over as much as he receives in the day?—No.

Are you aware whether it has ever happened that the payment of sums received to-day, for example, has been postponed to a future day?—I cannot tell that.

No such circumstance has come to your knowledge?—I have no means of ascertaining that; I do not receive the remittances myself at all.

What is done with the money at the time it comes into the hands of Mr. Symes?—He changes it to lodge the money as quickly as he can; he lodges it in the bank the same day, if possibly he can; if not, the following day.

Does it ever happen that he is enabled to make a lodgment of the whole in the same day?—Some of the bills he has to get accepted, and some of the pension bills are paid only twice a week; he is obliged to make a lodgment in the bank in the course of the week.

How do the letter-carriers make their payments?—At a particular hour of the day the receiver-general's clerk is in attendance in the office, that is, from two o'clock, and when the packet is in; if the English mail is out, he attends again at six in the evening, and receives there his charge of the day preceding.

How does the receiver-general know what that charge is?—It is furnished from the inland office and the British-mail office to the receiver-general.

What receipt does he give to them?—He does not give any.

Then the receiver-general has a check upon the letter-carriers?—Yes.

That is not the case with the remittance clerk?—No.

Suppose a letter-carrier does not return the whole amount, what is done?—He is returned immediately to the secretary as in arrear; there is an account goes up to the secretary and to the inspector of letter-carriers of the amount they are in arrear; if they do not pay up the next day, they are put off duty.

Does it frequently happen?—Not recently; there have been examples made.

Lately?—Not within these few months, but they have been put off duty.

What the letter-carriers pay in is, of course, cash?—Yes.

There is nothing to delay it there?—No, nothing but the silver.

How does the penny-post money come into the receiver-general's hands?—In the same way; the collector of the penny post pays it in; that is Mr. Irvine.

Has the receiver-general any check upon the account which should be paid in?—Yes; he has an account authenticated by the comptroller of the penny post.

Is it all paid in generally?—There is a trifling deficiency perhaps of a pound or a couple of pounds.

Is that made up the next day?—Yes; or if it is not made up the next day, there is the same step taken with them as the other letter-carriers.

Is that practically done?—Yes, it is.

Is there any sum which the letter-carriers are permitted to keep in their hands?—No; they sometimes make an excuse of a dead-letter, but that is not noticed; if they have a large letter, they will be allowed for that till it is returned to the dead-letter office.

Do not the letter-carriers sometimes give credit for the amount of their deliveries?—Yes, they do; but they must advance it themselves in that case.

Are you aware of that?—Yes; that would not be taken as an excuse.

What are the deductions which would be permitted from the account for which the receiver-general has a claim from each letter-carrier?—There is no deduction allowed.

If he has letters of which he cannot find the owners?—He gets credit for them; and there is an account of them given in once a fortnight.

If he says, I have got so many letters of which I cannot find the proper parties, what is done?—He will get an account to that effect from the dead-letter office if it is any thing considerable; but there is seldom or never more than a shilling or two.

How is the money from the alphabet office transferred?—By the superintendent of the alphabet, Mr. Lyster; he settles every week; he pays in, I believe, daily; but he is obliged to keep an account with the different public offices to a very large amount.

Has the receiver-general a knowledge of the amount which he should pay in?—Yes, he has; it is sent up from the British-mail office and the inland office; they furnish daily to the receiver-general the amount of postage sent in to the alphabet office.

Does it always happen that the sum reported as due is paid in?—No.

What is the reason for its not being paid in?—He is obliged to keep an account with the public offices, and he does not get the whole paid in.

Do you ever get more paid in one day than according to the returns you would expect?—No, never.

Ought you not sometimes to get more, if you do not sometimes get so much?—We get the arrears of the day before, some days.

Does the receiver-general make any report, or is he expected to make any report, of the amount received from the alphabet office?—No, only the receipts.

The receiver-general can make no report of any deficiency on the part of the alphabet office?—Yes; he reports regularly to the accountant-general the deficiencies on account of the alphabet and penny-post letter-carriers.

Every week?—Yes; those for the letter-carriers he reports daily to the secretary and inspector of letter-carriers.

He does not report in respect of the alphabet more than once a week?—No.

But he never reported to any other officer the deficiency of the alphabet office?—No; the accountant-general reports that to the secretary.

How is the lodgment of all those monies regulated?—The receiver-general's clerk, Mr. Symes, lodges the money in the bank, and then brings the bank book to the accountant-general, and he sees that the money is lodged in the bank.

Does the accountant-general know what money should be paid into the bank?—He gets the same account as we do every day.

What do you call your pay book?—The book in which the charges against the letter-carriers are daily recorded.

Have you seen the bank book?—Yes; we get it regularly.

Each lodgment is entered there daily?—Yes; I get it weekly to make up my account for the week.

What account do you make up?—The account of the receipts and payments of the receiver-general for the week.

Is that sent to the accountant-general?—Yes, for his examination.

Is it the practice to exhibit that book to the accountant-general daily?—No; we only get it up weekly.

Why is it not done daily?—I do not know; it is the custom of the bank to do it weekly.

Do you give any security?—Yes, 1,000*l*.

What security does Mr. Symes give?—I think 3,000*l*.

What is the usual amount of the daily receipts in the receiver-general's office?—Some weeks when the deputies are not remitting, the week's receipts are not more than 1,600*l*.; the letter-carriers and the alphabet is about 1,000*l*., and the post-paid window about 400*l*.

What is your attendance?—From ten to four.

In case of an English mail arriving late, what is done with the money?—I have nothing to say to that; Mr. Symes receives that money.

What becomes of the money he receives from the letter-carriers late in the day?—He keeps it under his own lock and key till the next day.

Are the receipts of the letter-carriers paid in the same day?—I think not till the next day; the letter-carriers do not return till two or three o'clock, and the bank closes by that time.

Have you observed any difference as to the amount of the remittances and the punctuality of the deputies?—No. I think latterly there was a circular letter written, which has brought up a great deal of money from them.

When was that circular written?—About a month ago, I think.

The bank will not receive the silver?—No.

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No. 181.

Mr. R. Harrison.  
16th Oct. 1826.

Has any application been made to them, to endeavour to persuade them to receive it?—Several.

What reason do they give?—Only that it is not customary.

What is the amount of silver, in general, on hand in the receiver-general's office?—About 200*l.*; sometimes 300*l.*; sometimes only 100*l.* The receiver-general receives from the letter-carriers alone upwards of 80*l.* a day.

How does he get rid of it?—He gets rid of it in the Bank; he has a situation in the Bank of Ireland, and in that way he gets rid of it.

Do you mean that Mr. Swan has an office in the bank?—No; Mr. Symes.

What is his situation in the bank?—He is head of the note office.

Does he ever give attendance at the Bank of Ireland?—Yes, he does; most of the post-office business is done in the bank.

What business is done in the bank?—All the different lodgments of the office.

If he is employed in doing the bank business he cannot do the post-office at the same time?—No; but I really do not know what his business is in the bank.

What are his hours of attendance in the post-office?—Early in the morning he is there to receive the charges and regulate the payments of the night before; he is generally there between six and seven in the morning, and remains there till ten, and then he goes out when the banks are open, and returns at two or three o'clock to receive the charges from the letter-carriers.

Has he any assistant?—No, no regular assistant.

Does he live in the post-office?—No, he does not.

Is the payment by the remittance clerk made before or after two o'clock?—I think it is generally after two o'clock.

That is, when Mr. Symes returns?—Yes.

Is not that the principal part of the receipts?—Yes, it is.

How late can a lodgment be made in the Bank of Ireland?—Till three o'clock.

Why should not the remittance clerk pay over to the receiver-general's office before ten o'clock?—He cannot do it; he does not get the remittances till nine o'clock.

The mail arrives at seven in the morning?—Yes; but the mail is not sorted; by the time he has joined all the notes, and arranged and entered them, the greater part of the day is gone over.

Is there any inconvenience from the remittances passing into his hands?—No.

Would not all which he does be as well done in the receiver-general's office?—Not by the present officers.

Why not?—It takes him and the assistant he has all the day to get the remittances in in time.

Is it not the fact that the entries made by the remittance clerk are again repeated in your office?—They are; but the great trouble is in joining the notes, and entering them, and acknowledging the receipt.

Your impression is, that you make the same entries in your office as are made by the remittance clerk?—Yes.

Then, with the exception of the joining the notes, you do the same as he does?—Only so far as the copying of his book goes.

Are the entries you make entries made by copying his book?—They are; it is in order to enable me to furnish my account to the accountant-general weekly.

Then, in fact, you make a transcript of the remittance clerk's book?—Yes.

Without comparing the remittances?—The remittances are signed for in his book by Mr. Symes before I do that; then I copy the remittance clerk's book.

Do you copy them the same day?—No; either the next day, or the latter end of the week; it is no use my doing it until it is seen what is to be taken off.

The copy for the accountant-general can be as well taken from the remittance clerk's book as from your book, can it not?—The accountant-general has another copy of the book.

Your copy, if it contains every thing, must contain a notice of the remittances which may be returned?—No; I do not copy that; I mean that it contains every thing after it is corrected.

How many days after the remittance is received is the notice of it copied into your book?—Except at the end of the quarter, immediately after, so as to be furnished to the accountant-general by the Tuesday or Wednesday, to enable him to see that the receipts and payments of the week are correct, before he sends in his check to the secretary.

When does your week end?—On Saturday.

When is the account of that week sent in?—About the following Wednesday.

When do you get back your copy?—On the Monday or Tuesday.

Are there any remittances received on the Monday?—Yes; they come up every day.

The remittance clerk could, if he was called upon, furnish the account you furnish to the accountant-general?—Not of the payments.

So far as the deputies go?—Yes; he does do that; he furnishes them with his own book, authenticated by the signature of the receiver-general.

What does the accountant-general do upon that?—He makes out his account for the secretary from those documents, when he sees that they are all correct.

You do not mean to say that a copy of the receiver-general's account is made in the accountant-general's office?—I rather think that there is a copy made out.

You stated that in the receiver-general's office you do not take a note of the assets which are not available?—No.

How do you get rid of them out of the remittance clerk's books?—He draws his pen across them, and states why they are returned to the deputy; and the chief clerk, Mr. Symes, keeps a book, containing an account of the payments returned.

From what does he take that copy?—From the assets themselves.

Which he has ascertained to be unavailable?—Yes.

What account is kept of post-bills and other matters remaining to become due?—The same account as of the remittances; it is stated in the remittance clerk's book the days on which they will become due; the bills of exchange and post-bills.

What account is kept of them after they pass into the receiver-general's hands?—The accountant-general takes an account of them and the days due, and the receiver-general is charged with them on that day.

What is Mr. Swan's attendance in the office?—Daily.

He has not been in attendance for some time, has he?—He has, every day; this is the first day, he was so unwell as not to be able to attend.

Does he take an active part in the performance of the duties?—He signs all the drafts on the Bank, and looks over the business.

Does he look over your books?—He does; he makes out, himself, the weekly abstract of the receipts and payments.

You said a good deal of the business of the post-office was done in the Bank of Ireland; have the goodness to explain that?—Mr. Symes does the post-office business in the Bank of Ireland as well as in the post-office.

What business?—The arranging those notes, looking them over, picking out every thing he cannot lodge in the Bank, and then going out and changing those.

It is the habit of Mr. Symes to carry away from the post-office to the Bank the receipts, and to arrange them there?—He takes them to the Bank and lodges whatever he can lodge, and goes out and changes others, and as he changes them he keeps lodging them in the Bank.

What are the remittances which come to the receiver-general, which the Bank will not receive as deposits?—They will not receive private notes, nor drafts of any description, they will not receive post-bills.

Not their own post-bills?—Yes, their own post-bills, but not others; nor any thing which is not Bank of Ireland notes, or post-bills.

At what dates are you in the habit of seeing any bills remitted?—Twenty-one days is the longest we have.

What are those; bills of merchants?—Yes.

Where do those bills lie before they become due?—After Mr. Symes gets them accepted, he lodges them in the Bank, and the Bank bring them to credit; they receive bills of exchange after they are accepted, and let them lie in the Bank till they arrive at maturity.

Who presents them for payment?—The Bank of Ireland will present them through their own runners for payment.

Do they not do so with post-bills?—No, they will not receive them.

What post-bills do you refer to?—Private bankers post-bills.

Will not the Bank receive them if accepted, the same as merchants bills accepted?—No.

Has that always been the case?—When first I entered the post-office, as far as I recollect, they took every thing.

Do many post-bills of private banks come to the receiver?—Not now.

Have the provincial banks post-bills?—Yes, I think.

Will the Bank receive them?—No; nor they will not receive their notes payable on demand.

Have they a branch here?—They have agents; Messrs. Latouche are their agents.

Is not there a great deal of inconvenience from the Bank refusing to receive those remittances?—There is an immense deal of inconvenience.

ROBERT S. HARRISON.

### Appendix, No. 182.

10th October 1826.

Mr. CLOTWORTHY D. DEVITT called in and examined.

WHAT is your situation in the post-office?—A Letter-sorter in the inland department, and Junior Officer in the accountant-general's department.

How long have you been in the accountant-general's department?—Better than ten years; nearly eleven.

What is your salary there?—Only 90*l.* a year; but I am entitled to 125*l.*; but there is 35*l.* kept back in consequence, I understand, of some Treasury Minute. I should enjoy at this moment 125*l.* by my length of service.

On what ground is that withheld from you?—I understand in consequence of some Treasury Minute putting a stop to any increase of salary till the office is revised; no revision has taken place since, consequently I am without that portion which I am justly entitled to.

What is your salary as an inland sorter?—Forty-eight pounds a year.

(107.)

How

Examinations.

No. 181.

Mr. R. Harrison.  
16th Oct. 1826.

No. 182.

Mr. C. Devitt.  
16th Oct. 1826.

Examinations.

No. 182.

Mr. C. Devitt.  
10th Oct. 1826.

How long were you a probationer?—I am still a probationer.

Are you always employed?—Yes, every day, when I am able to attend.

What do you do as a probationer?—In fact any branch of the duty I may be put to; a taxing clerk's if it is required.

For that, what do you receive?—£48 a year; but if I am absent I have to pay at the rate of a guinea a week; and I have paid at the rate of 69*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.*

You have a certain salary as a probationer, and are employed every day if you attend?—Yes; in fact probationer is only a name, we form an indispensable branch of the establishment, for the office is not full without the full number of probationers are on duty, and if they are absent, extra probationers are put in their place.

Supposing the whole strength of the office was in attendance, would you still be employed?—Yes.

As a probationer?—Yes, as a probationer; there are extra probationers and probationers; the probationers form a part of the establishment, so far, that they are required to be regularly on duty.

As a probationer do you perform the duty of some other officer?—It depends upon the officer who may be absent.

If that officer was present, would your services be called for?—Then I should be perhaps a junior sorter; if he is absent, I am assisting at a road, perhaps, or a taxing clerk.

If the officer was present, would you act as a probationer?—Yes, I should still.

If the whole office was present, you would still be doing something?—Yes, either sorting, or facing, or stamping; but if the senior officers are absent, we must according to rank take their places.

Supposing that Mr. Donlevy is absent, is a probationer put in his place?—No; the next officer in rank takes his place.

Suppose all the regular officers are exhausted, a probationer is put into the place of the lowest?—Yes; he must act in whatever capacity the president may put him to.

Supposing Mr. Donlevy returns, what becomes of the probationery officer?—He may not have to act in one character, but he is employed in another.

Who are those officers who sometimes attend in the morning or evening, in the expectation of being wanted; but who may not?—Those are the extra probationers; I went through that gradation myself.

How many years were you in that?—I dare say six or seven years; I have been in the office altogether about twelve years.

Who appointed you to that situation?—Lord O'Neill.

Do your family live in Dublin?—Partly; sometimes in Dublin and sometimes in the country.

What is your father?—He held a small property under Lord O'Neill.

As an extra probationer, what emolument did you receive?—When an extra probationer I was paid at the rate of a guinea a week; and then when I became a probationer, though I got rank, I was reduced in pay.

You were paid 3*s.* or 3*s.* 6*d.* a day when your services were required?—Yes.

Then there was a permanent salary attached to your situation?—Yes; in the Irish currency; 52*l.* a year, though I was still subject to a greater deduction than my salary; the entire salary was stopped from the inland department, and they took the difference out of the accountant-general's department, which had no connection with it whatever, to make up the sum in addition to the salary; to make up at the rate of 69*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.*, that is one guinea for six days in the week, and 4*s.* 2*d.* for the Sunday; we are on duty now every third Sunday, but receive no emolument for that day's labour whatever.

What is your rotation of duty; how many days are you called upon to attend?—Every day; I am in attendance from six in the morning till eight at night; I am up every morning at five, I am there till just eight, then go to breakfast, and I must be at the accountant-general's office again at ten, from that to four, and then return at a quarter past five to the inland office, and I am there till eight at night.

Do you lodge at the post-office?—No, I have not any apartments there.

Have you always given that attendance ever since you went into the post-office?—Always.

Do you find your health good?—Indeed it is pretty good.

Is there any difference in the emoluments of the probationers, or do they all receive the same?—All the same.

Are you the senior or nearly the senior of the probationers?—No, I am not; there are four or five of them senior to me; I think I am the sixth probationer now.

Is there any settled scale of increase of salary for probationers?—There should be when they succeed to the establishment; they will then get at the rate of 70*l.*

There is no increase of pay, however long the probationers remain so?—The length of service has never been taken into consideration heretofore, which I think a very great hardship.

The person immediately above you is Mr. Davies?—Yes; he has been ill a long time, but he has returned lately.

Has he any other situation?—I do not know of any.

Have you any other employment?—No; my entire time is devoted to the post-office.

Do you know Mr. Smith?—Yes.

What is he; has he been absent any time?—Yes, he has been sick, and I believe is still sick.

Do



Examinations.

No. 182.

Mr. C. Devitt.  
10th Oct. 1826.

Do you know that he was sick?—I believe he was.

Have you ever been obliged to absent yourself from illness?—Yes; sometimes I have been ill.

Has Mr. Smith any other situation?—He holds a situation in the Bank of Ireland.

Does he attend that?—I believe he does, but not while sick; but their salary is not stopped there; if I were ill, my entire salary would be stopped, and so much over and above the salary.

Would your additional salary in the accountant-general's office be stopped?—Yes.

Would you be paying 7s. a day?—Yes; I should be paying more in the inland office than I am receiving; that has been the case when I have been sick.

Do you mean to say you have been fined more than the amount of your daily pay, taking both together?—No, not taking both together.

The daily fine is 3s. 6d. a day?—Yes.

That is 52l. or 53l. a year?—Thereabouts.

Your salary is 48l., and 90l. in the accountant-general's office?—Yes.

Supposing you could not attend the inland office in the course of the year, you would be fined 4l. or 5l. more than your receipt in the inland office?—Yes, a great deal more.

Would you be fined the same amount in the accountant-general's office?—Yes, at the rate of 3s. 6d. per day there also.

You would be fined 104l. or 105l. a year?—Yes; I should have to pay a substitute at the rate of so much more in the inland department than I myself would receive if on duty, and also to pay a substitute in the accountant-general's department.

Have you ever actually paid two substitutes?—I have.

For the same day?—I have frequently.

Can you state the dates when that has occurred?—I cannot; but it has been stopped out of my salary.

Has it occurred within the last six months?—No.

Have you been absent from the inland office within the last six months?—Yes, I have, and it has been stopped there.

You are quite sure you have paid stoppages in both the offices?—Yes, I am quite sure of that.

Are the hours of attendance in the accountant-general's office fixed?—They are from ten to four.

Are there any other probationers in the accountant-general's office?—No.

Who inflicts the fines in the accountant-general's office?—They have a bill made out at the end of the quarter, and the amount is stopped from the salary.

By whose orders?—I suppose by the secretary's.

Not by the accountant-general's?—I should suppose not; there would be an account kept during the time of the absence, and it would be deducted at the end of the quarter.

How does it happen that your services as a probationer are required in the accountant-general's office?—I am not a probationer there; I am on the establishment in that office.

Do many of the probationers hold permanent situations on the establishment?—I do not recollect any other except myself.

What do you pay for a substitute in the accountant-general's office?—3s. 6d. a day.

In a return furnished to the Commissioners, it is stated that for twenty-two days absence you paid 2l. 15s. for substitutes, which is about 2s. 6d. a day; are you clear in your recollection?—I know I have paid 3s. 6d. sometimes; that might be from an understanding with some person who did the duty for me.

Are you permitted to bring in any person to do your duty in your absence?—I have more than once done it.

Whose permission did you require for that?—Both the leave of the secretary and the accountant-general.

Is it usual to grant that leave?—Yes, provided the individual should be competent.

From whom do you make your selection; from the extra probationers?—No; I have got some of the established officers to do my duty. Mr. Williams has done duty for me sometimes.

In what office is he?—He is in the inland department.

You have never brought in any person who was not in some way connected with the establishment?—No, never to my recollection, when left to myself.

C. D. DEVITT.

## Examinations.

No. 183.

Mr.

Henry Ed. Beare.  
16th Oct. 1826.

## Appendix, No. 183.

16th October 1826.

Mr. HENRY EDWARD BEARE called in and examined.

YOU are Senior Clerk in the letter-bill office?—I am.

Does that form part of the secretary's office?—I cannot say; it did; but it is a distinct establishment now by itself; on the establishment it is styled the letter-bill office, and I am senior clerk of it; but on the first formation of it it was a branch of the secretary's office.

Is that connected with the secretary's office in the same room?—No, it is distinct.

How long has the establishment been distinct?—From a very short time after I entered into the office, which is now eighteen years; on the formation of the letter-bill office it was stated to be part of the secretary's office; as long as I can recollect it has been distinct.

What returns do you receive from the deputy postmasters?—The vouchers generally. Paid-letter vouchers containing the amount of general letters from Dublin, and the amount of paid-letters received and forwarded to Dublin, or through it.

Those are contained in their dockets?—Yes.

Have you any means of checking their dockets?—Yes, we have; the amount is reckoned to the postmaster; the amount is reckoned in the inland office by the officer there, whose duty it is to make up the mail for any particular number of towns; that is then forwarded to the deputy postmaster, and he returns it, stating whether the account forwarded from the general post-office is correct or not; and if he has been charged with more than he has actually received, he takes credit for it on that docket in a column stating "deduct for overcharge;" those are the words on the docket; if he makes an increase to it, there is another column in the same docket for "additional charge by postmaster;" that is where the postmaster makes the sums more than that entered by the clerk in the inland office; if he re-taxes a letter, that is, if a letter from Dublin to his office is not taxed sufficient, he notes the additional charge upon it, and enters it in a third column that is in the docket, "retaxed on letters by postmaster."

Or if he diminishes the tax?—He cannot diminish the tax without the letter being first opened by the parties; he then takes credit in a form in the dead-letter office; he is obliged to state whether the amount is under or over that stated in the docket; if they are taxed more than they ought to be, he must get the cover from the parties, or a receipt.

You make your charge against the deputy from the total?—From the return in the deputy's column of the docket each day; at the expiration of each month the postmaster of every town forwards a monthly voucher, which contains the amount entered by him on receipt of those dockets.

Have not you omitted to mention that a slip is sent up?—That is sent up to me from the inland office, containing the amount of letters.

Why do not you enter the amount from the slip?—We do that now.

Since what time?—Within the last three weeks the secretary suggested that it should be done, since this Honourable Board attended at the post-office, whatever the delay arising from it might be.

Why did it occasion delay?—Because the slips do not run according to the books in our office.

Might not they be altered?—The entire of the divisions in the inland office should be altered to enable us to do that.

What reason is there why they should not be made to correspond?—Indeed I do not know.

The practice now introduced is that which was formerly the practice?—Yes.

Supposing the postmaster debits himself more than the slip charges him, must not you alter it?—There is a separate column to enter the amount returned to me from the inland office, which corresponds with the post-office return of the docket. There is a column separate for the deputy to enter the amount.

If the postmaster produces the amount, do you allow that?—Yes.

Without any communication?—Yes, unless we see the postmaster in the habit of doing it.

You do not require the permission of the secretary?—No.

Suppose the postmaster were to scratch out one figure, and put another?—If I detected that I should report it immediately.

How should you detect it?—From the slips that will be seen; that is the only thing.

Before you made use of slips, how could you detect it?—I had no means of detecting that unless I saw it on the docket. There is a side column to the docket, in which the officers of the inland department enter the separate amounts before they bring forward the total; for instance, for Cork, where the amount may be 20*l.*, and upon that the sums should agree with the total brought forward in the post-office docket.

Are the alterations very frequent?—No; I very seldom see an alteration of the description referred to.

Did not an alteration of that nature take place the other day?—Yes; I suppose I have detected at least a dozen instances in the course of six months.

Where

Examinations

No. 183.

Mr.

Henry Ed. Beare.  
16th Oct. 1826.

Where was that erasure made?—I am satisfied that must have been made by the deputy in the country.

In what town?—Newbridge, in the county of Kildare.

Have you observed repeated erasures of some postmasters dockets?—No; the first I observed I reported the circumstance to the secretary, and he gave directions for a check to be put upon that town; that is, the amount of letters for that town should be reckoned by a second officer, to ascertain that the amount was really correct; and as those dockets were returned, a letter from the inland office was forwarded to my office, and I compared them, and discovered that she had made this erasure, which I supposed she had been doing before.

Was that with a view to fraud?—Undoubtedly.

She had reduced the charge?—Yes; if she got down 6s. 7d. for letters, she would erase the top off the seven, and make it 6s. 1d., and then make her own the same; and if it was 9s. 10d., she would make a six out of the figure of ten, and erase the one.

Do you know what has been the result of that examination?—It has been laid before the postmasters-general, and I understand there has been an order made out for her dismissal.

How long has she been in the office?—Not more than seven or eight months.

Did you ascertain that by comparing it with the slip?—No; it struck me first from the sums in the office column having been evidently changed. On my getting the dockets I saw the marks of the erasures, and immediately referred to the slip, and ascertained that they had been made.

Should not you have referred to the slip without that?—If I had not seen that erasure I should not.

When did you perceive the erasure?—I believe on the very day that the docket was returned; this was prior to my making the entry from the slip.

If it had been since the entries were made from the slip, your attention must have been called to it by that?—Yes; if the slips returned to me and the office copy of the dockets disagreed, then if I posted from the slips I should post from the actual postage forwarded: and there was an instance of that very town of Newbridge, where a sixpenny letter had been added, and if I had entered the amount from the slip, this additional sixpence would not have appeared.

The error might have been the other way?—Yes, it might. I sometimes get in the slips; they will enter 11s. where it should be 11d., and in other instances 11d. where it ought to be 11s.

Do you report those inaccuracies to the secretary?—Yes, I do.

Have you any communication with the president of the inland office direct?—I am a clerk in the inland office myself.

Do you officiate there as well as in the letter-bill office?—Yes, I do.

Morning and evening?—Yes.

Are you pretty regular in that?—I have been very regular for the eighteen years I have been in both offices. From the letter-bill office I have been three days absent in 1823, and in 1824 I was six weeks absent on leave in England, and nine days absent in 1825; in the inland office I have been more absent.

What is your attendance?—My attendance in the inland office commences at six in the morning till eight; I have to be in the letter-bill office at ten, where I remain till four; I return to the inland office at a quarter past five, and remain there till eight, or the dispatch of the mails.

Has your health suffered in consequence of the attendance?—It has; my health has been impaired by the close attention I have been giving. I am not at all so well as when I came to this country.

Are you an Englishman?—I am; I was brought over by Lord Clancarty.

In the statement of your duties, it is said that you check the junior clerk's return of paid letters?—I do; that is the amount of paid letters, the total amount for each month, from which I post the account that goes to the accountant-general's office.

Is that made out from the same dockets?—No; that is made out from the dockets coming from the country, containing the account of paid letters only.

The charges against the deputies from their own dockets?—Yes.

You have no check at all upon them?—No.

Do you make out a weekly account of errors for the secretary?—Yes; that is errors committed in the accounts of general letters going from Dublin into the interior.

If a letter is undercharged coming up to Dublin, and is included in the docket at a low rate, and it should be advanced here, how would that come into charge?—It would be charged by the clerk of delivery; the letter would be marked "more to pay."

What account would you have of that?—None at all.

Would that ever appear in the account of the deputy postmaster who had made the undercharge?—No, it would not; if he receives a letter that appears upon examination in the Dublin office to be treble, and the post-office has received only double postage upon it, there is "more to pay" marked upon it, and the amount put on, which, when delivered to the parties, is paid to the carrier, and accounted for by him to the clerk of the delivery.

Suppose a letter coming up from Newbridge, that should pay 3s. charged only 2s., and that it is marked with another shilling here, how is that accounted for?—It is accounted for by the letter-carriers in the inland office; that money has not been received by the postmaster, but is received by the letter-carrier.

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Mr.

Henry Ed. Beare.  
16th Oct. 1826.

Does that very often happen?—Very frequently; there are eight officers whose duty it is to examine daily the letters on the receipt of the mails.

Who are those eight officers?—They are the eight senior officers after the president in the inland office.

Is there any fine for the wrong taxation in the country?—Sometimes they levy a small fine; if the deputy is in the habit of being inattentive, he is reported and fined; not in ordinary cases, because it is only to the best of the opinion of the officers here; when they do advance them, it may sometimes happen that a rebate will have to be made on a letter advanced; for a clerk in the general post-office can only go upon the best of his opinion.

Have you any reason to think that the dockets sent up to your office from the deputy postmasters are fairly made out; the red dockets?—In some instances they are not. I have sometimes got dockets where the clerk opening the bag, in the inland office, has omitted to reckon the amount of paid letters; it is the duty of the officer who opens the bags in the inland office to reckon the amount of letters on the receipt of that bag, and particularly the amount of paid letters, which is the money received by the postmaster.

Those are tied up separate?—Yes; and he should reckon those, to see that they agree with the amount on the red docket; and I have got instances in which the sum has been omitted altogether, both by the postmaster and the assistant in the inland office.

Then that is never charged against the postmaster?—Yes, it is; the postmaster enters it in his monthly voucher also; and the way in which it is detected is, that the address of paid letters is obliged to be entered on the back of the docket, which is the only way I have of ascertaining there are post-paid letters from any town.

Suppose the postmaster should send up his letters without that, what would be the consequence?—If it was not checked by the officers of the inland office, it would be impossible for any person to detect it, for he might omit it in his monthly vouchers also.

The officer in the inland office who opens the bag might put a bundle of paid letters into his pocket?—If the names were not entered on the back.

You take no notice of the unpaid letters sent up with the red docket?—No; they form a distinct part of the reckoning.

Is it much the habit to post-pay letters in the country?—The amount of paid letters sent up from the interior of the country for the last year is about 13,000*l*.

Are those principally letters with inclosures?—Single letters, a great many of them.

Suppose a postmaster in the country had a friend in the inland office, would it be easy to manage such a thing as that, with respect to post-paid letters?—No, I do not think it would.

You say that the directions of the post-paid letters that come up from the country are entered on the back of the red docket?—All letters containing inclosures; the address of a single letter is not.

Is any similar caution adopted in respect of the paid letters sent from the inland office?—There is; they are received from the alphabet, and the address is entered in the book from the alphabet; the officer who ties up the particular town signs the alphabet book and enters the addresses of paid letters containing inclosures on the back of the white docket.

Only of paid letters containing inclosures?—That is all; it would be impossible to do more.

Your salary is 129*l*.; is that Irish?—No. 140*l*. Irish.

What is it in the inland office?—Eighty pounds a year.

Have you had any increase?—I have got an increase of 10*l*. from the time I was a probationary clerk; I have been eighteen years in the inland office, fourteen years and a quarter on the establishment, and I have now only 80*l*. Irish.

What may your fines for occasional absences amount to?—I cannot speak to the inland office; but the first year, 1823, it was 11*s*. 4½*d*. Irish, for three days; and the following year, when I was in England, it was 5*l*.; and in the year following, fifteen or sixteen shillings in the letter-bill office.

Were not you on leave when you went to England?—I was; I in general go over every three years; my family all reside in England; I have no connection here whatever.

In the inland office, what have you paid?—I pay at the rate of a guinea a week.

What have you paid in the course of the last year?—I should suppose it did not amount to more than six or seven pounds for the year. I in general attend as closely as I can; I have a family to support; the salaries are so very small in both of them that I cannot afford to be absent.

Will not you be entitled to an increase of salary?—Yes, in the letter-bill office. I ought after fifteen years service to have been in the receipt of 150*l*. Irish per annum, in place of which I have only 140*l*.; I have been eighteen years in that office, and when I complete my twentieth year in the letter-bill office, according to the old scale I should be entitled to 200*l*.; the increase from fifteen to twenty years is 50*l*.

Would you be entitled to an increase in the inland office?—I am next but one, and have been for these three years, to an increase of 45*l*. a year; there is one between, but that officer has given but little or no attendance for several years.

Who is that person?—Mr. Robert Harrison; there are some who are in the receipt of as much for doing nothing as I am for slaving there for years.

Have they other situations in the post-office?—Some of them in other offices, and some in the office before me, but who have not served their full time there.

Do you refer to Mr. Cullen and Mr. Wall?—Yes, and Mr. Thomas Harrison; those are all above me.

If they were to retire, where would you stand?—I should get up the step of 45*l.* 10*s.* a year; I have the service that would give it me for some time past, but not the rank.

Is not your claim established after the expiration of a certain number of years service?—No; there are different ranks; a certain number who rank as taxing clerks; then there are senior sorters and junior sorters; I am second junior sorter.

What is the next class above you?—Senior sorters.

What is the emolument of a senior sorter?—The senior of the junior sorters has 125*l.* Irish per annum, which is the increase I am referring to, and then from that to 150*l.*, I think.

Would you rather be confined to one department?—I would; I should rather not be in the two, if I was enabled to live by holding one.

There is one tick clerk in the inland office; is he always in attendance?—The man who holds the situation of tick clerk has been absent for the last six months by sickness; he was the senior messenger, and was appointed to the situation of tick clerk; he is in the last stage of consumption.

Who does his duty?—An extra clerk in the inland office, and a guinea a week is stopped out of the tick clerk's salary to pay him for it.

Do you think the inland office is an unwholesome place to be in?—Indeed I do.

Do you think any of those who have been so long absent from sickness have suffered from that?—I cannot say; they have not given any more attendance than I have myself; probably there are some constitutions which would be affected more than others.

What time do you attend in the morning?—I am up every morning at half past five, and we are obliged to attend in the inland department alternately on Sundays.

Do you lodge in the post-office?—No; I had apartments in the old post-office, but I am married now.

What duty is there on the Sunday?—The bags come up from all the post-towns in Ireland on the Sunday morning, and the English letters are forwarded by the packet of that day; there are no other letters coming up but English and State letters, and a great many of the bags come up from the small towns without any letters.

How many attend on each Sunday?—I think eighteen altogether; it comes to our turn every third Sunday, morning and evening.

Who stamp the letters in the inland office?—The two junior officers on duty face the letters, the two next to them stamp the letters, that is the taxed letters; there is a distinct person for the free, who is a sorter. I would beg to mention that in the letter-bill office, up to April 1822, for better than ten years, there was a third assistant, though not on the establishment at that time; he was taken off, since which time the duties of that office have devolved very heavily upon the senior clerk.

Why were the services of that extra clerk discontinued?—They were discontinued in other departments also, by order of the postmasters-general, that the duty should be done without.

Has the business increased in your office?—It is much the same; the post-towns have not increased in number since that, but there was quite sufficient for the three; I find it almost impossible with the part of the duty allotted to me, which is treble that which the junior clerk has to do.

You are superior in the office?—Yes.

Cannot you regulate it yourself, and allot more to the junior officer?—He considers that he has as much as he can get through.

Is it regulated with the approbation of the secretary?—He cannot be aware of all the duties I have to do.

Is the other clerk a very competent one?—No, he is not.

What is the nature of your communication to the accountant-general?—I furnish an account to the secretary of the amount of the general letters from Dublin, and the amount of post-paid from the interior, which account is signed by me in the first instance, and then by the secretary furnished to the accountant-general's office.

Has the secretary any means of knowing whether that account is accurate?—None, except its being checked in the accountant-general's office.

When it goes from you to the secretary, what knowledge has the secretary of the correctness of that account, except that he derives from the paper you send him?—None, except by examining my books.

He has no return from the inland office to check that?—No; that account is made out by the returns from the deputies.

What is the reason of his signing that account?—It has always been done since the office was established.

Does he make any comparison with your books before he signs that account?—No.

Does he go into any examination of it?—He sometimes calls for the account of revenue for the month, and the same month of the year prior to that.

Does he go into any detail of the amount of postage charged on the different postmasters?—No.

Does he examine any of the details or check any of the calculations?—No; it is checked in the accountant-general's office when it goes there.

Does he, before he affixes his signature, take any step to ascertain the correctness of the account?—Not that I am aware of; the account is left with him.

Is there any means of checking its details?—He has the totals only.

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Mr.

Henry Ed. Beare.  
16th Oct. 1826.

Does he ever send for a docket to see whether it is properly entered?—Yes, he does; and the books also are laid before him sometimes.

Does he ever refer to the slips?—Yes, he does.

If any complaint comes to him?—Yes, he does, in case of a complaint.

Without a complaint, when your accounts are brought to him, does he examine into the correctness of your accounts?—No.

Not unless his attention is called to them?—No.

You are sure of that?—Yes; unless his attention is called to it he does not. I have detected deputies in other descriptions of fraud besides that which has been mentioned.

What fraud was that?—In the not accounting for the full amount of postage received by them on letters forwarded to them.

How did they evade that?—They took off the amount of the column deducted for overcharges, so much: from my having noticed that having occurred for a certain time, I have reported it to the secretary, and a check was then ordered.

Has that occurred lately?—There was an instance of it the year before last, and in the post-office of Derry last year.

Is the same postmaster there now?—Yes; and the postmaster's assistant was removed, I am given to understand.

Do you know necessarily whether a postmaster does his business by himself or by an assistant?—No.

He is required to sign the dockets?—Yes; in some instances the dockets are signed by the assistants, and not by the postmasters.

For a length of time together?—Yes; which circumstance I have reported to the secretary; that has been the case in a great many instances.

Do the dockets ever come without any signature?—Very rarely.

When an assistant signs, does he sign as assistant postmaster?—Yes; he writes "assistant," and excuses are sent by the postmaster in general for it, that they are absent from sickness or some other cause; in some instances the assistant does the duty altogether.

Can you mention any instances?—Carrickmacross I know is an instance at present.

Have you an opportunity of judging of the qualifications of postmasters for their situations?—Only from the accounts they return, and the manner in which they keep them.

What is your opinion, judging in that way?—My opinion is, that a great number of them are very badly capable of keeping the accounts necessary for their office, and there are some that it is impossible to make correct.

Do you correspond with them at all?—Through the secretary's office.

Do you consider that their inability arises from incapacity or inattention?—From their incapacity.

Do you write letters?—No; I have printed returns. As to their errors in the monthly return, I sign that as senior clerk in the letter-bill office, and that goes into the secretary's office to be forwarded; any difference that may appear between the deputy's vouchers and the account entered upon him by the dockets, there is a list of the errors furnished.

You do not make any observation till the monthly voucher comes up?—No; unless in entering the dockets daily, I find an apparent error committed, I have that docket returned the postmaster through the secretary's office; I am not allowed to correspond with the deputy myself.

Have you often observed that the monthly accounts have not agreed with the daily dockets?—Very frequently.

Would it appear from the monthly accounts if they had undercharged or overcharged themselves?—One fourth of them, I dare say, overcharge or undercharge themselves monthly.

The monthly return contains a monthly abstract of the account of postage?—Yes, corresponding with the entries in the docket: on the opposite side is the amount of paid letters forwarded from the country to Dublin.

Is there an entry for each day in the monthly account?—Yes, for each day.

It is a recapitulation of the daily dockets?—Yes, just so; he makes his entry from the dockets, and then returns the dockets to me as he receives them daily.

In order to do that each postmaster must keep an account?—Yes; which account is furnished to the letter-bill office.

Do they furnish quarterly accounts?—No, not to the letter-bill office; my accounts are all monthly.

At the end of the quarter the accountant-general sends back to each postmaster a copy of that monthly return?—Yes; there is a column for the amount of the general letters, in the form furnished by the accountant-general's office; there are other items of revenue, both for and against the postmaster, furnished in that account; there is the bye-letter part, and the claims for overcharged letters are all included.

If the postmaster kept an account himself, he must have charged himself with every thing which appears in the account furnished to him by the accountant-general?—Yes; there may in the returns sent monthly be errors committed; he may have charged himself with more or less than he had in his voucher; but he knows by the return furnished, and the list of errors, what is the amount of letters he received and sent.

Could not each postmaster make out his account at the end of the quarter?—He might make it out, but it should be checked.

Could he furnish an account of what he owes?—No, I think not.

Why not?—Because there is the bye and dead-letter account included in the returns he is furnished with.

He

He must know the amount of bye and dead-letters he has?—He cannot know whether the returns made by him are correct until the rebates are allowed, which he would have to get credit for; they must be checked in the bye and dead-letter office.

Do you observe greater accuracy in any particular district of country than in any other?—Indeed I consider that the postmasters in the north of Ireland are, in general, the most correct.

What is the meaning of the words “date of bills sent from Dublin,” in your return No. 26?—That is the amount entered on the docket; that is the general voucher; those are compared with our account, to see whether they are correct or not.

You make your monthly return to the accountant-general under the head of each division separately?—Yes.

HENRY EDWARD BEARE.

Examinations.

No. 183.

Mr.

Henry Ed. Beare.  
16th Oct. 1826.

My Lord,

136, Mecklenburgh-street, Dublin, 13th April 1828.

I HAD the honour of being examined before the Parliamentary Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, of which your lordship is chairman, on its first assembling in Dublin, and also two honourable members of the Board, in the year 1826. I beg to state to your lordship that I was appointed to two situations in the General Post-office of this country, in the year 1808, under the patronage of the Earl of Clancarty. From recent changes that have taken place in the inland department, I am induced to lay some facts before your lordship. My rank in that office is first junior sorter, on a salary of 73*l.* 17*s.* per annum. It is requisite for me to state there are four individuals whose names are already before your honourable Board, viz, Messrs. T. Harrison, W. Cullen, G. Wall, and Robert Harrison, attached to this office, who have ceased to give any attendance for a number of years. By a change that has taken place within the last three months, caused by the superannuation of Mr. Donlevy, late president, Mr. T. Harrison has come in for a considerable emolument per annum, as junior clerk in the express newspaper department, and Mr. R. Harrison, who ranked as first junior sorter, to an increase of 41*l.* 10*s.* per annum, and rank of senior sorter, by the removal of an officer, who was above him, on a change taking place. From the latter circumstance, I have to state to your lordship, that Mr. Wall, one of the officers mentioned, agreeable to the regulations, considered he was entitled to an increase, which was given to the person next in succession, Mr. Wm. Stoker; and the reason assigned was, that Mr. G. Wall had been actually recommended to the Lords of the Treasury for superannuation. The increase was given to Mr. R. Harrison because he had not applied to the Treasury; and in answer to an application I made to Sir E. S. Lees on the subject, was informed that he, Mr. R. Harrison, would lose all further rank in the office entitling him to increase of salary. Now, my lord, I have to state that Mr. R. Harrison came into office the year I did, and beg to refer your lordship to the returns furnished of absence to your honourable board for three years prior to 1826; since which time I do not think he has given a single day's attendance, although both he and Mr. Harrison sen. are in constant attendance to their mid-day duty. My reasons for stating these facts are, that your honourable board may be pleased to take my case into consideration, in regard to any regulations they may recommend with respect to those persons holding two situations; and in case my retirement from the inland office is recommended, that I may obtain it on the salary of senior sorter, the duty of which I have for many years performed. By a reference to my depositions taken in the year 1826, you will find that I stated my health to have been seriously affected by the constant attendance I had given to both situations for a lengthened period.

I have the honour to be your lordship's very obedient servant,

HENRY EDWARD BEARE.

The Right Honourable Lord Wallace.

### Appendix, No. 184.

Thursday, 12th October 1826.

Mr. STEPHEN DE JONCOURT called in and examined.

WHAT office do you at present hold in the post-office?—Vice-president of the inland office.

How long have you held that?—I believe since the year 1820. I cannot recollect exactly.

What is your salary?—£225 Irish.

Have you any other emolument at the post-office?—Clerk of express papers—British newspapers and publications.

What is included under the term publications?—Periodical publications of all kinds.

Is there no limit, no distinction; would it be the same thing whether Cobbett's Register or

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or Johnson's Dictionary was sent over?—Johnson's Dictionary would not be sent; it would be too large; if it is for Dublin we should get it, because we get it as any person in the trade would do.

Do you receive from London nothing but newspapers and periodical publications?—No; individual instances have occurred, but very seldom, that other publications have been sent; an individual book has been sent when it was required.

Have you received any publications which were not periodical?—Yes.

How do you receive them?—We receive them by the mail-coach, and they are put on board the steam packet that is ready to sail.

From Howth how do they come?—They come by the coach if they can be got at in time; but very often they have to come up by Mr. Elliott's cart.

How do you pay for their conveyance from London to Holyhead?—We pay our agent in London for it; he charges for the carriage in his account.

By the mail?—Yes, by the mail, as the shortest conveyance and the quickest.

Does he pay the same as any other individual would pay?—I presume he does.

Do you know what he charges you?—I believe it is about 5*d.* a pound, or 4½*d.*, it comes to together.

The question was confined to the conveyance from London to Holyhead?—I do not exactly recollect the amount, but I believe it is the same as any other person pays; by the mail it is higher than by any other conveyance.

They do not come by the letter-bags?—No, certainly not.

Did none of them ever come by the letter-bags?—Some of them did before the present persons had it.

Have they never since you have been express clerk?—I do not believe they ever did; some of them may have come in them when it was to supply an order; I believe at the commencement of my being a partner in it they did come so.

Have you any doubt of it?—No, I have not any doubt, only there is a difference of time; there was a time when they were prevented coming by the mail.

Do you mean in the mail-bags?—Yes; odd ones were still allowed to come, but not now.

How long have they been prohibited altogether coming in the mail-bags?—I believe ever since before the Commissioners were here last.

How long before?—I believe about that time.

Since the Commissioners were here do you mean?—Before that; they have not come since that.

Do you mean that they were prohibited at the time the Commissioners were here?—A large part of them accompanied the mail from Holyhead, and we got them free over; we did not pay the freight of them then, and they ordered that we should pay the freight of them, which we have done ever since to Mr. Elliott of Sackville-street.

How long is it since the conveyance of any such publications in the mail-bags was prohibited?—Since the Commissioners were here I believe they never have come.

Are the Board to understand that up to the time of the Commissioners coming here it was usual for such packages to come in the mail-bags?—They come in the mail from Holyhead, but I believe the principal part of them were sent to Holyhead by the coach; but since I have had the management of it they have not; that has been since that period.

Were any such packages as are alluded to usually forwarded in the mail-bags up to the time of the Commissioners being in this country?—There were some.

Were the greater part of them so forwarded?—Not the greater part of them; the greater part of them were forwarded by the coach, but were sent with the mail-bags.

What induced your agent in London sometimes to send them in the mail-bags, and sometimes by the coach; if he could send any by the mail-bag why could not he send all by the mail-bag?—When there was any order in the middle of a week or a month, as there are weekly and monthly publications, to supply our correspondents with them without waiting for the bag to be made up to come by the coach.

Do you mean to say they were only sent by the mail-coach when the agent was particularly enjoined not to wait for any other conveyance?—Yes.

On no other occasion?—I am not aware of any other since I have had any thing to do with it.

Was there any particular class of publications which was allowed to be put within the mail-bag at the time you have first referred to?—Yes, there were, I recollect; it was the weekly publications.

None but the weekly publications?—Except, as I informed the Board before, those that we received orders for, between the periodical bags being sent off; there were monthly bags sent off formerly.

Containing what?—Containing the monthly publications.

Did they go like the other mail-bags?—No, that was always by the coach.

Was that paid for?—So I understood; since I have had to do with it it has been.

There is a monthly bag still made up?—Yes, and a weekly bag.

Do they come with the mail-bag?—Not as a part of the mail, but as a parcel.

Do they go through the post-office in London?—No, they do not.

Where are they put into the coach?—Our agent could state that; I could not.

Your agent in the post-office is not charged with the receipt of such parcels at the post-office?—No, not at all.

Is your agent on the post-office establishment?—No, not our agent for the publications.

Have you no agent in the post-office in London?—Yes, for the newspapers.



Would he refuse to receive any thing else except newspapers?—I believe he would.

What is your reason for believing that?—We had taken a subscription for I think the Bishop of Elphin, who was in England; and we requested that he would furnish the publications, as we could not forward them through England; and he declined doing it, saying he had no privilege.

Do you send any newspapers from this country to England?—No; we may return newspapers to England, but we cannot return publications; we are obliged to be at the loss of them if they come when a person has ordered them, and we have ordered them from England.

What is your poundage on British newspapers?—Separately I cannot state that.

On what principle is it calculated?—The rough calculation is on the marked price of the paper, and for daily papers we charge 10*l.* 10*s.* when we pay only 9*l.* a year, and we are allowed eight per cent. off the 9*l.*

That is your charge; 10*l.* 10*s.* when you pay 9*l.*, and are allowed eight per cent. on the 9*l.*?—Yes, but that has reference only to the daily papers; we charge the weekly papers a little more.

What do you charge them?—We charge some of them 2*l.* 2*s.* a year, and we pay 30*s.*

Bell's Weekly Messenger, for example?—That is a publication I do not exactly recollect the price of at this moment; but there is the John Bull, for instance, we charge 2*l.* a year for, and pay 30*s.* 4*d.* a year for it.

What are you allowed upon the price?—On the whole of the newspapers we are allowed eight per cent.; we have been offered more.

How do you calculate your profit on the commercial lists?—We have considerably more upon them, because they cannot get them but through the means of the express clerks.

Why cannot they?—Because they do not come under the denomination of newspapers, not being a stamped publication; they are not liable to stamp duty.

How do you receive the commercial lists?—We receive them with the papers; the clerks of the roads in England have the privilege of sending them; they send them through England, and we send them through Ireland.

Do the clerks of the roads in England send the commercial lists to you free of any expense?—Yes.

What profit do you charge?—Indeed we charge various profits; we have charged very large profits, and we have reduced them considerably; since I came I have reduced several.

How do you calculate your profits upon the periodical publications?—The large publications, quarterlies, and monthlies, we charge the marked price, generally speaking, and sixpence on each in addition; in Dublin to booksellers we make a deduction, but we get very few orders from them.

What per-centage is allowed you in England?—Generally speaking twenty-five per cent., but there are some publications that are 2*s.* 6*d.* each number, we get only twenty per cent. on, we should be charged for them at 2*s.* each.

How many express clerks are there?—There are two who are called express clerks, but the clerks of roads all enjoy a share of the emoluments.

Is it an equal share with you?—No.

Supposing the profit to be 100*l.* how would that be divided?—It would be rather difficult for me to state that at this moment, because one gets forty-three 2-5ths of the profit, another gets 7-19ths of the profit. I cannot state the particulars exactly.

[The witness was directed to send to the Board a statement of the manner in which the profits are divided; among what persons, and holding what offices; with the total amount of receipts for one year.]

Is it to be understood that the conveyance of those packages from Holyhead is still done without any charge to the clerks of roads?—No; we are charged very high indeed, a halfpenny a pound; and Mr. Elliott has a very considerable charge; we get those up in the coach whenever we can; we give half a crown to a sailor to put them on the coach.

Can you get them free as far as from Howth in that case?—No; we pay as if Mr. Elliott delivered them into the post-office; he comes and gets the amount of his bill.

Though they are sent up in the mail?—Yes, just the same.

Has Mr. Elliott any official situation?—Not at all.

What claim can he have?—The reason of that was to prevent his complaining; his people would all be in readiness in case they came to him; but it would admit no delay, — dispatch is every thing with that employment.

Is Mr. Elliott the only person engaged in that business?—There is Mr. Williams; we employed him, and he was not attentive, and we have since employed Mr. Elliott.

It is a private agreement between you and Mr. Elliott that he should always be paid, though you could in some instances get it done quicker?—Certainly.

Do you always know the contents of those parcels?—We write our order for them, and they should contain our order, but we cannot tell till we open them.

There is no examination of them?—No, not between London and Dublin.

Then if your agent put up any other books, they would pass without observation?—Certainly; they are not liable to be overhauled by the custom house now.

Who is your agent for this business in London?—Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper.

Have you received any instructions from the postmasters general since the Commissioners were last here upon the subject of such parcels?—Not since the Commissioners were last here, I think.

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Then the practice on this subject remains as it was?—Yes; it was during that time that they stopped the Holyhead packets from taking them free.

You still frank all these into the country?—Yes.

You still enjoy the same privilege of franking them on to the country after their arrival here, without any distinction as to the size of the parcels?—Yes, certainly.

Are the parcels opened here on their arrival?—They are opened here, and we make them up for the individuals our correspondents.

Do you open all the parcels here?—The books come, one dozen, or twenty or thirty of the Quarterly Reviews. I have covers ready, and they are made up; it requires the exertion of two or three persons to make them up.

Supposing half a dozen gentlemen in Armagh ordered a Quarterly Review, and half a dozen in Tipperary, they would all come to you, and you would open them here?—Yes.

Has it ever happened that any thing has been sent which you did not order?—Yes.

What kinds of books have been sent which you did not order?—The Beauties of Ireland were sent to us to request we would find sale for them, and they remain in the post-office.

They were sent over by your agents?—Yes.

Have any other books been sent in the same way?—They have made mistakes, and they have sent in our parcel for booksellers, requesting we would have them delivered in Dublin, and they would pay the carriage and portorage, but then the carriage was paid throughout.

Have they sent you any parcels to frank on to the country?—No.

The Beauties of Ireland have been the only books sent without order?—Yes; I do not recollect any other; there may have been mistakes made.

Did those Beauties of Ireland pass without any charge?—I paid for them as I paid for any thing else.

Did you send any of them on to the country?—No; I got sale for two of them, of which I had the profit.

By what authority do you forward those periodical publications free of postage into the country?—By authority of the postmaster-general.

What is the date of the minute giving that authority?—I believe it was always the custom for the clerks of roads; they always had that privilege, as far as I can remember; but when the clerks of roads put it all into the hands of clerks of express papers, there was, I understood, a minute made out for us to do that business.

When was that?—I cannot charge my memory with the date of that.

[The witness was directed to send a copy of the minute.]

The express clerks do the whole of the duty now?—Yes.

The clerks of roads do nothing but receive the emolument?—Just so.

You have nothing to do as express clerks with the Irish newspapers?—No, nothing at all, nor with any Irish publication.

What advantage have you as express clerk in forwarding English newspapers, when the British mail arrives rather late?—Only the advantage of recommending ourselves beyond any newsvender.

How do you manage that; what do you do?—Suppose the mail comes in at a time when it cannot be dispatched, we exert ourselves to have our papers put into the bags, into the mouth of the bag, any where to get them forwarded; that is a recommendation to our establishment, but we do not get any more by it: in the country we hold that out as an inducement.

Does that often happen?—Latterly very seldom. A case occurred the night before last, I think; we got most of them forwarded; the papers were not very numerous.

Which of the clerks forwards most of the newspapers?—Indeed I cannot say; I should imagine the clerk of the Leinster road.

Who is that?—Sir Edward Lees; his road is considered the best, and I presume that is the case, but I cannot speak with any certainty.

What is your attendance in the inland office?—From six in the morning till the mails are made up and dispatched to the public, and from five in the evening, or a little after five, till the mails are dispatched in the evening.

Do you wait till the letter-carriers are all out in the morning?—Not quite, but very nearly so.

What is the signal for your morning duty ceasing?—The signal for my duty ceasing is, when I see the State-letters taken away by the messenger; when once that is the case, it is supposed that all the letters are sorted, so that there can be no more to do.

Are the letters all taxed by that time?—Yes, every thing is done by that time. I have received the keys of all the divisions before that, and locked them up in the president's desk. I must be first in the office, and the last in the office.

Have the taxing clerks checked all the charges before that time?—They must have done it, and may have gone completely out of the office, every officer but two, I may say, and the president.

Cannot the State-letters be sent off before all that is done?—If they are, they are only liable to their being mis-sorted, either papers or letters; and if so there would be another messenger to be sent to the Castle, and a complaint would most likely come down from the Castle on that account.

What time does it generally take after the arrival of the mails?—From eight o'clock till fifteen minutes after eight, except on Mondays; on Mondays it is often till nine o'clock. Each morning and evening the presiding officer is to give out the keys for the divisions to

be opened, and the receivers for the letters to be turned, and he is to wait to receive all those keys again and to lock them up; he must be the first and the last.

Is your attendance daily or alternate?—I have two days in the week; I have Monday and Tuesday at present. I do not attend Monday evenings and Tuesday mornings, Tuesday evenings and Wednesday mornings.

How many others are there who share your duties?—Two more.

There are two other vice-presidents?—Yes.

Who are they?—Mr. Leet is one, and there is an acting vice-president, Mr. Harvey, or occasionally the next in turn, if he should be sick.

Who is the president of the inland office?—Mr. Donlevy is the president.

How many vice-presidents ought there to be?—Two vice-presidents on the establishment; there is an acting president. Mr. Leet is the acting president at present. Mr. Donlevy is sick, and therefore Mr. Harvey is employed to act as vice-president in his absence.

What is the duty of the president?—The president has to make a report, to receive the letters from the secretary's office, and to answer them; to give directions for all stoppages, and to answer the public if they call there at the time.

What should be his attendance?—The same as ours; the attendance is equally divided amongst us.

The president and the two vice-presidents take the alternate days in the week?—Yes, if there is any call in the middle of the day; the vice-presidents, though they attend, do not consider it their duty; they consider it the president's business to attend if called on in the middle of the day.

On what occasions are you called on in the middle of the day?—If any person wants his letters stopped from going into the country, and to receive them at the moment, they call upon the president to open the divisions and obtain the letter for them.

Can that be done without a special order?—There must be an order from the secretary. No letter can be delivered to any person without an order from the secretary, unless it was a person that we knew that gave an order in writing, then the president would do it, but to no other person.

Is there any authority for that?—We take the person's order for it.

Whose order?—If a member of this Board came into the office I should feel it my duty to give him his letters if he gave an order in writing, being known to me as such.

Would any person who is known to you in the city get his letters at whatever time he pleased?—No; there is every objection to that; in fact it is not usually done at all, but still there are exceptions.

Are those exceptions made at the discretion of the acting president?—Yes.

Are they often made?—Very seldom, because they do not like to take the responsibility upon themselves.

Are they made permanently in favour of any particular individual?—No, not at all.

It is only that the person gets his letters by favour on coming in?—If a member of Parliament came in and could not see the secretary, I should not hesitate in giving him his letters if I knew him to be the person, or if he gave me an order in writing.

Do you recollect any complaint of a member of Parliament applying for his letters within the last twelvemonths, and not being able to get them?—I do not recollect any such instance at this moment; it may have occurred, but I am not aware of it.

You have been always in the inland office?—Yes, I came in on that establishment; but I was a good while at what they call the post-paid window, which was separated from that at that time.

Have you had any reason to think that the service in the inland office has been injurious to your health?—That part of the duty that I had at that time was very injurious to my health.

Latterly in the inland office have you had reason to complain in respect of your health?—I cannot complain.

Your service has been only four days in the week?—Four mornings and four evenings, and every third Sunday.

Do you find that the air of the inland office and the duty there is injurious to the health of any of the officers?—Indeed I think it is.

To the young ones, or to those who have been there any time?—I think that those who have been there some time complain of it.

To what do you attribute that?—I attribute it partly to the constant attendance of the officers that they have not time to cure themselves; they take cold, and that increases upon them; they got a fresh cold, and I believe that may be the cause, more than the office itself, that they cannot nurse a cold, from being obliged to be there every day, it increases upon them.

Have you observed that any of them are liable to fits?—No.

Or constant head-aches?—I have heard some of them complain of head-aches; some of the gentlemen complain very much of the gas, but that may be individual cases.

What effect do they say it has upon them?—They say it affects their lungs.

Are their eyes affected?—The eyes are more affected; I feel my eyes more affected by the general light that I receive on them passing through the office. I do not think I should suffer so much if I was stationary; but generally speaking, I believe the gas does not affect their health much. I do not feel any inconvenience from it myself, except from the heat of it.

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What superintendence do you exercise over the taxing officers?—I see that they are in their places, and that they do their business.

Do you ever take a packet of letters, which has been taxed, to another officer on the other side of the room?—No, I do not know that I have, because if they had taxed them wrong, the complaint would come back, I conceive, from the postmaster or the public, and it would mark the individual.

Suppose they had undertaxed them, the deputy postmaster might not make the complaint?—Not being in the same situation possibly the next night, a person getting a letter undercharged next night, and getting an additional penny possibly over that amount the next night, would naturally complain of it.

Do you think it is sufficient to depend upon that kind of check; have not you it in your own power to create a further check?—Certainly; it has not been the practice, because we have had no cause of complaint.

Are not frequently overcharges and undercharges in the dockets returned by the deputies?—That has no reference to the officer in the taxing of letters.

Is not that a proof that they have been taxed incorrectly?—Yes, it is.

Would not that be corrected by the habit of taking parcels of letters every now and then from one taxing officer, asking him the amount he has made, and getting them taxed again by another officer?—It would certainly be a check upon him.

Are you necessarily apprised of all the complaints which do come upon the subject of the taxing?—It would naturally come to the president of the inland office, and would be handed to me, and I would call upon the clerk to account for it.

Every complaint of a wrong taxation is referred to the president of the inland office?—Yes.

Are not complaints very frequent?—Indeed there have been some complaints.

Are the complaints generally of overcharges?—Indeed, generally speaking, I believe they would be of overcharges.

Have you always found the complaints well founded?—We would only get those that would be supposed to be well founded, because the examination of them would remain in the secretary's office: where they have a doubt about it themselves, they would send down the cover, which they often did, to the officer of the inland office.

In the case of an overcharge being actually ascertained, or an undercharge being actually ascertained as complained of, there would be no reference to the president of the inland office?—Originally there would; it remains with the secretary's office to do so; but I presume, as they send down many of those things, that they send them all down.

What superintendence do you exercise over the taxing officers, beyond seeing that they are in their places?—I see that the letters are turned up from the receiver; that the officers are at their posts; that they call them up to sort where it is necessary. There are two offices, the newspaper office and the inland office, to be attended to, and there are a great number of officers, and it requires a constant watch upon them.

To prevent what?—To prevent their idling or not doing their business, or they might be talking to one another.

If they neglect their duty, and have not got through the letters in proper time, what do you do?—If they did not attend to the directions that I gave them, I would put them off duty at once.

That is, you would suspend them?—Yes.

For that evening?—Yes.

What is the consequence of that?—They would only come on duty the next day.

Are they fined?—If it is reported, they would be.

What would be the use of putting them off duty?—They would lose their pay for that evening.

What do you do in order to have them fined?—They do not get paid for that evening, that is all.

How is it secured that they do not get paid?—A person is put in their place who gets the pay.

They are appearing to do their duty, but have not got through their letters in time?—If they are delayed, the delay would be reported; or the secretary would demand the reason why the mail was late, and they would be fined, most likely, for it.

Are they fined upon your representation?—Yes, very often; not always.

Have you often had occasion to complain of officers being too tardy or neglectful?—No; I have very seldom complained to the secretary on the subject; but I have spoken to the officers very often.

Have you ever made any complaint to the secretary?—Yes; I have stated in writing that some of the officers have not done their duty.

What has been the result?—That they have been threatened with a severe fine if the delay occurred again; sometimes no notice was taken of it.

How do you communicate with the secretary while you are in the inland office?—By letter.

Always by letter?—Yes.

Do you write in a book?—We write in a book also, answers to secretary's orders, but no communication from that office; if I have any communication from that office, I do not put it into that book.

Do you ever go up to the secretary to speak to him?—I do merely to get a frank perhaps.  
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Not on any thing which is occurring in the office while the business is going on?—Very seldom.

Does he ever come down to the inland office to superintend?—No, he does not.

That is not his practice?—No, it is not.

You receive daily returns of the amount of postage?—Yes, I do.

From each division?—Yes.

Who sums it up?—The clerk makes out a sheet with the sum.

What clerk is that?—The president's clerk; that is merely a return for the secretary and postmaster-general.

What is that return to contain?—The postage inwards and outwards; the number of letters; the state and the attendance of the officers, and the places they filled in the office.

Who is the president's clerk?—Mr. Henry.

Is he a clerk in the inland office?—Yes.

Is he always in attendance?—He has to attend at the same hour as every other officer.

Daily?—Yes.

In his absence, what do you do?—We call upon some officer who knows how to fill up that sheet, the return to the postmaster-general; it is very laborious in the morning.

It requires a good deal of knowledge of the business, does it not?—Yes; they have a great deal to do to fill it up within the time.

State what that report contains?—The amount of postage outwards of the evening before; the letters inwards; the amount of postage; the number of letters; the officers in attendance; the absent officers, stating the cause of their non-attendance, and the divisions at which they perform their duty.

Is that all?—I do not recollect any thing further, except the hour of the arrival and dispatch of the mails; that is merely a return for the secretary and the postmasters-general; there are four made out, one kept in the office, one for each postmaster-general, and one for the secretary; then they see the attendance of every man.

Do you superintend the registry of the paid and double letters in the inland office also?—No; that is attended to by the clerk of the roads, the taxing clerk.

That is under you, is it not?—It is part of the duties of the office.

Do you superintend its being done properly; or is it not considered part of your duty?—I see that they do it; I do not examine every individual what he is about each morning, but I see that the work is done by them all generally; and for their own sakes, they are particularly careful to attend to that, they are so often obliged to have reference to it.

Do you consider that that registry is a security?—Indeed it is in a great degree; for the double letters certainly it is.

Have you reason to think that it has been of use?—I am certain it has.

Does it create any delay in the business of the inland office?—Yes, it does a little; certainly.

Do you consider that the mails would be dispatched earlier if it was not adopted?—Yes; there is a mail that would be out sooner, I think; that is the Cork early mail; but it is often delayed by other causes.

Why would it affect the Cork mail rather than any others?—Because the letters are received almost to the hour that it ought to be dispatched, and they are taxing them to the last moment; it ought to be out at seven o'clock, and they cannot get it out at seven, and I believe they take them till a quarter after seven.

How many persons are there in the inland office?—Forty-one, I think, on duty.

Does that include the alphabet and the paid window?—No, not at all.

Do you consider that that number is necessary for the duties of that office?—I think it is, to do the business correctly, and as it ought to be done.

Are there forty-one in attendance daily?—Yes.

Each morning and evening?—Yes.

How many of those forty-one are probationers?—I cannot recollect at this moment, for there has been such a number of the extra probationers employed; I believe there are ten probationary clerks.

What is your opinion of the system of employing probationers and extra probationers?—It is a very good plan for securing to the public a regular dispatch of the mails; that could not be obtained in any other way.

Do you think it could not be obtained in any other way?—It could, to be sure, if the postmasters-general obliged the attendance of the officers.

Is it now easy to regulate the office, there being such a number of probationers and extra probationers?—It is, certainly, for I have them in attendance.

Are they frequently in attendance when their services are not required?—I have hardly known an instance of their being in attendance when their services were not required, except in the present instance, when there are two or three newly appointed and not capable of the duty; but there is scarcely an instance of there being in attendance any capable officers who are not employed.

How are they to become capable if they are not to be employed till they are capable?—Because there would be clerks and other officers to go off duty, which would be acceded to if there were officers waiting, capable of doing the duty; but the president would not feel himself at liberty to let off persons capable of duty if there were not persons capable in attendance.

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Have you never let in a probationer to act for an officer, when that officer was capable of acting for himself, if that officer wished to go away?—If I had enough of officers, I should have no objection if the office is full.

Then he loses his 3s. 6d., and it is paid to the probationer?—Yes.

That is a common practice, is it?—Yes; where it has been in the power of the president to do it, it has been done; but it has not been latterly in his power to do it.

Why has it not been in his power to do it?—From the want of attendance of a sufficient number of officers to perform the duty.

Supposing a regular officer on the establishment were to come to you, and to say, “I want to go away for a week,” and you have a probationer ready, what should you do?—It could not be done by me; he must apply to the secretary.

What would you do if he applied for a day?—It cannot go beyond the day, for I have known a full attendance on one day, and the next day we have wanted six or eight officers.

When an officer makes such an excuse as that, does he name the probationer whom he wishes to be employed in his place?—No, certainly not.

Never?—I have known an instance where an officer has said I should be glad to go off if you will employ such a man; but the officer who acts as president always employs the next in rank.

If an officer should desire to go away for a day, and you grant him leave, may he come the next day to the president and obtain leave again?—The presidents give leave only when they see the office full; at the moment of commencing the duty, if a person comes and says, “The office is full, sir; I have particular business; will you have the goodness to let me go away?” the president says, “I have no objection;” and he puts on a probationer.

If he comes again the next morning, and the office is full, will his request be complied with?—I think it would.

And so long as you saw the office was full?—Yes; under the conclusion that it was better to give those extra probationers some employment than to let them be idle.

Then it follows that there must be extra probationers attending, waiting for employment?—Yes, certainly; that is the case.

But not taking any part unless an opportunity occurs?—No; but that opportunity seldom fails them.

Have you any thing to do with the alphabet?—No.

It is not under your direction?—No.

Nor the paid-window?—No.

Would there be any objection to putting the two with the inland office under one president?—Indeed, I cannot see that there would be any.

Do you think you should be able to control those two offices, supposing there were inferior officers placed in them?—I think it could be done, for it was formerly done.

When was the alteration made?—In Lord Clancarty's time.

Do you understand that there was any great inconvenience when they were in one department?—No, there was not; I never heard of any considerable complaint or inconvenience.

You were once in the paid-window office?—Yes.

How many officers are there there?—I believe there are two officers now. I have no connection with that office; I never go into it. Formerly there were two attended it.

Is there any check upon the receipts?—Yes; there is a return made to the president, which he signs and sends up, that is checked by an officer in the inland office, of the amount of the postage which they receive; they check it with the book in which the amount of the letters is entered for the country; and also a return of the amount of postage from the public offices; that book is sent into the inland office and checked with the amount of letters by an officer.

By which officer?—It has been optional with the president to appoint a person to do it; the person next in authority to the taxing clerks does it now.

What then becomes of the book?—He returns it to them after getting a ticket from the paid-letter office of the amount; he makes out a return, for the president's clerk, of the amount of postage, and the president's clerk makes out a return for the president to sign, and they are returned to the alphabet; and that amount is sent up on the face of the report to the secretary's office.

Do you always give this book to be checked by the same person?—It has happened that the same person has had it a good while; but it is not always the same person.

Who is it?—Mr. Beare, at present.

Would there be any objection to giving it sometimes to one person and sometimes to another; is there any emolument derived from it?—Not the least; it is an office that a money book is attached to, and we find it more convenient to let one officer do it, if he is a steady officer.

Would it not be a better check if it was sometimes one officer and sometimes another?—If there was any possibility of fraud, for there can be no advantage to him.

Is not your whole system an attempt to prevent the possibility of fraud?—There is no doubt it would prevent any thing of the kind; it would render it impossible.

How long have you been in the office?—Thirty-one years.

Have you any claim for increase of salary?—No, none whatever.

What was the emolument you received last year as express clerk?—As express clerk, independent of salary, in 1825, 728*l.* 2*s.* 2*d.* Irish currency.

How much of that did you receive from Government?—Not a halfpenny.

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No part of that is compensation?—No.

It is only the clerks of roads who have compensation?—No; it all depends upon my own exertions.

Have the receipts of the express clerks been greater since the clerks of the roads got compensation?—They certainly have; but I do not attribute it to any thing attaching to the clerks of the roads at all; the increase has been by the exertion of the express clerks.

Do not the express clerks do that which the clerks of the roads do?—The express clerks have nothing to do with any Irish papers whatever, nor any Irish publication.

And the clerks of the roads have nothing to do with English newspapers?—No.

They have no common privilege?—No; if I saw a clerk of the roads sending an English publication, I would inform him of it at once; and he would do the same with me as to Irish.

The clerks of roads share in your profits?—Yes; Mr. Donlevy's share was 7*l.* 0*s.* 5*d.* last quarter.

How can he claim any thing if there is no common privilege between the clerks of roads and the clerks of the express?—The clerks of the roads claimed the privilege of sending the publications as well as the express clerks, and the postmasters-general arranged that we should have the whole management, and that we were to pay them the amount they were then receiving for forwarding publications.

The clerks of roads did forward publications at that time?—Yes.

Then the exclusive privilege was given to you?—Yes.

When was that?—I believe it was in 1820.

Do you know when the arrangement was made by Government, under which the clerks of the roads receive compensation?—I do not.

What would prevent a clerk of roads now forwarding English newspapers, if he chose to have them over from England in the same way as you do?—They could do it just as any other newsvender could do it, or any other papers, except that of having agreed to give up all English papers to us; we would appeal against them if they continued to do so.

When did they agree to give up all English papers to you?—At the time they gave up the publications.

Prior to that, they had the same privileges in common as you now have?—Yes; the clerks had in their respective divisions, and we claimed it all over the country; they wanted to claim it to our exclusion, but the postmaster-general would not allow it.

Your emoluments as clerk of the express were increased by the clerks of the roads giving up their privileges?—They claimed what they then made by their English publications and newspapers; they gave in a statement of what they were making, and we agreed to pay them in proportion to the sum that we got; the scale was made out by the accountant-general, and we have since continued to pay them at that rate.

Do you know for what the clerks of roads are compensated by Government?—Indeed, I am not clear about it at all. I heard there was compensation once.

[*The Witness was directed to send a copy of his last quarterly account as express clerk.*]

STEPHEN DE JONCOURT.

## Appendix, No. 185.

10th October 1826.

WILLIAM DONLEVY Esq. called in and examined.

WHAT is your situation in the post-office?—I am president of the inland office, and clerk of the Connaught road.

How long have you been in the office?—Fifty years this October; I am on the establishment, by some error, forty-nine and a half, and I spoke to my Lord Rosse, who has ordered it to be corrected. I have been a great invalid latterly; I was fifty years in the post-office, from which I was never six months absent, either from sickness or leave; and now the physicians have ordered me to sleep in the country, which prevents my attending, which I have explained to Lord O'Neill, Lord Rosse, and the secretary.

In the statement of absences which have been communicated to the board, it appears that you are not in attendance at all?—At present I am not.

How long has that been the case?—The 22d of January was the day I was taken ill.

How many days were you absent last year?—Not one; nor for fifty years; I was not six months absent in all.

It is only during the present year your absence has been continued?—The only time I was ever absent; my duty was a pleasure to me.

You are accountant-general of the Bank of Ireland?—I am; and have been nearly since its establishment.

What attendance does that require?—From ten till about three, sometimes half past three.

Every day?—Yes, every day.

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Do you go there now?—I go there for an hour, or an hour and a half; the physicians thought it better to break me in gradually; but my office hours of attendance at the post-office are from six in the morning, when I could come in, and in the evening; when I advised with Sir Edward Lees and Lord O'Neill, they desired me not to mind for the present.

What was your usual attendance in both when you were in health?—From a quarter after five in the evening till the dispatch of the mails, and from six in the morning; I was in the chair at six to see that every one was in his place, and I remained there until the whole of the bags and the letters were assorted, and given in charge to the letter-carriers; in short, all made up for the delivery.

What time did that occupy?—Generally from eight to half past eight; till nine in winter, when the mails did not come in.

After that where did you go?—After that I went and cleaned myself, and breakfasted, and went to the bank by ten.

From ten o'clock till what time did you remain there?—Three.

When did you return to the post-office?—At a quarter after five: then I should mention that the president and vice-presidents from time immemorial, that is, from Lord Clancarty's arrangement, we have two mornings and two evenings off in each week; there are three, two vice-presidents and one president, and then there were two of them always in attendance; we had an indulgence by leave of the postmaster-general, that I had two evenings and two mornings in the week, and I took my turn on Sundays; I was always every day in attendance some part of the day.

If you did not attend in the morning you attended in the evening?—Yes.

What do you consider the duration of the weekly attendance; how many hours in the whole?—About twenty hours.

What is your salary as accountant-general in the bank?—About seven or eight hundred a year, including a variety of other matters besides salary.

When did you receive that appointment?—A few years after the opening of the bank, about five and twenty or thirty years ago. I entered the post-office when I was twelve years old, and by being regularly bred up to this business it was quite an amusement to me; and never seeking more than domestic pleasure, I had the recreation of that, which I have done with those offices, and it was always my business and my pleasure; and I feel it unpleasant that I have been obliged to withhold in consequence of the opinions of the physicians, for otherwise I should be in attendance, though I am still a little weak.

What is your salary at the post-office?—I have 300*l.* a year salary at present; then I have fixed allowances by Government, in consequence of my giving information a great many years ago, which the Commissioners, I believe, have been acquainted with, against the unfortunate people who were prior to me in those situations; they took the allowances, and also what they could make by the newspapers, or part of what they could make; in short, they gave a false return; the consequence was, that the late Commissioners, or the Government, many years ago dismissed those persons, Mr. Arnett, Mr. Twigg, and a Mr. Maturin; those three unfortunate men lost their situations in consequence of my making the disclosure: and when I got the situation of clerk of the Connaught road, I found it was 1,200*l.* a year. Lord Clancarty could never make out what those clerks of roads were making; he asked me what they were making; I did not then know; he asked me to tell him if ever I succeeded to it, and I promised I would, and I did tell him, and the result was that I have stated; this result proved fatal to those men, and it reduced me from 1,200*l.* a year to this allowance, 525*l.*, which the Government allowed me, which was the allowance those persons were formerly in possession of, who had put both in their pockets; but I do not regret having done so.

You receive 525*l.* a year as fixed emolument, and 300*l.* as salary?—Yes; and there are perquisites from English publications; the proportion I receive out of those is about from 25*l.* to 32*l.*; that composes the whole of my income from the post-office.

Who receives the actual emolument for what is done by the clerks of the roads?—There is no salary; they are not allowed a salary; I do not receive a salary as clerk of the road; but if I was president I should have 200*l.* a year from my standing.

You receive 525*l.* a year as clerk of the road?—Yes; they are the perquisites of newspapers.

Who receives the money which is actually so gained by those perquisites?—I receive it; and I, on oath, every quarter, make out a statement of the profits which have been made upon the newspapers, and the difference the office pays me between the receipts and that emolument of the 525*l.*

The perquisites would be less than 525*l.*?—Yes. When this disclosure came the editors of the newspapers were not aware that those people were in the receipt of so much a year, and it got published, and they then raised their prices and lessened the perquisites; then Lord Clancarty by his regulations directed that all future clerks of the roads their salary should be reduced one third; though my salary was 300*l.* a year, I was only to receive 200*l.*; and at that sum it went on for a number of years, until Mr. Thomas Lees was appointed clerk of the Munster road, and when he was appointed clerk of the Munster road they did not take his salary from him, the one third of it; and when I discovered this, and Mr. Johnston, who was then appointed clerk of the north road, we remonstrated with the present postmaster-general; and at the old post-office in College Green, Lord Rosse with his usual sense of humanity heard with great patience, and had the matter investigated, and he did not seem to understand why I should not have it as well as Mr. Thomas Lees, but from our services, and my service particularly, I was as well entitled to any thing of favour

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as any body else ; but, however, notwithstanding his lordship's opinion at that time, it was not given to Mr. Johnston or me, nor for some years, until I was forced to go to Government, and with the permission, for I did not do any thing without the knowledge of the secretary ; the postmaster-general seemed to think that Mr. Thomas Lees had a better right for some reason, but I thought he had not any better right ; but I got leave to go to the Castle, and I had an audience with Mr. Grant, the then secretary, and Mr. Grant, after listening to Mr. Johnston and me, put this question, " And Mr. Donlevy, why has not this been done ? " I said, " Sir, that is what I have come to you to submit that it should be done ; " the next day there was an order from the Castle desiring that Mr. Johnston and I should be put upon the same footing with the other clerks of the roads, meaning the secretary, and Thomas Lees, whose salary was never stopped, and his brother, and from that day to the present I have received 300*l.* ; but I was mortified to think there was a misconstruction or a misinterpretation of the Castle order, as to the back salary, from the time that Mr. Thomas Lees was appointed clerk of the Munster road till the time that Mr. Grant ordered me to get the full salary, and from that until the present day I have never been able to obtain it ; and within the last week I wrote a letter to Lord Rosse, that the next time his lordship would be in town I begged he would give me a hearing at a post-office board, for the purpose of knowing why this money was not returned to me ; I believe it was five or six years ; and Lord Rosse this day did send for me, but the command of this board coming, I have paid my respects, and have attended here as I could see Lord Rosse at any other time, it was for the very purpose of having myself righted. Now I am not in distress ; I never was, when I came into the post-office at 20*l.* a year. I always managed to live within bounds, and I was always independent, and was able to go forward to the postmaster-general and the secretary, humbly to represent any thing which I thought proper. I do expect I shall get this money refunded to me, because when I saw Mr. Gregory he had a perfect recollection of it.

What is the period to which you allude ?—I suppose from four to six years, from the time of Mr. Thompson's death, whom Mr. Thomas Lees succeeded, until the day that Mr. Grant ordered my salary to be paid like the other clerks, for which I was very grateful. I was unhappy at having the idea of attending at one situation, and not the other, but the physicians explained to me that it was desirable for me to sleep in the country for the present, but I mean, please God, to resume my situation, and to work as long as it pleases God to give me strength, which I have had a great deal of.

Do you propose to continue to hold both the employments ?—Yes ; I will not give up the post-office as long as I can hold it, unless I am turned out of it.

Is it your intention to hold with that the occupation you have in the bank ?—Yes ; the kindness of the Governors and Directors to me since my illness (and the only illness I have ever had) has helped and assisted to reinstate me in my health.

Do you not consider that the having accepted that second office under the bank has prevented your performing your duty at the post-office ?—No, not for a moment, or I would not have held it.

Suppose any new arrangement should take place with respect to the arrival and departure of the mails, which should render your presence necessary between ten and three o'clock, what would be your determination then ?—I must then throw myself on the mercy of the Governors and directors, to say whether they would keep me.

Do you conceive the postmasters-general have no claim on your time but during the hours you have mentioned ?—Decidedly ; but the attendance at half past five in the morning is so very great a fatigue to any man, and then in the evening again, that any man doing that would not be expected at other times.

Would you think it any hardship if the postmasters-general, instead of calling upon you at those hours, were to call upon you to attend from nine in the morning to four in the afternoon ?—Then I must throw myself on the board ; but it is not reasonable that they would make such a requisition upon me, unless it were to turn me off without a cause, that is my feeling ; but I do not pretend to contend on such a point.

Do not you conceive that in accepting such a situation you give up all your time and all other engagements ?—Yes ; but when I state that for fifty years I have attended to both, that is the best answer I can give.

Do not you consider it rather an unusual indulgence for a public officer to have been allowed to carry on two offices so long ?—No, it was not to me individually ; I never received any indulgence from them, nor never sought it ; I always did my duty during the hours that I was requested to do it.

What compensation would you be entitled to under the original Act, if you were inclined to seek it ?—If I was inclined to seek it, I should claim that they would give me every thing I have possessed ; I believe that is according to the Act of Parliament ; I have never read the Act myself ; I was so strong that I never thought what sickness was till January, when I was visited by Providence in this way, from which I have got a wonderful recovery ; my being obliged to live a regular life from the habit of my duty at the post-office and the bank, I think, was the cause of my being able to go through what other men would think a slavery.

There are some other officers of the post-office, whose absences, as reported during the last year, are to the same, or perhaps to a greater amount than yours ?—I dare say there are.

There is one of the name of Cullen ?—Yes, he has been a long while away.

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What is the cause of his absence?—Indeed, I never knew how he managed to get away; it might have been indisposition. When I get any thing of that kind I send it officially to the secretary, and they make their report to the postmasters-general; to the secretary I report them daily as absent, either with cause or without cause, or sickness.

How do you know the cause?—By their writing to me to say that they are sick.

In case of sickness do they always send the certificate of Mr. Kerin?—Mr. Kerin is always under the direction of the secretary's office; it is there he gets his instructions to visit them.

A person wishing to excuse himself on account of sickness, would he send you the certificate of Mr. Kerin?—They did in many cases send me certificates from other physicians, which I always inclose in that case, with the official documents of the morning, to the secretary, and also report them to the postmaster-general as sick.

You say you are not acquainted with the situation of Mr. Cullen?—I believe he is an attorney.

Do you think a person holding the situation of an attorney is capable of performing his duties at the post-office?—Indeed I do, if he has the same inclination as I have, for I believe half of them have not business; I have complete occupation, many of them have not.

Are you acquainted with the general attendance of Mr. Cullen; has he, although an attorney, been regular in his attendance?—There has been very great irregularity.

For many years?—I may say for years; I do not think he has been in constant attendance for a length of time.

Are you acquainted with Mr. James O'Neill's attendance?—Yes.

He is also stated to be the president of the penny post-office, and a clerk in the inland office, and an attorney?—He is the most regular in his attendance with me; that strengthens what I have said, that if a man is inclined he can do all those things; he has been very regular with me.

Mr. Wall?—Mr. Wall has been many years an invalid; I am intimate with the young man, and he has been used to communicate to me the state in which he was, and I used to advise him to come to his duty; he said he would be very willing to do it, but he was not equal to it; and I find he has made representations repeatedly to get retirement, and from some cause that I never could find out, they never granted it; and then of course he has been absent; but, however, in one respect it may appear a terrible grievance on clerks, one thing is very much in favour of the Government, and that is simply this, that Mr. Wall and Mr. Donlevy, during our absence, though for a short period, I have been and he has been obliged to pay out of that salary which has been stopped at the rate of 70*l.* to pay a junior clerk, who is brought into a junior situation, and so they step up to fill the higher offices, so that the Government is no loser, but when sickness comes, as in many cases I can mention, of the junior clerks, poor fellows, who have only 52*l.* a year; it is a dreadful thing to humanity.

Is there any difference in the amount of fine for nonattendance between those who are well paid and those who are ill paid?—No, there is not; for instance, myself in the Bank of Ireland, they would not think of stopping from me for my sickness; on the contrary, their kindness towards me assisted my restoration to health; in the post-office, after fifty years service, they stopped from me for that absence, to pay a person to fill the lower situation, the same as they do for Mr. Wall; but I, being so well paid in comparison to those persons, naturally have no right at all to complain, or say a word upon the subject; but I would submit how far it is consistent, when a medical man certifies as if on oath whether the person is really sick or not; but a constant absence, a year, I do not think should be admitted in any case, in my own opinion.

There is the case of Mr. Thomas Harrison, are you acquainted with his nonattendance?—He has a situation in the secretary's office; his health has been always represented to me as a sick state of health, not able to endure the fatigue I have been able to endure.

Is it that he is not capable of bearing the fatigues of the inland office, but does perform those of the secretary's office?—He does perform the duties of the secretary's office, for I have seen him there; but the hours of attendance in the inland office, and the fatigue of it, I believe to be the cause assigned for his absence.

Could you, from your experience in the inland office, suggest any plan by which the officers engaged in that office could be sufficiently employed the whole day, and sufficiently reimbursed to preclude the necessity of their having any other situation?—I am afraid I could not, the scale would be so very large, it defeats itself in a great measure. Harrison and some others are not equal to it, and therefore they would be thrown still as a burthen upon the Government.

Perhaps the small fine by which he is enabled to absent himself from the inland office is an inducement so to absent himself?—Clearly; and to prevent any imposition on the Government of that kind, I would suggest that if a man was not able after one or two years, or whatever time was thought reasonable, he should be forced to withdraw, by either the humanity of Government interposing to enable him, or in some way.

Do you think a smaller number of officers, occupied a longer time, and sufficiently paid, could do the business as well as a larger establishment, occupied occasionally for shorter intervals?—No; we are obliged to work to time the same as the London office; and if we went there at ten o'clock in the morning, if I went there at ten and stayed till three for instance, I should wait, for the letters are not yet coming in; the merchants and traders put in all to the last moment, and the press sometimes requires a greater number of hands; half the number would do if we could work from ten to three, as at the Bank.

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Might not some other occupation be found for them in that case?—No, I think not.

Might not they go into the remittance office, or the accountant-general's office, or other offices?—No doubt of it.

Would it not be as easy for you to devote the time you give to the public, to the accountant-general's, or any other offices there?—Yes; but it depends upon the man. Harrison has that, but he does not avail himself of it.

That is because by inflicting the fine, they give him the option of being idle during those four or five hours, for which he pays a small sum and receives the rest of the salary?—Yes.

If that fine was not a matter of option, would he not be obliged to attend?—He would be obliged to attend or quit, which is the same thing to the Government.

Do you not conceive generally, setting your own case aside, that the facility and regularity with which those fines appear to be inflicted, has a tendency to produce a great irregularity in the attendance?—I think they are an abominable thing.

At the same time, are you not aware that the post-office must not submit to pay any salary to an officer who cannot attend to perform his post-office duties, whatever they may be, and at whatever hour, supposing at the same time he is performing other duties in the middle of the day, and paid for them by some other office?—I would not allow it at all, myself not excepted; for though I did it fifty years, if I intended to make it a practice to attend the bank of Ireland, or the secretary's office, and I was not to attend as president and clerk of the Connaught road, I should think I ought to be put out; the only thing in favour of the Government is, that when we stop away, the Government are no losers, saving that they give to the individual the difference between that which is paid to the person performing the duty, and his salary; I think it might be seen for a time whether they are restored to health; but, if after that, as in the case of Mr. Wall and others, it might be said you have been in attendance in the bank, or wherever it might be, for two years, and have not attended, I will put my pen across your name.

There is also the case of Mr. Robert Harrison?—He is in the receiver-general's office; they are two brothers, that is another case in point.

Is it not evident that his appointment to the inland office is a mere sinecure; it gives him the difference between his fine and his salary?—Just upon the same principle as his brother and Mr. Cullen; they have not been in attendance, and ought to be made to attend after a certain period, I should think.

There is the case of Mr. Henry Leahy, he is an attorney?—That is the case in point; he has resigned, as he has informed me, within this very short time. I know he is a professional man, and that he is as stout and able to do his duty as I was; but the return for his professional pursuits, I presume being better, and enabling him to do that, he has staid away, and my advice to him was to resign or attend.

In your experience of the post-office, have you perceived any difference of late?—There was a great deal more mildness towards the clerks in respect of the performance of the duty, formerly.

Was the same latitude always allowed?—No; it was always considered that if a man was on duty three nights and three mornings, and his turn of Sunday duty, which I take to this day, that was sufficient. When Lord Clancarty came into office, he thought he should do great matters by insisting on every one attending every night and every morning; and he called upon me when Lord O'Neill and he were present. I was so annoyed at the unreasonableness, as I thought, of Lord Clancarty's plan, never having been more than three nights and three mornings in the week on duty, I told his lordship such a plan as that required would be oppression, as I felt no man, whatever his constitution, could stand it; he gave me then my choice, and, said he, "I will make you vice-president." Says I, "My lord, I am very much obliged to you; but I would not wish to be a president under such circumstances; but if your lordship will allow me to go on three days and three nights, I will do it;" he said, "Oh, no, I will give you three hours to consider." I did so, and wrote him that of the two evils I would choose the least, that was to be a vice-president; after a little time I became reconciled to it.

Before that time, your attendance was confined to three mornings and three evenings?—Yes; I have been in the post-office in London, and have a knowledge of some of the clerks, and there is a great deal more humanity. I believe that after a certain number of years men do not attend so frequently.

Were not the hours of attendance much longer and later before Lord Clancarty's time than they are now?—No, they were not; but from the time of Mr. Palmer, the time of the mail-coach business, that was the time they were so severe; it used to be from six o'clock in the evening till twelve o'clock at night, then there were only the three mornings and three evenings.

The mails were then dispatched at eleven o'clock?—At twelve o'clock.

When were the mails first dispatched at the present hour?—I cannot say. I believe after a certain number of years attendance in London, they are not so strict with them.

When was the system of fines first introduced?—In Lord Clancarty's time.

Were there no fines before that time?—Only for mis-sorting a letter, or any thing of that kind; but these are regular stoppages.

There were no regular stoppages till Lord Clancarty's time?—No, there was not; for when a man was sick, formerly it was ascertained to a certainty, as in all other establishments under the Crown, or under humanity, if a person is a well-deserving man and is sick, his master, always to a common servant, will show some mercy to him; but here a

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poor clerk at 52*l.* a year for instance, or 60*l.* a year, cannot subsist; if he comes back to the establishment and works under such a plan, I stand on an elevated place to watch this man; but such a state of things is enough to drive a man to do that which is improper; and I trust the Commissioners will in their humanity think of the junior clerks, so as to prevent this kind of stoppage, so that if a man meets with this visitation of God, he may not be distressed in consequence.

Of what class are the probationers composed?—They are nice young lads, who must be eligible to come in whenever there is a vacancy through sickness; they are put on duty, but they have no other pay, and then they rise into the other situations as an officer dies off.

When an officer is absent from sickness, or any other cause, he does not choose the person who shall perform his duty?—No; I put on the senior of these extra-probationers at six in a winter's morning. I have been sometimes obliged to say to a young man after coming there, I have not occasion for you, waiting for this 1*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.*

If all the regular officers attended, would there be occasion for any probationers?—No, not one.

How many probationers are there?—I forget immediately now: I suppose fourteen or fifteen, if not more.

And the number of absentees will sometimes amount to that?—Sometimes they will.

Were there always in your experience probationers attached to the office?—No, there were not; that was also one of Lord Clancarty's experiments, he was a very clever man; but I do not think he knew what would work; there is a great deal of difference between theory and practice of every thing, the working at the time renders it necessary to have more persons in the office than otherwise; the fact is, the secretary very properly expects of the president, unless there is some unforeseen circumstance, such as a mail coming in a few minutes before, to get the letters forward; therefore, unless we have a certain number of men, it cannot be performed to the satisfaction of the public.

When you first knew the office, did the secretary superintend the dispatch of the mails?—No.

Who did?—The president.

Was the secretary in attendance?—Yes; but it was twelve o'clock at night they were dispatched, and he was not in attendance then.

He was not forthcoming officially then?—No; unless there was some emergency, or express from Government, or any thing of that kind.

Did the secretary never actually come down and see the dispatch of the mails?—Never, as a duty; he has often come in.

He never interfered with the arrangement?—He was at the head of the arrangement so far, that if any thing went wrong he was appealed to, but he never attended to dispatch the mails.

Does he ever attend to dispatch them now?—No, I do not think he does; he has been often in his office and has been in the way.

Whom do you consider as responsible for the regular dispatch of the mail-coaches in due time?—I consider myself, when on duty, bound to see the thing performed, and if any thing goes wrong to report it to the secretary, and he to the postmaster-general, if necessary; but indeed when a mail is late, ten or fifteen minutes for instance, it is reported opposite to each mail, and one of those reports goes to each of the postmasters-general, and another to the secretary; I have three of them made out.

Have you a habit of corresponding with the secretary?—Regularly.

There is a book?—Yes, and independently of that book, if there is any thing particular, I write to him, and write "private" upon it.

Do you consider that book as useful?—Yes.

Do you consider it a good measure?—Indeed I think it is; any book is better than a letter, because it remains on record, a letter may be lost.

What do you call that book to which you allude?—The inland-office book; it is generally mentioned if we want to stop a nobleman's letters, on his coming to town.

Does it ever happen, in case of any misunderstanding between the secretary's office and the inland office, in consequence of the correspondence having taken place through this book, that an opportunity is lost of explanation which would have taken place if you had communicated personally?—No, I think not; I do not think it is; the word I generally write opposite to it, is "complied with;" that tells the secretary that his order has been obeyed. Suppose Lord Gosford or Lord O'Neill comes to town, and their letters are to be sent to a certain place that is written down, and the president on its coming down, issues his orders to the clerks under him, and then I say "complied with," or any further explanation which is necessary, or if there is any thing upon which I want further explanation, I write to the secretary the following morning, or have recourse to him if he is in the house.

Do you receive your letters free?—No; formerly we did.

How long have you ceased to do so?—I declare I forget: it is a considerable time now.

Is it a number of years?—I think it is.

Is it more than three years?—I think it is; lately they have been, very properly, very strict; I will state how—the only letters I could possibly receive are entered into a book, and they are then signed by the person who receives them, as vouching that they are on office business; if I should receive a private letter for myself, I say “self,” and it is by the secretary’s authority or countenance that that book is sent to him, and that he allows it to be refunded; but the whole postage is charged; I am charged with the postage, but it is repaid again or allowed.

In fact you do receive them free?—Yes, private letters in the way I state, by the signature of the secretary, going before him.

Does that apply to all the officers of the post-office?—I speak at present with respect to the clerks of the roads, if a clerk in the office receives a letter it is charged to him as it is to me; but by producing it to the secretary, he says here is a letter I have been charged with; Sir Edward Lees sees that this letter is his, and he then initials it so that the postage may be refunded; the check of doing so prevents those clerks putting a letter, on opening a bag, into their pocket; and I believe that was the origin of the allowance to prevent that evil.

Is there any difference between the clerks of the roads and the other clerks in regard to receiving their letters free?—Yes; and they are more strict with the clerks of the roads, for they are receiving orders for newspapers from their correspondents.

Do they pay for those?—No, they do not pay for those, for they are refunded again.

The fact is, that all private letters directed to the clerks are charged but are not paid for by them?—The money is refunded on their being shown to the secretary.

The clerks of roads have the same privileges?—Yes, with the privilege of receiving those on own office business.

Do you consider the ordering newspapers office business?—Yes, because I am obliged on oath to account for the money I have received, and the deficiency is made up.

What is the amount of the emoluments of the clerks of the roads for newspapers; what would be the emoluments if you got no money from Government?—They would be very trifling now.

How much do Government receive out of the amount they pay to you?—It varies every quarter.

Who keeps the account of it?—Each clerk keeps an account of his own, and furnishes it every quarter, swearing to it.

What was the amount of your last quarter?—My deficiency the last quarter was 94*l.* after giving my trouble to manage it. Sir Edward Lees’s was a great deal more.

Then it would amount to about 40*l.* a quarter?—Some quarters more and some less than that.

It is no advantage to you to induce people to apply for the newspapers through you?—Not the least advantage, only from principle that I try to make as much as I can; in my advertisements I say send me silver, for sometimes notes are not so conveniently had; if a man sends me up 5*s.* I would send him a paper as long as I could.

Do you think there is any use in continuing the principle of allowing the clerks of roads to forward newspapers?—I think it ought to be all done away, and no perquisite allowed but their full salary. I think it would be advisable in Government never to allow perquisites, but to allow them their fixed salaries and fixed allowances from Government, and to let the editors, who are always fighting and trying to do every thing to annoy, do as they could, and probably an increase would be on the stamp duty, for that is another object in trying to circulate newspapers that we increase the revenue from the newspapers.

You have no inducement to increase the circulation?—Except from principle, we have no inducement at all.

The inducement is the other way, for it is attended with trouble?—Yes, but they allow us for that trouble; we are allowed a clerk.

Was any thing deducted from the receipts for the payment of the clerk?—Yes, every thing was deducted.

What is the allowance to the clerk?—It will come to very near 100*l.* a year altogether.

Is it a clerk in the post-office you employ?—No; I employ a person out of the post-office.

What do the other clerks in the post-office do?—Some of them have a clerk in the post-office; I believe Mr. Burrowes does Sir Edward Lees’s, I believe somebody does Mr. Thomas Lees’s; but then they are obliged to have persons to do for them. I think it my duty to state that it would be better that all those people had fixed salaries instead of perquisites of this kind; though they do not make any thing by those perquisites, it is holding out a false thing, and the newspaper editors think there is a great deal more of this than it is.

What advantage is there to the newspapers from the practice?—They have a profit to allow the clerks of roads; for every quire of papers they sell, that is the profit to the newsvender; it is the same as in London, but there it is an immense thing.

Examinations.

No. 185.

William Donlevy,  
Esq.

10th Oct. 1826.

Is it better for the newspaper vender to send his papers through the clerk of the roads?—He will not send them by us, he is our enemy; he profits by sending them himself; he puts the profit he allows us in his own pocket.

The newspaper editors would be better off if the privileges of the clerks of the roads were abolished?—Completely so; for all the profit we give Government, after working at it, he would have; but I am told it is an immense thing in England.

Explain how what the public gets comes out of the pockets of the newspaper proprietors?—We send to the newspaper offices for the papers, they charge us so much a quire, then we have their profit upon that, for if they sent it to an individual in the country they would have a certain profit.

What does that come to on a paper?—Two or three shillings on a quire.

What would that amount to in the course of a year?—I have not calculated it.

The clerks of the roads get their clerks to take the newspapers from them?—Yes.

You apply to the newspaper proprietors to make an allowance to you for dealing largely with them?—Yes; I believe it is the same in London.

WILLIAM DONLEVY.

## Appendix, No. 186.

16th October 1826.

Mr. JOHN HEBDEN called in and examined.

No. 186.

Mr. John Hebden.  
16th Oct. 1826.

YOU are Superintendent of the Bye, Dead, and Mis-sent Letter office?—I am.

Will you state to the Board the general nature of your duties as superintendent?—I am responsible for the duty of the office, and I take an active part in performing the duty; each individual has an equal portion of the duty as near as it can be.

How many are there in your office?—Five clerks.

What are their respective duties?—Checking the different accounts of postmasters in the country.

With respect to the bye letters?—That is the cross-post communication, that does not touch Dublin at all, the correspondence between town and town in the country.

What is the manner in which that correspondence comes before you?—By the bye-letter vouchers, the sent and received sides of these vouchers explain it [*producing them.*] When a postmaster is keeping his account he enters the amount of letters sent to his correspondent, and then when he receives letters from his correspondent he enters them on the other side; then when he furnishes those at the end of the month we take those two accounts and compare the entries; they very seldom agree, but in checking them we make them agree, and we, in the first instance, charge the postmaster in the country with the amount of the errors, then we furnish him with a list at the expiration of the quarter of those errors; then if they find we have actually charged them with too much, they send us the dockets, and we let them stand against them, as it appears by the dockets.

What is that you hold in your hand?—A monthly bye-letter voucher; that is sent up to the post-office here up to the fifth of every month; on the sixth they ought to dispatch them; these three [*producing them*] correspond with each other.

How do they correspond with each other?—One is from Clonegal in the county of Wexford, he corresponds with Newtown-Barry, for instance.

Those are neighbouring towns?—Yes, they must be neighbouring towns.

What is the distance between the two?—I suppose ten miles, in some instances it is twenty; one town may correspond with twenty, in some instances with thirty; they are both monthly accounts, but kept in different offices; those are bye vouchers.

What do those contain?—The amount of postage on letters sent from Newtown Barry to Clonegal and others, and *vice versa*.

Under what particular head do they keep this account; are the letters paid or unpaid?—Both letters unpaid and paid.

What is the other paper in your hand?—I have nothing but the bye-letter vouchers.

What money is received in your office?—Very little, only for dead letters returned by letter-carriers; we just keep the letters a fortnight, and if any application should be made by the public, we of course during that time deliver them, and receive the postage for them, which is a mere trifle, not more than 10*l.* or 15*l.* every three months, that is the most.

Examinations.

No. 186.

Mr. John Hebden.  
16th Oct. 1826.

How do you account for that money?—We pay it into the office of the treasurer of the post-office, Mr. Swan.

How often do you pay it in?—Every three months.

Why do you say this paper is only between Clonegal and Newtown Barry; there are two other towns mentioned in it also?—Yes, in some instances he corresponds with twenty towns; that paper contains an account of the bye-letters with all the towns he has accounts with.

It contains another column; for what is that?—For the undercharge for cross-post bills undercharged, and another for cross-post bills overcharged; he is directed not to alter a docket: there is another column for penny post letters put in in his delivery; in Newtown Barry here are three columns, and not one of them right; we have had them all to alter: we furnish them with a list at the expiration of the quarter.

What are those red marks?—They refer to the errors.

There is a series of eight or nine days in which there are errors?—Yes.

Here appears an error of four-pence; how do you detect that error?—By comparing this voucher with that for Newtown Barry.

You compare the received side at Clonegal with the sent side from Newtown Barry?—Yes; his corresponding town enters four-pence against him; this man did not acknowledge it.

The deputy at Newtown Barry has entered four-pence against the deputy at Clonegal, which Clonegal did not charge himself with?—Yes, just so; then he must furnish us with the docket before we can allow it to him. Here is another instance, an under tot of one shilling, when that is a thing of no consequence, he has been charged with that.

What documents come into your office respecting the dead letters?—We have forms five and six, where the deputies get credit for dead letters, and for re-directed letters; for instance, re-directed from one town to another, parties having moved to a different quarter; they get credit for that amount of postage, then that is charged against the deputy to whom it is sent.

How many offices are there which do not account directly with the head post-office?—They all account directly with the head post-office.

Not for bye letters?—Not any of them.

Would not the postmaster of Clonegal account with the post-office?—No; only for the letters sent from Dublin.

How are the bye letters accounted for to the head office?—By these vouchers.

How would the postage of a letter from Newtown Barry to Clonegal be accounted for to the head office?—We give in the accounts to the accountant-general; and the postmaster at any town, Newtown Barry, for instance, sends up his account of revenue; he sends them to Mr. Thomas Harrison in the secretary's office; he receives them all; his revenue will amount to 10*l.* in about three months for cross-posts.

Whom do you acquaint with that?—The accountant-general.

And he charges the deputy with that amount?—Yes.

Is that the case with all the deputies?—It is; and Mr. Beare furnishes the general account.

How many post-towns are there included in that account?—Only three in either of these.

Mention the names?—He corresponds with three towns, Clonegal, Tullow, and Ferns.

Suppose letters going from Newtown Barry to Ferns, how is the postage on those accounted for?—It is accounted for in exactly the same way.

Which postmaster accounts for that postage to the head office?—The postmaster of Newtown Barry enters the amount on the sent side of his voucher, which is a check upon the other.

He sends this to the head office?—Yes.

That becomes a check upon the postmaster of Ferns?—Yes.

The postmaster of Ferns is required to remit it to the post-office?—Yes; but we have to compare it, and we generally add something to it in our office.

How many towns correspond with Belfast?—I think twenty-seven; the checking the vouchers for the whole kingdom is a very laborious part of the duty.

Do you think that could be made more simple in any way?—I do not think it could possibly.

Have you detected any attempts at fraud?—No, I cannot say that we have.

How long have you been in the office?—Upwards of twenty-two years.

In the bye-letter office have you never detected any frauds in the last twenty years?—I cannot say that we did; the only chance we have is by examining the vouchers; it is the department of the surveyors to detect that.

Does not the detection follow from the examination of the account?—All his errors we charge him with; if we suspected any thing of the sort, we should acquaint the secretary, and he would write to the surveyors.

Examinations.

No. 186.

Mr. John Hebdon.

16th Oct. 1826.

Have you heard of no frauds?—Yes, in the neighbourhood of Fermoy, two or three years ago; that was detected principally by the vigilance of Mr. Fetherston.

It was not detected in your office?—No.

Do you correspond with the postmasters?—Only on those matters; we have certain forms to do that.

Is that correspondence direct, without going through the secretary?—Yes.

Do you ever report to the secretary?—In some instances.

In what instances?—Sometimes they are very backward in furnishing their vouchers; then we have to apply to the secretary; they should dispatch them from their office on the 6th of every month; and by the 10th or 11th we ought to receive them all.

In practice, by what time do you receive them?—It is generally the 15th before we get them.

In what district are the least accurate accounts?—I think in the south of Ireland they are a great deal the worst.

In what particular counties and towns?—The county of Limerick and the county of Clare; the north is the best.

How is it in Galway?—It is not very good; I do not check that district.

How is it in Mayo?—In some parts it is very bad; and the same in the north of Ireland, in some parts.

How is it in Donegal?—In some part of it it is very bad.

How is it in Roscommon?—In Roscommon, in all the large towns they are more correct than in the small towns.

Are there a great many towns in the county of Roscommon?—Yes.

Are they correct there?—I think they are pretty correct.

How is it regulated what towns shall correspond with each other?—It is regulated by the mail-coach office principally, for they have all the way-bills; and the surveyors in many instances alter their different lines as they find it will answer for the correspondence of the country.

Have post-towns increased in number very much within your experience?—Yes, they have; when I came into office first there were nearly three hundred, and I believe there are four hundred now.

You have no bye letters in the penny-post department?—No.

Penny-post letters from Blackrock to Rathfarnham would still come through Dublin; you would have nothing to do with that?—No.

What do you do with the mis-sent?—If a letter was sent to Newtown Barry, which ought to have gone to Clonegal direct, the postmaster of Newtown Barry sends it across, and takes a credit for the amount of postage in the Form No. 6.

It becomes a bye post by accident?—Just so.

It does not add to the postage of the letter?—Not in the least; the postmaster would not re-tax that; but if it was re-directed by himself, he would add the additional postage.

Suppose a letter put into the post-office in Newtown Barry was undertaxed going to Ferns, and was re-taxed by the postmaster at Ferns, and he received the increased rate; how would that be accounted for?—I do not see how he can account for it, except in the undercharged column.

Would it ever be known that it was undercharged if it was advanced only to the proper amount, and the proper amount received?—He would enter it in his undercharged column.

Has that ever taken place?—I never knew an instance of it; we have entries of undercharges and overcharges.

Have you ever met with such an undercharge as that now mentioned to you?—No.

You have no check at all upon the taxation by the deputy postmasters?—No, we cannot have; that is the way in which the surveyors are so very useful in examining the mails on the road; for instance, if they happen to be at any town they can open the mail themselves in preference to the postmaster.

Do they frequently do it?—Yes, they do, I am sure.

Do you speak to it as of your own knowledge?—It is well understood that they do it; if they do not, they ought to do it.

When you say "I am sure," you mean you take it for granted?—My meaning is this, that I consider it their duty.

And you take for granted that they do their duty?—Indeed I hope so.

Have you known any instance of errors of that kind being detected by the surveyors on their examination?—No; I was never made acquainted with it.

JOHN HEBDEN.



## Appendix, No. 187.

October 12th 1826.

Examinations.

No. 187.

Mr.  
Frederick Homan  
12th Oct. 1826.

Mr. FREDERICK HOMAN called in and examined.

YOU are Comptroller of the British-mail office in the post-office?—Yes.

How long have you held that situation?—Sixteen years.

Had you any previous situation in the post-office?—No; I was in England before that time.

What situation had you been in before that time?—I was related to Mr. Sheridan; I was the manager of the finance department in the theatre at 500*l.* a year, before the theatre was burnt down.

In what year did you come here?—In the year 1810.

What does the establishment of the British-mail office consist of?—There has been an increase to the number of two additional clerks; there were four clerks originally; there are at present seven clerks in the office; there are two clerks put on as registry clerks, of the names of Drury and Mr. Irvine, and an extra clerk, a Mr. Alexander.

Were they taken from any other part of the office?—Mr. Drury held a situation in the sorting office in the inland office, and Mr. Irvine has some situation in the penny post; Mr. Alexander had none previously.

What salaries have they?—They have now, I believe, 70*l.* a year; they had only 2*s.* a day as registry clerks; I recommended, in consequence of the change of the duty of the office, that those gentlemen should be put on duty to prevent the necessity of employing other clerks there; additional expense is the difference between 2*s.* a day and 3*s.* 6*d.*; I believe they are to allow them 70*l.* a year; they are not yet regularly on the establishment.

What change in the duty do you allude to?—By the introduction of the Liverpool packets.

When were those three additional clerks appointed?—The 31st of August was the day that establishment commenced, and I thought it better to wait the experience of a week to ascertain what hands would be necessary; considering that those gentlemen had some knowledge of the business of the office, I thought it much better to employ them than to apply for additional clerks; the date of their appointment, I conceive, may be about the middle of September.

What is your salary?—My salary was 180*l.* Irish.What is it now?—It is the same reduced to British money; it is 42*l.* a quarter.

Have you any other emoluments?—No.

You have no perquisites?—No.

And you hold no other situation?—No.

Have you a residence?—I had a residence in the office; but I have a large family, and it was impossible to keep my family in it, and I was obliged to take a house out of the office; I occupied it for one year.

What is the attendance?—The attendance is rendered almost perpetual by the change of the system.

What used it to be until lately?—From six in the morning; the mail was dispatched at seven, there was then an attendance; the mail was generally expected about one; it was not safe to be absent after that hour; that depended, of course, on the time the mails arrived; then a portion of the mail was made up in the evening to forward the business of the morning.

What attendance were you obliged to give after one o'clock in the day?—It depended entirely upon the arrival of the mail.

What was the usual time?—Sometimes from three to four, but that was quite uncertain.

At what time in the evening were you obliged to renew your attendance?—At seven o'clock we made up a portion of our mails; I used to continue the duty when I lived in the office till ten at night, but afterwards it was found so extremely inconvenient to the officers, we did nothing but from seven to eight.

What did you in that hour from seven to eight?—We made up whatever happens to be in the receiver for the mail of the succeeding morning.

What has the duty become now by the present arrangement?—The duty by the present arrangement is this: the early dispatch is half-past eight from Howth; we dispatch the mail from our office at half-past seven; the mail is due almost immediately afterwards from Kingstown; it is considered to be due at twenty minutes past eight, and mails have arrived sooner than that; yesterday there was not half an hour between the Liverpool mail and the London mail by Holyhead, and we had the Chester mail immediately afterwards; so that yesterday from six in the morning till nine o'clock the officers were scarcely out of the office the whole time.

Then you have to begin again in the evening?—No; the evening duty we have discontinued in a great measure since this new arrangement; the officers could not do it; the officers come earlier in the morning; that is a regulation we have made among ourselves, and they do more in the morning than they should have done the night before.

That is the result at present, that you come early in the morning; at what hour?—Yes, about half-past five.

## Examinations.

No. 187.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
12th Oct. 1826.

And it may go on till the afternoon?—It may go on till eleven at night; if the mail does not arrive till eleven at night, the officers must be in attendance to examine it for the State letters, and to forward them; the State letters are taken out at any time before eleven; the letters for the public are not sent out if the mail arrives after seven o'clock.

What is the latest arrival of the London mail since the late arrangements?—The latest has been at half past three o'clock in the afternoon.

You have never been detained after that, then?—Yes; the Chester mail did not come in an evening or two ago till ten o'clock at night.

What was the reason of that?—The vessels on the Holyhead station are of an inferior description; the machinery is not sufficient for the vessels.

Could you state how often it has happened since the new system was introduced that three packets have arrived in Dublin in one day?—I have a Return here of the arrivals, and I have also given the time from Liverpool to Kingstown, and the length of the passage from Liverpool to Holyhead, also from Holyhead to Kingstown; this includes the whole of the passage, and the hour of the arrival in Dublin of the inward mail, and also of the outward mail for the last month; some of the journals have not been so regularly sent by the new captains as we could wish; the captain of the Thetis has sent journals more regularly than the others.

[The witness produced the same (A.) (B.), and they were read as follow:]

## (A.)

A RETURN showing the Length of Passage of His Majesty's Post-Office Packets between HOWTH and HOLYHEAD; commencing 7th September 1826.

DATE.	PASSAGE TO HOWTH.		PASSAGE TO HOLYHEAD.	
		Hours. Min.		Hours. Min.
1826:				
Sept. 7.	Cinderella -	10 13	Aladdin -	6 44
8.	Aladdin -	8 49	Cinderella -	6 50
9.	Cinderella -	10 35	Aladdin -	6 9
10.	Aladdin -	10 20	Cinderella -	6 6
11.	Harlequin -	7 27	Aladdin -	6 21
12.	Cinderella -	7 35	Harlequin -	6 5
13.	Harlequin -	6 34	Cinderella -	6 3
14.	Cinderella -	7 41	Harlequin, not stated.	
15.	Harlequin -	6 25	Cinderella -	6 50
16.	Aladdin -	6 10	Harlequin -	6 17
17.	Harlequin -	6 23	Aladdin -	6 55
18.	Escape -	6 11		
19.	Aladdin -	7 15		
20.	Cinderella -	6 42		
21.	Escape -	6 40	Cinderella -	9 11
22.	Cinderella -	7 5	Escape -	7 20
23.	Aladdin -	6 45	Cinderella -	7 52
24.	Cinderella -	6 32	Aladdin -	8 3
25.	Aladdin -	6 30	Cinderella -	10 10
26.	Escape -	6 10	Aladdin -	6 25
27.	Aladdin -	6 30	Escape -	5 42
28.	Escape -	6 15	Aladdin -	7 0
29.	Cinderella -	5 52	Escape -	6 5
30.	Escape -	7 55	Cinderella -	6 30
Oct. 1.	Cinderella -	6 39	Escape -	6 40
2.	Aladdin -	7 55	Cinderella -	6 45
3.	Cinderella -	7 58	Aladdin -	6 55
4.	Aladdin -	8 37	Cinderella -	6 58
5.	Cinderella -	7 50	Aladdin -	7 27
6.	Escape -	6 53	Cinderella -	6 30
7.	Aladdin -	8 26	Escape -	5 48
8.	Cinderella -	6 30	Aladdin -	7 5
9.	Escape -	13 20	Cinderella -	6 4

One hour being added to the passage from Holyhead gives the arrival at this office. Two Holyhead packets conveyed six London mails to Kingstown between the 9th September and 12th October. The Liverpool Company's packets, four mails between the 7th September and 9th October 1826. Between the 10th September and 12th October, on seven days three packets brought in the mail each day.

British-mail office, 13th October 1826.

FREDERICK HOMAN,  
Comptroller.

Examinations.  
 No. 187.  
 Mr.  
 Frederick Homan.  
 12th Oct. 1826.

(B.)

INWARD PASSAGE from LIVERPOOL to KINGSTOWN.

DATE.	Length of Passage from LIVERPOOL to HOLYHEAD.				From LIVERPOOL to KINGSTOWN.				Arrival in DUBLIN.	
		Hours.	Min.			Hours.	Min.		Min.	Hours.
Sept. 9.	Comet	-	-	10 0	-	-	17 4		at 59	after 10 A.M.
10.	Hibernia Company's	-	-	out.	No Journal	-	-	Etna	45	- 5 P.M.
11.	Thetis	-	-	-	No Journal	-	-		29	- 1 P.M.
12.	Comet	-	-	9 0	-	-	16 57		52	- 10 A.M.
13.	Etna	-	-	8 26	-	-	15 40		53	- 9 A.M.
14.	Thetis	-	-	9 1	-	-	17 17		15	- 11
15.	From Holyhead	-	-	-	Aladdin	-	-		14	- 11
15.	Etna, (no Journal)	-	-	-	-	-	-		44	- 11
16.	Thetis	-	-	8 13	-	-	14 21		30	- 8
17.	Etna, (no Journal)	-	-	-	-	-	-		44	- 11
18.	Thetis	-	-	6 56	-	-	13 26		42	- 8
19.	(No Journal)	-	-	-	-	-	-		35	- 8
20.	Comet	-	-	8 0	-	-	14 50		2	- 10
21.	Thetis	-	-	8 3	-	-	15 3		2	- 9
22.	(No Journal)	-	-	-	-	-	-		41	- 8
23.	Thetis	-	-	7 25	-	-	14 56		13	- 9
24.	Etna, (no Journal)	-	-	-	-	-	-		41	- 8
25.	Thetis	-	-	7 20	-	-	15 2		8	- 9
26.	Etna, (no Journal)	-	-	-	-	-	-		57	- 8
27.	Thetis	-	-	7 15	-	-	15 30		42	- 9
28.	Etna, (no Journal)	-	-	-	-	-	-		57	- 8
29.	Thetis	-	-	7 30	-	-	14 55		58	- 8
30.	Comet	-	-	8 55	-	-	19 40		37	- 1 P.M.
Oct. 1.	Etna	-	-	8 21	-	-	15 10		20	- 9 A.M.
2.	Thetis	-	-	7 0	-	-	13 50		24	- 9
3.	Comet	-	-	8 0	-	-	15 48		0	- 1 P.M.
4.	Etna	-	-	8 44	-	-	17 12		26	- P.M.
5.	Comet	-	-	8 0	-	-	15 48		0	- 1
6.	Thetis	-	-	7 25	-	-	14 15		0	- 9 A.M.

Examinations.  
 No. 187.  
 Mr.  
 Frederick Homan.  
 12th Oct. 1826.

(B.)—continued.

## OUTWARD PASSAGE from KINGSTOWN to LIVERPOOL.

DATE.	Length of Passage from KINGSTOWN to HOLYHEAD.				Length of Passage to LIVERPOOL.			
			Hours.	Min.			Hours.	Min.
Sept. 9.	Comet	-	6	27	-	-	13	2
10.	Company's vessel	-	-	-	No Journal.			
11.	Thetis	-	6	25	-	-	14	30
12.	Comet	-	6	25	-	-	13	40
13.	Etna	-	-	-	No Journal.			
14.	Thetis	-	6	43	-	-	15	23
15.	-	-	-	-	No Journal.			
16.	Thetis	-	6	15	-	-	14	45
17.	Etna	-	-	-	No Journal.			
18.	Thetis	-	13	10	-	-	27	43
19.	-	-	-	-	No Journal.			
20.	Company's vessel Manchester	-	-	-	No Journal.			
21.	Thetis	-	6	50	-	-	16	35
22.	-	-	-	-	No Journal.			
23.	Thetis	-	7	0	-	-	14	45
24.	Etna.	-	-	-				
25.	Thetis	-	8	35	-	-	16	5
26.	Etna	-	-	-	No Mail.			
27.	Thetis	-	6	40	-	-	14	15
28.	Etna	-	-	-	No Journal.			
29.	Thetis	-	9	0	-	-	17	0
30.	Comet	-	6	50	-	-	15	15
Oct. 1.	Etna	-	-	-	No Journal.			
2.	Thetis	-	6	35	-	-	15	35
3.	Comet	-	6	20	-	-	15	35
4.	Etna	-	-	-	No Journal.			
5.	Comet	-	6	14	-	-	5	59
6.	Thetis	-	6	20	-	-	13	50

Have you applied to the captains of the other vessels for their journals?—Yes; I am inclined to think that I shall receive them more regularly; they said at first they were not directed to furnish journals to the office.

Do you consider yourself authorized to call for journals from the captains?—Yes; the captains of the Holyhead packets send their journals to my office, and they remain as a document in my office; and the captains of the Donaghadee packets also furnish journals.

Are the journals addressed to the secretary or to you?—They come, in general, loose, not addressed at all.

Do you know whether the secretary has such journals?—I believe not; they come to my office and remain there, and are bound up in books.

Is it a part of your duty to correspond upon those returns?—No, I do not consider it part of my duty; but I have instructed captains as to the forms required.

Do the journals contain any observations respecting the voyage?—Entirely so; here are two of the journals of the Liverpool packets, and one of the Holyhead.

[The witness produced the same, and they were read as follows:]

JOURNAL kept on board His Majesty's Packet the COMET.

Hours.	WINDS.	WEATHER.	TOWARDS LIVERPOOL.
			5th October 1826.
2	Variable.	Light breezes and fine.	P.M.—At 4 h. 6 m. received the mails, weighed and set on the engines.
4	E. b S.		
6			
8	East.		
10			
12			6th October.
2	E.N.E.	Light airs and clear.	A.M.—At six made the N.W. buoy of Formby Channel.
4			
6	Variable.		
8	Southward.	Foggy weather.	At 8 h. 5 m. arrived in Liverpool and landed the mails.
10			
12			TOWARDS DUBLIN.
			8th October.
2	W.S.W.	Moderate and cloudy.	P.M.—At 5 h. 5 m. received the mails and set the engines.
4	Variable.		
6			
8	W.N.W.	Strong breezes and squally, with rain.	
10			
12			9th October.
2	W. b N.	Fresh gales and squally.	A.M.—At 3 h. 45 m. passed Carmile Point.
4	West.		At 3 h. 55 m. communicated with Holyhead by signal, and found the mails had been dispatched.
6			
8	W.N.W.	Fresh gales and clear weather.	
10			
12			P.M.—At 2 h. 40 m. anchored in Kingstown, and landed the mails.

JOHN P. PHILIPPS,  
Commander.

Examinations.

No. 187.

Mr.

Frederick Homan:  
12th Oct. 1826.

JOURNAL kept on board His Majesty's Packet the ETNA, 10th and 11th October.

Hours.	WINDS.	WEATHER.	TOWARDS DUBLIN.
4	W. b N.	Strong gales, with rain at times.	P.M.—5h. 9m. received the mail and started.
8		.	1h. 14m. exchanged blue lights and rockets with His Majesty's packet <i>Thetis</i> .
12			1h. 30m. passed Point Linas.
Mid.to			
4	- -	Fresh winds.	
8	N. W. b W.	More moderate.	3h. 55m. rounded Carmile Point, made the signal to the Holyhead to know if mail had been dispatched.
12	- -	Moderate and fine weather.	4h. 12m. repeated ditto; no answer. Concluded that the mail was sent off. Hauled out of the bay. At day-light saw one of the Holyhead packets a-head about 8 or 9m.
Noon.			At 12h. 1m. 30s. came to an anchor, delivered mail. The Holyhead packet rounded the pier-head 1m. 45s. before the Etna.

JOHN EMERSON, Captain.

7th October.—Passengers from Dublin to Liverpool:

Mr. Wise,

10th October.—Passengers from Liverpool to Dublin:

Mrs. Creighton,  
Mr. Creighton,  
Mr. Swinney,Mr. Cox,  
Captain Hendrick,  
Mrs. M. Corsland.

JOURNAL kept on board His Majesty's packet the ESCAPE.

Hours.	WINDS.	WEATHER.	TOWARDS HOLYHEAD.
			Tuesday October 10th, 1826.
4	W. N. W.	Fresh gales with rain.	A.M.—At 8h. 37m. received the mail and steamed to sea, and made sail. Wind N. W. a fresh gale.
8	N. W.		
12	W. N. W.	Moderate and clear.	10h. 50m. passed a P. O. steam packet bound westward.
4			
8			
12			
4	N. W. b N.	Moderate and cloudy.	11h. 40m. passed a steam packet far to the southward, supposed to be the <i>Aladdin</i> .
8	W. b N.		1h. 20m. P.M.—The head S. E. by E. 3 leagues.
12			2h. 40m. arrived and landed the mail, 5 bags.
4			
8			
12	Coals received	T. B.	
	Howth - - -	4 14	
	Holyhead - - -	5 4	
			Wednesday 11th.
			A.M.—At 2h. 55m. proceeded with the mail. At 8h. 30m. made Howth, N. W. by W. 8 or 9 leagues. At 10h. passed the <i>Aladdin</i> . At 11h. 55m. arrived and delivered the mail, 6 bags.

GEO. C. DAVIS.

How do these go before the postmasters-general?—They never go before them.

Do you ever found any report upon them?—I have done so formerly; I have found it necessary to make reports upon them during the express service; the captains of the express packets and the pilots very often delayed them, and went into ports into which I thought they had no right to go, and I reported them upon those occasions.

You do not regularly transmit abstracts of them to the postmasters-general?—Never; but we always transcribe the material points of them into our books; we keep a sailing book; it notes the arrival in Dublin, and sailing from whatever station, Holyhead or Liverpool; and from that journal we enter into the books kept in my office the sailing of the vessel, the hour of her arrival in Holyhead; and when she returns the length of her voyage is stated, and her arrival here. I would contrast the journal of the Holyhead packets, to show the advantage and superior sailing of the Liverpool packets over the Holyhead packets; the Liverpool packet sailed nearly two hours after the Holyhead packet from Holyhead, and arrived at nearly the same time in Dublin on the same day.

Are you aware of any steps having been taken to make any alteration in the present arrangement?—No, I am not, but I am satisfied the arrangement at present must be very injurious to the service.

What has been the number of passengers from Liverpool?—They do not average more than five or six, and sometimes only one.

Any from Holyhead?—From Holyhead scarcely one.

How is it with respect to passengers from Dublin?—Hardly any; Holyhead is so much out of the course, and there is such a rough race at the Head, that passengers going by the Liverpool packets from Kingstown would not like to go to the Head, neither would those returning from Liverpool like to do so; therefore there is a preference given to the other packets, as they sail direct.

Have you had a return of the number of passengers?—I think the greatest number was ten; the number has decreased; I think they were at first greater than at present; of the packets which came in yesterday and the day before, one brought only one passenger, and the other two; the Comet had two, and the Thetis one.

How many came by the day packet from Holyhead on the same day?—I should think thirteen or fourteen. With regard to the passengers from Holyhead, they must come by our packets; but a gentleman informed me, who came over from Holyhead, that being very anxious to come, he was waiting at the Head to come by the Liverpool packet, and that at twelve o'clock at night he was obliged to leave the inn at Holyhead, as they shut up at that hour, and that from twelve to three he was walking the pier with the agent, Captain Goddard, waiting for the arrival of the Liverpool packet, and he certainly expressed himself very much determined against ever coming in that manner again, and there is no doubt that the inconvenience he felt himself must be felt by others.

Do you know any thing of the signals established at Holyhead?—I do not know what the signals are, but I understand, that if it happens to be favourable weather for a boat to come out, it comes out with the mail; if it is not, the vessel comes in, and this night it was not so; the gentleman mentioned that the sailors would not venture out, and that the packet was obliged to come up to the pier.

Do you know whether the packet always receives an answer to the signal?—I know by these journals that they do not always receive an answer; but I conclude by that journal of the Etna that the other packet had sailed, and therefore there was no one on the look out.

Should not there be a signal to signify whether that is the case or not?—Yes, but the duty is very severe there; the packet, with the mail, had been dispatched at the time those signals were made.

That is certain?—Yes, the captain stated that it must have been, because by her journal it appears she had sailed; it was after four o'clock.

Why should he go in if the time had elapsed?—I do not think it was his duty to call there at all after three A.M.

Was not that an unnecessary delay?—Yes.

Did you make a report of that?—No.

Has that been stated in any way?—It has not; in fact, the captains are so new on the service that we make allowance.

Do not you feel that it wants a good deal of regulation?—A vast deal, but I should hope a much better system might be introduced; it is very harassing to the men, both on that side and this too.

Has it frequently happened that the Liverpool vessel has gone in and made a signal of inquiry after the time when it is fixed that the mail from Holyhead should depart?—I think that has occurred only once or twice.

To what vessels did that happen?—I think it was Captain Philipps's vessel, the Comet.

Have the packets at Holyhead ever waited beyond the fixed time?—They have, they have not been ready; the information that I can give upon the subject has been mostly derived from the journals and from a communication I have had with Captain Skinner, who told me they were to sail at three, if the Liverpool did not call sooner.

Have you the journals of the Holyhead packets regularly?—I have.

Those show the time of the departure?—Yes, they do.

Has that always agreed with the time fixed for their departure?—It has not; the packet may not have been ready; it requires some time to prepare: the packet whose turn it was for sailing at eight in the morning is called upon to sail at three unexpectedly; she is prepared with her passengers and luggage to sail at eight o'clock; if the Liverpool vessel does not arrive she must sail at three.

Examinations.

No. 187.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
12th Oct. 1826.

She knows that perfectly well before?—Yes, she may expect it every night.

Do you mean to say that she is not prepared to sail at three, though it is known she may be called upon?—I think there have been but few exceptions; latterly they have been ready.

Do you find that they have generally left Holyhead at the time appointed latterly?—They have in general; they are some time in getting out; very repeatedly last winter they were not able to sail at all from the Head in a rough sea.

The inquiry is confined to the period while the Liverpool packets have been working?—I conceive they have been in general as near the hour as it was possible for them to be.

Who has the regulation of the departure from this side of the channel?—There is an agent appointed, I believe, very lately; Mr. Hutchinson.

Where is he stationed?—I believe he is post surveyor at Kingstown.

Is he considered as on the post-office establishment?—I am not able to answer that; he is the post-office agent; I communicate with him.

Have you received instructions to communicate with him as an officer of the post-office establishment?—No; I believe his appointment is merely temporary; I understood he had only a pound a week.

What is your authority for communicating with him on the post-office business?—Mr. Thomas Lees told me he was appointed agent; I have received, independent of that, a report from him daily for the last fortnight; he reports to me daily the arrival and dispatch of the packets.

Does it rest with him to dispatch the mail from Kingstown?—Yes, if he is agent.

What are his instructions upon that head?—I am not aware what his instructions are; that is not in my department.

Your interference and your duty ceases when the mail is dispatched from the post-office?—Certainly.

Is the mail delivered to Mr. Hutchinson's care?—No; I fancy Mr. Hutchinson takes no part in the business further than seeing that the mail is delivered.

When the mail leaves your office, to whom do you direct the guard to deliver it?—The guard delivers it to the boat which conveys the mail to the packet; the packet lies out in the harbour, and the boatmen carry the mail out to the packet.

Who has the care of that boat?—There are regular men appointed there.

By whom?—I should suppose by the post-office; there is the same kind of boat at Howth.

Do not you know to whom you order the mail to be delivered?—I consider that I fulfil my duty by delivering it to the guard at three o'clock, the hour appointed.

It has happened that there has been no post-office packet at Kingstown?—It has.

In that case who has the care of the mail?—Then one of my officers goes in charge of the mail; I have been down myself one time to see it put safely on board, and to give instructions.

On board what packet was it put?—One of the company's packets; I made previous arrangements with them to be in readiness; I believe the company's packets have carried three or four mails since the new arrangements.

There being no post-office packet there?—Yes.

Was there no packet there, or none ready to sail?—There was no packet there.

Has that been ever the case on the other side of the water?—Yes, the Leeds, one of the company's packets, brought a mail from Liverpool.

Did she touch at Holyhead?—No.

Did she attempt it?—No; I do not know that she had any instructions; I rather think not.

Under whose instructions did you put the mail on board the private vessels?—On a previous day a mail had been dispatched by one of those private vessels, under the direction of Sir Edward Lees; this circumstance of putting it on board this other vessel occurred on a Sunday when Sir Edward Lees was not in town; I received no instructions for it, but I forwarded the mail in that manner; I conceived it my duty in that case to forward it in the best manner I could, having previously communicated with the proprietors of the company to know whether they would carry it.

Did you make any bargain with them to carry it?—I did; they carried it gratuitously.

They were going to sail, probably?—No, they were not; but I told them it would be a convenience to the public service, and they sailed immediately.

Was that mail delivered as early as it would have been if the post-office packet had been ready?—It was.

Did it carry over all the mail bags?—Yes.

Was it instructed to touch at Holyhead?—It was.

If they could get there before what time?—Before twelve o'clock; I understand the mail for London leaves Holyhead at twelve, and therefore I particularly mentioned that it would be necessary they should be there by that time, and they undertook to do so.

Which of the company's packets did you put the mail on board?—One of the city of Dublin Steam Company; their packets carried all the mails; they made an offer previously to carry the mails.

Are you aware of any objection to that offer being accepted?—I think it would be highly beneficial, inasmuch as their, the Liverpool vessels, are a very superior class of packets. In that case, the post-office Liverpool vessels might be attached to Holyhead, and start with the Holyhead mail on its arrival, by which means the Dublin correspondence would be sure to be delivered before eleven o'clock every day, allowing eight hours and a half for the passage from



from Holyhead to Kingstown, the mail would be in Kingstown about nine o'clock, and in two hours afterwards the letters might be in the hands of the public. I think the merchants of Liverpool and Dublin being so closely connected with that company, it would be their interest to facilitate the correspondence, and it would also be their interest to get our packets out of the way of taking passengers from them; they have a very superior class of vessels at present. I think there is some little danger to apprehend that a rival company may start from Holyhead, for the conveyance of passengers; the passengers complain very much of the annoyance they suffer now.

They have always a day packet if they please?—They have a day packet at eight o'clock, but a nobleman may have his carriage and every thing else on board the packet to sail at eight o'clock, and that packet is ordered off at three; that goes to Kingstown, and he comes himself to Howth. The cross-post letters are very trifling. I have brought an account of the mail that arrived from Howth yesterday, to show; that carried the Chester mail and the cross-post letters; the mail that arrived yesterday at one o'clock contained letters for the Dublin delivery to the amount of 13s. 6d., from Chester for the interior of Ireland 18s. 1d.; the Holyhead bag contained no letter for Dublin; there were letters for the interior to the amount of 2s. 1d.: that was the entire amount brought by that packet.

Were the British-mail officers obliged to be in attendance for that packet?—They were.

Are you aware whether a person in Liverpool may choose whether he will send his letters by the Liverpool packet or the mail to Chester, and then by the Chester mail to Holyhead?—I am sure there are no letters sent from Liverpool by Chester now; we receive no letters with the Liverpool stamp *via* Chester now.

Have you any return of the passengers which came in the packet which brought the Chester bags?—I have; there were either eight or ten passengers. I think that the eight o'clock mail would always pay, but the Liverpool mail, I am convinced, never can pay the expense, and that must be very considerable; the captain told me he had eighteen tons of coals; coming over he had a very rough passage, and he had not more than five or six when he arrived.

Do the company's Liverpool packets always make a night passage?—I do not know exactly the time they start; but I am inclined to think that they start latterly as near the hour of our sailing as possible, to show the advantage they possess over ours.

Do you know whether the London post has arrived in Liverpool before they sail?—I think the Liverpool post arrives at four.

Then they might bring the London mail?—I think in the winter months there would be an uncertainty in the passage; in the summer there would be a great advantage; the vessels are obliged to lie off Liverpool, they cannot come out at a particular hour; in the summer months, I have no doubt the London mail might be here much earlier than by Holyhead; but if a superior class of vessels were placed on the Holyhead station, such as the Liverpool vessels are at present, and to sail on the arrival of the London mail, I have no doubt that the correspondence would be here with regularity about nine o'clock.

What is the present regulation for bringing the mail from Kingstown?—It is brought by a coach to the office.

What is paid for that?—I have heard that they pay only a pound a year; I do not know what the understanding was; I proposed to convey it, and I am inclined to think that the contract was a pound a year; I believe it is Mr. Freeling who has made that contract.

That the post-office is to pay a pound a year to the contractor?—Yes.

Do they pay the guard?—The guards are all on the post-office establishment; the coachmen are kept by the proprietors.

What would be the expense of that conveyance?—I should suppose the expense of that conveyance would be 300*l.* a year, for there is no money paid by the passengers; they are carried free from Kingstown to Dublin and back.

That is not the case from Howth?—No, that is quite different; but the company's packets convey all their passengers in the same manner, and it was thought necessary to do the same by the Government.

Who pays the contractor for the mail-coach for that?—That I am not prepared to say.

Then the passenger from Liverpool pays in one sum?—Yes; and the Government packets charge only the same as the other packets charge.

Who are the contractors for the conveyance between Kingstown and Dublin?—Mr. Machen; his father or he himself was steward to one of the packets.

What do you mean by saying that there is only one pound a year paid?—I can only speak from hearsay; I put in a proposal myself for conveying the mails, and I heard that they contracted for it for a pound a year; there must be certainly some understanding; but I heard, in the same hearsay manner, that it was some arrangement of Mr. Freeling's.

What do you mean by saying that it costs 300*l.* a year?—I should say that the expense to the contractor must be 300*l.* a year.

Then what advantage does he derive?—I do not know; he is an hotel keeper in Dublin, and he might think that he should be compensated in that way; it was a speculation.

Do you believe that it is done for a pound a year?—I do, for I have heard it from several.

It is an excellent conveyance, is it not?—It is; no coach in Ireland travels better, and he has had two mails a day to bring in, the one the Liverpool mail, and the other the Holyhead, almost following each other in coaches.

What time is he allowed?—Forty-five minutes between Kingstown and the post-office.

Does he do it in that?—He does it in less.

What is the measured distance?—From six miles and a half to seven miles; he travels at a tremendous pace; he travels ten miles an hour, I believe.

Examinations.

No. 187.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
12th Oct. 1826.

Do you mean Irish miles?—Yes.

Do you conceive that at present there is a good deal of property lost in the inland office?—I have heard a great many complaints.

From individuals who have put forward their claims?—Many persons whom I have known have lost money.

Lately?—Yes; but I consider not so much as formerly.

In those instances was it ascertained that the money had ever been in the inland office?—Yes; the money has been traced to the inland office.

Are there any examinations of that kind going on now?—I do not know.

Was there any scrutiny into those cases?—I know very little of that department; I never heard of any being successful.

You are aware you have put forward a very strong accusation upon that subject?—That there has been money lost, there is no doubt at all, and to a great amount.

Money lost that was traced into the inland office?—Yes.

You stated in a letter to the President of this Board, "complaints of the loss of money have increased; the very great insecurity in the transmit of money must injure the post-office revenue; a whole bank note hardly ever escapes"?—Yes; I believe that to be the fact, for they have the opportunity of learning the nature of the property by the gas-light.

Is there more than one person has that opportunity?—Yes; it passes through so many hands, it takes off responsibility; one man faces them up, and another throws them forward for the particular road; again they are sorted to the particular town; another stamps them; so that it is impossible to say where the property may be lost.

You state a strong fact; have you reason to believe that that is true?—I have; I have known persons who have lost money.

Have you heard of any more than one letter containing whole notes having been lost?—I scarcely have been outside of the post-office door without having complaints of persons having lost money by post.

Have they complained?—They have; but there was no possibility of checking it, for the money might have gone to the country postmasters, and been lost there.

Will you state any recent instance which you consider to be a clear one, in which money which has found its way into the inland office has not been received ultimately?—Indeed I cannot say; lately I have taken very little notice; I conceive the checks which have been established have very much assisted and served the public; but I think whole notes still scarcely ever go through the office unless they are entered as money-letters.

Can you mention any one whole note which has gone into the inland office and not been received by the person to whom it was addressed?—I can bring a person who has put in a letter with a whole note and it has not been received, but where it was taken out I cannot say; young men in the office have been detected; there have been several investigations, and some people have been detected.

You put it forward as a complaint against the existing state of the office?—That letter was written a good while ago; I do not think the state of the office is so bad as it was.

This letter was written only in March last?—Unless people are better paid these things will always occur.

Do you know of your own knowledge that those letters have been put into the receiver?—Only from the gentleman's assertion; I have put in no money myself.

Did that gentleman state that it had been investigated?—Yes, he did; and that it had ended in the same way as other inquiries had ended; that the public were cautioned against putting in whole notes; in fact, all the official letters, I believe it will appear, are answered in the same manner; that if such a letter has been put in there, it must have gone forward, and that the officers have no recollection. Applications have been made to me in respect of letters passing through our own office, but I cannot say whether they have passed through.

Should not that put you on your guard in respect of the accusation, if there is no proof that it has gone into the office?—Common fame must be true, I should conceive.

You state that each clerk has a drawer and key for himself in the inland office?—Yes; which I consider very objectionable.

Is there no master key?—I believe not.

What is the purpose of this drawer?—I declare I should suppose it was originally intended merely for the accommodation of the clerk to keep his pens and ink, and those kind of things; but that they have those keys and locks is certain.

Does it happen that the clerks are left sometimes officially in care of a particular letter or paper in the inland office, which it would be desirable they should keep under lock and key?—No; I believe they are not allowed.

Are you aware of any official purpose for which they should have them?—No, I do not think there is an official purpose; I do not think that any letters or papers should remain in the care of any person in the inland office after they are assorted for the public.

If a gentleman has the care of a parcel of letters, and is obliged to be absent momentarily, do you think that he should have an opportunity of locking up those letters till his return?—No; the clerks are all locked in in the morning; they are not allowed to go out during the business of the office.

Are they all locked in while the sorting is going on?—Yes.

You do not mean to say they are actually locked in?—Yes, I do; I believe they are not allowed to go out; I have understood that to be the fact.

Is the door actually locked when the president is in the office?—Yes, it is, as I understand.

Are not people continually coming in and out?—No; they are not allowed during business.

Are

Are not men coming in with bags?—No; the bags are generally brought in at about six o'clock in the morning, and the business then commences of opening the bags and sorting the letters in the inland office.

If the secretary should wish to come down into the office, what is done?—If any one rapped, the door would be unlocked, of course.

Did you yourself use any means to detect those cases of fraud which you have mentioned?—No, I could not interfere; I advised them what to do.

Did you form any opinion in any particular case as to the manner in which the loss had occurred?—I considered, from the inadequacy of their salary, it was impossible they could appear as they did upon the salaries which they had.

Do you think that happens at all in the British-mail office?—I believe not; I hope not.

Is there any difference of salary?—A very material difference from the probationers; my clerks have more salary than I have myself; my first clerk has 200*l.* a year.

The temptation to fraud, of course, must apply to the lowest?—Yes; the lowest has 70*l.* a year, but my clerks hold other situations which do not interfere with their business.

Mr. Alexander, for instance?—He is an extra clerk, who has not been able to attend from indisposition. Mr. Irvine has another situation, and Mr. Shiel another situation. The second clerk has within a few shillings of what I have. They have their fees and perquisites besides.

What you have stated is only a general opinion. With respect to the probability of fraud, have you formed your opinion on the fraud confirmed in any of the instances to which you have referred?—I form that opinion from the circumstance I have mentioned.

Did you form an opinion that any individual in the inland office had participated in a fraud in any particular case?—No, I did not; for I think them all pretty much of the same style of dress; I do not see much difference between those with good and low salaries.

Is it from their dress you judge?—In some measure.

Have you no other ground on which to proceed than that?—The repeated complaints of the public; they may be groundless against the inland office, but they are great presumptive evidence that the money is taken there.

What was the last sum you heard of being taken, and when was it supposed to have been taken?—Ten pounds was the last sum I heard of; I think it was taken in the month of February last.

Did you know the person who lost it?—I did.

Did he state to you why he put in a whole note?—He said he was in a hurry, sending the money into the country.

Was that a sufficient reason?—I think it was a very bad reason; and I told him so at the time.

Do you know where it was directed to?—I do not recollect now; I think it was to Wexford. The gentleman told me he had gone to Sir Edward Lees about it, who had made inquiries without any success.

Is there any person in your office who has greater emoluments derived from the post-office than yourself?—Yes; I consider my first clerk has 20*l.* a year more than I have, as well as his perquisites and fees.

What are his fees?—He has his share of the money received on letters brought to the office after the office receiver is closed, and he has a perquisite for going down with the mail when a post-office packet is not here to take the mail in; his fee for that is a guinea.

Does that belong to his situation as first clerk?—No; the other clerks take the duty and receive the fee in turn.

Have you relinquished that?—I never considered that I had any claim to it. There were fees for Government expresses during the war, which I considered myself entitled to, of 400*l.* or 500*l.* a year, and which I memorialled the postmasters-general for; there was a fee then paid to the clerks, and also to the messengers; and there was another considerable fee went to another officer unconnected with the office, which I considered I was entitled to.

Who was that other officer?—Mr. Thomas Lees.

What fees were they?—There was 13*s.* 6*d.* on each express which came in and went out, and a guinea on hiring a vessel for the conveyance of the mails or expresses, and on each mail landed at an outport; every mail not landed at the Pigeon-house.

Had those fees ever been enjoyed by any person holding your situation?—The situation was a new one; it was made by Lord Clancarty; my predecessor in the office was Mr. Goulding, who never did any duty, and he retired on 350*l.* a year.

Did those fees commence during the time of your predecessor?—They must have occurred, but he never attended; he was comptroller of the inland office.

Who got the fees?—Mr. Thompson, the first clerk in the secretary's office.

Is not that the situation Mr. Thomas Lees now holds?—Yes; but on the death of Mr. Thompson, I memorialled the postmasters-general, stating that, as the office was become an efficient one, I considered myself entitled to the fees, and I received rather a favourable reply from both the postmasters-general.

What had the first clerk in the secretary's office to do with the dispatch of those expresses?—Nothing whatever.

Did he not communicate with the Government upon the subject?—No; it was all done through my office.

Examinations.

No. 187.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
12th Oct. 1826.

To whom was it directed?—It was always sent to my office, directed to Sir Charles Flint in England; and the expresses from England were all received in my office, and forwarded by my messenger, who had a shilling fee on each express he carried.

There was, you say, a guinea for the hiring a vessel?—Yes; and there was 13s. 6d. for every express; sometimes there were two or more in a day; they were directed to Mr. Gregory at the Castle; sometimes there were two or three vessels in one day hired.

Did not the packet pass through the secretary's office?—No; the express never went through the secretary's office.

Who acknowledged the receipt of that packet from Government?—The clerk in waiting in my office.

Did you, or any person in that department, ever communicate with Mr. Gregory or the chief secretary on the subject of hiring vessels?—On one occasion, when I came over first, I got an order from the Lord Lieutenant's secretary to prepare a vessel for sea at such an hour, but after that I never received any more communications.

To whom did that instruction go, when the Government gave the instruction to have an express vessel ready?—Afterwards the instruction sometimes, I believe, came to Sir Edward Lees, then he sent it on to me; but in the first instance they sent to my office certainly.

In that case what instruction did you receive from Sir Edward Lees?—It was, generally, a verbal communication; the messenger that came down from the Castle was sent over to me: the communications were generally to my office direct from the Castle, and all the State letters for the Castle were received direct with the express by my office; we had no communication with the secretary's office about them.

Is there any perquisite to any one in your office from the State letters?—I believe there is some gratuity to the messenger at Christmas; I know on the Lord Lieutenant's going away there is always something to officers, and I was directed by Mr. Thomas Lees to apply for my portion of that when the Duke of Richmond, who appointed me, was retiring. I got an unfavourable answer from the secretary of the post-office, and I never applied for it afterwards; but I have Mr. Thomas Lees's letter directing me to apply for it.

There is a Christmas gratuity received from the Castle; to whom is that given?—To the messenger.

Not to the clerks?—No; the Chancellor, and all those to whom the State letters are delivered, give a Christmas-box to the state messenger of the British office.

You say that the fines have been increased of late?—They have been; they are very oppressive.

On what grounds?—I do not know on what grounds; the fines for non-attendance have increased, and also deductions from the salaries of the extra clerks, who had only 52*l.* a year; in case of their absence by sickness or other cause, they were obliged to pay a guinea a week, which was fifty-two guineas a year; since, the fine is increased from fifty-two guineas a year to 70*l.* a year, and I believe that 70*l.* a year is deducted from their salaries; that I understand was to oblige the more regular attendance of the officers; but the extra clerks suffer most.

Do you know by what authority that increase of fines has been made?—I suppose on the authority of the postmasters-general.

Does that apply to your office?—Yes, it does; Mr. Draper has paid the whole amount of his salary; he has not been on duty for these two years; the whole amount of his salary is paid to another clerk in my office, who does the duty.

Who is that clerk?—Mr. Blake; he is doing duty for Mr. Draper; and Mr. Hunt is on duty for Mr. Drury, who is absent.

Why is Draper absent?—He is incompetent; he was not capable of doing the duty of my office.

Does he hold another office?—He holds a situation in the ship-letter office.

Does he do duty there?—He has very little duty there; the collecting those letters is chiefly by a sailor, who sends them in.

How is Draper incompetent?—He cannot attain a knowledge of the business; he had been in the office for a considerable time, and could not attain any knowledge of the business; it is very difficult, more so than the inland office.

Have you taken any steps to get rid of him?—Yes, I have reported him.

What aged man is he?—He is a young man.

What is the reason of Drury's absence?—I have got a much better clerk in his place, so that I have no objection to his absence; he is in delicate health. Mr. Hunt is doing the duty now. I suggested that the registry clerks should be put on full duty; they only attended on the arrival of the inland mail, but I suggested that they should be put on full duty, in consequence of the late change, which would be but a trifling expense; the two clerks would be only 60*l.* a year.

Is Mr. Drury a clerk in any other office?—He is a sorter in the inland office.

You have no professional or other employment?—No.

Are you entitled to an increase of salary under any existing regulations?—The postmasters-general recommended an increase of salary five years ago, which I never got.

On what grounds did they recommend it?—On the particular circumstance of the inadequacy, as they considered, of my salary; it was going to be increased by the Duke of Richmond, I believe.

Do you know what bags are carried now by the Chester mail?—Yes; the Salop branch is now thrown into the Chester mail; that is, the Shrewsbury comes by the Holyhead mail, and the Chester merely carries the intermediate towns between that and Holyhead; the Shrewsbury mail is done away with; we do not make up a mail for Shrewsbury; their letters come and go through the Holyhead office, which has increased the Holyhead docket.

Do you mean to say there is no bag made up at Shrewsbury?—No, not for our office; we send the letters to Holyhead, and they are sent forward; the Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool rates of postage are pretty much the same, about 12*l.* a day; there is a considerable difference when ship-letters arrive from Liverpool, 40*l.* or 50*l.* some days.

Do you keep a separate account with the British post-office establishment?—Yes; they are all kept in my office; that is, the account of the British postage on all letters going and coming.

What is the use of that?—To keep an account against the British post-office of the Irish postage.

Suppose that was annexed to the Irish establishment, would there be any necessity for keeping these accounts?—No.

Do you see any use in keeping those accounts?—Quite the reverse; it increases the business of the office.

How many clerks in your office are occupied in those accounts?—It occupies a great portion of the time of one clerk.

Is one clerk sufficient?—It would not be sufficient if others did not assist him; it occupies more than the time of one person; the chief clerk enters the dockets which come in, and those dockets having been entered in a book, are then copied; there is an account made out by another person for the accountant-general and the receiver-general; a daily account of the postage of all the letter-carriers, and the alphabet; that is fairly copied, and I send it up, having examined and signed it, to the accountant and receiver general daily.

Does any money pass from your office to the receiver-general?—No; we receive no money at all; all the accounts in my office are merely checks on the other branches of the revenue.

Your accounts are only checks on some intermediate account between the two countries?—And the other office and the letter-carriers; we check the amount of their money.

If the British-mail office was merged in the inland office there would be only one account with the letter-carriers?—Just so; and it would be less distressing to the officers.

Why would it be less distressing?—More officers might take a part in the business.

Might not a certain roster be then established by which a certain proportion of the officers of the inland office might be ordered to be in readiness alternately for the British mail?—Certainly; that I conceive would be an advantage; it would be a great relief; they would know that they should be relieved from duty at a certain time; at present the officers in the British-mail office are the only ones who cannot reckon upon their time; the others reckon upon their engagement regularly, and can occupy their time in the middle of the day to advantage in other ways.

Did you ever consider what arrangement should be made for effecting such an union of the two departments?—I have.

And what establishment would be necessary?—I have considered, that by commencing a part of the business of the inland office at a certain time in the day, and sorting to a certain hour the letters, that would facilitate the business and relieve the officers, and allow them to go off at a certain hour; and that if the president and vice-president were to superintend the business for a certain time, that would make the business much more light, and, as I conceive, more correctly done, than in the hurried manner in which it is at present; and I think a system could be introduced much more beneficial, if there were particular hours, and particular men to do the duty at those particular hours.

You think the accounts of the British postage might be dispensed with?—I do.

What reduction of the number now employed in the inland and British-mail office might be made in that case?—I do not know as to the inland office; the British postage is brought in in such a way that they do not attempt to make a check upon it, and therefore, of course, there are no additional hands employed upon that; but where there is an account to be kept between England and Ireland, as in my office, I know the officers employed in the duty consider it very severe to be obliged to do it; but they have so much waiting time for the business, so many clerks are necessary to be waiting in the office, they may be as well employed as not; but taxing the letters here delays the dispatch and taking the amount.

What accounts do you keep in your office?—We keep the account of the British postage, paid and unpaid, also the postage chargeable against Great Britain and against Ireland; the proportion of the letters which have to be taxed with Irish postage must have the Ireland postage marked at one corner; that does occupy a great deal of time in the morning, and in the hurry of the business it is very difficult to do it correctly; but if there is a little error there is no loss, the account is taken, and the postage can be advanced on the other side, as we do here.

Is the Scotch postage included in that?—The Scotch postage very little of it comes into my office; I have sent some letters through Holyhead.

From whence?—From the interior of Ireland; if the letter is marked "*viâ* Holyhead," we must so send it.

Do you mean to say that letters have been sent *viâ* Holyhead to Scotland by choice?—Yes; until the establishment of the steam packets at Donaghadee.

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Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
12th Oct. 1826.

Do letters still continue to be so directed?—Yes, they have, some of them; not many; they consider it a more certain passage.

Do they go to Liverpool?—Yes, they do; the steam-packets have improved the Portpatrick station so much that I do not observe many letters come in that way, but formerly that packet was so uncertain that there were a great many.

What taxation of letters takes place in your office?—The whole of the English postage.

A letter for Norwich, for instance; do you tax it all the way to Norwich?—Yes.

A letter from London to Sligo is not taxed in London all the way, is it?—No; it is only taxed to Dublin.

Why is it that you tax the whole postage of a letter to an interior town in England, and that they do not do the same for an interior town in Ireland from London?—I consider that the London office has a great deal more business to do; our office has comparatively very trifling, when compared to the London office; a great portion of those letters are taxed in the country by a suggestion of mine; the country postmasters have a good deal of leisure time, and they get very few English letters in a country town; and as they have abundance of time, I furnish them with books containing the rates of English postage, and they tax the letters according to those books, which saves us a great deal of trouble; and they strike off the Irish postage, which appears at one corner.

The postmaster at Sligo, having a letter to send to Harwich, would tax it the whole distance?—Yes.

In one sum?—No; in two distinct sums; he puts the Irish postage in one corner, and the full amount of postage in the other, striking off the Irish postage with his pen; then a clerk in my office takes the account of the Irish postage, and that is brought into one account.

Could that be done from England equally on letters sent to Ireland?—It could.

Would that save much trouble in the British-mail office?—It would save trouble, certainly.

Suppose a letter came from Sligo to go to Norwich; what entry would you make of the postage upon that letter in your office?—The account of that letter is taken as 9*d.* the Irish postage; we do not let of the English postage, 1*s.* 4*d.* We take an account of the English paid postage, because we charge ourselves with it; in the case of an unpaid letter going to England, we charge the English post-office with the amount of the Irish postage.

You charge that in your account?—Yes, we do.

Have you any account with the Norwich postmaster?—No; our corresponding office for Norwich is London.

Who are your corresponding officers in England?—We correspond with Liverpool, Chester, Manchester, Birmingham, Holyhead, and London.

You keep accounts with all those persons?—Yes; Shrewsbury has been discontinued.

You do not correspond with Edinburgh?—No; we have scarcely any letters; they all go into the interior of Ireland, and by Donaghadee.

Who checks the accounts between you and the postmaster-general in England?—There is an account sent from each of the English offices of the amount of postage they receive from us, with our dockets; we keep the accounts also, and return their dockets to the London office.

What does the postmaster at Sligo, for example, enter in his docket when he has taxed a letter to Norwich?—He enters the Irish postage.

Was the regulation, which made it the duty of the country postmaster to add the British postage, made by you?—Yes; as it became impossible in our office, from the hurried manner in which we are obliged, within an hour, to tax and examine the Irish letters coming in at six and going off again at seven; but there are a great many of the postmasters who have made errors, which I have been able to point out to them; they used sometimes to take improper postage against letters; my officers advanced the postage by charging them the money; eight-pence for instance, they were charged at, when the correct postage should have been taken at 1*s.* 4*d.*

If the postmaster in the country, instead of making a double charge of postage, were to make it all together, would not your accounts be quite useless?—They would; but then every country postmaster would be corresponding with the English post-office; but I do not see any advantage in taking the account of it at all, if it is all one branch of the revenue; making the English and Irish postage a distinct account gives a great deal of extra trouble in my office.

Do you conceive there is any security derived from the accounts you are obliged to keep?—I do not conceive that there can be in the least.

Do you find the country postmasters pretty accurate in their taxing?—I think more so than could have been expected; there is a great deal of trouble in writing to some of them when it is otherwise.

It is considered part of your duty to see that that taxing is correct?—Yes; my officers must alter it, for it must go correct to England; that makes it more difficult for my clerks to understand the duty of the British mail; they must have a thorough knowledge of the English and Irish postage.

If any inaccuracies occur, do you correspond with the postmasters in the country here?—Yes, I generally write to them; this is a thing which is not right, or my duty; if there is any particular case, I apply to Mr. Thomas Lees to write to them; that is one part of the duty which my clerks require to be more experienced in than other officers, as they must know both English and Irish postage.

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As to paid letters for England where the postage is received in the country, how is that accounted for?—The country postmaster is charged with the amount by the inland office.

That is carried to the account of England?—Yes; we take the gross amount, whatever that may be, and charge the Irish post-office with it.

What time is usually occupied in your office in the dispatch of letters after they are received?—About an hour; it requires more time in consequence of the introduction of the register of letters supposed to contain property; all double letters which are registered: I think that, though it occupies a considerable time, it is certainly a beneficial regulation.

Do you conceive it contributes to the security?—I do.

Was that plan in use when the Commissioners of this board was last here?—It was not.

Some experiments were made at that time as to the possibility of accelerating the dispatch?—They were, and it was much accelerated by them.

Have you found it still possible to keep up that acceleration?—No; by means of the registry we have been prevented.

What time does it occupy?—That must depend upon the number of double letters which come; I should suppose it makes twenty minutes difference at least; the clerks have to enter the full address of those letters; the letter-carriers enter them and check in their own books; it occupies a great deal of time; but still I think it is beneficial generally, as a greater portion of correspondence is now delivered by the alphabet.

How can a stranger here get his letters out of the British-mail office?—If they are directed to the post-office he gets them at the alphabet.

There is no obtaining them from your office?—No; members of parliament have got their letters by favour from my office.

Suppose a member of parliament coming to Dublin wishes for his letters, within what hours would he get them?—They would go to the alphabet; that remains open an hour or two hours after the arrival of the mail on Sundays; it remains open, I believe, till seven o'clock on week days.

Then unless he applied within two hours after the arrival of the mail he could not get his letters that day?—I believe indeed it remained open till seven o'clock at night, except on Sundays.

Do letters, not directed to the post-office, go to the alphabet?—If a gentleman is known to come to a particular hotel, his letters are given to the carrier in which that particular hotel is; that is done in the letter-carriers office.

Is there any office to which letters directed to Dublin only would be sent?—Only to the alphabet.

Have you heard any complaints upon that subject?—No, I have not.

Are applications made at your office sometimes?—Very frequently, by members.

Do you remember Mr. Owen Williams, the member for Marlow, making any application some months ago?—I do not recollect that; but any gentleman who comes to me, if he is a member, has his letters taken out if required.

Could you give letters out of your office which are to be paid for?—No; in that case I always call the letter-carrier who has the letter.

How long does it take to get the state letters out after the arrival of the mail?—The state letters are not dispatched so expeditiously as they might be, in consequence of an anxiety to examine the entire mail before we dispatch them. The London state letters might be dispatched in five minutes after the arrival of the mail, if we were not to wait for the assorting the entire mail to get that portion which comes in the country correspondence.

By whom is the present arrangement regulated; has it been desired by the Government that the state letters should not be forwarded until the whole had been examined, or has any application been made to have them quicker?—There was an application I know made, and I used to send them out almost immediately after the arrival of the mails; but in consequence of some letters having been overlooked in the country correspondence, and I believe the Lord Lieutenant being at a distance from town, Lord Rosse considered it better that that expedition should not be used, and that the mails should be carefully examined before the state letters were dispatched; at any time when Mr. Goulburn sends down to me that he is in a hurry for his letters, I have the London correspondence delivered immediately to his messenger; the Lord Lieutenant very seldom sends; if he should, it would be immediately complied with, or any other state officer.

Whom do you consider as state officers?—The Lord Lieutenant, the state secretary, the under secretary, the Lord Chancellor, the first clerk in the civil department, the first clerk in the military department, the commander of the forces, the postmasters-general, the private secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, and the secretary to the post-office; the attorney-general has been so considered, but it is not regular.

Are there none of the public boards get their letters in the same way?—No.

Nor the secretaries to the boards?—No.

Are any of the letters for the public boards sent to the alphabet office?—Yes; those for the vice-treasurer are sent there.

Is not the vice-treasurer considered a state officer?—No.

The adjutant-general?—No; but his letters are sent with those for the commander of the forces.

What other boards have their letters sent to the alphabet?—The commissariat, and I think the customs, the excise, and the ordnance.

Do you send their letters to the alphabet?—Yes.

Do they get them quicker in that way?—They do; they get them as soon as the Lord Lieutenant gets his, or rather before the alphabet is given out; as soon as the state letters are dispatched.

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How is it regulated who shall have the privilege of receiving letters in that way?—They pay for them.

Just as any merchant would do?—Yes, I believe so.

There is but one alphabet office for the Irish and English correspondence?—Only one.

Are your clerks subject to be fined for non-attendance, like those in the inland office?—I am not aware of their being fined; they always endeavour to get a substitute; I do not know of any fines.

When a substitute is so procured, the individual who does not appear is fined?—He is fined by paying that substitute.

Does he pay him by an agreement between the substitute and the absent officer?—Yes.

If a person chose to do the duty of the absent officer without payment, would he be allowed to do so?—Yes, if I considered him competent.

Who are the persons put in?—I generally select from the probationers in the inland office the persons most competent.

Have you no system of fines in your office?—No.

What is the difference in respect of fines between the inland office and yours?—I believe it originated in my having been a good deal absent from my office, when, two years after I was appointed, I was in a bad state of health; there was then a clerk in waiting, and I laid down a particular system for each person, and this clerk in waiting superintended the business, in some measure, for me, inasmuch as that if he detected any omission in the accounts or the documents, the regular daily documents, this gentleman was obliged to do duty for him when he became clerk in waiting again, by that means I had no absence in my office, and the clerks were a check upon themselves. I considered that 1s. 6d. fine, or whatever it might be, was light in comparison with the whole attendance of the day; this was so very severe, the business was more regularly done.

The clerk in waiting attends the whole day?—Yes, and they took it in turn; there is now a clerk in waiting.

What was the amount of punishment or the form of punishment you imposed?—The form of punishment was, that instead of doing duty himself, if he detected an omission on the part of A., A. did duty for him when it came to his turn.

The clerk in waiting's duty was more laborious than the others?—Yes; it confined him the entire day; he was there for the purpose of receiving any expresses or state letters in and out.

Did you find that efficient?—I did.

Did that continue when you returned to the office?—Yes, it did.

How is it at present?—At present there is a clerk in waiting; but I am so much there, and the whole business goes on so well, I do not find it necessary to fine any one; I considered that the other system of fining was so very trifling in comparison, that it could not be relied on.

Do you consider the attendance in your office so injurious to the health as it is represented to have been in the inland office?—I consider the confinement in my office as greater; but the state of the office is not so injurious; it is more effectually ventilated.

Are the hours of attendance in the office so long?—The hours of attendance in my office may be the twenty-four hours; the real work in the office is trifling if we could get the mails in.

Is there an attendance which affects the health arising from the late hours which you have in your office?—I conceive that the clerk being obliged to be in attendance the whole day, and must stay there till eleven o'clock at night, and if the mail comes in at eleven o'clock at night, they have to go through the whole of that mail, and may not be in bed till half-past twelve at night, and to be in the office again at half-past five, is more severe upon them, and that may last for three or four days together.

Are you not stating an extreme case?—I am, certainly.

How often within the last three years has the mail arrived at eleven o'clock at night: a dozen times?—Yes, and more; they must wait in the British-mail office till eleven, whether it comes or not.

That is if it has not come in before; are you not aware that in the inland office the clerks have to attend at a very early hour in the morning, and in the evening till eight?—Yes; I consider their duty much lighter than ours, for they are obliged only to attend from six in the morning until eight o'clock, and they are then off till five or six in the evening, and then again only from five to eight.

They have three hours in the morning and three in the evening?—Yes; but then they have the entire day to themselves.

What is the actual attendance in the office required of your clerks?—The duty requires their attendance from half past five till half past seven, and again from half past eight o'clock till the business of the office is disposed of; they then commence the outward mail for Kingstown at two o'clock, which terminates at three, that is only an hour's business.

In a common fair way, in how many hours can your business be done, supposing the mails arrive at the proper-time?—In about four hours in the day. As to the duty on the Chester mail, it is only that it is necessary to attend; for the business of that is done in a very short time.

Do you keep the whole of the establishment in attendance for the dispatch of that mail?—No, I do not; but it is merely in consequence of late arrangements that I have not done so.

Then the real business of your office is done by four hours occupation?—Yes; but the attendance is for the whole of the day.

Has Mr. Henry Clare any other occupation?—No.

Has Edward Darley any?—No.

Which of them have other occupations?—Mr. Sheil; he is regularly on the establishment.

What



What is he?—He is fourth clerk in my office, and I believe second clerk in the dead-letter office; he is a very excellent officer. Mr. Irvine also, a very attentive officer; he is in the penny post; and Mr. Drury, he is a sorter in the inland office; and Mr. Draper is in the ship-letter office, collector of ship-letters.

He succeeded his father in the situation he now holds?—Yes; I think it is the same situation which his father held.

Why did his father leave that situation?—I believe he was obliged to resign either his situation in the post-office, or his situation in the custom-house.

How long is it since he resigned?—I cannot speak positively; I believe about five or six years.

You mentioned that Mr. Draper is incompetent; is that from his youth, or from what other cause?—Indeed I do not know; he might be a very good clerk in other offices, but he cannot acquire a knowledge of the business of our office.

What age is he?—Three or four-and-twenty; he was always making mistakes; the duty is difficult.

When there is a vacancy in your office do you recommend?—I may recommend; upon the present occasion I did, two gentlemen, whom I knew to be in the office, and the most competent.

If there is to be a new nomination do you interfere?—No.

Who arranges that?—The postmasters-general.

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LETTER from Mr. Frederick Homan to the Commissioners of Parliamentary Inquiry, relative to his situation and the business of his office.

Gentlemen,

British-Mail Office, 20th October 1826.

As I feel that when examined before you on the 12th instant, my answers to many of your questions were not so full and satisfactory as they might have been, had I been previously aware of the points on which I was to have been examined, I think it my duty to lay before you such additional information as a more mature consideration of those subjects enables me to do.

I omitted to state, with respect to my own appointment, that by a letter written by Lord Maryborough at the time of my appointment, to my friend and relative the late Mr. Sheridan, the situation was greatly overrated with respect to emoluments, and expectations held out to him, which have not as yet been realized, which may more fully appear by the copy of a memorial presented to the Marquis Wellesley, in February 1822, to which I most humbly intreat the attention of your honourable board, and rely with confidence on its justice, that I shall no longer be suffered to remain in the mortifying situation of being placed at the head of an office of great trust and responsibility, on a salary, not only much inferior to any person at the head of an office in the establishment, but also inferior to clerks in the inland, British, and other departments of the post-office.

As to the attendance of the officers of the British-mail, compared with those of the inland office, I should have stated, that *every person* attached to my office is obliged to attend on Sunday. Whilst in the inland office, the president is allowed to be off duty from Saturday morning until Monday evening, and again from Wednesday morning till Thursday evening; one vice-president from Monday morning until Wednesday evening; the other vice-president from Thursday morning till Saturday evening; the three senior clerks attend as vice-presidents on Sunday in rotation, with a few of the junior clerks.

On fines, I should have stated, that the officers of the inland office who incur a fine must pay it or remain off duty till they do; one of the inland officers was fined 2*l.* for one morning's absence. I was myself fined 5*l.* for absence at an unusually early arrival of a mail.

I consider the general state of the office much improved within the last three years. But the business would be better done if the officers were better paid; those who have two or three places may do very well on their present income; but the junior clerks in the inland office, through whose hands in the first instance the property entirely passes, receive but 52*l.* a year; and some of the clerks who have that salary have received no more for upwards of *ten* years. Yet *they* are fined for absence at the rate of 70*l.* a year, and even so much as 5*s.* for a few minutes absence after the hour at which business commences, whilst they receive but *one shilling* and *sixpence* if they attend.

On the loss of money, the first clerk or any officer in the secretary's office must admit *that fact*: the guard of the Kingstown coach, late a porter in the front of the office, has told me repeatedly within the last *eight* months of people complaining daily that they had put money into the inland office which had not been received. On loss of property, I should have stated, Andrew Rourke Esq., of Mountjoy-square, has also a country residence near Clonee, in the county of Dublin; his son being abroad, sent a remittance through a banking house in London, addressed to his father, Tyrrelstown, Clonee\*; this letter passed through the British office, and was forwarded by the inland office to Clones, in the county of Monaghan. The postmaster of Clones, finding that it had been mis-sent by the inland

\* And here I beg leave to observe, that adding the *county* to the address, according to the English practice, would prevent many letters from being mis-sent, greatly facilitate the sorting, and in this instance *might* have preserved the property in question. There are a great many post-towns in England and Ireland with similar names; as England is often omitted in the address, the county would be a guide.

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office, re-directed it; the letter was received in the inland office; but there all clue was lost of the letter and its contents, and it never reached Clonee.

I omitted a case the Bishop of Elphin mentioned in the presence of a friend of mine, that a respectable clergyman of his diocese had sent up 45*l.* in bank notes, directed to his friend in Dublin, residing in Dominick-street, and the direction being mistaken for Dorset-street, after several inquiries, not having been found in Dorset-street, it was shewn to Sir E. Lees, who wrote an observation thereon, signed with his initials, that the letter seemed to have been opened: but the gentleman's residence having been discovered to be in Dominick-street, the letter was sent and received by the gentleman himself at the door, who opened it in the presence of the postman, and finding 45*l.* in bank notes, said all was right; but upon trying to negociate the notes, those sent by his correspondent appeared to be taken out and replaced by notes take out of one of the northern mails that had been robbed. The bishop, if written to, could corroborate this statement, and give the names of the persons. I should have stated that the English office does not acknowledge (as we do in Ireland) the receipt of letters as *money* letters, except they contain *hard cash*. This regulation is particularly severe on my officers, who give a receipt for each letter, *even post paid*, they receive from the inland office, and yet they *get no* acknowledgement from their corresponding offices in England; and this was the reason why I stated in my evidence on the 12th instant, "The only reply I could give in answer to an application on the loss of money said to have been put into my office, would be, that the officers had no recollection of such letter; but if put into my office it must have gone forward as addressed."

If the business of my office were merged into the inland office, all letters might be entered, containing property from Ireland, on the docket which accompanies the mail for each corresponding town; this would be a check; and the same might be done in England on their dockets for us; but such a change in the English system would be impossible, for the number of letters passing through the interior of England would render it impossible, but passing between England and Ireland would be advantageous; and by a union of English and Irish post-office revenue, sufficient time would be gained for the purpose of entering letters containing property, or post paid, either for England or Ireland. This union would facilitate the business between England and Ireland, by rendering it unnecessary to make a distinct entry of English and Irish postage, *paid* and *unpaid*, for each of our corresponding offices as at present. (See document.) It would only be necessary then to take an account in the Dublin office of the total amount of postage sent to each office, and to furnish the London office with a docket of the postage sent to each of our corresponding offices. This would be a check, and render our accounts more correct than they can be at present; for in the hurry of business to dispatch the mail errors must occur; and by including the English and Irish postage in one sum it would occupy less time, and render the English business less difficult to the inland officers. Instead of the present mode of charging letters with inclosures, &c. I beg leave to suggest that they should be charged by weight. This would prevent that prying into letters, which I consider objectionable, first, as to the impropriety of the scrutiny into family matters, &c.; secondly, as giving the person a freedom of examining, as part of his duty, the inside of every letter, and ascertaining the nature of the property and secrets it may contain. If an average were taken between the rate of a double letter and a single, and all letters under half an ounce charged only by that single rate, those between half an ounce and an ounce at the double rate, and so in proportion, there would be no pretext for tampering with letters to ascertain if there were figures, or any thing like an account, to allow a double charge. Should a person having occasion to send a pound note from *Sligo* to *Norwich*, and *divide* the note, the charge on each would be 1*s.* 6*d.* Irish postage, and 2*s.* 8*d.* English, and the reply to each letter, 1*s.* 4*d.* English, and 9*d.* Irish; so that the postage on that note would be 12*s.* 5*d.* Newspapers coming as *ship-letters* are often charged 2*l.* by weight, are therefore never released. The same observation applies to Newspapers on which a person may put an observation; it is charged by weight and never paid for; if charged at the double rate of postage it would be released.

The weighing of packets and parcels from the different public boards and offices occupy much time as they are charged by the ounce, being at the rate of four single letters; if their official correspondence passed free it would save time and the collection of a fictitious revenue.

Much abuse still exists in official franking, which could be easily checked by charging letters and packages with *sealed* inclosures.

A return which I caused to be made of the number of members franks passing through the inland office for the interior of Ireland has enabled us to charge letters of members for England, above the privileged number, to the amount of from 30*s.* to 2*l.* a night in the British office; this still continues.

I have reduced the amount of English rebates, or allowances on English letters overcharged, more than one third, by getting the residence of the person receiving the rebate entered on the receipt he gives, when the cover of the letter could not be given up; the former receipts (see Form of Receipt of Rebates, page 887,) only required a *name*, and there was no check on the officer who paid the rebate; he filled the receipt and paid the money, which he got credit for weekly on producing those receipts.

	£	s.	d.
Amount of rebates, quarter ending 5th October 1813	-	65	3 9
Amount of rebates on introducing this check, October 1814	-	19	1 2
	£	46	2 7

I believe

I believe it will be admitted by the postmasters-general and their secretary, that I have introduced many effectual checks to the great improvement of the office, which I found in a most neglected state.

I have now to apologize for the length I have been obliged to go into from the nature of the subjects contained in those papers, and which I felt it imperative on me to explain before the closing of your report. I have the honour to be, gentlemen, with the utmost respect, your obedient humble servant,

FREDERICK HOMAN.

Examinations.

No. 187.

Mr.

Frederick Homan.  
12th Oct. 1826.

EXTRACT.

To His Excellency Marquess Wellesley, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, &c. &c. &c.

The Memorial of the Comptroller of the British-Mail Office, F. Homan.

Showeth,

February 1822.

THAT Memorialist was recommended to Lord Maryborough, then chief secretary of Ireland, in the year 1810, by the late Right Honourable Sir John M' Mahon, and the late Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan, for the situation of inspector-general of gaols in Ireland.

That your Excellencies memorialist has the reply to this application from Lord Maryboro', stating that the situation was filled, but his lordship added, — "I shall be very glad, if an opportunity occurs, to be of use to Mr. Homan, and I will mention the interest you take about him to the Duke of Richmond."

Memorialist was shortly after appointed by his Grace the Duke of Richmond to the situation of comptroller of the British-mail office; his Grace's warrant, appointing memorialist, is dated 9th October 1810.

Your Excellency's memorialist was induced to accept this situation, and to resign a more lucrative one in London, from the favourable representation of it in the letter of Lord Maryboro' to Mr. Sheridan, stating "that the office was much sought after, and that Mr. Lees, the secretary of the post-office, was very desirous that his brother, who holds the office of surveyor of roads, worth 400*l.* a year, should exchange with Mr. Homan."

Memorialist, induced by these circumstances, resigned his situation in London, and came to Ireland to take possession of his office, which he found had been held by his predecessor nearly as a sinecure, and that he had retired on 300*l.* a year, while constant duty was required of memorialist on a reduced salary of 180*l.* per year, without fee or perquisite; and the privilege of franking, enjoyed by his predecessor, withheld from memorialist.

And yet since your memorialist was appointed to this office, his first and second clerks have exceeded him in salary, besides their perquisites, which were considerable during the war; and salaries of his third and fourth clerk will also, in a few years, exceed his, for memorialist must be twenty years in office before he obtains even 200*l.* a year; and, according to the present scale, his salary never can equal that of his clerks.

CLERKS SALARY.

	1810.	1817.	1820.	
1st, J. De Joncourt	- £150	- - 170	- - 200	- - Retired.
2d, H. Clare	- - 125	- - 170	- - 200	- - Now first clerk.
3d, L. T. Rogers	- - 80	- - 150	- - 170	- - Superannuated.
4th, Edward Darley	- - 80	- - 150	- - 170	- - 1824, £177 10 <i>s.</i>
Comptroller	- - 180	- - 180	- - 180.	
The 1st Clerk has been an increase of	- - -	- - -	- - -	- £50 a year.
— 2d Clerk	- - -	- - -	- - -	- 75 —
— 3d Clerk, superannuated	- - -	- - -	- - -	- 90 —
— 4th Clerk has since increased to 97 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i>	- - -	- - -	- - -	- 90 —

Since memorialist was appointed in 1810.

That the postmasters-general repeatedly agreed to increase memorialist's salary, and that the secretary himself, by letter dated 26th October 1821 to memorialist, desired memorialist to memorial, and that he would recommend an increase of salary; and again, so lately as last June, the postmasters-general did agree to send a representation to the Lords of the Treasury; which representation, though signed by their lordships, has not been transmitted by the secretary to the Lords of the Treasury, to the great prejudice and loss of memorialist.

FORM of Receipt of Rebates.

181 Received from the General Post-Office, Dublin,

overcharged on Letter from

Directed to

£

(107.)

## Appendix, No. 188.

11th October 1826.

Mr. WILLIAM CULLEN called in and examined.

Examinations.  
 No. 188.  
 Mr. William Cullen.  
 11th Oct. 1826.

WHAT situation do you hold in the post-office?—I am a taxing clerk in the inland office.

Have you any other situation?—No, I hold no other situation.

What is your salary as a taxing clerk in the inland office?—Latterly I have not attended there.

Since what time?—It is some time; I do not know the precise time.

How many years?—Indeed I suppose for the last two years; I am not exactly certain; I have attended very little for the last two or three years.

Why have not you attended for the last two years?—From illness; my state of health would not permit me to attend.

Have you had a certificate to that effect?—I have; I have had a certificate from the post-office surgeon, and from several surgeons whom I have gone to for the benefit of my health.

Do you expect ever to return?—It is the opinion of the post-office surgeon that I never could permanently return; and I am sure I could not, from the nature of the office.

Have you applied to retire?—Lord Rosse stated that he would represent to Government my state of health; and it was only within the present year that the post-office surgeon gave his certificate to the effect I have mentioned.

Have you ever applied?—No, I did not, for I understood there was a representation to be made; the officer next to me had applied, and he has not been superannuated; and he told me he had made repeated applications, and it was stated that all would be acted upon at the same time.

What is your salary?—My salary is 170*l.* Irish.

What have you lost by fines for non-attendance?—The last quarter I was paid but 16*l.*

Your fines amount to nearly 70*l.* a year?—To 100*l.* a year; they paid me in British money at the rate of 70*l.* Irish; they paid me but at the rate of 64*l.* British, which is, I think, 70*l.* Irish; that is the money I actually receive, instead of 170*l.* which I have upon the establishment; that is, they deducted 100*l.* Irish currency from me.

By the letter the Commissioners have received, your stoppages are only 32*l.* 6*s.* 2*d.* for the last half year, and for the preceding year they have been 69*l.* or 70*l.*?—The last quarter they paid me 16*l.* I understand they are to pay me the same sum I should be entitled to if I were superannuated; they have deducted from me 70*l.* a year for some time past; but the last quarter I received but 16*l.*, that is the quarter ending the 6th of the present month.

Have you made any application on the subject?—No, I have not; I understood an order had issued; they told me in the treasury office that an order had issued that I should receive yearly that sum that I would have been entitled to if I had been superannuated.

That is 64*l.* a year?—Seventy pounds, I think; five twelfths.

What is the date of your appointment?—From December 1807; they did not give me credit from the time; but I have been eighteen years and a half upon the establishment.

Did you commence as a probationer?—Yes, I did; I came in at the formation of the present arrangement of the post-office.

Have you always been in the inland office?—I have.

You follow the profession of an attorney, do you not?—I do.

Have you been an attorney long?—No, I have not, only since I got ill; not more than about three years.

Were you regular in your attendance before that?—I was for a long time; I thought nothing of my attendance there; when I went in there first I was very young, and I thought nothing of the attendance; but the attendance there is very laborious, and there is scarcely any one person could attend constantly there, particularly in summer; it is very oppressive latterly, they make the duty very oppressive; the sealing bags and fishing letters over the candles and on the gas has a very noxious effect arising from that; that when I have been there I have been scarcely able to stand or to walk home.

Do you mean to state that the labour was too much, although you had no other duty in the post-office?—Certainly; the labour at those hours, for the hours are peculiar, and the duty to be performed there in summer, it was very laborious, and at that time much more injurious; I should have rather preferred attendance an entire day: and it is downright labour.

Was yours a daily attendance throughout your service, or were you in the post-office while there was an alternate duty?—I never was; I came in at the time that was abolished.

Yours was a daily attendance from the beginning?—Yes.

For what part of the day?—From six in the morning till the letters were delivered to the letter-carriers, and in the evening, from five till the letters were dispatched, at eight.

Has your health permitted you to attend to your professional pursuits?—Very little; the surgeon tells me I have a liver complaint; and I have a nervous disorder, which affects me in the morning, and I can scarcely write for some time; the truth is, the salary I got from the post-office would not enable me to live.

Have you found your health better since you left the office?—I did certainly; I was at Cheltenham for a time, and after that I returned here, and attending the post-office I got ill again; I found it affect my health, and that I could not attend it permanently; the stoppage is considerable; I have a large family, and the hours there would not interfere with my profession if my health would permit my attendance, but it will not.

Are they a respectable class of persons generally in the office in which you were?—Some of them are; of course in such a number of persons there must be a mixture of different classes; I have taken the liberty of stating to Lord Rosse, that by an increased time I should be considerably benefited in point of salary.

Are you likely to be entitled to an increase of salary?—I should in twenty years; I have been eighteen and three quarters, and of course in a year and a quarter I should be twenty years, and should be entitled to a twelfth more, making one half by the old arrangement; but a minute of Treasury some time ago went to interfere with the increase of salaries; if that should be rescinded it would give me not only an increase as to service but also as to salary, because I have 170*l.*; in the twenty years under the post-office regulations I should have 200*l.*

Did Lord Rosse give you encouragement to think, that by remaining two or three years in the post-office and doing nothing, you should be still considered entitled not only to an increase of pension but a pension on an increased rate?—No, he did not, it was a thing which originated with myself in the present year; he stated that I might feel it a hardship, but that he had a duty to the public as well as to me, and that he should be obliged to recommend a retirement; that he was bound to be governed by the Act of Parliament, and to discharge his duty to the public as well as to the individual; the reason I mentioned the subject to Lord Rosse was, that under the late Act of Parliament regulating superannuation, I should some years ago, and when I was doing duty, have been entitled to a larger sum as retired allowance, than I am now under the present Act, notwithstanding the increased period of service.

WM. CULLEN.

Mr. GARRETT WALL called in and examined.

WHAT situation do you hold in the post-office?—I am senior sorter in the inland office.

What is your attendance?—The attendance in the office is from six in the morning till the business is done.

What is your personal attendance?—I do not attend.

Since when have you ceased to attend?—I have not attended since, I think, the year 1821; I was recommended for superannuation in February 1820.

By whom?—By the postmasters-general, Lord Rosse and Lord O'Neill, to the Treasury.

What reply was received?—There has never been any reply received.

How long have you been in the office?—I have been fourteen years in the office.

What was the occasion of your applying for a retirement?—Very bad health; the certificates of which I have a copy; Mr. Kerin's and Dr. Cox's certificates, and on having sent those in, the postmasters-general recommended me for superannuation.

What was the nature of your certificate, that you were unable to discharge the duties?—Yes, it was.

[The witness produced the certificates:]

[The certificate of Dr. Cox was read: That the witness had been under his care, and that he was subject to very severe headaches, caused by his extremely delicate state of health; and that he had recommended his retirement from the post-office as necessary for the re-establishment of his health.]

[The certificate of Mr. Kerin read: That his health had been affected; that he was obliged to leave the office; that since he left the office his health had been improved; but that he had no doubt that if he were to resume his duty, his former bad health would return.]

Since I left the office I have been constantly affected by bad health.

After the deduction of your fines for non-attendance, what do you receive quarterly?—My salary on the establishment is 125*l.*, and out of that the postmasters-general have stopped 70*l.*; formerly it was a guinea a week to pay a substitute, that leaves it very small indeed.

Have you any other avocation?—Yes, I have a situation in Sir Robert Shaw and Company's bank.

What attendance do you give there?—I attend there from half-past ten to three.

Mr. WILLIAM STOKER called in and examined.

WHAT situation do you hold in the inland office?—I am the senior of the junior sorters.

How long have you been in the inland office?—I am going on nineteen years on the establishment; and I was three years in a clerk of the roads office before that, in Mr. Arnett's office at that time.

You are in your nineteenth year of service?—Yes, I believe eighteen years and three quarters.

What is your attendance there now?—From six in the morning till the business is got through;

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*Mr. William Stoker.*  
11th Oct. 1826.

through; sometimes we are kept till nine, and from five to a quarter past five till the mails are dispatched in the evening.

Is your attendance regular there now?—Yes, I am in close attendance.

You have been returned during the last half year, as eighty-two days absent?—I have been very ill.

Have you been in the habit of absenting yourself on account of illness?—Not without cause.

How were you last year?—For the last two or three years my health has been bad.

Have you been in the habit of getting medical certificates?—Yes.

From whom?—Dr. Stoker was my physician; but I have been latterly obliged to get a certificate of the surgeon of the post-office; although I am junior, I have been acting as taxing clerk for ten years without receiving the emoluments of the office, but having all the responsibility.

Do you attribute any part of your ill health to your occupation in the post-office?—Indeed I do; the salary is so small, that after twenty-two years I have not enough, and am obliged to have another situation.

Do you think your health has been affected by your situation in the post-office?—No, except by getting cold.

Your attendance for the last two or three years is represented as having been very irregular?—Yes, I have had several attacks of liver complaint.

To what do you attribute that?—To my close attendance to support my family. I am employed from five in the morning till eight at night; my salary there would not support my family.

Your salary is 125*l.* a year?—Yes, in Irish currency.

What is your salary under Sir Abraham King?—£140 a year.

What is your employment there?—As book-keeper.

What attendance do you give?—From ten to four; when I leave the post-office I have to go there immediately, and I have only an hour for dinner.

Have you been able to give a regular attendance to Sir Abraham King?—No, I have been frequently absent; there is an assistant book-keeper.

Have your absences from Sir Abraham King's been as frequent as from the post-office?—No; for when I have been very ill with a cold, and not able to go out before daylight, I have gone out in the middle of the day to Sir Abraham King's.

Have you any claim for progressive increase of salary?—No; although I have been performing the duty of 200*l.* a year salary, I have not got an increase.

Would you under the Act have any claim on the ground of superannuation, if you were to retire from the office?—I really do not know; I should not wish to retire.

Do you think you could give as much attendance at the post-office as you now give at the office of Sir Abraham King?—I am desirous of doing that, but I have so large a family that every minute I can get I am obliged to employ myself. During the twenty-two years I have been connected with the post-office I never have had a complaint against me. I had but 15*l.* a year for the first four or five years, then I got 52*l.*, and then I rose to 70*l.*

If your absences continue as long as they have done lately you are receiving 70*l.* a year for nothing?—Some quarters I have got only 2*l.* or 3*l.*; one quarter I know I had but 4*l.* out of the office altogether. If we were a minute too late at one period they fined us two-pence a minute; and during that absence the person has been put off duty almost the moment the clock had done striking, if a junior officer was to be had.

You are stated to have been absent 282 mornings and 272 evenings, for which you paid only 54*l.* 6*s.*, but your salary was 125*l.*, you received the difference of course?—Perhaps that does not include fines.

This includes fines for absences?—That is only what is paid to supernumeraries.

You say you sometimes receive only 1*l.* or 2*l.*?—I think there was one quarter I received only 3*l.* or 4*l.* out of 31*l.*

What other fines are you subject to besides those for absence?—The comptroller of the office, if we happen to be only a moment too late, though a man has been twenty years in the department, an officer who has been only two years in the office is put on, and he is sent back to his house, and there is a deduction made for that; then if he is fifteen minutes too late he charges two-pence a minute, though he is put on for duty.

Is that charged now?—That has been charged almost to this Board coming over.

Have you been charged that latterly?—No; I have been almost constantly in attendance latterly.

Mr. ROBERT HARRISON called in and examined.

*Mr.*  
*Robert Harrison.*

WHAT is your situation in the post-office?—A senior sorter in the inland office.

You have also a situation in the receiver-general's office?—Yes; I am second clerk there.

What is your salary in the inland office?—73*l.* a year, British.

In the receiver-general's, how much?—101*l.*, British.

How comes it to be an odd sum?—There was a Treasury minute in 1822, which stopped all further increase of salary from that time; it would have been 125*l.*; but for that I have got only a proportion of the 125*l.*

How is that proportion fixed?—I had served five years; ten years gave me 125*l.*, and I had served only one year out of the second five, and the Treasury minute stopped all further increase.

In the return of absences, it appears, that during the first six months of the present year you were hardly at all in attendance?—No; I have not attended for a long time.

For how many years?—I came to it several times, and was obliged to give it up for the last six or seven years.

How long have you been in the office?—Thirteen years.

Have you been absent from both of the offices?—I have never been absent from the treasurer's office.

Have you had certificates of ill-health?—Surgeon Kerin of the post-office, and Surgeon Maclean have certified for me; the light of the office brought on inflammation of the eyes; my health was very good.

Is your health returned?—The sight of one of my eyes is nearly gone from a stone, when I was young, but the other is now well again, but the inflammation continued as long as I attended. Sir Edward Lees obliged me to return and try it again, two or three times.

What is the amount of the stoppages in the inland office?—70*l.* Irish.

Out of what?—Out of 80*l.* Irish.

It is stated in this return to be 30*l.* 4*s.* in the half year?—The order for stopping 70*l.* a year was in force about a year ago; then it was augmented to the 3*s.* 6*d.* a day; now it is in force again; but that is only for the weekdays, but we paid for Sundays besides, which made up that.

What situation do you hold in the treasurer's office?—That of junior clerk.

What is your duty in the treasurer's office?—To pay all drafts for incidental clerks, and furnish the accountant-general with an account, weekly, of the receipts and payments of the receiver-general.

What drafts do you mean?—All warrants of the postmasters-general.

How do you pay them?—By a draft on the Bank of Ireland, which is countersigned by the accountant-general after it leaves the receiver-general's office.

Do you draw that draft?—The receiver-general draws it.

How long have you been in the receiver-general's office?—Since the latter end of the year 1813.

How many clerks are there in the receiver-general's office?—Two.

Is that the permanent establishment?—It is.

Are they both in attendance?—They are.

Does Mr. Swan himself attend daily?—He does.

What are the hours of attendance in that office?—From ten to four for me; the senior clerk is constantly in attendance to receive the charges of the letter-carriers, and to receive the payments from the remittance clerk; he receives every thing, and I pay.

You receive nothing?—No.

You have nothing to do with the examination of the incidents you pay?—No; they are all examined before they come to our office.

Nor with the lodgments into the bank?—I make all the lodgments in the bank to the credit of the exchequer, nothing else.

You make the transfer from the receiver-general's account to the treasury account?—Yes.

How is that managed?—By the same description of warrant, signed by the postmasters-general.

How often is that done?—We generally make three or four payments in the quarter.

Do you ever pay in the exact amount?—No; we always keep a sum in the bank to meet the expenses of the day.

Are there numerous daily payments?—Sometimes a great number, about this time in general.

Those are quarterly payments?—Yes.

Except at the expiration of a quarter, are there many payments?—Yes, indeed there are; I suppose about seven or eight hundred in the year.

Are they all made by drafts?—Yes, they are.

Except at the times of the quarterly payments, the business is not severe?—Not in the receiving them; but I furnish an account to the accountant-general of the remittances made.

How do you make up that account?—From the remittance clerk's books, and Mr. Swan or the first clerk signs for every remittance separately; I give a detailed account of it to the accountant-general.

Do you prepare an account from the book of the remittance clerk?—So far as the remittances go.

You extract that from the book of the remittance clerk?—Yes.

How often do you do that?—At the end of each week.

For what purpose?—The accountant-general does the same thing, and we check together.

How do you get at that?—The remittance book is sent in to the chief clerk in the receiver-general's office, and he gives a separate receipt for each.

At what time of the day is that brought down?—About two o'clock; but I do not do it till the end of the week, there are so many little things to be taken off.

What do you mean by little things taken off?—Bad drafts sent up, and forgeries, and so on.

Whose business is it to take that off?—The receiver-general returns them to the remittance clerk at the end of the week with an account, and he takes them off the book.

The remittance clerk takes every thing as good when he enters it?—Yes, and then it is handed over to Mr. Symes, and he goes round to the different places to collect those sums in.

Are there any other accounts which you make up?—I keep a detailed account of all the incidental

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Mr.

Robert Harrison.

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incidental expenses under different heads, and furnish all accounts called for by Parliament and the Treasury connected with the incidents of the office.

Does it always happen that you find the accounts of the accountant-general agree with those which you furnish?—Always, or he discovers them in a moment.

You have never discovered any differences?—Never.

Your is only an account of receipts?—Only an account of receipts.

Then the accountant-general makes the account of charges?—I charge myself with every thing received during the week.

The accounts of the postmasters are only accounts of receipts?—That is all; then I furnish the accountant-general with an account of incidents during the course of the week.

It is in that way that the accountant-general raises the account against the receiver-general?—He takes them from the original documents; every office furnishes to him an account of the week.

When you say original documents, you mean books kept in the different offices?—Books and letters.

Take the letter-bill office for instance; there is no original document passes from that office to the accountant-general?—No, not original documents, I believe.

Does the receiver-general give in any account to the Commissioners of audit?—Not since the year 1817.

It is a part of his duty to do so?—When called on they would not take them from us; we offered them to them.

Who prepares this account?—I do; the accountant-general does also.

Are they in a state of preparation in your office?—I never did it more than a year or two; since that the year 1818 is balanced; the year 1819 is not at present.

What do you understand to be the reason for not sending it in?—The Commissioners said they had no right to take them without an order of the Lord Lieutenant; there were some outstanding balances.

Had they been furnished before that?—I never recollect their being sent but once before; they took eight years from us at one time.

Was that by order of the Lord Lieutenant?—Yes.

Did they make any disallowances upon this account?—A great number, I think 12,000l. or 13,000l. for surveys, and a great many others which have been paid in by the parties since; they were very trifling ones.

What was the nature of those which have been paid in since?—Errors in calculation, I believe; they were very trifling.

Who signs the accounts of the receiver-general?—The receiver-general himself; when they were furnished to the audit office the postmasters-general signed them.

Does the secretary sign them?—I am not sure; but I know the postmaster-general does in that case.

Do you give any security?—£1,000 in the treasurer's office; myself in 1,000l. and two securities in 500l. each.

Mr. GEORGE MIDDLETON called in and examined.

Mr.

George Middleton.

YOU are a clerk in the inland office of the post-office, are you not?—Yes.

How long have you been in that situation?—Fifteen years in December next, I think.

What is your salary?—£73 British, some few shillings.

In the return for the first six months of the present year you are stated to have been a good deal absent?—Yes, I was.

On what account was that?—Indeed I was rather unwell part of the time.

What other situation have you out of the post-office?—I have a situation in the custom-house, in the excise department.

Did you attend upon that business?—I did.

What is the reason you did not attend in the inland office at the same time?—Sometimes the hours are very unpleasant; getting up in the morning; and sometimes I felt a little fatigued perhaps in the evening, after performing the duty of the other place.

In what other place?—In the custom-house.

The hours are not very late in the custom-house?—No, they are not.

Nor in the post-office?—No, eight o'clock.

Not such as to prevent early rising?—No.

What are the necessary hours of your attendance at the custom-house?—The whole of the situation I perform at present is performed day and night.

What is that situation?—A gauger.

What are the hours of attendance?—The department I am over at present is surveying officer of a glass-house; I have been at that duty only for the last three months.

You do not belong to the custom-house department, but entirely to the excise department?—To the excise entirely.

What are the hours you give your attendance at the excise?—An officer comes on at six in the morning, he gets away at two; he comes on again at ten in the evening and remains till six in the morning; he then goes on the two o'clock duty, and remains till ten in the evening, and the following day is what is called his odd day.

How long have you been in the excise?—Fifteen years last July.

Do you represent yourself equal to the performance of those two duties?—I do at present.

Have you ever for any length of time performed the duties of the two offices without feeling



ing it too much for you?—There was one period of my life I was confined to my bed by sickness, and could not attend at all; that was six or seven years ago.

What is your emolument in the excise department?—£73, subject to the deduction of six per cent. for charitable purposes.

Are there any stoppages for the time you are absent?—We are allowed sixteen weeks sick leave before there are any stoppages.

That is on a certificate that you really are sick?—Yes, on a certificate of our own surgeon, by making this application to the surgeon, which I believe was recommended by this honourable Board three years ago.

For several years you have been in the habit of absenting yourself in the inland office: in the year 1820 you were absent 277 mornings and 254 evenings; in 1821 not so many, 65 mornings; in 1822, 129 mornings?—I believe the year alluded to, when there were so many more, was a memorable one in my life, that I got married that year.

It would seem by the excise hours you state, the two offices are frequently totally incompatible; for instance, six in the morning?—Yes; but there are three officers who have nothing else to do but to attend to the surveying of this glass-house, and only one officer is on at a time, so that we can alternately relieve and accommodate each other; so that the duty is performed; there is a supervisor over me; he is the other officer who is held responsible for the due performance of the duty; so if he goes and visits this glass-house, and finds a person in attendance, he is satisfied.

If you attend your duty in the inland office, you never can be by six o'clock in the morning on excise duty?—I have been only three months on that glass-house; until within the last three months I never interfered with that; but the manner in which I attended that is, that they stand two hours in the morning for me, and I give them two hours at night, or in the course of the day, whenever it does not clash with my hours.

You do not consider that your duty in the inland office, as it has been performed, has injured your health?—No, I cannot say it has; I have been a little delicate at one period, but within the last three months, since I have had the opportunity of going into the country, a mile and a half from Dublin, towards Ringsend, I have been better.

Are you entitled to any increase of salary for length of service, beyond the 70*l.* you now receive?—No, I am not entitled to any increase of salary in the inland office, nor, I believe, would not be if I were to remain all my life, unless calculating on deaths, which is a very unpleasant thing for any man to calculate on.

Which service do you prefer, the post-office or the excise?—They are both so bad, if I may make use of the expression, it would be almost a difficult thing to decide; neither the one nor the other is the means of giving a man the common necessaries of life in the most frugal manner in which a man can possibly exist.

Have you any prospect of advance in the excise?—It has been recommended, I am told, by this honourable Board, in the 11th or 12th Report, about three years ago, but we have not got it yet, that we should be put on an equality with the English officers, as we are in point of duty, and fatigue, and labour, and responsibility.

Are you confined to the glass-house?—I have nothing else at present to attend to.

Is it a very extensive work?—Indeed it is as extensive as any one in this country.

What do they make?—Flint-glass.

Have you ever been in the tobacco stores?—I have surveyed tobacco traders tobacco stores, as an inland situation belonging to the custom-house.

What did you receive last quarter from the post-office?—I think it was between ten and eleven pounds.

Then your absence continues to be considerable; you would be entitled to 18*l.*?—About that.

Mr. JOSEPH SMITH called in and examined.

HOW many years have you been in the inland office of the post-office?—I have been thirteen years in June last; I was appointed in 1813.

What is your salary there?—£52 Irish a year.

Have you been able to attend lately?—I have not been able to attend these nine months, I have been so debilitated.

Have you any other situation?—I have.

What other situation?—I have a situation in the Bank, but I have been badly able to attend.

You are a clerk in the Bank of Ireland?—Yes.

Have you been in attendance there lately?—I have been lately, but I had been away for some time; they have been very indulgent to me.

Do you forfeit any thing for non-attendance in the Bank of Ireland?—No, not when I am sick.

You do in the inland office?—I forfeit every thing; they charge me more than my pay there; they charge me a guinea a week even when I am sick.

During the first six months of the present year, it appears you were fined 5*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.* more than your pay?—Yes, I was.

It is stated that your pay was 24*l.* and your fines 29*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.*?—That was the case.

Do you consider that the service of the inland office has affected your health?—It was really the cause of it. I have often left the office at night so that I was scarcely able to walk up stairs, so debilitated from the weakness of my limbs that I was afraid almost to handle a

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Mr. Joseph Smith.

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*Mr. Joseph Smith.*  
11th Oct. 1826.

a letter, I was in that nervous state, lest a letter should be mis-sent, in the nervous state in which I was, from the heat of the office I have been in that state. I persevered till the doctor, Mr. Kerin, told me for many months that it would kill me.

Have you offered to resign your situation there?—No; I was called upon some months ago, when Mr. Kerin was there and Lord Rosse; I was sent to Mr. Kerin, and was with him five or six times before he told me that my state of health was such that it would actually kill me.

Have you requested permission to resign?—It remained there; that they would lay the circumstances before the Board (I really did not understand it) to see if I could get a remuneration.

You would wish to retire, but desire some remuneration?—I certainly would. I have been nearly fourteen years there. That has been the cause that I could not sleep in Dublin; I go to bed with the dread of not being able to sleep; and the mornings and evenings when I have gone in the summer season has rendered me so that I am reduced at this moment to a skeleton.

Were you regular in your attendance before?—I was regular for eleven years, so much so that I do not suppose I was more than two months absent during that time before. For the last year and a half I have been unable to attend. When I went there last it was after six weeks confinement to my room, and all I got was 3*l.* for six weeks attendance.

Mr. GEORGE DAVIES called in and examined.

*Mr. George Davies.*

YOU are a clerk in the inland office in the post-office, are you not?—Yes.

How long have you been in that situation?—Thirteen years.

What is your salary?—£46 when I am on duty.

You have been a good deal off duty in the course of the last year?—I have, in consequence of over-exertion in business; it brought sickness upon me, which nearly brought me to my grave. I have a family, which of course made me persevere.

Have you any other situation?—No.

Neither in the post-office, nor in any other department?—No.

Have you any profession?—No; I was appointed to the post-office by Lord Rosse, from Parson's Town.

Your salary for the first half of this year was 24*l.*, and it appears by the return that your fines were 30*l.*?—I have not been on duty until within the last five weeks; I got leave through Lord Rosse and Sir Edward Lees to absent myself.

Has that often happened?—Never before, for I was never off till actual sickness made me leave.

Do you conceive that the service of the post-office has affected your health?—I do; I over-exerted myself. I have staid away by the order of the postmaster, and I thought to baffle off a cold, and it drew a fever upon me and was near killing me; it was going into the country recovered me.

During the twelve or thirteen years you have been in the office, have you enjoyed good health?—I have.

You have not suffered, generally speaking, from the duties in the post-office?—No, only that I should have staid away by order of the doctor.

For the first ten years you enjoyed good health?—Yes; and when I have been wet going into the office, coming in a heat, it brought a cold upon me, and I thought it would go off; instead of that, it increased upon me; the doctor told me that by persevering I was ruining myself. I have a family, and was induced to make an effort.

Your attendance previously to that had been regular?—Yes; I had been for years not absent at all.

Did you suffer head-aches?—I did just previous to that; I fell off in a fainting fit that morning that I was obliged to leave.

How were you affected?—I passed blood every way; so the doctor told me, that knew me for years before, that I was destroying myself by persevering. I had still hoped to continue to get better. I was obliged to take to my bed, and was unable for months to attend to any business.

You expect to be able to resume your duties?—I have been for five weeks now unable to attend to my duties. Mr. Leet, the president of the office, when I returned, begged me to go off, seeing the state I was in; he was afraid I should go off again. Lord Rosse and Sir Edward Lees allowed me, after five months receiving nothing, 1*l.* a week Irish money, seeing the state in which I was; that in fact it was an act of charity.

Otherwise you would have lost the whole amount of your salary?—I would; I lost it for five months before that.

You received nothing during that five months?—No, nothing whatever; but by memorialing Lord Rosse, through Mr. Thomas Lees's recommendation, I was allowed 1*l.* a week for a year or better; after that five months, at the rate of 1*l.* a week, till I was able to attend my duty.

You were absent five or six months in the present year?—I was.

Were you allowed any thing in that time?—Yes, I was allowed 1*l.* a week Irish.

Were you ever allowed that 1*l.* a week for any former period?—I never had occasion until I last sickened; in fact, I never expected again to be able to do business in the inland office, and the doctor the very day that I resumed my duty ordered me off to the country again; then I persevered and got better.

Do you know whether the same allowance of 1*l.* a week has been made to any body else under the same circumstances?—I never knew of any one; they told me it was in consequence of my attendance always in the office before that, that it was granted to me; seeing that it was actually through the business that I had received that injury, persevering as I had done in attending.

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Mr. ANTHONY LYSTER called in and examined.

DO you still continue superintendent of the alphabet department in the post-office?—  
Yes.

Have you had any increase of salary of late?—No.

What is your present salary?—£200 Irish, and the emoluments paid by the merchants and public offices.

To what do they amount in the year, one year with another?—My proportion amounts to about 300*l.* a year Irish.

What does the whole amount to?—About 440*l.* or 450*l.* Irish.

Amongst whom is that sum distributed?—Between myself and the principal clerk; I have two thirds and he has one third.

What are the contributions by which that is raised?—Public offices and merchants who keep book-accounts give a certain sum per annum; the merchants give three guineas, the bankers give five guineas, and the public offices give five and ten guineas, according to the bulk of their postage.

How are the rates of payment fixed?—Merchants have always paid three guineas; when I went into the office it was so; and the public offices five and ten; they are fixed by the department itself as regards the public offices, and not by the alphabet; the merchants have always paid three guineas within my recollection.

Do all the public offices get their letters through your office?—With very few exceptions; there are some.

What credit do you give to the public offices?—The public offices pay every week.

Do they pay every Monday for the week preceding?—Yes.

How often do the merchants and bankers pay?—They pay once a month.

You are allowed a balance in hand for that purpose?—Yes.

To what does that balance generally amount?—Generally to 500*l.* or 600*l.*; there is sometimes 800*l.*, sometimes 750*l.*; a great portion of that applies to the public departments; I call every Monday morning at the public departments for the postage.

Do you apply in person?—I do; and I find a warrant made out for the amount of postage, save and except when a holiday intervenes, or perhaps the warrant is not signed by a sufficient number of Commissioners; of course then I do not get it, for it is paid by a regular warrant.

Is the balance paid in to the receiver-general always the precise amount of the sum due to the office?—Precisely so, save the amount due by public officers and merchants, and for which I am held responsible.

You are also superintendent of the paid window, are you not?—It is one and the same department.

Do you ever stand at the paid window yourself?—While an officer is gone out for any necessary purpose, or has been sent for by the secretary or Board, I have attended that duty.

Who attends at the alphabet then?—There are always two persons, one at the alphabet window and another at the paid window.

Who attends at the alphabet window when you are at the paid window?—A clerk attached to the alphabet department.

Who is the clerk attached to your department?—Mr. Summers and Mr. Hamilton; there are two at each window; from the different periods of the arrival of the mails, they would not otherwise have time to meet the mails or to clean themselves, if it were not so.

During what time is the alphabet office open to the public?—The alphabet office is open, generally speaking, at twenty minutes or a quarter before nine, for delivery of the Irish mails; on a Monday morning it is somewhat later, for the mails are heavier; it continues open from that hour till seven in the evening for the delivery of letters, to all persons who call.

Without any intermission?—Yes, without any intermission.

If the British mail arrives after seven, is it opened in the evening?—Seven is the hour prescribed; if the British mail arrives at seven, the British mail is assorted, and the letters are delivered up to nine; but in the event of the British mail having arrived in the previous part of the day, seven is the hour at which the office closes.

Supposing the British mail arrives at half past six?—The office is open then for two hours after the mail is assorted; the mail in general takes twenty-seven or thirty minutes, or perhaps thirty-five, according to the bulk of the mail.

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Mr.

*Anthony Lyster.*  
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Is the office always open for the delivery of the British mail as soon as it can be assorted?  
—Yes, always, if it arrives before seven; if it arrives as the clock strikes seven, indeed.

If it arrives at eight, you do not deliver that night?—No.

What do you do before you open for the public?—We attend at the British-mail office and assist in sorting the free letters; the taxed letters are assorted in the British-mail office for us and charged out on us, while either myself or a clerk is performing this duty, as the case may be; if I happen to be there at the minute I hear the mail has arrived, I assort, or if he happens to be there he throws forward the letters into the different merchants boxes and the box of the public offices.

What do you do on the arrival of the Irish mail?—Go through the same form.

Do you go into the inland office?—No; there is a little port hole, I may call it, between the sorting office and our office; the free letters are all given in to us by clerks from that office, and the taxed letters in bundles of two, three, four, five, and six pounds; they report to the president the amount, and the amount contained is charged against the alphabet keeper.

You do not go into the inland office yourself, but you do go into the British-mail office?  
—Yes; to assist in sorting the free only.

How long has that regulation existed?—I think about three years; I may be a month wrong perhaps.

That was once objected to, was it not?—It was in regard to the taxed; we also assorted the taxed for a year and a half, or a year and three months, and the secretary was under the impression that we might take taxed letters, mix them with the free, and consequently not be charged with them.

How is it you assist in assorting the free letters?—They all come distinct from the taxed; it is in order to expedite the business; they come in perfectly distinct parcels.

How long would you allow any name to be upon the alphabet, that is, any person's letters to be put into the alphabet, without his paying the usual fee?—We almost always know the respectability of the party; the usual manner is, for the merchants to pay in advance, and the public offices to pay at the termination of the year.

In respect of individuals who do not leave their addresses?—We keep no account with such persons; their letters are delivered to them, and they pay for them on delivery.

Do you allow that to go on for any length of time?—As long as it is desired; the fee merely applies to the book account of the merchant.

Do they pay any thing to the office?—No.

It is only the persons to whom you give credit, from whom you receive fees?—Yes; an ordinary individual who wishes to have his letters at the post-office, receives them, and pays for them; and we know nothing further of him.

May any person have his letters addressed to the post-office?—Yes, any person may do that.

Is there an increasing number of persons who receive their letters in that way?—No; I cannot say that I have observed any difference.

All letters are delivered from the alphabet window; you send none out?—No; there are no carriers attached to the alphabet office.

Do all the merchants pay the same fee?—Indeed I think they do, with a very slight variation, unless they are bankers; the merchants three guineas, and the bankers five guineas; that is in Irish money; when the change of currency took place it was transferred into British.

Have you any reason to suppose that it is the interest of any persons in the post-office to prevent the alphabet opening so soon as it might?—No, I do not think it is.

You think the utmost diligence is exercised to enable you to deliver your letters as soon as possible?—I think so; I do not see any obstruction; indeed I think thirty minutes is as short a time as would admit of the business being done correctly.

Thirty minutes, between what time?—Between the arrival and the opening of the alphabet.

Is it ever done within that time?—Yes, it has been done in a shorter time.

Do you allude to the inland mail?—No, merely to the arrival of the packet.

You give security in 2,000*l.*?—Yes.

Is your surety alive?—One is alive; the other is dead.

Have you taken any measures in consequence?—I am about finding a new security.

How long has your security been dead?—He died in 1823.

Have you not been able to find a security since?—I was never applied to on the subject; I was making a return a short time ago, in conformity to an order from the Treasury, and that directed my attention to it.

No person has applied to you upon the subject?—No.

Whose duty was it to have applied to you; the solicitor's?—I suppose it was the solicitor, if he was aware of the fact.

Is there any diminution in the number of letters received free in the office?—I think there is, certainly.

Have you reason to think there are more franks than there ought to be?—I do not think there are; the privilege is not very numerous in the post-office at present.

Has it been curtailed latterly?—It was curtailed when the Commissioners were sitting here before; the clerks of the roads used to frank, and it ceased then; there were four clerks of roads.

Do

Do you consider that the number of letters franked in the post-office has diminished?—It think it has, certainly.

Have you had any means of detecting letters lately which come under official franks, which ought not to have been franked?—No, not latterly; before the Commissioners sat here I think those to public offices were a great deal more numerous than they are now.

The question refers to letters charged to public departments?—Yes; I conceive the letters charged to public departments, but received free by the individuals, have diminished.

Did you ever detect any of them?—I cannot say; I cannot suppress any letter or stop it, or make any remark upon it.

Have you become aware of any?—Yes, I perceived there were inclosures in those letters.

Inclosures which were not official?—Which I conceived were not official.

Have you ever taken any steps to inquire into that?—No, I have not.

Have you ever made any complaint to the secretary?—No, I never did; as the postage was paid to the post-office I did not do it.

Are there any religious societies which have their letters free now?—They have not their letters precisely free; they are addressed to Sir Edward Lees, with the name of the society at the corner; but if addressed specifically to the society, they do not pass free.

Have you had any reason to suppose that those covers are made use of for improper purposes?—Formerly I think there were some instances of it; at that time I was in the secretary's office, and had an opportunity of judging; now subsequently to my removal from that office I have had no opportunity of judging.

Were you in the secretary's office at the same time you were in the alphabet office?—No; but since I came down stairs I have had no opportunity of judging of those circumstances of which I had an opportunity formerly.

What proportion of the whole letters received do you think is delivered through the alphabet office?—I cannot well answer as to the proportion, but I can as to the postage.

Making the postage the criterion, what would be the proportion?—I should think we receive and deliver as much as all the letter-carriers put together, that is taking our payments as the criterion. It must be observed that the postage paid by the public offices is very heavy, and consequently as to the number of letters this cannot be a correct criterion.

Is there often a great pressure at the alphabet office?—Yes, particularly on the Monday morning, when the packet is anxiously expected by the mercantile people.

How long does it take you to make a delivery?—For those who actually stand there, and are anxious for it, it would not take myself and the other clerk more than ten or fifteen minutes, but then they are calling perpetually after that time, one presents himself at the window every moment almost.

Does the same person always officiate at the post-paid window?—No, not the same person; there are two clerks.

Can a person who gives in a letter, see who it is to whom he gives his money?—No, he cannot. I took occasion to observe upon that once or twice; I would respectfully suggest that there should be some mode of bringing the persons more face to face; I think that would be better.

That would be easy by having a window put in?—We are confined as to room in that particular department.

Do you think that would be desirable?—I certainly do; I think if the persons were to come face to face as they do at the alphabet window, it would give more satisfaction. I do not mean to say it would protect the letters one atom more, but I think it would give more satisfaction to the person who pays for the letter.

Has the present mode been adopted intentionally do you think to prevent the person being seen?—No, I think not; I think it is the nature of the office.

It was not done in order to prevent the individual receiving the money being sworn to by a person who might wish to defraud the office, or to lay a claim against the office?—I think if any one did that, the circumstances would be so narrowly investigated they could hardly substantiate their claim. The officer at the post-paid window, like all the other officers, is sworn, and consequently it would be affidavit against a sworn officer; and I think that would be so narrowly investigated that it is almost probable a person would be defeated in making a false charge, should he be so inclined.

Do you give any notice at the alphabet window of the time of the arrival of a mail?—No, we do not, save while in the act of sorting the mail.

Is there any public notice in any other part of the post-office of the time of the arrival of the British mail?—There is a notice, at least there was; but whether it is attended to by the messenger or not, to alter the figures "arrived" or "not arrived," I am not aware; the person in general comes up to the alphabet window, and it is opened, and he asks whether the mail is arrived or not, and he receives a reply.

There should be some public notice, that every body going by may know whether the letters are come, should there not?—I think it would be very eligible; there are the means of doing so.

Do you think it is neglected?—I believe the messenger attending has neglected the directions.

There are letters up against the post-office stating the arrival and dispatch of the mail, are there not?—Not that I am aware of; it devolves upon the messenger, and I think it is not attended to, for the reason that many persons have come up to the alphabet window, and asked whether the mail is arrived; they have said "It is up, that it has arrived," when it has not arrived.

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Anthony Lyster.  
13th Oct. 1826.

There is a notice given, but not regularly attended to?—That is my idea.

Have you ever represented that to the secretary, or any person who should have the control, in order that you might not be interrupted?—I have even spoken to the messenger myself upon the subject; at least it is upon my recollection that I have.

Have you had any complaints of letters being delivered to the wrong persons?—No, I have not. There was a circumstance occurred so lately as yesterday; there was a letter containing a large number of half notes delivered at the window to a Mr. O'Connor; he immediately returned them; it was not for him; he had opened it, and I myself delivered it and took the acknowledgment from the proper person this day; that was the only circumstance of the kind I recollect. There was also, some very short time since, a letter addressed "W. Hamilton, Esq., Dublin," delivered to Wm. S. Hamilton; it proved to have been intended for Mr. Hamilton, Commissioner of Revenue Inquiry, and was subsequently delivered to that gentleman, with an explanation.

You of course can have no means of ascertaining that you deliver the letters to the proper persons?—With regard to all the merchants we know their clerks and their messengers, and most of them have locked up boxes; but with regard to individuals cursorily here whom we do not know, whose letters are directed to the post-office, we have no means of knowing them; the precaution we have usually taken with regard to letters charged double, and particularly if it is a paid letter, is to enter it in a book and take an acknowledgment, and request them to write down their name and their residence in town; that in fact is the only precaution we have the power of taking, above all where it is a paid letter, and we can evidently see it has some contents of value; we also ask for the christian name of the person applying for the letter, and take his receipt.

How did the mistake you refer to occur yesterday?—A man of the name of O'Connor applied for a letter, and it was given to him; it was given to the right person to-day; I asked him his christian name, and it was Alward; I asked the post-town, and it was Roscommon.

How are bank notes taxed?—A letter containing any bit of paper, note, or otherwise, is considered as double; if it contains two it is treble; between that and an ounce weight there is no distinction; when it arrives at an ounce weight there are four postages charged, and every quarter of an ounce after is considered as equal to a single letter.

Are letters very frequently weighed?—Very frequently. When they arrive at an ounce, standing beam, they come under that denomination or class of letters which are charged by weight, four postages for an ounce, and a single postage for every quarter afterwards. Letters containing invoices or bills of lading, or written processes or proceedings at law, written on the same sheet of paper with a letter, are charged double, or an order on a bank.

Do you remember, in the year 1823, when you were examined before the parliamentary Commissioners, giving them some information respecting a Mr. Irvine and Mr. Mitchell?—Yes, I do.

Has any thing new occurred upon that since?—I have heard nothing since, except that Mr. Mitchell is hatchman at the sheriff's prison or the marshalsea.

How are you determined whether you shall weigh a letter or not; do you guess pretty nearly whether it is above an ounce?—We guess them at once by seeing them; many persons, having got franks from members, have asked me to weigh them; they are chargeable if it is standing beam. I believe the words in the Act are, "if it is under an ounce weight." I have told a person at once on seeing it, it was above weight, from habit, and have weighed them frequently.

Do you receive your full share of the profits now?—Yes, I do.

You did not at first; you paid something to Mr. Hamilton?—Yes, I did.

That has ceased?—Mr. Hamilton died after that time.

Was that payment with the sanction of the postmaster-general?—It was.

Did you ever happen to hear of any other officer in the post-office giving any pecuniary consideration, or any share of his receipts, to another person, on getting possession of an office?—No; there is no case of the kind within my recollection.

Did you never hear of an office being bought?—Yes; there was a case of Mr. Kellett and Mr. Parsons; but I was not aware of the transaction till it was actually made public. I understood that office had been bought.

You never heard of any money having been given, as an inducement to resign, by an officer who was to succeed him?—No; that was the only instance in which I think I have heard of an office being sold.

Is there any system of fines in your office?—No; the persons in our office are fined for mistaking the letters of a public office, but that is not frequent.

Not for non-attendance?—No; the duties are such that it is imperative the officers should attend; the office is of that nature that the business could not go on if they did not attend.

If they are too ill to attend, what is done?—If they are too ill to attend, we generally get a probationer from the sorting office.

Is not the officer who does not attend fined?—He pays the probationer.

At what rate does he pay him?—Three shillings and nine-pence halfpenny Irish currency is the established rate. It is difficult to induce an officer from the inland office to come into our office, from the duty being so perpetual and so constant; they have very often declined it; and it is an office of that nature, that unless the individual has a local knowledge of the place, he is perfectly useless; if he throws a merchant's letter wrong, and there is a day's delay, he would set the whole wrong; a person must have a local knowledge of that office before he come into it.

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No. 189.

Mr.

Anthony Lyster.  
13th Oct. 1826.

What do you mean by a local knowledge of the office?—Bring forward a young man, and ask him to throw forward a packet there, and if he has not been in the habit of doing it, he will make mistakes; he will throw Mr. Sneyd's letters into Mr. Shaw's box, and the consequence is, when those persons call for their letters, the whole thing will be in error; that happens even to ourselves sometimes, and has happened.

What you mean by a local knowledge of the office is, where the different boxes are placed?—Yes; and the mode of keeping the accounts, &c., &c., and of re-directing letters in the evening.

What is that process?—The letters we receive from different persons who have received them from us, who return them, and we forward them on that evening, and we enter them and take credit for the postage. All the letters which have been delivered by us must go back through us.

If they have not been opened?—Yes; for instance, suppose a letter directed to Mr. Sneyd's house, for any individual there, that it is sent back to us, stating that the party is gone to Elphin or Roscommon, or wherever it may be, that letter goes forward that night again.

Then the postage is taxed on?—Yes, the full amount of postage. We stamp this letter with the takings off stamp, the words are, "Postage to Dublin not paid;" the letter then goes forward with the original charge and the additional charge to its destination.

Who puts on the additional charge?—The inland office.

You put on the stamp, "Postage to Dublin not paid"?—Yes.

You get credit for the amount of that postage?—Yes; then we send in those letters to the inland office, to go on that evening.

Have you reason to think the system continues of sending surveyors into the interior by private favour?—No, upon my word, I do not think it does.

You mentioned that upon your former examination?—It is not upon my mind that I did, perhaps I may have done; I am not in the secretary's office now, nor have I been for upwards of three years, and consequently I do not know what is going on there, as I did formerly.

Nobody in the alphabet office has any other occupation?—None other; the duties would materially interfere with any other occupation.

ANTH<sup>y</sup> LYSTER.

## Appendix, No. 190.

9th October 1826.

Mr. WILLIAM FETHERSTON called in and examined.

YOU are one of the district surveyors of the post-office, are you not?—I am.

For which district?—Indeed it has got no particular denomination; it might be partly called the south-west; I think it embraces different parts of the kingdom running from Dublin to Galway, and from that on to Limerick and Kerry, and running from Dublin through Kildare; in fact it embraces a considerable part of Galway, Leinster, and some of Munster.

You are particularly confined to that district?—That is my immediate district, but I have been occasionally employed on others.

How many other surveyors are there?—Three regular surveyors.

How many extra surveyors?—Two, I understand.

Galway is in your district?—It is.

The Commissioners have had an application from a person of the name of Forbes, who a short time ago was a porter in the employ of the Galway mail-coach office?—I know the person.

Can you state to the Commissioners the circumstances under which the complaint that man has made to the Board originated?—I do not know of any particular complaint. I will state the circumstances which occurred: I had been at one time at Galway two or three years ago, and had observed them in sending letters by the coach, and I took an opportunity on a particular morning of stopping them as well as I could; I went myself down to the street where the coach was going off, and they got intimation that I was going to speak to them on the subject, and the coach was driving off, and I think I sent on to the next village; at all events they had intimation of my intentions, and put the letters into the next post-office, and they were sent on to Dublin. The letters were stopped upon that occasion. The man being aware of what I had been doing, just at the moment entered into some conversation with me, and told me that he would point out many that were carrying letters; I desired him to ascertain such as he could, and to let me know the names, and give me the names.

What did he do?—The man did not send me any names for a considerable time afterwards.

Did he send you any names afterwards?—I think two or three. He had been removed from the employment, and he stated that it was in consequence of his exertions on this particular

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ticular occasion, and I inquired from the agent what was the occasion of his being dismissed.

What agent?—The agent of the mail-coach; he was a porter in that office; he said he dismissed him for his misconduct at the time.

Did you understand for what misconduct he dismissed him?—I forgot exactly what it was; I think he mentioned it; but he gave me to understand he was a man in whom he had no confidence.

Did you understand whether he had been long in the service?—Indeed I recollect the man for I think at least six or seven years before that.

He states that he had been fifteen years in the service of the mail-coach office?—I think I recollect his being in the service for six or seven years before that circumstance took place, and probably more.

Did the man complain to you of having been dismissed?—He did, and not till then, state to me the names of those persons, and complained of his having been dismissed by the agent of the coach-office; and I applied to the agent of the coach-office, and he denied it; he said that the man had made himself very troublesome about the coach, and to the people going by the coach; but that it was not in consequence of such exertions he had dismissed him, when endeavouring to ascertain whether people were taking letters or not.

What is your impression of the man's services?—The impression on my mind is this, that the agent might have considered him officious; he stated to me that the man's conduct was not altogether correct.

Did you ask him what he alluded to, when he said the man's conduct was not correct?—He mentioned the circumstance of some matter, but I cannot bear it in mind at present; the impression upon my mind is, that they might have taken a dislike to the man for doing so; the man memorialized, I think, for some remuneration, and stated, that he had been deprived of his situation; this was referred to me, and I recommended he should receive some remuneration for what he had done, conceiving that the agent might have taken a dislike to him for this.

What had he done at this time?—Nothing, but the mentioning the names of two or three persons when he was dismissed, but not till then.

Have you reason to believe his information was true?—I have no reason to doubt it.

Have you reason to know it was true?—None, but from himself.

Did you take any steps to ascertain that?—Not then, for the man was put into confinement; I could do nothing then, for it was too late.

What was he put into confinement for?—For some domestic concerns.

Why do you suppose the man did not give you the information till so long afterwards?—Indeed I cannot say, but he did not.

Do you believe he had no other object but to detect frauds upon the post-office revenue?—And to get the reward which he might have obtained in consequence of it.

Was he at liberty for any time after he made this representation to you of the names?—I am not certain.

Was it a written communication or a verbal one?—It was a written one; and, I believe, I sent it with my other reports.

Did you ever make a report upon the subject to the secretary?—When the man applied for remuneration, I did recommend him to receive compensation.

Did you apply to the secretary before the man applied to you?—The man made the application himself.

Did you communicate to the secretary before the secretary applied to you?—I think the secretary referred this man's memorial to me, and I replied upon it.

There is a letter of yours of the 26th of August 1825?—That will explain every thing.

You state, that in returning the enclosed letter, you beg to state, that you did find him sometime back of service, by assisting you in preventing persons travelling in the Galway mail-coach conveying letters, and that you believe he made himself disagreeable to the proprietor by that?—That is exactly the case.

How did he make himself disagreeable to the proprietor by that?—I think that very morning he was the person who told me that people were conveying letters.

That he was the person who gave you the information?—Yes.

Was that in consequence of any communication from you before?—No, I do not think it was; I had been stopping at the hotel, and he had seen me taking some steps to prevent people conveying letters; and, I think, he mentioned to me, one morning that the coach was just going off, that he had seen people taking letters.

What were the steps you had taken yourself?—I had spoken to the agent of the mail-coach to prevent it; it was in his house the hotel was kept.

You went down, having a knowledge that there was a practice of conveying letters in that way?—Not with that view; I went on other business.

How did you gain the information?—In all probability it was the agent himself mentioned it to me.

It was not this person who mentioned it to you in the first instance?—No, undoubtedly not.

That letter being dated the 26th of August 1825, it appears that the secretary then wrote to you upon the subject; and that your second answer is "In reply to your letter of the 30th ultimo I beg to mention that I conceive the services of Thomas Forbes worthy the consideration of the postmasters-general, and that I meant to express myself to that effect in my letter of the 26th of August"?—Yes; I conceived that if the man had assisted

in



in any measure in detecting any thing of the kind; in fact, his services should have been taken into consideration, particularly when he had lost his employment.

How do you know it was not a misrepresentation on his part?—I cannot say; he merely stated that to me.

Was his statement a sufficient ground for recommending him for compensation?—That statement of having given me the information he had that morning; that was the information of two or three persons.

And you took no steps to ascertain whether it was true or not?—I have mentioned that on the first morning alluded to I did so in person, and that some of the letters were put into the post-office at the next village; it was too late upon the second occasion to do so with effect.

You took for granted that his statement was correct?—Yes; his conduct on that morning, and his having mentioned to me he would take every step he could to prevent it and to give me information, but he did not communicate any thing to me except one letter, in fact, after he had lost his situation.

Is it not possible he may have been mistaken in representing that those three persons had carried letters?—Undoubtedly it is possible.

Is it not possible he may have wilfully misrepresented the fact?—Undoubtedly it is possible.

Did he state to you that he had tendered an affidavit to the effect of the information he was capable of giving?—Yes, he said he would be able to prove that those persons conveyed the letters.

Did he state that he had offered or was ready to make an affidavit of this fact?—He stated that he was ready to prove it on oath.

Did he state that he had tendered that affidavit to a magistrate at Galway?—No, not that I recollect.

What did you do on that information, that he was ready to prove it?—Nothing; it was too late to follow it up; it is very difficult to fine any person, unless it is done at the moment.

Did you or not believe that the man could have produced sufficient evidence of the fact?—As far as he was concerned himself.

He professed to have a knowledge of a fact?—Yes.

You believed it?—I did.

Then why did not you take measures to pursue the inquiry?—Because I conceived the law was so defective; it would have been difficult to have done any thing to fine the persons concerned.

Then you did nothing but receive this man's communication, and send up a recommendation that he should have compensation?—Just so.

Did you recommend that he should have compensation, before the secretary applied to you?—No.

If the secretary had not applied to you what should you have done?—I think I should have recommended the man myself to have received some consideration in consequence of his losing his employment.

If a man, really for an honest service to the revenue, loses his employment, and is turned out of employ, what compensation can you make to him?—What he would have gained if those persons had been convicted would have been but a few pounds, and I thought if he lost any thing by it, that it would have been proper to make him that or some remuneration.

Would that be a compensation for the loss of his office?—The agent told me it was not for that he was dismissed; I inquired of the agent his reason for dismissing the man.

Did he tell you what it was for?—I cannot say exactly what it was, but I think it was for some misconduct.

Was it for dishonesty?—I think it was, from the information I got from the agent. I have no doubt it was for dishonesty.

On the 26th of August 1825 you stated that he had made himself disagreeable to his employers; what did you mean by that?—That I conceived that by looking after this, by coming to the coach and cautioning the passengers, as the agent told me, making a vast deal of noise about the coach; that, in fact, he said, prevented people getting into it at times.

Do you consider that dishonesty?—No, not that; but the man had dismissed him for some dishonest act.

Why did not you state that to the secretary, to put him in possession of the whole case?—It did not occur to me at the moment; I was asked whether I considered him entitled to any compensation, and having the impression upon my mind that the agent might possibly have found him disagreeable, or conceived him so in any way, sooner than the man should be injured, I recommended him to get some compensation from the post-office; I thought he was entitled to it, as far as I could judge.

On recollection, cannot you state the particular act of dishonesty for which the agent stated he was dismissed?—I cannot.

Did you communicate to any body the information this person had given you, with respect to the three individuals whom you supposed to have carried letters?—No, except by my report.

Did you communicate to any body that he had given you this information?—I did not, that I recollect.

Did you mention it to the agent?—No, certainly not.

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Mr.

William Fetherston.  
9th Oct. 1826.

Did you make a report of it to the secretary or any body at the post-office?—No, I did not, that is, until the memorial came up; I then mentioned every matter. I recollect being in town and mentioning it.

Do not you make a report of the information you obtain when you are on your tour?—Occasionally.

Did you make any such report prior to the reference; did you state to the department that you had received any such intelligence?—No.

Why not?—I expected to be able to act on this man's information, but in fact he defeated every thing he was to pursue; for he went openly about the matter, and completely defeated it. My object was to ascertain those people's names who were generally in the habit of conveying the letters, and then to have tried to detect them; but he let every person in the town know what he was about.

And the effect of that was to prevent its being effectual?—Yes.

You mentioned that it was the length of time which had elapsed which prevented your following it up?—I mentioned that also, that it was the length of time which had elapsed, together with the difficulty of fining persons, if not done immediately.

Does it frequently happen that you recommend persons to receive a consideration?—No, very seldom indeed.

Never, except in cases of particular merit?—Never, unless when I consider them entitled to it; and in such cases I am called upon merely to state my opinion.

Not where the service is at all doubtful?—If I consider them entitled to it I state that, and if I conceive them not entitled I would not.

Will you mention the names of any persons who have received pecuniary consideration on your recommendation?—I am not aware but of one person who gave me information of frauds being practised by different postmasters, and I followed up that information until I completely succeeded in detecting it; that was about three years ago, and that person got remuneration.

Upon your recommendation?—Yes; the person applied for it; the memorial was referred to me.

What was the amount?—£30.

What was the fraud in that instance?—There were two postmasters appeared to have combined together to have made money by short-charging themselves; they send dockets from one to each other; one postmaster sent, we will say 15s.; I found the person who received it, entered an overcharge upon that docket; I will suppose 2s. 6d.; he had a method pointed out to him in what way on his voucher to take credit for that 2s. 6d.; I found also that notwithstanding his claiming that 2s. 6d., the charge he had set down in what they called the received side of his voucher, which he acknowledged, the actual sum possibly was but 7s.

Was that detected in the bye-letter office?—I detected that in the country.

Might that have been detected in the bye-letter office?—I do not think it would so well; I know they could not so well as the surveyor could.

Could they have detected it at all?—Unless they had reason to suppose from the smallness of the charge that a suspicion of the kind came into their mind they never could.

Who were the postmasters concerned?—The postmaster concerned was the postmaster at Kilkenny, and the postmaster's assistant at Clonmel; there were two others that I conceive also might have been connected in it, but I was not able rightly to bring it home; the four were dismissed. I have the documents to this moment; I have not them in Dublin with me.

You mention that Forbes was imprisoned for debt?—For some domestic debt, I think; I know he was imprisoned.

Are you quite sure it was for debt he was imprisoned?—He told me himself it was for debt, and my belief is that it was for debt; the man was in a very distressed situation when I went there; I gave him money out of my own pocket, seeing him distressed.

You had no reason to suppose he was imprisoned for any act of dishonesty?—I never had.

Have you ever detected any unfair forwarding of letters by that Galway mail?—No.

Suppose you heard a guard was carrying letters what would you do?—If I knew he was carrying letters I would take them from him.

Suppose you had information from a person who said he knew the guard had got letters in his pocket, what would you do?—I would take them from him; I would desire him to hand them to me; and I would tell him it was at the risk of his situation if he refused to be searched.

Did Forbes ever tell you that the coachmen or guards were in the habit of carrying letters?—Indeed, I do not think he ever did; I am pretty sure he never did.

Do you reside in Dublin?—No, I reside in the country.

In what part of the country?—Mostly within a few miles of Limerick; I have resided until the last six or seven years in the county of Westmeath.

How often do you proceed on a tour?—I am generally constantly on duty.

Were you on duty now?—Yes, at the time I was ordered up here.

Where?—I came from a place called Newport, on the road to Ballinasloe.

The post-office stated that you were not on duty?—I was; I received a letter a few days before to exert myself respecting some arrears that were due by different postmasters in my district, and I was on that very business.

Was the postmaster at Ballinasloe in arrear?—He was.

How long is it since you had been at Ballinasloe before?—It is some months ago.

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Mr.

William Fetherston.  
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Have you been there since the last fair?—There are two fairs, one in May and one in October; I do not think I have been there since the one in May; I may have passed through, but I do not think I have stopped; I was not there in May.

Were you there at the preceding October fair?—No, I was not.

Do you consider the time of the fair a convenient time for making inquiry into the post-office?—There was a gentleman appointed to meet me there to pay me the arrear of a deputy, and I was proceeding to other offices.

Was that the arrear of the postmaster of Ballinasloe?—It was the arrear of Dangan. The deputy of Ballinasloe remitted, in consequence of applications made to him, a considerable part of the arrear, and to-morrow is to remit the remainder.

How much did he remit?—I think about 40*l.*, between 30*l.* and 40*l.*; and I got 50*l.* this morning from a gentleman who was to have paid me for the other office.

Did you receive any money at Ballinasloe?—None but that I mentioned; the gentleman did not keep his appointment with me as he said he would; but on receiving orders to come to Dublin I wrote a letter to him, and he paid 50*l.* this day at the post-office.

Did you receive any particular order to go to Ballinasloe?—I did, among others; the postmaster of Ballinasloe, among others, was mentioned as being in arrear.

What was the date of that order?—I think it was dated the 18th of September.

What day did you arrive at Ballinasloe?—I came up on this day week from Newport, and a gentleman appointed with me to meet him on Thursday; I went in on Thursday, and came to Ballinasloe.

More than a fortnight elapsed after you had been directed to Ballinasloe, before you went there?—I had been at different offices before I went there.

What is the distance between your residence and Ballinasloe?—I think fifty miles.

How long would it take you to travel that distance in your usual mode of survey?—I went within a few miles of Ballinasloe the first day, and was in Ballinasloe at eight o'clock the next morning, in sufficient time to take the coach; I recollect getting there at eight o'clock, ready to take the coach to go down to Westport, and other offices in that line. I took them all in the same direction.

Did you go direct from your own place to Ballinasloe?—I had been in the county of Cork at the time.

Are any extra surveyors ever sent into your district?—They are.

Are any there now?—Not that I know of.

Or any other persons doing the duty of surveyor?—Not that I know of.

Are there no postmasters under suspension?—Not one that I know of.

No vacancies?—Not one that I know of. I got an order to-day to appoint a new postmaster in the room of one that is dead; that is the only vacancy I know of; but none for arrear, or any thing of that kind.

How long has the postmaster of Ballinasloe been in arrear?—I think he was rather tardy in his payments these last two years, I have remarked that.

How long had he been in arrear upon this occasion?—The arrear accumulates.

How long was it since he had remitted before you went down there?—I cannot say, I did not see the last remit; he just remitted, immediately upon my going there.

Do you remember what other places you were desired to visit?—I have a list of them; there was a return of them sent.

Can you remember them?—Ballinasloe is the first, and Ballyboy was another. I can furnish an exact list to-morrow, if it is wished. Ballyglass, Ballyhaunis, Ballylongford, Ballymullet, Ballinacargy, Charleville; I happened to be there at the moment when I got the order; Clare, Clifden was also mentioned, but it appeared to be the arrear of the late deputy, which I reported when I received the order; Cloughjordan, Colehill, Croughwell, Dangan, Emo.

That is in the Queen's County?—Yes; there are many of them for very trivial sums; Hollymount, Kanturk, Kilbeggan, Kildare, Killaloe, Kinnitty.

The places appear to be very numerous?—Yes; I will give a return of the whole of the names; there were many of them for trivial sums; it was not worth while to go to many of them. On writing to many of them, I got the money at once; I believe my district is exceedingly clear of arrear.

You did not visit all the places mentioned in your order?—No; I took that line down to Westport, and was on my return when I received an order to come up here.

You were quite sure you were ordered to Ballinasloe?—It was in the list, I know.

Did you ever succeed in clearing off the arrears generally?—I believe it will be found there is very little money due in my district by any postmaster; there are some odd ones owe money, but there are very few that the payment is not in the course of being made.

How many have cleared off their arrears in consequence of this last visit?—Almost all have cleared off in a great measure; I will send an exact return of those who have cleared off, along with the return of the names.

How do you travel?—Sometimes I take the coaches, and sometimes I take my own gig, and sometimes the other public conveyances, according as I can get on best.

Is it any part of your business to superintend the travelling of the mail-coaches?—No, I cannot say that it is.

Do you frequently travel by the mail-coaches?—Often.

Have you ever had occasion to make any observations upon them, and to make reports upon the subject?—I cannot say that I have; I think they are in general exceedingly well conducted; if I saw any thing I thought not right, carrying luggage on the top of the carriage,

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Mr.

William Featherston.  
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carriage, or any thing of that kind, I have mentioned it, and the agents or the coachmen have at once acquiesced in any orders that I gave them.

Are you accustomed to check the taxing of letters when you arrive at any office where they may be?—I do; I examine them minutely constantly.

Do you often detect errors that way?—I have detected mistakes and irregularities of postmasters not charging sufficiently; charging, suppose, double letters single, and treble letters only double, and matters of that kind.

What is the most usual mistake you have discovered?—There cannot be any material mistake, except for the frequency of it.

What is the most frequent mistake?—I think the most frequent mistake is not charging sufficiently, according to the specified rate according to the scale.

That the letters are undertaxed?—Yes; that a postmaster will charge a letter 6*d.* when it should be 7*d.*, and matters of that kind, and then I write to them, pointing out their error.

And single when it should be charged double?—Yes.

Have you often discovered that?—I have.

What steps do you take when you make that discovery?—I write to the postmaster, pointing out his irregularity, and cautioning him to be more regular in future.

Where is it that you make these discoveries?—At the office where the letters arrive.

At Galway, for instance, you would examine the letters which had come from Limerick?—I would.

And you would write to the postmaster at Limerick if there were any mistake?—Yes, I would caution him to be more regular in future.

Would you report that to the post-office here?—I regularly forward a copy of all my correspondence here.

Do you suppose it is through inadvertence those mistakes occur, or that there is any design in it?—Through inadvertence.

It does not occur so frequently as to induce you to think it is design?—No, because the postmaster cannot benefit, for he keeps no account with the postmaster at Galway; two officers who do not keep account with each other cannot ever do it, then all they could do was to charge the person for whom the letter was directed with the postage upon it; but if they combine they can cheat the post-office; for instance, the cases that I alluded to before.

How would they be able to cheat the post-office as you describe it, by undercharging a letter?—They could not in that instance, but where two postmasters hold accounts with each other, and they have a pound's worth of letters to send, and they charge suppose 18*s.*, or suppose they charge a pound, the postmaster receives the docket, as in the instance I have mentioned, he takes off 5*s.* as an overcharge; I have found this person I have mentioned doing this, notwithstanding his having taken credit for that 5*s.*, or whatever it was; he then set down in the received side of his voucher probably but 10*s.*, instead of 18*s.*; thus making 5*s.* upon the amount of overcharges, independent of a short entry of 3*s.*, thus making 8*s.* for himself; having got the other postmaster's voucher and examined the sent side of it, I found that each tallied with the other as to the entry of 10*s.* so of course they had combined to cheat the post-office.

Do you ever find any errors in post-paid letters?—I have heretofore observed letters passing through that the deputies have not stamped them with their office stamp, but marked them as post-paid; I have taken notice of that.

What object had they in omitting the stamp, as they put the mark?—What I conceived was, that it was to defeat detection by not putting their office stamp; it might have been a hundred miles from their office where I observed it.

In that case the person here or wherever it was going could not ascertain whether the charge was a right one?—I conceive that their doing this was to put, in all probability, the money into their pocket that they got for the letter, and to keep off detection by not stamping the letter; if a person post-pays a letter the person to whom it is going will receive it free if it is marked post-paid; but the deputy not stamping it with his office stamp would keep off the detection by my not knowing where the letter came from.

Who is to check him, only the other deputy postmaster?—The other deputy postmaster should check him, and they have a particular method for doing that.

He would find out that it was marked post-paid, though the mark of the town was not upon it?—Yes; and it is the duty of the postmaster who keeps an account with the deputy where the letter is paid, when he receives that letter, to enter it in what is called the paid column of his voucher against the person who gets the money.

Do you mean that he stamps post-paid upon the letter, but does not mark the town?—Yes; then suppose the letter was put in at Cork I might find it at Galway, but cannot know where it was put in, unless the postmaster where it comes first from stamps it; at the same time a fraud may not exist, unless with the consent of this corresponding deputy.

How can the person who omits the post-office mark put any thing into his pocket, in consequence of that omission?—It might not come into the account, and I have known instances.

It is not by the mark of the town that they make the charge?—They should mark their own town on every letter they dispatch; suppose Clonmel holds an account with Kilkenny, any deputy receiving the payment of a post-paid letter at his own office must enter it in his docket, and must enter it in the sent side of the paid column of the voucher, and the deputy receiving it must enter it on the paid side of his received side of the column.

By the first deputy omitting to take any notice of the letter, he pockets the money, and his friend delivers the letter free?—Yes, unless entered in their vouchers; I have observed

a letter

a letter in this way forty, fifty, or a hundred miles from where it was put in, and I could not discover the office from which it was dispatched in consequence of the town not being put upon it.

The person who received the letter could give you the information?—I have applied in various instances, and have ascertained whether they were entered or not; in some instances they were, in some instances not.

If a letter is taxed with the proper rate, though the post-town is omitted to be stamped upon it, there could be no fraud?—Not if it is carried to account.

Do you mean to state that because the post-town is omitted to be inserted, there is necessarily fraud?—No, if it is entered in the account; but I cannot say how far it may have come, through how many persons hands it may have come, unless it bears the office stamp.

You mean to say that a fraud intended would never be detected, unless the letter came under the examination of a superintendent?—In all probability it would not.

Would it then?—If they are enabled to trace up the matter to where the letter was put in and paid, it would; I have frequently written to different persons on observing those letters, and enclosed them to the postmaster where they were directed, and desired him in delivering them to find out for me where they were put in, and I have then examined the vouchers to see whether they entered them correctly or not.

W. FETHERSTON.

Examinations.

No. 190.

Mr.  
William Fetherston.  
9th Oct. 1826.

Sir,

19th September 1826.

HEREWITH I send you the list of arrears due by postmasters to the present day, and I am to desire that you will lose not a moment in proceeding to those offices most in arrear; where you are of opinion that the same is not likely to be liquidated by your calling on them to do so by letter; and I am further to desire that you will from time to time report what probability there may be of the entire being paid off, as well as the general state of the offices you visit.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

To William Fetherston, Esq.

(Signed) E. S. LEES,  
Secretary.

MR. WILLIAM FETHERSTON begs to forward, for the information of the Parliamentary Commissioners of Inquiry, a list of the several deputy postmasters mentioned to him as in arrear, agreeably to secretary Lees's letter of 19th September, together with a statement of the proceedings taken by him in consequence thereof; and also the amount of payments subsequently made by each deputy, as required by the Commissioners. Mr. Fetherston also forwards a copy of Sir Edward Lees's letter on the subject.

General Post-Office,  
Dublin, 11th October 1826.

LIST.

TOWN.	SUM stated to be due on 18th Sept. 1826.			SUM paid since 18th Sept. 1826.			OBSERVATIONS.
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Ballylongford - -	8	19	8½	-	-	-	Deputy written to.
Bunratty - - -	16	8	1	7	0	0	Ditto.
B in Ossory - - -	9	0	2	8	10	0	Ditto.
Boleigh - - -	20	4	5	10	4	7½	Ditto.
Castleisland - -	5	2	1	5	19	10	Ditto.
Charleville - - -	22	3	5	23	6	5	Surveyor was at Charleville upon the receipt of the secretary's letter of 19th Sept.
Cloughjordan - -	10	16	4	9	0	0	Deputy written to.
Dingle - - -	45	0	2	14	10	0	Ditto.
Doneraile - - -	17	2	0	32	3	8	Ditto.
Emo - - -	24	10	0	25	0	0	Ditto.
Kanturk - - -	30	0	0	16	7	4	Ditto.
Kildare - - -	25	3	7	24	7	6	Ditto.
Kildysart - - -	16	3	3	16	0	0	Ditto.
Killaloe - - -	12	12	4	15	0	0	Ditto.
Pallaskenry - - -	4	15	0	7	17	0	Ditto.
Scariff - - -	3	2	10	3	2	6	Ditto.
Shanagolden - -	16	10	0	3	13	10	Ditto.
Ballinasloe - - -	72	0	0	87	0	0	Ditto, and office visited.
Ballyboy - - -	11	7	6	2	10	0	Deputy written to.
Ballyglass - - -	11	0	0	14	0	0	Ditto.

Examinations.  
 No. 190.  
 Mr.  
 William Fetherston.  
 9th Oct. 1826.

TOWN.	SUM stated to be due on 18th Sept. 1826.			SUM paid since 18th Sept. 1826.			OBSERVATIONS.
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Ballyhawness - -	10	0	0	2	9	0	Deputy written to.
Ballynacaugy - -	47	8	4	15	11	9	Ditto.
Ballymullet - -	8	15	7	8	15	7	Ditto.
Castlebar - -	55	8	9	42	12	0	Ditto, and office visited.
Castleblakeney - -	17	7	2	12	0	0	Deputy written to, and office visited.
Clard - - -	57	19	0	2	0	0	Deputy written to.
Clare - - -	21	0	0	24	7	11	Ditto.
Clifden - - -	95	0	11	-	-	-	This arrear due by the late deputy.
Colehill - - -	13	6	9	12	7	0½	Deputy written to.
Croughwell - -	20	13	11	6	0	0	Ditto.
Dangan - - -	74	1	3	50	0	0	Deputy written to, and office visited.
Hollymount - -	50	0	0	32	10	0	Ditto ditto.
Kilbeggan - -	37	15	7	13	0	0	Deputy written to.
Kenity - - -	5	15	5	5	15	5	Ditto.
Mullingar - -	100	5	6	52	10	0	Ditto.
Newport, Mayo - -	38	18	6	5	0	0	Ditto, and office visited.
Outerard - -	16	12	0	8	0	0	Deputy written to.
Portumna - -	30	0	0	14	0	0	Ditto, and office visited.
Tyrelspass - -	117	6	10	-	-	-	Ditto ditto.
Ballinakill - -	14	0	0	11	13	10	Deputy written to.
Pallasgrane - -	20	0	10	5	0	0	Ditto - this arrear appears to be that of the deceased deputy.

W. FETHERSTON,  
 10th October 1816.

### Appendix, No. 191.

16th October 1826.

Mr. PATRICK URQUHART called in and examined.

No. 191.  
 Mr.  
 Patrick Urquhart.  
 16th Oct. 1826.

YOU are assistant to the superintendent of mail-coaches, are you not?—Yes.  
 Where is the superintendent at present?—He is upon the line between Limerick and Tralee.

On any particular business?—The grand jury of the county of Kerry requested an acceleration of the mail-coach between Limerick and Tralee, and the contractor is at present travelling at a quicker rate than he is required by his contract, but upon some application having been made to him, he stated that the state of the road was not sufficiently good to enable him to accelerate the rate, and he requested the superintendent should be sent down to inspect it, and the postmasters-general have ordered it.

When did he go?—On Friday evening last.

How long do you suppose he will be absent?—I should think about a week from this date.

What allowance does he receive during his absence on service?—Twenty-four shillings a day.

Any travelling expenses besides?—No.

Is he allowed to travel gratis by the mail?—He is.

Do you attend the arrival of the mail-coaches in Dublin?—Occasionally.

What attendance do you give?—In the morning the constant attendance in the office is from ten to four, or till the business of the day is over, frequently five, and again in the evening to inspect the guards for duty, and to remain till the dispatch of the mails; the evening attendance is also required on Sundays.

In the morning do you attend regularly at the arrival of the mails?—Not always at the arrival of the mails; I do occasionally.

How often in a week or a month?—Probably once a fortnight or so.

Or once a month?—More frequently than once a month: the first duty on going to the office in the morning is to examine the coach arrivals, and to inquire into any irregularity that may appear; if any circumstance occur which requires attention before the usual office hours, a report is made to the superintendent or to me by the orderly guard in attendance each morning to receive the fire-arms and time-pieces, &c., and in such case it is instantly attended to.

What

What examination is there of the riding posts through Ireland?—There is an examination in our office every day of each time bill, and the entry is made from those time bills, showing what time may have been lost or gained upon each journey as well as upon the mail-coach roads.

Is there any fine or reward for time lost or gained?—There is no reward for time gained, but in case of time being lost on a riding post, the postmaster is fined for it, except some very reasonable excuse appears to have occasioned it.

Is that strictly attended to?—Strictly.

What kind of fine is inflicted in case of neglect?—Probably for twenty minutes on a postmaster 1s., and we never fine under ten minutes, because of the variation of clocks that may cause that.

Is that fine ever disputed by the postmaster?—Sometimes it is disputed.

To what may that amount in the course of a year?—I should think not beyond 40l. a year over the whole kingdom.

Do you correspond with the deputies on those subjects without communication with the secretary?—Yes; but in case of any very great irregularity which we found ourselves unable to correct, we should then report to the secretary, with a view to personal inspection, or such steps as might be necessary to remedy it.

Do you make any monthly or annual report to the secretary?—There is a daily return made out ready for inspection; it is made out in our office, and is a return from each time bill in Ireland.

Do you send it to the secretary's office?—Whenever it is required; but they are all preserved and completed daily.

In those returns is comprised the arrival of the mails, is it not?—Yes; we have a distinct entry of the mail-coaches preserved in a separate book.

What means have you of ascertaining that the guards establishment is always kept up in the distant parts of the country?—In the time bill it is stated what guard accompanies the mail on each stage, and we see whether each guard takes his turn of duty or not.

Have you any thing to do with the coachman?—Not with regard to the payment or immediate control; but in case we heard of any irregularity on the part of a coachman, it would be our duty to communicate it to the contractor, and if he did not remove him in case of sufficient cause, the matter would be submitted to the secretary.

From what class of persons are the guards taken?—They have been for the greater part in the army; but it is required, previously to a man coming to the establishment, that there shall be a certificate that he is acquainted with fire-arms, and that he is under thirty years of age; and before he is approved, he is certified by the medical man as to his health and strength, and by the armourer as to his use of fire-arms.

What other certificate do you require as to his fitness?—A certificate from two respectable gentlemen, who may have recommended him to the postmaster-general as to his general character and age and abilities.

And to his sobriety?—Yes, certainly.

Is it particularly enjoined upon the deputies to make a return, if in any case they find a guard in liquor?—Yes.

Does that ever happen?—Indeed it has happened within the last week.

What steps did you take in consequence?—A copy of the postmaster's report, stating the intoxication of the guard was immediately submitted; and this day I have received an order from the postmasters-general, to communicate his dismissal from office.

On what road was that?—Between Ballinasloe and Westport.

Does it frequently happen that you have such reports?—Not very frequently.

How do you check the turnpike toll accounts; are they paid by contract?—No, they are all by Act of Parliament; there are several Acts of Parliament for different lines of road; and frequently upon a long line there are various Acts of Parliament; and on a doubtful matter of charge, an opinion of the post-office counsel is taken.

How is the amount paid?—By the treasurer of the post-office to the treasurer or proprietor of the toll.

Do you pay the full charge, or have you ever contracted for a diminished charge?—Always according to the Act of Parliament; the Post-office Act requires the postmasters-general to pay the accounts quarterly.

Are the turnpikes heavy?—Some of them are; between Dublin and Kilcullen is the heaviest.

What is the state of the roads at present generally; have you a report of that regularly?—Not regularly, except in case of delays; if I were to judge from the general arrivals at present, I should think they are good; some of them are in winter always bad; from Dublin to Wexford is badly made, and always bad in winter. The Derry and part of the Enniskillen, and some of the cross mail-coach lines are also in bad order in the winter season.

Have you ever taken steps to indict the Commissioners or the parishes?—Sometimes on representations from the contractors of the difficulties of travelling, and the impossibility of keeping time, the superintendent may be ordered to inspect the road, and if it be not a turnpike-road, a letter would be written to the grand jury of the county, under whose superintendence it is; if it were a turnpike-road, we should apply to the treasurer of the turnpike or the board of directors.

Is that frequently done?—Where there are complaints on the state of the road.

Are the roads in consequence improved?—I think they are in general improved; it is not long ago since a representation was made to the grand juries of Tyrone and Monaghan on

## Examinations.

No. 191.

Mr.

Patrick Urquhart.  
16th Oct. 1826.

the state of the Derry road ; the grand jury of Tyrone appointed a person to superintend the road in consequence, and considerable improvements have been made.

What is the state of the roads from hence to Swords?—Very indifferent.

Have any steps been taken to make it better?—It is under the turnpike board from hence to Dunleer, and I believe the funds are not in a good state.

Has it been complained of?—Some time ago, but we have not a mail-coach on it now ; it is part of the old road, but the mail-coach is withdrawn from it now ; the line between Drogheda and Dublin goes by Ashbourne at present.

Do you suppose that is the reason that that road has not been so much attended to?—No ; I should rather think it is in consequence of the depressed state of the funds of the turnpike board.

What number of miles are travelled by mail-coaches in Ireland?—About 2,900 single Irish miles, about equal to 3,500 British.

What is the extent of the post-office communication by carts and every thing?—Probably about 7,000 single miles Irish ; but I should be able by a short calculation to state it more correctly.

Do you think the communication by mail-coaches could be extended much?—I think not, without additional expense.

Putting the expense out of the question, can it be done ; are other roads in a good state?—Yes, and some very important roads, on which applications have been made for mail-coaches.

To what lines do you refer?—Between Belfast and Enniskillen, and from thence to Sligo, applications have been made for that ; and also from Dungannon to Coleraine.

Is there any line from east to west which it would be desirable to travel over in that way?—No, I think not.

From Sligo to Galway, what communication is there?—We have no communication, except by Ballina and Castlebar, or through Kinnegad.

Have you any interference at all with respect to the contracts?—No, not except being the medium of carrying them into execution.

You are not consulted upon the terms?—Sometimes ; and generally, in case of any proposal being made, it is sent to our department to ascertain the additional expense, if any, that it would amount to.

Are the tolls included in any of your contracts?—No they are not ; there is one line of road between Limerick and Cork that the present proprietors of the mail-coach undertake to pay the tolls.

A contract was made, including the charge for tolls?—Yes, it is part of the agreement with the present proprietors of the mail-coach with the postmaster-general ; there is no regular contract yet signed, but it has been going on for some years, and with great regularity.

What is the reason the contract has never been signed?—I believe it has never been authorized by the Treasury.

What is the point of difference?—I do not know ; there is no point of difference between the postmasters-general and the contractor.

Is there any contract for the direct Limerick mail?—No, no contract.

What is the reason of that?—I really cannot state it positively.

Do you know what are the terms of the contract for the Belfast mail?—Three-pence Irish per single mail for six days weekly, and 1*l.* Irish per mile per annum, or 18*s.* 6*d.* British, for carrying the Sunday mail, and 3*d.* per double mile for carrying an additional guard so far as he is carried.

How far does that additional guard go?—To Newry, where the mail arrives at four o'clock in the morning ; then it is attended only by a single guard to Belfast.

Is that 3*d.* a mile for carrying the mail the general rate of contract?—It is the lowest ; it is the same on the Belfast, Cork by Clonmel, and Limerick roads.

What do you pay for the Waterford mail?—It is something about 9*d.* Irish per double mile for six days weekly.

When you speak of 3*d.* per single mile, is that English or Irish?—Irish.

For Waterford it is 9*d.* the double mile Irish?—Yes, it is about that ; it is a certain sum, not exactly calculated, per mile.

Do you think it ought to be done for less, if you could get contractors with capital?—I do not imagine that from Dublin to Waterford it is a very lucrative line ; but between Dublin and Belfast, I conceive, is a very lucrative one.

Should that be done for less?—I think the contractor makes a considerable profit upon it.

What number of outside passengers are the mails allowed to carry?—Generally four ; not exceeding four, except in a few instances.

Four, besides the coachman and two guards?—Yes, they are so constructed ; three sit behind the coachman.

And the guards sit together on the back seat?—Yes, but on the Belfast line the contract is only for one outside passenger ; but in consequence of their having accelerated the coach to a much quicker rate than they were required, the contract with the postmaster-general granted the liberty of carrying three additional passengers, as they did not pay any additional sum.

What is the rate they travel now?—Six Irish miles an hour, including stoppages.

What is the rate to Cork?—About five miles six furlongs, including stoppages upon the one line, that is the Clonmel, but only five miles by contract.



When a coach travels faster than by contract, the only advantage they derive is a greater credit for passengers?—I am not aware of any sum having been given; and in some instances the contractors have volunteered to travel at a quicker rate without receiving any consideration, as between Kinnegad and Sligo.

The contractors furnish the coach for that?—They do.

The horse riding is done for a certain sum throughout Ireland?—It is, except where we require them to travel at a quicker rate than the general.

What is the general sum?—The general sum is 5*d.* Irish for the double mile for six days, weeks, or 6*l.* 10*s.* per mile per annum Irish; and where they travel at the rate of five miles an hour they are generally paid at the rate of 7*l.* 16*s.* Irish per mile per annum, or 6*d.* Irish for six days weekly.

For the former sum, how quickly are they to travel?—Four Irish miles an hour.

Have you any thing to do with the settling of post-towns?—No, nothing; as to changes of lines of road through the country and riding posts, references are frequently made to our office.

Are there any new routes in contemplation?—No, except between Derry and Sligo. It is in contemplation that there should be a mail-coach, and the postmasters-general have advertised for contractors, but I believe there have been no proposals given in; the Treasury have sanctioned the establishment of a coach on the line, I believe.

What communication is there by mail-coaches in the county of Roscommon?—None that I know of.

A mail-coach does not enter the county?—No, I believe not; we had a mail-coach from Athlone to Roscommon and as far as Castlereah. We had first one contractor and then another, but it was found so unproductive that they were obliged to withdraw it.

Is there a good road?—There is a pretty good road from Roscommon to Castlereah, and there is a riding post there now.

Would not that be a nearer road to Castlebar than the present one?—I cannot say; there is a very good mail-coach road from Tuam to Castlebar, branching from Ballinasloe.

When a particular line of road is fixed upon to be travelled on by a mail-coach, how is that governed; by the number of populous towns, or by what circumstances is it governed?—Generally the best road. If a large town can be embraced with a small circuit it is generally done; but the best road from point to point is generally regarded.

Without regard to distance or population?—Without regard to the distance, certainly; the best road generally will be the shortest distance, as we should be able to travel at so much a quicker rate.

Is Mr. Ferguson generally in Dublin or generally on excursions?—Generally in Dublin.

It does not often occur that there is occasion to send him into the interior?—Yes, it does.

Does he go at his own discretion, or by order from the postmasters-general?—By order from the postmasters-general or secretary; he has not it in his power to go himself, or to send any one acting under him, without a special order.

P. URQUHART.

### Appendix, No. 192.

13th October 1826.

Mr. EDWARD JAMES BAYNES called in and examined.

YOU are Comptroller of the Penny post-office?—I am.

How long have you held that situation?—Nearly seventeen years; I was promoted from the situation I held by the Duke of Richmond, which I had held thirteen years before; I have been thirty years in the service of the Government; sixteen years last January in the post-office.

What have you been before?—I was barrack-master before.

What is your salary?—£200 Irish, 184*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.* British.

What fees or perquisites have you?—None whatever; I have apartments in the post-office, coals and candles; but I have no fee or perquisite whatever, nor any person in my department.

What are the hours of attendance?—From seven in the morning until a little after six in the evening.

Do you mean that you are in attendance the whole of that time?—No, but very nearly; the first delivery finishes at half past eight; the dispatch is every second hour alternately during the day, at eight, ten, twelve, two, four, and six.

What attendance is required in the office during the intervals?—The sorting office is closed in general between the deliveries; but there must be either the chief clerk or myself to answer the public as to inquiries during the office hours, which we consider from ten to four.

Do you deliver penny-post letters at the post-office?—We deliver to the alphabet from the penny post-office; all are sent out by the letter-carriers except those sent over to the alphabet office.

(107.)

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The

Examinations.

No. 191.

Mr.

Patrick Urquhart.  
16th Oct. 1826.

No. 192.

Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
13th Oct. 1826.

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No. 192.

Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
13th Oct. 1826.

The alphabet will deliver for a penny?—Yes.

How many penny post stations have you at present?—Eighty-four; ninety is what we are entitled to have.

Who arranges the stations?—They were originally arranged under Sir Edward Lees and myself.

Do you consider them fairly distributed throughout the city?—Indeed I do; some of them are unproductive, but still, it would be conceived a hardship, I understand, to the people to have them withdrawn. The salary of the keeper is only 5*l.* Irish a year. Some parts of the city do not produce as much as others; others are to a great extent.

Are not some too near each other?—Some of them are very near each other.

Might not the number of them be very much reduced?—I think some might be reduced which do not produce equal to what might be expected.

Have you represented any to the postmasters which you think might be reduced?—No, I have not.

Why have you not?—I really have no reason to give for not having done so, only that the sum is so small that it would not be worth while to reduce, if it was of some little trifling benefit to the public.

The sum ought to be in proportion to the service?—The service is serious; they have six times a day to send in; that is, the carrier calls, and they are obliged to deliver to the carrier six times a day.

They do not send out their letters?—No.

How do you settle your accounts with the alphabet office?—By a book sent across each time in which the entry is made, and they pay us.

How often?—Once a week.

What is the amount in the book?—In some weeks 15*s.* or 20*s.*, and in other weeks not so much.

Does the penny post pay its expenses?—Yes, it does, and more.

How much more?—I think about 500*l.* or 600*l.* the last year.

What number of clerks have you?—There are, one chief clerk, four sorters, one window-man now only; he has been removed to the alphabet office, but is still on the establishment of the penny post; one collector, two stampers, and a porter; eleven officers altogether, including myself.

How many carriers?—Fifty-seven carriers.

What is the use of your having a window-man?—He is now attending in the alphabet office, though attached to the penny post-office; there were two originally, but about this time twelvemonth there was one vacancy occurred, and one window-man done away with entirely.

What is the use of a window-man at all?—Previous to that we used to receive the postage on all penny-post letters at our window.

Are many penny-post letters paid?—I think that on an average the amount of paid penny-post letters would not be above 180*l.* a year; that was the amount last year.

How did you manage about the penny post when the change in the currency took place?—There was an allowance made, the same as in the other offices; the carriers were all charged; if a carrier had 1*s.* worth or 5*s.* worth of letters, it was charged British.

Suppose a person came to pay the postage of a penny-post letter?—We charged 1*d.* Irish to the individual.

Is that the case now?—No; that has ceased on the proclamation.

Is not the number of carriers greater than you want?—No, I think not; each carrier in the town has three times a day to go out.

Would not four deliveries be sufficient?—I think it would; that was the case formerly, but then we had the same number of carriers.

Could not you do with fewer carriers if there were only four deliveries?—No, I think not; there are twenty-eight carriers for the city delivery, and twenty-nine for the country, and one extra at the Rock for going round Killiney, which is a very extensive district.

Is that a horse post?—No, there are no horse posts.

What is the extent of that district?—It goes to the extent of seven or eight miles from Dublin.

Does it pay?—Yes, that is the best district we have; this district I allude to is that about Black Rock and Kingstown, taking in Killiney, Dalkey, Bullock, and all in that direction close on to Cabinteley.

Do you go as far as Clontarf on the other side?—Yes.

You do not employ any boys on ponies?—No.

How long after the dispatch from Dublin does a person at Killiney get his penny-post letters?—The dispatch here is at half past eight or nine o'clock, and a person at Killiney should get them by one o'clock.

That is five hours?—Yes, but the man has a long way to go round.

What is the direct distance from Dublin to Killiney?—The direct distance is about seven miles and a half, or eight miles.

At Stillorgan, how are the letters delivered?—By a foot post.

How far do you go on the Donnybrook side of the town?—As far as Stillorgan, Dunsdrum, &c. &c.

What is that distance?—It is considered four miles.

Do you go to Rathfarnham?—Yes.

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Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
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Are there the same number of deliveries at Rathfarnham and Dundrum as in the city of Dublin?—No; there are only two in the country; one at Dundrum only.

Were they always done by foot-posts?—Yes, always.

Does the mail between Kingstown and Dublin take away any of the post letters which used to be delivered in that district?—Not at all; that does not interfere with the penny post.

Do you call yours a twopenny post or a penny post?—It is a penny in the city, it is two-pence out of the city.

Have the receipts increased very much?—Yes; when I came in 1810 the gross receipts were only 300*l.* or 400*l.*; they are now upwards of 8,000*l.*, including the general letters we receive.

What do you mean by general letters?—All letters from England and the interior of Ireland that come into the penny post for places outside the circular road, such as Upper Baggot street and Clontarf, we add one penny to the general tax on those.

You include newspapers also?—Yes, we charge a penny on every thing, except the newspapers of the clerks of the roads.

What do you charge on a letter going from Clontarf to Black Rock?—Only two-pence; we do not make any additional charge.

Where is that taxed?—In the penny post-office.

A letter coming from Clontarf comes through your office?—Yes, it comes into the penny post-office, and is then sent on to its destination.

What proportion do the twopenny-post letters bear to the penny-post letters?—Trifling.

You say that Killiney pays better than any other of the districts?—That district I meant including Black Rock and all together; that is more thickly inhabited, and by a description of persons that have more intercourse with the town.

The twopenny-post circuits are not so productive as the penny post, upon the whole?—With this difference, that the circulation of the general-post letters would be lost; there would be no mode of circulating the general-post letters without that.

What proportion do the twopenny-post letters bear in their produce to the penny-post letters upon the whole?—I should think about a fifth or sixth in number, but in amount about a third, as we charge two-pence on each.

What is the additional tax to the general-post letters going into the suburbs of Dublin?—One penny; we circulated during the last year about 4,000*l.* worth of general-post letters.

You are very particular as to not letting carriers substitute other persons for themselves?—Decidedly; no carrier can substitute any other person.

You are sure nothing of that kind is done?—Nothing of that kind can be done now; there was an instance, as I mentioned before the commissioners on a former occasion; the man was dismissed for it; if a person was discovered so doing he would be dismissed for it.

How are your carriers paid?—They are paid weekly.

Are they paid at the same wages as the general-post carriers?—Yes; there are ten of them at 18*s.* a week Irish, ten at 17*s.*, eleven at 16*s.*, eleven at 15*s.*, and fifteen at 14*s.*

Do they receive christmas-boxes?—To a very trifling amount.

Do any of them make considerable profits?—They can have no profit in my department, except any little gratuity they may make by christmas-boxes.

Are they of an inferior description, or less paid than those who carry out the general post letters?—They are worse paid; they have no emoluments. In the general-post the carriers have a great deal to look forward to, which those in my department have not.

Is there any general promotion from one office to the other?—No.

They are quite distinct?—Yes.

By whom are they appointed?—By the postmasters-general.

Are the situations much sought after in the case of a vacancy?—Indeed they are.

Notwithstanding they are so ill paid?—Yes; but they are certainly wretchedly paid.

Do they give any credit?—I believe in some instances they do, but it is to a very trifling amount.

Do you require them to account daily?—No; they pay once or twice a week, and once a week there is a final settlement.

There has been no project for establishing a horse-post to Killiney?—No; it is considered it would be too expensive; we should still require a carrier to deliver; the horse-post could only bring out the letters, and there would be a person required to deliver them, so that the horse-post would be an additional expense.

The deliveries might be made more frequently in that way?—Certainly, but they are fully sufficient I conceive to what is required; it might be quicker, certainly.

Are your letter-carriers subject to a fine in case of non-attendance?—They are subject to suspension.

Who does the duty in case of their suspension or non-attendance?—An extra carrier.

Is that extra carrier one of the fifty-seven?—No, none of the fifty-seven.

What are considered extra?—Carriers appointed for the purpose of doing duty in case of illness or suspensions from office of regular carriers.

Are those included in the fifty-seven?—No.

How many are there?—Eight or nine; they get no salary unless they do duty.

Are they paid more than the stoppage from the letter-carrier?—Yes; the stoppage from the letter-carrier is 9*s.* 11*d.* Irish, and they get 4*s.* 1*d.* Irish more, making the same as the lower class of the letter-carriers; that was not the case formerly.

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No. 192.

Mr. E. J. Baynes:  
13th Oct. 1826.

How long may a letter-carrier have his duty done by an extra carrier?—As long as his illness continues.

There is no limit?—No.

Whose certificate do you require?—Mr. Kerin's the surgeon.

How many miles a day do any of your letter-carriers go?—I should think from sixteen to twenty miles a day, some of them.

Do you find them pretty punctual and exact in settling?—Indeed they are, in most cases.

You do not hold any other situation, either in or out of the post office?—No, I do not.

Do any letters go free by the twopenny post?—Yes, letters and papers under the sanction of the clerks of roads, which I understand they give credit to government for; and letters franked by the postmaster-general or the secretary will go free, and by myself and by Mr. O'Neill.

Is there any limit to that?—No, there is no limit; but it is only a thing done for very particular purposes, done for an officer of the establishment; it is on the same principle as it is in London.

Do any newspapers go free through the twopenny post in London?—I believe so; I have heard so.

On what principle do you assume the privilege of franking?—Only by courtesy.

There is no minute justifying it that you are aware of?—Not that I am aware of.

Has it always been allowed?—Yes; my predecessor always did it.

What is the form of franking?—I only put my name.

Do any letters directed by public officers go free?—No.

What do you do with respect to letters directed to the Castle?—They are all charged; Mr. Goulburn's letters are charged; every letter but his Excellency's; his go free. Under an arrangement that was made at a certain period, they have been allowed to go free.

Do you put them under cover?—I did formerly, but the circumstance which caused that has ceased, and it is not now done; but every letter which passes through my hands for his Excellency, I mark myself. Formerly I sent them under cover to his secretary, but that was not considered necessary, afterwards, by a communication.

A letter directed to the secretary would be charged?—It would.

Do the charity letters pay?—A penny a dozen.

Under what order is that?—Under the Act of Parliament.

What are considered charity letters?—For charity sermons and different things of that description, not exceeding one sheet, and all printed letters.

They are circulated for a penny a dozen?—Yes.

How do you understand whether such and such letters come under the Act of Parliament?

—That is not easy to understand. When the management was in the penny post, we did every thing we could to try and send nothing but what we thought was according to Act of Parliament.

How is it now?—Now it is done at the alphabet office; I believe they send only those that they conceive come within the Act.

The alphabet office send them to you?—Yes, they do.

How long is it since that change was made?—In October 1825.

What was the reason of its being taken out of your department?—In consequence of a vacancy having occurred, the postmasters-general conceived they would make a reduction of one of the officers, and transfer that duty to the alphabet office.

What is the arrangement for forwarding letters that come from England through the penny post department?—Precisely the same as those that come through the inland office.

How do letters which fall within the twopenny-post delivery come into your office?—All which are beyond the circular road come into our office; if they arrive too late for our first dispatch in the morning, they are held over till twelve o'clock, and sent out by the twelve o'clock delivery.

Suppose a letter came from England on a Saturday, directed to a person at Clontarf; when would he receive it?—Unless it arrived by the present mail in time to go out by twelve o'clock, that person could not get it till the Monday.

Why is that?—There is no delivery on a Sunday, nor is there in London.

You say the clerks of the roads send their newspapers free?—Yes.

Do they send any letters free also?—Notices on newspaper business only.

How is that ascertained?—They are marked by them as such; they are generally open; they are printed notices.

Is the circulation of newspapers by the penny post considerable?—Indeed it is tolerable.

Are your carriers allowed to vend newspapers on their own account?—No, they are not.

Has that ever been done?—I never heard of it; they would be discharged if they did, if any carrier delivered any thing at all except what passed through the office. They have been told that if they delivered any thing which had not the office stamp upon it they would be dismissed, and I never heard of an instance of it.

Do you report all irregularities in your office to the secretary?—Yes, all of any serious nature.

Are there any fines for want of punctual attendance among the letter-carriers?—No, except placing an extra carrier on duty, who is paid out of his salary.

If they come after hours is there any fine?—A person is employed for them. If a person came in a few minutes after the time, there would be no fine.

Do you think the penny-post circulation is capable of any amendment?—My own idea is, that it is not, unless in the way of horse-post.

You

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No. 192.

Mr. E. J. Baynes.  
13th Oct. 1826.

You think that it is as frequent and as quick as it can be?—Yes; in the town I think six deliveries, that is three for each man, is as much as they can go through; until the last four or five years there were only four deliveries; each man had two deliveries, now he has three; I think four deliveries would be sufficient.

Do the officers in your office receive their letters free?—Yes, myself and Mr. O'Neill; if a letter came to me by the penny post I should not pay any thing for it.

Is that by authority?—No, by courtesy.

Suppose a letter came to Mr. O'Neill, covering another person's letter, what would he do?—I should think he would not receive another person's letter.

Have you any control over that?—No, certainly not.

You are aware that by Act of Parliament you are not entitled to receive your letters free?—I believe there is no Act of Parliament giving me the privilege; I never heard of any.

Nor any authority from the postmasters-general?—Nor any authority from the postmasters-general, except its having been the usage, and the same being done in London.

Does not it often happen that no letters are brought from different districts for delivery?—It does at certain periods.

Do you not think there are more carriers employed than are required?—No, I think not; there may be more receiving-houses than are necessary.

Is there not a greater preparation for doing business than of business really done?—No, I think not; the officers and carriers have enough to do; I think some receiving-houses might be diminished.

Would that tend to diminish the number of carriers?—No; because if they had to go to one or two places in the room of three, they would have the same distance to go with their letters in delivery.

Which of the present stations would you propose to discontinue?—In the city there are about six or eight that might be discontinued, I think.

Can you name them?—I think there is one in Church-street that is unproductive; I could furnish a list of the whole on a future day, if it is desired; some in the liberties that were established in former times that are certainly now unproductive; that part of the city was the trading part and manufacturing part formerly.

EDWARD J. BAYNES.

Mr. Baynes's Statement of the least productive Receiving-houses.

Sir,

Penny post-office, October 16, 1826.

I BEG leave to send, for the information of the Parliamentary Commissioners of Inquiry, a statement of the most unproductive penny post receiving-houses in the city and its vicinity, stating the number of letters that have been put into each for six months, ending 5th July last. I beg to say that the expenses of each is only 4*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.* a year :

		George's-quay	-	-	-	-	899	letters.
		Cork-street	-	-	-	-	802	do.
City	-	-	-	-	-	-	992	do.
							732	do.
							548	do.
							925	do.
							163	do.
Country	-	-	-	-	-	-	155	do.
							142	do.
							74	do.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

EDWARD J. BAYNES, Comptroller.

To C. Harrison, Esq.

## Appendix, No. 193.

13th October 1826.

Mr. NEAL JOHN O'NEILL called in and examined.

## Examinations.

No. 193.

Mr. N. J. O'Neill.  
13th Oct. 1826.

YOU are Chief Clerk in the Penny post-office, are you not?—The designation of my situation is president and chief clerk

President and chief clerk of what?—Of the penny post-office.

What is your salary?—£150 of the late Irish currency.

What other emoluments have you?—Nothing.

What does your duty consist in?—To assist the comptroller in the general management of the office.

What is that general management of the office?—Chiefly to see that the officers are in their proper places; that the letter-carriers are in attendance; to provide substitutes in room of officers and letter-carriers, in case of the absence of either; and to see that the business of each delivery is not neglected; I also answer and take down the complaints of the public, in respect to missing or re-directed letters passing through the department; and assist in forwarding any part of the ordinary daily business of the office that requires assistance; I also keep two books, called the daily and weekly charge-books, one shows the daily charges against the letter-carriers, the other the weekly charges, and the gross and net amount of the weekly penny postage revenue.

What is your attendance?—I am not confined to any particular hours; there are six deliveries in the day, I attend four of these deliveries, that is the ten o'clock dispatch, twelve, two, and four. I generally come in at the early dispatch, and sometimes at the late dispatch, that is, at the eight o'clock and the six o'clock dispatches.

You receive from the letter-carriers unknown and refused penny post letters?—Yes.

What do you do with them?—The letter carriers write the address of those unknown and refused letters in little slip-books, and my duty is to see that the addresses they so write down and the returned letters correspond; I then enter the amount of the letters that the carriers should get credit for in books; the letters are then sent to the dead-letter office.

How is it ascertained that all such letters are sent to the dead-letter office?—Once a fortnight we return them, and they generally amount to between four and five pounds. Those letters are sent up in large bundles to the dead-letter office.

Four or five pounds in each fortnight?—Yes, that is generally the amount of the penny and twopenny post letters returned every fortnight.

Suppose any one to be omitted to be sent?—That cannot be the case.

Why not?—We wish to get rid of them, therefore we send them to the dead-letter office as soon after they are checked as possible.

In whose custody do they remain in that interval, from the time of their being returned by the letter-carriers to the time of their being sent to the dead-letter office?—In my custody, not more than an hour. I commence checking them soon after the first dispatch in the morning, I then give the letter-carriers credit for the sums, so as to be able to discover the credit they are entitled to for the letters returned.

You were understood to say that the letters were sent in only once a fortnight; where do they remain?—They remain in the custody of the letter-carriers from the period they are received by them till the end of the fortnight.

For the chance of finding the person to whom they are addressed?—Yes.

Do you examine and check the books of the carriers?—I see that the address of those letters as entered correspond with the letters returned.

Do you examine their charge-books?—Yes.

If a letter-carrier chose to pay the postage of a letter of which he could not find the address, of course that letter would never be heard of any more in the post-office?—No, never. It is impossible to guard against that; we are obliged to confide in the carriers.

Who have the privilege of franking penny post letters?—The comptroller and myself, and Sir Edward Lees.

Has Mr. Thomas Lees the privilege?—No, not since the former sitting of this Board here.

What is the authority for the comptroller and yourself franking?—None whatever, that is, none by Act of Parliament; but we have such privilege by custom from our predecessors in office since its creation.

What is the authority, if there is none by Act of Parliament?—Nor is there for Sir Edward Lees. The same statute that established the post-office does not give any privilege through the penny post, not even to members of parliament; but it is conceived to be necessary for the comptroller and myself to have that privilege, inasmuch as it prevents the possibility of irregularities, and gives no pretence for conveying any letter that does not pass in a regular way. One letter-carrier might give a letter to another to deliver for him, and, in order to give a facility to that carrier of sending his letter forward in a regular way, the comptroller or myself franks it.

If a letter-carrier brings his letter to you to frank, you frank it, do you not?—Yes; and perhaps give it back to himself to deliver.

Do you receive letters free?—Yes, penny-post letters; and the postmasters-general have been pleased to give all the officers in the post-office the privilege of receiving their single letters free.

Are any newspapers circulated free through the penny post-office?—None but those of the clerks of the roads and the express clerks.

They may be either English or Irish?—Yes, both English and Irish.

Is that by any authority?—No, none that I can discover.

Why then is it permitted?—It is the pleasure of Sir Edward Lees; his authority to us is sufficient for that purpose.

Have you any express authority?—Yes.

A written authority?—I put the thing to the test. I rejected the newspapers of the express clerks, and in consequence of that Sir Edward Lees wrote a few lines, just merely a memorandum, "Let the papers of the express clerks go free. *E. S. L.*" I have also rejected the charity letters. I conceive letters passing through the penny post-office, under that denomination, contrary to Act of Parliament.

What examination did you give to the law to see how it bore upon them?—I referred to the Act of Parliament.

What does the Act state?—With respect to the charity letters, it says they shall be on a single sheet. I think it is the 55 Geo. 3, charity letters, or charity notices, are to be on a single sheet of paper. Many public institutions are in the habit of heading periodical publications with the title of charity notices or charity letters; I think they should be charged. I very frequently see letters of that description pass through the inland office and the penny post-office.

Do they do that?—Yes, frequently.

Are they open?—They are; they sometimes make them up with a little slip of paper round them, like a newspaper cover.

Have you examined them?—Yes.

Do you find them to be charity notices?—Some of them are not charity notices.

Do you charge them in that case?—I made several efforts to charge them, conceiving it was quite wrong to suffer them to go in that way; I wished to give them the full benefit of the Act of Parliament; I was always overruled; my suggestions to charge them were never attended to.

Have the goodness to state more particularly what was the case in which you were overruled?—I expressed my wish to charge those charity letters, and letters to different charitable establishments, such as the Association for discountenancing Vice, for instance; conceiving such papers, letters, and documents not privileged to pass free through the penny post-office, much less through the general post-office, I referred to the Act of Parliament, and the result of that reference was to convince me the more that they were not entitled to pass free, either through the inland or penny post-offices. Several charitable institutions have even gone so far as to make up twenty or thirty pages in pamphlets, and to pass such pamphlets, in a continued series, as charity letters; in some instances I exacted from them payment in this way, I let every four pages pass as a letter, and I, knowing it was not correct to let pamphlets in that shape pass by any means, my instructions to the window-man was to charge those pamphlets, reckoning every four pages as a letter, and to charge them a penny a dozen. Those letters being now received both for the interior of Ireland and for the penny post at the alphabet office, I have no control over them; and all sorts pass very freely, to the great prejudice of the revenue.

So that forty-eight pages would have gone for a penny?—Just so. If the framer of that Act were endeavouring to cut down the revenue of the penny and twopenny post-office, they could not do it more effectually; every thing, under the pretence of charity, is endeavoured to be passed as charity letters, and actually pass in that way.

To what weight can any page or pamphlet or letter be sent by the penny post, and only charged a penny or two-pence?—Four ounces, by Act of Parliament; the Act of Parliament confines the penny post to four ounces; the meaning of the Act I take to be, that any parcel exceeding that weight should not, in point of fact, pass through the penny post-office at all; but as it sometimes happens that letters exceeding that weight are dropped into the penny post-office, we invariably suffer them to pass, by affixing an additional postage, that is, putting two-pence or three-pence, according to the size of the parcel; we do that without authority, but the payment is seldom or ever scrupled.

Is that a case which frequently occurs?—No, not frequently; but those letters which pass under the name of charity letters appear to me to cut completely at the penny post revenue, to do away with a great portion of this revenue; it keeps the carriers constantly employed, giving them very great fatigue in the performance of their duty, with but little advantage to the revenue; we impress on the minds of the carriers the necessity of their delivering those letters with as much care as if they were to receive the regular postage upon them.

You have stated what you consider to be the real abuse of the Act, that allows the charity letters to go at a penny a dozen?—I would confine the public exactly to the words of the Act, to "printed notices or printed letters:" my construction of the Act would not suffer a word to be in writing.

What is the practice?—The practice is to put two thirds of the letter in writing, or sometimes one third of the letter in writing and the remainder in print.

You have applied to know whether you were not authorized to charge each separate letter

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Mr. N. J. O'Neill.  
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letter under those circumstances?—I did; and I rejected the pamphlets until such time as my opinion was overruled.

Are those letters called charity letters becoming more numerous?—Yes, they are; in truth, I do not know to what extent they may ultimately arrive at; the carriers are prevented doing the more necessary part of their duty in delivering the correspondence which relates to business, by the immense quantity of such letters that pass through the office.

Do those letters increase the business of the office in doors much?—Very much indeed.

Have the goodness to explain how?—By the quantities of them that pass through the office; all go through the routine of stamping, sorting, and dividing into their proper districts.

Is it necessary to stamp those?—Yes; I make it a rule to suffer nothing to pass through the office without being stamped.

That is a necessary precaution to prevent the letter-carriers delivering any thing which is not stamped; is it not?—Yes; as well as to prevent the possibility of their screening themselves, or having any apology for not delivering them; the stamp is always the criterion of correctness or incorrectness. If a complaint is made of the delay of letters, we immediately refer to the stamp on the letter produced; and by that we ascertain whether the letter has been actually delayed or not; it strikes me that, at all events, circulators of charity letters should be confined to the very words of the Act of Parliament; it is very liberal.

N. J. O'NEILL.

Appendix, No. 194.

October 17th 1826.

THOMAS THOMPSON Esq. called in and examined.

No. 194.  
Thomas Thompson,  
Esq.  
17th Oct. 1826.

THE Parliamentary Commissioners had a conversation with you three years ago upon the subject of the post-office establishment, as far as your office is concerned?—I had the honour of attending the Board when they were here last.

What improvements have you noticed in respect of the state of the securities since?—Whenever the securities of a deputy postmaster die it has always been the practice to get new ones in their place; there was a Treasury order came a few weeks past requiring a return of the securities, whether living or dead.

What has been the result of that?—There has been a return made; and all those whose securities were dead have been renewed, with very few exceptions.

With respect to those whose securities were living, what steps have been taken to ascertain that they are solvent?—No steps have been taken on my part; it is the duty of the surveyors to go round to inquire whether the securities are living, and whether they are solvent.

What do they report upon the subject?—They report to the secretary occasionally, I believe, when they are dead, and the secretary officially desires me to get new security; but it is with the secretary's office they always communicate.

There is no regular report to you upon the state of the securities?—No, there is no communication at all between the surveyors and me on the subject; they always communicate with the secretary's office.

Was the result of the steps you took in consequence of the order from the Treasury, forwarded to the Treasury?—I forwarded the return to the secretary's office.

You do not know what has become of it since?—I cannot say whether it has been sent forward or not.

In the case of the new securities which have been taken, has there been any reduction in the amount of the security required upon any new calculation of the proper amount?—No, there has been no alteration made; I have received no instructions.

What facilities had you in getting those new securities?—There was a circular written from the secretary's office by Sir Edward Lees, desiring them to make a return of their securities, whether living or dead, and whether, if living, solvent; their answers were handed over to me; and in case of their securities appearing to be dead, I then wrote to the deputy to give me the name of some solvent person in the place of the deceased person, with the particulars. A letter in substance like that in my hand was written; that is the letter I write when a postmaster is appointed, and I send a printed certificate of that kind down to him to be answered.

What step is taken in consequence of that?—That certificate requires the deputy to set forth the property, and the nature and situation of it.

The process is the same on the giving a new security, as in the appointment of a new deputy?—Yes, it is in substance the same.

When a deputy reports to you the names of two whom he calls solvent securities, what steps do you take to ascertain the truth of that?—I then make search in the Exchequer office to find that they are not under bond to the Crown, and the certificate of a magistrate is required; the security is bound first to put on the paper the amount of the property of the



the sureties, that to be certified by the next magistrate or clergyman who knows the fact; if the fact is stated, of course I assume it to be so: it would be impossible in a distant part of the country for me to know that myself.

Do they always obtain a certificate of the truth of that which they state?—It has sometimes happened that they have named others instead of sending up the certificate; but it is on the certificate signed by the next magistrate that I act.

Are there two securities in each case?—Yes.

To which of the parties is the magistrate to be nearly situate; to one or both of the parties?—The certificate refers to both of them.

The magistrate may be ignorant of the circumstances of one case, though he may know very well the circumstances of the other?—It is very possible; but unless I got a certificate signed by a magistrate or clergyman, I would not certify to the secretary's office the solvency.

Suppose one surety lives in Armagh, another may live in Clare?—Then the deputy must get the certificate of a magistrate next to each of them; most commonly the persons named as securities are in the neighbourhood of the person appointed.

If one surety should live in Armagh and the other in Clare, what certificate would be required?—In such case the office would require a magistrate at Armagh for the person resident there, and also of a magistrate or clergyman at the other place for the person resident there.

Is that your practice?—It is.

When you say a magistrate or clergyman, do you mean a Catholic or a Protestant clergyman?—At the time that certificate was made out I expected it to be a Protestant clergyman; we call the Catholic a priest; the Protestant we call a clergyman.

Is it usual to take the certificate of a priest?—I never took one, to my knowledge at least.

In whose custody are the bonds of the sureties?—They lie in the chief remembrancer's office, in the court of Exchequer.

They are all to be found there?—Yes; except the few last, which have been executed in the last five weeks; I file them generally once or twice in the year.

Has it been always the course to file them?—Not till the last four or five years.

Is it so long as that?—Yes, I believe it is.

What is the effect of that filing?—It has the effect of binding the property of the party.

In the case of deputies appearing in arrear, what course do you take?—There is a book sent to me with a list of those in arrear, I think once a quarter; I then write to the securities of such persons as are returned to me a circular of that kind [*producing it*].

Do you consider that since the Commissioners were here the arrears are diminished?—I think considerably; I think the last two or three years the written-off arrears are very trifling indeed.

What do you call the written-off arrears?—Of deputies dismissed for arrears.

This circular notice is made out only to apply where a certain number of months instalments are due; what is the number of months?—I believe the deputy is allowed to hold one month's instalment in his hands; if he holds more than that, this book, with a reference to me, shows the instalment one month of a year. When I see the amount of the instalment I can see how many are in arrear.

How many months may a postmaster be in arrear without having this notice given to his surety?—I believe only one month's instalment; it becomes an arrear when it becomes two months.

This printed circular is made to apply to a number of months?—It is.

Would it be sent if there was only one month's instalment due?—I think it would, if the book is sent to my office with those arrears; I write to the securities of every one who is in arrear.

Would you write to a man who owed but one instalment?—I think that instalment is not counted in the arrear list sent forward to me.

You consider that as one of course?—Yes.

You say the number of written-off arrears has very much decreased; is that owing to the deputies in arrear not having been dismissed, but their still going on?—I think the arrears of the existing deputies is considerably reduced; also I think the gross amount in hand of existing deputies, as far as I can judge, is considerably reduced.

Are the Commissioners to understand, that if two monthly instalments were due, this circular letter would be dispatched to the surety of the postmaster?—It would, provided it was sent to my office for the purpose; it comes from the secretary's office. This book is written off in the clerk of the remittances office.

Is there any rule as to the number of instalments which may accrue, before such an application is made to the sureties of the postmaster?—I believe that the rule is, that if two instalments, that is, one month, is due, that is sent off if it comes to my office; its being entered in the book is a duty in the secretary's office.

What is the reason of this letter being sent from your office?—To induce the deputies to pay up.

Would it not have the same effect if it went from the secretary's office?—Perhaps the threat of law proceedings has an effect.

Here is no threat of law proceedings; here it is a mere courteous notice?—The notice may induce him to compel the postmaster to pay up, under the threat of withdrawing himself.

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Thomas Thompson,  
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Is any charge made by you for a letter of that kind?—There is not; that and other duties are included in the salary I get of 100*l.* a year.

You do not consider it necessary to give a surety a notice of that kind, do you?—When the arrear comes from the secretary's office I send it.

You do not consider it necessary with a view to fix his responsibility?—No; he is bound for the amount of his bond, if no notice were given; it is rather to give him notice of the state of the debt, and to induce him to exert himself with the deputy to pay it up.

To whom does the answer come?—Sometimes it comes to me; it is very seldom that they answer, unless it is to say that there is no such arrear due; but the answer generally is in the paying up the arrear.

You write to both the sureties?—Yes, I do.

Do you find that generally useful?—If the arrear is not decreased on one or two of those letters being written, it is a very strong reason to me to think that the sureties are perhaps regardless, from being themselves insolvent.

What steps do you take?—I take no steps; it lies with the secretary, or persons in his office, to take the steps they think necessary.

Have you any reason to doubt that the sureties have participated in the deficiency of the postmasters?—I never had reason to believe that; I have known of a person who was security, and the postmaster complained that he could not pay his arrear, for that the surety owed him postage; there was one instance of that, I think.

Was that a large arrear?—No; it was large in proportion to the town; that was at Dangan, in the county of Galway.

There is a very large arrear due from the postmaster of Waterford?—There is.

What are the circumstances of that arrear?—I really cannot say; I can infer that his case is a very hard one; he was obliged to find new securities a short time ago, in addition to his former securities.

Does his security now cover his arrear?—I think it does.

To what was that owing?—I really cannot say with certainty; he makes great complaints of the lowness of the salary and the great number of assistants he is obliged to have; but I merely speak from what I hear; I cannot know it officially. He always complains to me, when I write to his securities about his debt, of the hardship of his case.

If it comes to your knowledge that the surety of any officer dies, do you take any steps?—I write to him to give new.

Were you aware that one of the sureties of the principal officer of the alphabet office was dead?—No, I never knew of it till Mr. Lyster mentioned it to me yesterday. I do not know who his sureties were, unless I look to his bond; if I had known of it of course I should have written officially to him to find another security.

Does it fall to you to recommend the dismissal of a deputy, in consequence of nonpayment?—Never.

How soon is an application to a surety repeated, if he does not answer the first, which apprises him that a certain number of instalments are due from the postmaster?—I think three months; every quarter that the book comes to my office I act upon that book. I cannot know in the intervening periods how the arrear stands, for I know nothing of the remittances from the various deputies.

Where you have written with a view to the liquidation of an arrear, do you not ascertain whether it has been reduced or not?—No; I wait for the next quarter; I do not officially interfere; I may have asked questions of Mr. Thomas Harrison, "Has my last letter had any effect," or some question of that kind; but I do not officially know any thing of the matter.

You write to the surety of a postmaster in the beginning of July, to tell him that two months instalments of the postmaster are due; if he does not send any answer, you do not write to him again till the book comes down at the end of the quarter?—I do not.

Then, for any thing you know, the instalment may have continued increasing for four months?—Certainly.

Is there any other correspondence on the subject of arrears of postmasters than that, passes through you?—I believe circulars are occasionally written to them by the secretary's office.

But none to the securities, except those which you write?—I believe not.

In the case which has been recently mentioned, you write again at the end of the quarter to that surety, and you then wait till the book comes down again before you take any step?—I do; it rests with the secretary to see those increasing arrears, and the postmasters-general, I believe; they get a transcript of that book.

Would it not be a better course to require an acknowledgment from the surety of that notice to him?—That has not been heretofore done.

Are there many sureties, do you think, who do not reside in Ireland?—I cannot say as to that; I rather think there are not many non-resident.

There is a fixed amount of surety for each postmaster?—There is, according to the revenue.

Has that ever been varied within your experience?—It has been increased a few years ago, I think subsequent to the last Act of Parliament for increasing the postage.

Was it generally increased?—Yes, except the very subordinate small towns, according to the instalments payable by them.

Do you ever write to a surety to fix a period within which, if the arrear is not discharged, steps will be taken against him?—Never; I have never taken proceedings against the surety of an existing deputy.

Whatever

Whatever may have been the length or amount of the arrear?—Never; the practice of the office has been, when proceedings were about to be taken for the recovery, to remove the deputy previously.

In the case where the postmaster made it an excuse for his arrear, that the surety was indebted to him in postage, was that surety written to?—He was written to, in course, with the rest; that was about two or three years ago.

Was he informed of the representation made by the postmaster?—Not by me; the representation was not officially made to me by the deputy.

To whom was it made?—It was not made, I believe, officially; I rather think it was the surveyor mentioned it, that when he urged the man to pay up the arrear, that was the answer.

Do you recollect who was the surety?—Mr. Bourne of Moyné; he is dead now, and his son is the existing security, and who, I believe, has paid the arrear.

Is the postmaster removed?—No; he is still deputy; his name was in the last return, I recollect.

Have you observed greater irregularity in any particular district of the country than another?—I cannot say; I think the north, generally speaking, is the most correct; that is, that they are more regular in their remittances.

How is it in Galway?—I cannot state that from recollection with any accuracy; the book will show the arrears of each.

Upon what occasions do you make charges for work done to the post-office?—I make charges for all the work I do, except for writing to the securities of deputies in arrear, and occasional attendance; that is the duty for which I get the salary; when first appointed I had not an office in the post-office, nor in the old post-office; the duty I got the salary for was for occasional attendance.

Have you apartments in the post-office?—No, I have not; I had a room for myself and another for my clerk, but they have taken away one.

Does your clerk sleep in the post office?—No. Whatever else I do for the office I make out a bill of costs; I have three clerks generally and myself; whatever I do, exclusive of the duties, I am paid for.

What is the nature of those services for which you make a charge?—Every thing connected with prosecutions, tracing out frauds committed in and upon the post-office, making reports on matters referred to me; memorials.

Of what nature are those?—Memorials of persons seeking compensation for services performed are referred to me, and various matters regarding Acts of Parliament; my charges are a history of the transactions to which they refer; my bills of costs undergo a very good scrutiny.

Do you attend the taxation of your bills of costs personally?—I do; I first submit all the papers and briefs in support of those charges to Mr. Dunn, the solicitor for the Imprest Commissioners, and then he, when he has ascertained the charges are all substantiated, taxes those costs; then they go before Mr. Bourne, the clerk of the Crown in the King's Bench; when I get them back, if I see any things unreasonably taxed, I reason the matter, and get as much as I can.

Does Mr. Bourne often strike off charges?—He does.

By whom are the reductions made in those red ticks?—Those are by the accountant-general in the post-office, I think; where the calculations may have been made erroneously; there may be clerical errors in the calculation.

Those before this Board are the copies of the bills of costs after they have been taxed?—Yes; the solicitor for the account-office keeps the actual instrument he taxes himself.

They do not go before Mr. Clancy?—Mr. Clancy only taxes in civil matters; these are criminal proceedings.

You mention that Mr. Bourne strikes off a great many charges?—Not a great many; he strikes off some charges.

Should not Mr. Dunn have struck off all which are objectionable?—No; he may not have the professional knowledge of criminal matters which the other has.

If he had equal knowledge with Mr. Bourne, is it considered his duty to strike off all which was objectionable?—I think he would do so.

Is it considered that that is the object of submitting the bills to him?—Yes; and not only that, but to ascertain that the work has been actually performed.

Do you conceive that Mr. Dunn considers himself responsible for any thing more than seeing that the work is actually performed?—He has reduced charges for going into the country; where I have charged, say, twenty guineas for going into the country, he has reduced that, but he has not struck off for indictments and so on.

Does he do that indiscriminately with respect to all items of charge?—I think he exercises his discretion upon the charges that I make, to reduce them, when they can be reduced, except perhaps with regard to the indictments.

Why is that exception?—I rather think he thinks Mr. Bourne the proper authority to ascertain that point.

What do you mean by charges for indictments which Mr. Dunn does not tax?—The account of length of the indictment and the counts of it; I charge so much a count for drafting an indictment, so much for the fair copy, so much for ingrossment; Mr. Dunn, I do not think, has interfered with those charges; I think Mr. Bourne is the man who has taxed those.

How is the propriety of these charges ascertained?—From the length of the pleading.

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Is not the indictment submitted to Mr. Dunn?—Yes, constantly.

Is not he as competent as Mr. Bourne to tax that?—Perhaps he is now as competent as Mr. Bourne.

You say he is perhaps now competent?—Yes, from practice; it is probably from a complimentary feeling.

Is any more information submitted to him now than formerly?—No, not at all.

You say it is perhaps a complimentary feeling which induces him to leave that to Mr. Bourne; why do you think that?—Perhaps he thinks Mr. Bourne more competent than himself.

To whom is the compliment paid?—If there is a compliment it is to Mr. Bourne.

Is Mr. Bourne aware when the bills of costs go before him, whether they have been reduced at all by Mr. Dunn?—He is, for the taxation is before him; it is the same bill goes before both.

Does he ever make a reduction of the same items as those which had been reduced by Mr. Dunn?—He has, on attendances in the country.

Do you ever charge for attendances not actually given?—Never.

If you send a clerk, is that charged as an attendance?—It is; I must send clerks that are as competent to do the business as myself.

Is the same charge made for the clerk as for yourself?—Yes, certainly; at the circuit time there may be prosecutions in two or three places on the same day; I must of course send down persons to attend, for the post-office prosecutions are of a very nice description, and if one link in the chain is lost, the whole falls to the ground.

Does Mr. Bourne exercise a rigid taxation upon those items which Mr. Dunn does not tax, alluding particularly to the indictments?—I think he does; they speak for themselves.

These are the fair corrected copies, after the deductions?—They are.

Therefore they can hardly be said to speak for themselves?—The reductions speak for themselves; the left-hand side of the column is the deductions; they are taken from the gross amount of the account; that is an exact transcript of the account when taxed.

Are those reductions made by Mr. Dunn or Mr. Bourne?—Jointly; they are made by both.

Are they made by one, or first by one and then by the other?—First by the one and then the other; and if I think it an unreasonable taxation I bring them together and reason the matter, and strive as far as I can to induce them to give more; I have succeeded in some instances, but more commonly I have not.

Is it more usually done separately by them?—Yes, always; then in some instances I have perhaps brought them together; I have generally had to reason with them afterwards upon each account.

Have you any standing counsel for the post-office?—There are counsel on each circuit, and a consulting counsel in Dublin.

Is there any salary to the consulting counsel?—No; he is paid according to the cases.

He never goes out of Dublin?—Never on post-office business; all matters are submitted to him in cases; no case is presented without his directions.

What is the result of this case, referred to in your bill, of Mr. Mulholland having written a letter to Sir Edward Lees, complaining of a letter having been charged double in consequence of a receipt being written on the same sheet of paper with the said letter, and claiming the postage; was it declared that postage should be charged for that receipt so written?—A receipt, I think, is not subject to an additional postage; the Act of Parliament says, merchants accounts, written invoices, process or proceedings at law written on the same sheet of paper; I do not think a receipt comes under that.

You stated that he alleged he was overcharged, and that this letter having been one of many similarly circumstanced, was referred to you?—I remember Sir Edward Lees had a great number of letters.

You charge for "attending reading over the Act of Parliament, taking abstracts, drawing draft of report and fair copy, and attending secretary therewith"?—That was a case frequently occurring in the office.

What was your report?—I rather think that postage should not be claimed; I do not think it comes under any of the exceptions in the Act.

It was the 24th of October 1825; do you not remember the advice you gave?—I think, as well as I recollect, my opinion was, that it was not chargeable; it does not come within the exception of the Act, certainly.

How is the standing counsel nominated?—When I came into office, many years ago, the solicitor had the appointment of him; but I found it created so much jealousy, that I requested the postmasters-general to nominate, and now they nominate. When I came into office the late Judge Mayne was the standing counsel; when he was promoted, there was such a jealousy about it, I requested the postmasters-general to nominate, and they have done so ever since.

How are the counsel on the circuit nominated?—They are also nominated by the postmasters-general.

Who pays the standing counsel?—I pay them.

Are the payments to him included in each bill of costs to which the accounts have relation?—He is paid quarterly as I am paid myself; the moment I get the amount of a bill of costs, I pay him.

He does not make up an account each quarter?—No; I make entries in my bill of costs of the fees I pay him, and I suppose he keeps his fee book; the moment I get my account,

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I send him a draft for the amount of his fees; if he finds my entries correct, of course nothing more is said about it; if he thinks I am incorrect, of course he mentions it.

What is the general nature of his duty?—Directing prosecutions for frauds committed on the establishment, and giving his opinion and advice on all cases submitted to him.

That is being consulted on the propriety of prosecutions?—Yes; he directs all prosecutions; and also when there are conflicting Acts of Parliament, and opinions requiring a better head than mine, there is a case stated. There was a case submitted to him lately on the two Acts of Parliament, with respect to the carriage of letters by the drivers of stages, jaunting cars, and jingles, and so on; and I was obliged to refer a case to the attorney-general also.

Have you had a point referred to you with respect to the authority of the postmasters-general to send letters by steam packets?—Yes.

What is the result of that?—The Act is so defective, no ship postage can be charged on any letter coming into Ireland from England.

How is it on letters going out of Ireland?—I think it can be charged going to England; there is a ship-letter postage on letters going out from and coming into Ireland from foreign ports; but the Act excepts the ports of Great Britain.

Do you state that the standing counsel never leaves Dublin on the business of the post-office?—He did on one occasion go down to Dunmore; that is the only instance I recollect within these ten years; there was an inquisition held there by the Dunmore commissioners, and he went there and attended the jury this time twelvemonth.

What was his fee upon that occasion?—I really cannot say; it was regulated by the fee another counsel got for attending at Waterford.

Was it 100 guineas?—It was either 60 or 100 guineas; I rather think it was 60 guineas.

What is the lowest fee you ever give to a counsel?—I have given Mr. Crofton two guineas for an opinion.

What do you give with a brief on the circuit?—The leading counsel six guineas, and the others five and four guineas; I have given seven guineas where the briefs are heavy, and in general post-office briefs are heavy; in fact, a post-office case is a day's work at the assizes, if it is a case of any consequence.

Do you always retain three counsel on the circuit?—Always; there were four until a few years ago.

Do you feel it necessary always to retain three counsel?—I think, unless counsel attend, a case will fall to the ground; and at the assize towns, one or two of them may be in the record court at the time that the case comes on; that is the reason of having three counsel, and it was always the practice.

In case of circular notices, which you are called upon to send to the deputies, which you have printed, do you make a charge for them?—I have made charges when they did not come within the distinct rule.

In the case of being required to forward notices in consequence of its having become the practice to send various documents, purporting to be receipts from soldiers wives, you appear to have charged?—Yes; there was an Act of Parliament recited, and an abstract of instructions to the deputies how to send forward the receipts, that I had a great deal of trouble with.

You gave instructions to print 600 copies, and charged for correcting proof-sheet, and you then enclosed those to the postmasters, and called their particular attention; 470 post-towns, for which the sum of 21*l.* 7*s.*, at 1*s.* a town. In the left-hand margin it is marked 21*l.* 7*s.*, as if it had been a reduction, but it is marked only in pencil; how is that?—Sir Edward Lees and I had a great struggle about that; and I wrote to Lord Rosse upon the subject, and stated to Lord Rosse, that I was obliged to keep clerks whether they worked or not, and that I thought I should be paid for what I did, and that I thought it a reasonable charge; Lord Rosse was pleased to take my view of the matter, and consequently Sir Edward Lees's pencilling was struck out.

Was that submitted to Lord O'Neill likewise?—I do not know whether it was or not.

Not by you?—No, it was not; I wrote a letter to Lord Rosse.

Had it passed Mr. Bourne and Mr. Dunn?—It had, and had been allowed by them.

Do you find the surveyors of any use?—I think they are, in reporting the deaths of securities.

Do you find them of real practical use?—I cannot officially answer that question; but my opinion is, that they are, if they do their duty, of very essential use.

Have you reason to believe that they do their duty?—I think they are of use, that is my impression; I cannot officially state the matter, for they and I have no sort of official communication.

In the book you have produced, called "The Solicitor's Deputies Arrears Book," the Commissioners observe, that for the town of Newport, in the county of Mayo, the monthly instalment is stated at 4*l.*, the probable arrear at 38*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.*; that is nearly ten months arrear, is it not?—It is.

Nothing appears to have been paid of that?—That was a good deal higher; Sir Neal O'Donnell's brother is the security; he has passed a note, payable in December, for that 30*l.*

Is it usual to take the notes of securities?—That was an arrangement in the secretary's office.

Was the other surety written to?—I always write to the two sureties.

Do you exonerate one when you take the engagement of the other?—I should imagine not; I do not think a promissory note at all adequate to the security of a bond; a minor security

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security will never invalidate a real one; that woman is an old dependent upon the family, and she would have been removed if he had not come forward; I believe he volunteered.

Here is Tyrrelspass monthly instalment, 7*l.* 10*s.*; probable arrear, 170*l.* 16*s.* 10*d.*; then there is added, in pencil, 50*l.* more; there does not appear to be any part of that arrear paid; how is the fact?—That lady memorialized His Majesty some months ago; the memorial was referred to the Treasury, and by the Treasury referred, I believe, to the post-office. I believe the Treasury, as far as I remember, granted the time; she offered to pay so much a month, and to keep down the accruing revenue in the office. I do not think she has made good her engagement; her securities are very solvent.

According to the sums here stated, she must be more than twenty months in arrear; is that so?—The thing speaks for itself.

Is that the fact?—It appears so.

You believe that to be the case, relying upon this statement?—Relying upon this statement, I believe it to be so.

Are the Commissioners to consider this an accurate statement?—I cannot say; it comes to me from the secretary's office; it is furnished to me as the document upon which I am to act in writing to the securities.

Have the securities been written to?—Yes, constantly.

Are there any particular circumstances in that case which would justify abstaining from an application to the sureties?—No; I always apply to the securities.

Do you allow it to remain upon that application, without any thing being done for twenty months?—It is not for me to allow or to disallow it; it comes to me to write.

Is that lady holding the situation still?—She is.

The next instance is Bray; the monthly instalment is 19*l.*, the arrear 121*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*; that must have been an arrear of about eight months, of which 63*l.* appears to have been paid; have any steps been taken with the sureties in that case?—No; except writing to them.

The next case is Broadway; 3*l.* 10*s.* is the monthly instalment, and the arrear 31*l.* 10*s.* 7*d.*, nearly ten months arrear; there appear to have been 5*l.* paid; have you received any instructions to write particularly to the sureties in that case?—I wrote to them.

Not more particularly than by circulars?—No.

The next case is that of Enniscorthy; the monthly instalment 56*l.*, and the arrears 206*l.*, of which 20*l.* has been paid; is that the state of that account?—I dare say more has been paid since that was the state of that account. When Lord Rosse was here last week it was submitted to him; there may have been some sums remitted since.

Then "Newtown Mount Kennedy; instalment, 12*l.* 10*s.*; arrear, 136*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.*;" that again is more than ten months arrear; 45*l.* appears to have been paid of that; is that the state of that account at this moment, do you think?—I cannot say further than what appears there.

The town of Ross in the next page; the monthly instalment, 48*l.* 10*s.*, the arrear, 506*l.*, of which 24*l.* has been paid; is the account of the postmaster in that state, do you think?—I rather think he has got to the first of November to discharge that; his name is Ulysses Burgh; he is well connected; I believe he is closely connected with Lord Downes.

What steps have been taken in that case?—The sureties have been written to.

Do you ever alter your form?—No, unless where the party is dismissed; in that case, if they do not pay attention to it, I issue process upon it.

There have been no new contracts for mail-coaches of late, have there?—Not of late at all.

Do they come under your inspection?—They do; I have always prepared them.

What do you understand to be the difference between the English and the Irish obligations?—I cannot exactly state that; I think the English contracts are one printed set of obligations; the Irish mail-coach contracts have been each a separate agreement in themselves, differing from local circumstances of various kinds.

At the foot of this there is a minute of the secretary, dated the 20th September, to the effect that Mr. Thompson is requested to ascertain as soon as possible the solvency of the securities of the above deputies, and to report his opinion; what has been done in consequence of that?—I wrote to Sir Edward Lees in consequence, to say that it would be impossible for me to ascertain the solvency of those sureties without local attendance for the purpose; it would be impossible for me residing in Dublin by any correspondence to ascertain the solvency of the persons living at a great distance. I did conceive it was more the duty of the surveyors residing in their districts, and that it was impossible for me to make an accurate report upon the subject without a local examination.

What reply have you received?—I got no reply. I wrote in the same letter to say that it struck me that if a deputy went on increasing his arrears after repeated applications from me to his sureties, without any remonstrance from them, I thought it a fair inference to draw, that the sureties themselves were not solvent.

You have received no further instructions or information?—I got no further instructions.

Have you had any further information upon the subject?—No.

Are you aware whether any instructions were given to the surveyors upon the subject?—I do not know indeed.

The postmaster of Keady appears to be in arrear more than twelve months his average instalments, and nothing has been sent by him; do you purpose to take any further steps in that case?—No, not without orders.

You will wait to the end of the next quarter before you write again, unless you receive a particular instruction?—Yes, unless I received a particular instruction. I would say, with respect

respect to those petty towns, if I might prefer an observation, the revenue is so very trifling, that perhaps if a surveyor is put in charge on a debt amounting to more than its regular instalment, his daily pay would, in a short time, amount to more than the arrear.

Would not the short way be to remove the postmaster and appoint another?—Then a surveyor must be sent down to take an account of the office, and instruct the new postmaster; every postmaster requires instruction; I believe an uninstructed deputy would be altogether unfit for the duty.

Who makes out this book?—The clerk of the remittances, Mr. Harrison.

Was it always the practice to make such applications to the sureties only at the end of each successive quarter?—Formerly, in Lord Clancarty's time, it was not the course to apply to them at all, that is, to send them circulars; this was a suggestion of my own, and I think it has had a great effect in keeping down the accruing arrears of the office.

Do you know what was the amount of the arrear last quarter?—I do not.

They are not totalled when they come to you?—No, they are not; I totalled that myself.

What was the total of that quarter, as appears by that book?—£8,860.

There is nothing in this book to show the dates of those applications to sureties?—No; I have the entries of the letters in my letter book; it is as soon as possibly they can be made out after receipt of the return.

How soon after the end of the quarter is this book brought to you?—It is brought down the day, or the second day, after it bears the secretary's date.

The postmaster of Dundalk appears to be indebted 490*l.*, being equal to more than five instalments?—He has been removed since that.

Is that arrear still due to the Crown?—I rather think it is.

There is no payment noticed here?—I think that man has been removed.

Who are his sureties?—Mr. George Magustie, a professional gentleman, and another gentleman, Mr. Forster, of the county Louth.

Have any legal steps been taken against them?—No.

Has there been any intimation of an intention of instituting any?—No, I believe not at present.

Although the postmaster has been removed?—I have no official knowledge of his having been removed; the arrear has not been handed forward to me for recovery.

The postmaster of Ballibay, whose monthly instalment is 1*l.* 10*s.*, is in debt 43*l.* 14*s.* 9*d.*; that is upwards of two years arrears; is it possible such an arrear can have accrued?—I cannot say further than appears there. I have brought the attorney-general's opinion respecting the conflicting Acts of Parliament respecting penalties for drivers of stage cars and carriages carrying letters. The attorney-general appears to think that the 5 Geo. 4. c. 20. repeals our Irish post-office Act of the 53 Geo. 3. c. 58. The Irish post-office Act makes the penalties for carrying letters recoverable by the evidence of one credible witness before a magistrate; it makes it a summary proceeding. The 5 Geo. 4. obliges an information to be filed in some of the record courts, and the preamble of that Act only recites English Acts of Parliament. It appears to me it was never in the contemplation of the legislature to repeal the 53 Geo. 3. c. 58. making the proceeding summary, because the recital of 5 Geo. 4. says they are quite inadequate to put an end to the practice of carriers carrying letters; and then it goes on to enact, that they shall be liable to a fine of 5*l.*, such fine to be recovered by information in a court of record; now the costs of that, it is quite obvious, would be enormous for the recovery of fines against drivers, who perhaps could not be found when the execution issued; and if even found, the amount would never be paid. The attorney-general thinks that the 5 Geo. 4. c. 20. in effect repealed our Irish Acts. The whole is recited there, and I think it is well worth the consideration of the Board.

How far do you think it would be expedient that magistrates should have jurisdiction in post-office cases?—I think for carrying letters, the fines should be recoverable by information of one credible witness before a magistrate, or, at all events, before the magistrates at petty sessions; in this country, to go to the expense of a law proceeding by information, though it would be profitable to the solicitor, in my humble opinion would be a very wanton and unnecessary expense, for the fines would never be recovered. At present, the public do not know that that opinion has been obtained; but if the drivers of cars come to know that they can be recovered only in that mode pointed out by the 5 Geo. 4. c. 26. the Post-office Act would be a dead letter.

You have a right to recover small arrears by civil-bill process?—Yes; but we should have to take the books and the officers to the sessions; that would be more expensive than the present mode.

What course do you think the most advisable in those cases?—I think the proceeding on the Government bonds, now that the stamps have been taken off, and the practice of the Court of Exchequer regulated, is so reasonable, that the present course is as good as any which could be devised. [*The witness delivered in the opinion.*] I would suggest an alteration of the Ship-letter Act, for that excepts all letters coming from the ports of Great Britain to Ireland, and all letters going from Ireland to the ports of Great Britain.

Does it expressly except them?—It does.

What Act do you refer to?—The 55 Geo. 3. c. 105., our Ship-letter Act

Do you conceive there is considerable evasion of the post-office duty by ship letters?—I am quite certain the Liverpool steam boats have led to an evasion.

You have no law to meet that?—No; the British ports are all excepted in the Act; that is a defect in the Act that is well worthy the consideration of this Board, I think.

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Cannot a man be fined for carrying letters to Liverpool in a trading steam vessel?—He cannot; he may carry a sack of them, so far as we are concerned; he cannot do that in England; but if a vessel brings a ship letter from England to this country, they cannot be fined, for the Irish Ship-letter Act excepts the ports of Great Britain.

Have you represented that to the secretary?—I have, repeatedly.

Have you to the postmasters-general?—The secretary is quite aware of it.

Do you know any reason why it has not been acted upon?—No, I do not.

How long is it since you represented that state of the law?—A year and a half or two years, I should think. Sir Edward Lees is quite aware of it, and feels the annoyance of it as much as any man, I believe.

Do you know whether it is within the knowledge of the postmasters-general?—I cannot say; I never had any conversation either with Lord Rosse or Lord O'Neill upon the subject of it.

Should you have any objection to be paid by salary as solicitor?—I should prefer it, if I got any thing at all adequate to my situation.

At what do you estimate your emoluments?—I think hitherto my office has been worth from 1,100*l.* to 1,500*l.* a year, clear profit.

What is the expenditure of your establishment?—I have three clerks, and am only paid for what I do, except a salary of 100*l.*, and am obliged to have them, because from those conflicting cases on the circuit they must attend.

What is the expense of your professional establishment?—I cannot say at this moment; my chief clerk I have been in the habit of paying, in salary and allowances, 90*l.* a year to, until lately; I paid him at one time 100*l.* a year; my second clerk 50*l.* in like manner.

Have you a third?—I have had till a fortnight back, and must get another.

Do they do any other business but post-office business?—One of my clerks does professional matters for me.

Is there any other expense attendant upon the office for which you do not make a direct charge?—No; I do not know of any other expense I am at.

You are allowed to pursue private professional practice?—I am.

Had your predecessor that privilege?—He was a very celebrated solicitor, Mr. Richard Whaddy. My office, when I came into it at first, was a very valuable one, and I sacrificed my professional pursuits to it; then when it became a less valuable one, I could not recover those lost clients. When I came into office, in the year 1801, immediately after the Rebellion, there was a great deal of bills of costs, they were much more than double what they are at present; then, when my office was reduced in value, my clients had got other connections.

Do you receive many representations with respect to frauds upon the post-office?—I think that the register of the double letters has prevented a great deal of the frauds in the double letters. I believe that has so checked the various letter-carriers, and with that the commission of fraud is not nearly so frequent.

Do you receive many representations of frauds?—They are received in the secretary's office; I never receive them from the persons.

Do the informants come to you frequently?—No, never, except on mail robberies. My chief way of coming at the fraud is, to trace the property back to the person who has embezzled the letter or robbed the mail.

Is there any defect created by the law in bringing the case home to the party?—There is a great deal of preliminary proof necessary before we can enter into the case immediately affecting the party. Suppose a mail was dispatched from Cork to Dublin, and robbed in some of the intermediate counties, it is by the plunder taken out of that mail that the robbers are subsequently come at; the owners generally put a stop upon the payment of those bills when they come to be tendered for payment; they are immediately handed over to me to trace them to the robber, in the event of the robber being taken up; before I can attach any guilt, I must prove the letter put into the post at Cork, the dispatch of the mail, the arrival of it at the town immediately before the robbery took place, the robbery, the non-arrival in Dublin, the non-receipt by the party there; we must go through this before we can attach an atom of criminality to the prisoner. Before that chain is completed, the court will not suffer us to offer any evidence to criminate the party. Though I have stated the matter very shortly, it is very often very circuitous and difficult; it is that which creates the great expense of the post-office prosecutions; all those persons must be brought from Cork and Dublin to the intermediate town where the trial takes place.

By whom are the payments to witnesses regulated?—I regulate them as cheaply as I can. I will venture to say, looking at them, when it is seen the distance they come, that they are very reasonable.

Do you think any of the difficulties you have mentioned could be lessened by any alteration of the law?—In one Act of Parliament, the Act relating to the recovery of small debts by process, I framed a clause, that in all post-office prosecutions it should be taken for granted that the mail was dispatched, and so on, and that there should be no evidence necessary to be produced of that; the bill came back, and the clause was expunged; they altered it in the Irish office in London. That would have cheapened the prosecutions very much, and have prevented a great deal of circuitous evidence being necessary.

Do you know why it was altered?—I do not; I very frequently frame Acts for the localities of the post-office here, and when they come back I would not know my own work again. I suppose the clause in question was expunged in *favorem vite*, that there should be no short course taken.

Do you find any difficulty to get a conviction?—It is astonishing how successful we are.



Juries are very unwilling to convict, and unless there is that sort of overwhelming proof that they could not consistently with their oaths, they will, where death is the consequence, inevitably acquit if they can. We cannot prosecute under the post-office laws for any thing short of a capital felony; they are all capital. I reported the fact some years ago, and that I thought a modification of the laws would tend to put an end to the crime, because it would give juries a greater facility of finding guilty.

In cases where you have detected robberies or frauds, what classes of persons have committed them?—There are two descriptions of persons: a fraud committed in the office must be committed either by a letter-sorter or a letter-carrier; a fraud committed in the country, of course by country people, the lowest description of vagabonds in the country. I have been asked whether I would prefer salary to bills of costs; in answer to that I would state, that if it is the wisdom of the Treasury to pay the public solicitors in this country by salary rather than bills of cost, I should hope my professional time, being my estate, it is equal to that of any other professional man. When I came into the office, it was much more valuable than it is at present. Of course I cannot complain, as long as I am allowed to remain as I am, if the business falls to nothing; but if I am put on a salary, I think that my previous services should be taken into consideration, so as to put my office on an equality with the other Crown solicitors in Ireland. I say that upon the ground that one professional man's time is equally valuable with another; my whole time is taken up with the post-office business; no solicitor can be more employed than I am.

Can you mention any thing which you do, except under express instructions, with respect to the improvement of the revenue or the collection of it?—That circular was a suggestion of mine, and I think that has had a great effect.

You mention that your whole time is devoted to the object, in what way?—I cannot state the whole: I have a great correspondence to answer; and I am every day of my life called upon by the secretary to show Acts of Parliament to the office, various Toll Acts and Turnpike Acts; and a hundred things come down for me to write my report upon, as to the postage of letters, various things; which cannot find their way into my account, still they take up my time.

THOS. THOMPSON.

Examinations.  
—  
No. 194.  
Thomas Thompson,  
Esq.  
17th Oct. 1826.

Mr. THOMPSON, Solicitor, relative to the Salaries of his Clerks, in reference to his Evidence on 17th October 1826.

Sir,

General Post-office, 20th October 1826.

On my examination before the Commissioners on the 17th instant I omitted (or rather it did not occur to me) to state that my chief clerk receives from me a per-centage on my private professional costs, and my second clerk on the costs received on the recovery of the arrears due by dismissed and deceased deputy postmasters and letter-carriers.

In the event of my office being put on salary, those two sources of remuneration will, as I apprehend, cease; and in such event I should humbly hope, that whatever scale of salary may be allocated to the solicitor of the general post-office, the Commissioners will be pleased to recommend such a salary to those two clerks as will insure to the general post-office department, in the instance of the first, a person fully competent to act and advise in the solicitor's absence on duty, and in the other the due execution of the various services required of him.

I regret much I had not the opportunity of an interview with the Commissioners, as requested by me on the 18th instant, to explain those matters.

Hoping your indulgence for this intrusion,

I am, Sir, respectfully, your very obedient servant,

THOS. THOMPSON,  
Sol. to the Genl. Post-office.

T. C. Harrison, Esq.

### Appendix, No. 195.

16th October 1826.

Mr. JAMES KERIN called in and examined.

YOU hold the situation of surgeon to the post-office?—I do.

How long have you held that situation?—The first business I did for the post-office was in June 1815.

What is your salary?—£100 a year, Irish.

Have the goodness to state the nature of the duties you are called upon to perform as surgeon to that establishment?—I attend, if called upon, all the sick in the establishment; I inspect all the letter-carriers and guards previous to their appointment, and attend them when unwell; I report upon them when, from illness, they are unfit for duty, and I have again to report upon them when they are well enough to resume their business.

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No. 195.  
Mr. James Kerin.  
16th Oct. 1826.

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No. 195.

Mr. James Kerin.  
16th Oct. 1826.

With regard to the clerks?—I have to report upon and attend them when called on in case of illness or absence from duty; I mean that it is my duty to state whether their absence is caused by illness or not.

Do they come to your house?—When they are able they do; my directions are to wait upon them, and when they cannot come to me I call upon them.

You mention that no officer can get a leave of absence without a certificate from you?—If they represent themselves as unwell, they are generally obliged to produce my certificate to that effect.

Are you not aware that other medical gentlemen give certificates?—Yes, I am perfectly aware of that, but I am obliged to confirm that certificate; the certificate of no other medical man will be taken without mine; I must either approve or disapprove of it.

Does it ever happen that you differ from other medical gentlemen on that subject?—No, not that I recollect; the persons referred to are always men of high rank and character, and with them I can have no difference.

Do you receive any fee for that service?—I do not expect fees for such duty; and when a fee is offered, I make it a rule to refuse it; some persons insist on my taking a fee, and say, if I do not do so, they will take neither my certificate nor my attendance. This happens very rarely, and under those circumstances I take the fee.

What is your observation with regard to the healthiness of the employment of the gentlemen in the inland office?—I think they are very delicate men generally.

The question is as to the effect of the duty upon their health?—I think their health is affected from the nature of their duty, and from the want of sufficient ventilation in the office; many of those officers hold two situations, and suffer in health from endeavouring to do the duty of both. I conceive a great deal of the illness of the officers is attributable to this last circumstance. The duty, in some instances, being from half-past five in the morning till half-past eight at night, is a duty which no man can do without injury to his health; there are, however, I understand, one or two exceptions to this in the office, where the duty has been done without much bad effect.

Do you speak of constant attendance during that period?—Yes, almost constantly, except while they are at breakfast and dinner; they are obliged to be up at half-past five to be on duty in time; they remain at business till, I understand, after eight o'clock; then they go to breakfast, after which they have some other duty which engages them till about four o'clock. They are obliged to be on duty again at the inland office at half past five, and remain till the mail goes.

Have you ever attended during office hours in the inland office?—I have gone in once.

When it has been lighted?—Yes.

Have you had frequent representations from the clerks in the inland office that their health has suffered from the nature of the work to which they were exposed?—I have heard them frequently complain of the nature of their duty as being injurious to their health.

You have not, in consequence, gone in and examined to see how far it might be considered deleterious to their health?—I never did; but when Lord Rosse was here we had some conversation about making some alteration in the building.

Was any thing recommended?—No, it was merely conversation; there was a proposition about lowering the floor or raising the ceiling; I do not distinctly recollect what passed on that occasion.

Do you consider it sufficiently ventilated as it is at present?—I should rather think it is not; I only speak of it now from mere supposition.

Do you find the illness occurs principally in that department?—Speaking of the clerks, I think it does; but the letter-carriers and mail guards suffer most of all from illness.

Are you ever required to go into the country?—No, not far: I am required frequently to go outside the Circular Road.

Supposing a guard were wounded in the country, would you be called upon?—No, a surgeon in the neighbourhood would be sent for; I have gone as far as Howth once; but it is understood that when I go out of town I am to be paid by a separate warrant for that duty.

What was the case which occurred at Howth?—The horses and cart that were to bring the mail to Dublin backed into the sea, and a man, the guard I think, was severely injured between the wall and the cart. I brought him up to town in a carriage.

There are several clerks in the inland office who have represented themselves as quite incapable of going on with the inland office duties, but who continue to perform the duties of other situations they have?—There are.

You consider that that is the case?—Yes.

Can you mention the names?—Mr. Thomas Harrison is one, Mr. Robert Harrison is another, Mr. Garrett Wall and Mr. Cullen; those four only occur to me at present.

Do you know any thing of Mr. Donlevy's state of health?—I waited upon Mr. Donlevy by direction of the postmasters-general, some weeks ago; I saw him in the Bank, and he appeared in a very feeble state; I made a representation of his state of health at the time.

Have you seen the receiver-general, Mr. Swan?—Not as a patient.

Are you aware of his illness?—I am not aware professionally that he is unwell.

Has he required your certificate for absence?—No; his illness is, I should think, of a short duration; were it to continue long I suppose I would have to certify for him as matter of course.

You

You have not confirmed any medical certificate for him?—Certainly not; I have had no application upon the subject.

[The witness was requested to visit the inland office in the course of this evening when lighted, and to state his opinion upon it to the Board to-morrow.]

Have you made any application on the subject of your memorial to the postmasters-general?—No, I have not; my salary at first was only sixty pounds a year, but the services which I rendered the establishment induced the postmasters-general to increase it by degrees till it came to be a hundred a year Irish; since that I have not made any application; I did not wish to do so pending the present and during a former inquiry; I had several demi-official conversations with Sir Edward Lees on the subject.

Do all the charges connected with medical attendance, and so on, pass under your view?—They do; all the charges for attendance on mail guards, and so on, in the country, are submitted to me; I very often have to reduce them, as being too great.

Can you state, on recollection, the average amount of such charges?—I cannot; I recollect saving to the establishment 23*l.* some shillings, in about nine months, on documents from different parts of the country.

Have you been frequently called upon to do the duty of reporting upon the claims of persons for superannuation?—Yes, I have.

In what way does that come before you?—An officer, a mail guard, or letter-carrier, for instance, applies to the secretary to be superannuated; he refers him to me, and if the man is a fit subject for superannuation, I report upon him accordingly, if not, I reject him; if there is any doubt about the case, I call for the assistance of another medical man.

Has it happened that you have seen occasion to refuse your sanction to such claims?—I cannot bring to my recollection any particular case of that nature just now; I think applications have been made to me in one or two instances, which I refused; of this I speak with great uncertainty.

Generally such applications have been in your opinion well founded?—Generally so; they mostly refer to mail guards, who have suffered very severely from accidents and length of service; they also refer to letter-carriers, who suffer much from their duty.

Are the mail guards admissible only below a certain age?—Only below thirty.

How many years would you consider a mail guard likely to last in good health?—I should think that perhaps ten or twelve years would be a fair average at the duty they perform just now.

Does a mail guard go the whole way from hence to Belfast, for instance?—I do not know. I think they go forty miles on an average every night; there is an instance of a man who has been a mail guard four or five and thirty years, and who is in very good health; he is at this moment on duty.

Are his habits more sober than those of others?—I do not believe they are; I never heard of any irregular conduct on his part.

Are they generally sober men?—In general I think they are; they certainly drink a good deal, but from the nature of their duty they can bear drink better than others, and perhaps require it in moderation.

What advice do you give them as to their mode of living?—Always to abstain from spirits; I advise them to live as soberly as they possibly can, and never to drink but when they are fatigued, or very cold, and then to drink warm porter rather than punch or spirits.

Have you seen many cases of infirmity brought on by drink in the case of mail guards?—I think I have seen several cases brought on by hard drinking; they conceive drink is actually requisite for them from the nature of their duty, they think it is the best protection they can have, even equal to clothing, if not better; and in spite of all the cautions which can be given to them they will have frequent recourse to it: there are of course exceptions to this.

That is not taken into consideration in certifying for the superannuation of a guard?—No, certainly not; for if those habits bring on that state of constitution which renders a guard unfit for duty, his condition is supposed to be a sufficient reason for superannuating him.

How many mail guards are there altogether?—I cannot recollect precisely at this moment.

It appears by your statement that there are 120 letter-carriers, in respect of whom you are liable to be called upon?—I believe that is their number.

JAS. KERIN.

#### REPORT on the state of the Inland Office as regards Health.

Gentlemen,

9, South Frederick-street, Dublin, 17th October 1826.

IN obedience to your directions, I visited the inland office last night, at five minutes past seven, and remained till five minutes past eight. I purposely selected that time as being that at which the office is most crowded, owing to the introduction of the guards to assist in discharging the duty.

The inland office is, in my opinion, from want of sufficient height, incommodious and injurious to the health of the officers, for the following reasons: 1st, It is too small and confined for the number of persons employed in it; 2dly, The gas light causes considerable heat; and 3dly, There is no possible mode of ventilating effectually from above, and lateral ventilation from the window, will, I understand, dim the glasses, and also obstruct the

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officers

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officers in sealing the bags. Substituting candles in the lower part of the room, and leaving the suspended gas light in the centre, would certainly lessen the heat very considerably. But gas light is indubitably the best for the office; it causes no unpleasant smell, and is most useful in "fishing" the letters. The only objection to it is its great heat, and if this had room to expand, the inconvenience would be abated. While in the office the thermometer was steady at  $69\frac{1}{2}$ . Some few officers complain of the great glare of the light, but I do not look upon this as a strong reason against its use.

I have given a hasty opinion on this subject, as the Commissioners wish for my Report this day.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

JAS. KERIN,

Surgeon, Genl. Post-Office.

To the Right Hon.

His Majesty's Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry.

### Appendix, No. 196.

Belfast, 24th October 1826.

Mr. JOHN FERGUSON, Mr. ADAM M'LEAN, and Mr. TENNENT, &c. Deputation from the Chamber of Commerce, called in and examined.

No. 196.  
 Mr. John Ferguson,  
 Mr. Adam M'Lean,  
 and  
 Mr. Tennent, &c.  
 24th Oct. 1826.

YOU were mentioning the subject of the Enniskillen mail?—(Mr. Tennent): Yes; we have made an application to the postmasters-general here; it would be a very great benefit to this part of the country. I recollect, before a mail-coach was established between Belfast and Derry, Lord O'Neill, the postmaster-general, said it would take a great deal of money, and that the postages would not repay a fourth part of the expense; it is now found out that it has doubled. The intercourse is very great, and many coaches are now established on the line of road between this and Derry; and if there were coaches established between this and Enniskillen and Connaught, it would tend to the advantage of the country very much, and to the further extension of the cotton and linen manufactures to the west of Ireland.

The Board have before them a correspondence which took place between Mr. Ferguson, the superintendent of mail-coaches, and the Chamber of Commerce; they are aware of the difficulties which have been stated, namely, the impossibility of getting individuals to contract for the coaches; do you know whether any steps have been taken?—(Mr. M'Lean): I was requested by the Chamber of Commerce to accompany Mr. Ferguson on that subject, and we thought we had quite completed it; at one time we were very much pleased with the prospect, but were requested to leave the room where a number of intended contractors had been with us; there was one very clever man there who is the proprietor of a day coach from Enniskillen to Dublin; and when we returned they made a proposition, a most preposterous one, that the Chamber of Commerce should guarantee all the loss which should take place for three years; this man had wound them up to that, and we concluded at once that it was for his own aggrandizement: however, within the last eight days we have a pleasing prospect for it; a gentleman at Lurgan has this day commenced running a coach from this place to Monaghan three days a week. Monaghan is within two stages of the line of road from Dublin to Enniskillen, on which regular daily coaches are established. The Chamber of Commerce communicated with Mr. Goulburn, when Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Tennent, and myself were deputed to wait on him; he was very anxious to relieve those parts of Ireland which were not able to relieve themselves, as he, Mr. M'Lean, said, even the name of Government often enables persons to do things. The line is opened forty-two miles of the road by the coach started to day.

That is not the road to Enniskillen?—There is a coach runs down by Clones, which is within one stage of Monaghan, that would bring passengers within a stage of the Monaghan coach; consequently, I have no doubt, but with a very little exertion from the postmasters-general, a contract could now be got.

Was your proposition for a coach from Belfast to Enniskillen to run through Monaghan?—Yes, either by that road or Auchnacloy. It is a very singular thing, that the postmasters-general had a survey made by their own surveyor, and there was but one and a quarter miles difference between the line by Auchnacloy or Monaghan.

Is not Clogher by far the nearest road to Enniskillen?—I think Mr. Ferguson told me that they were very near the same distance.

There has been a difficulty started with respect to the state of the road?—(Mr. Tennent): The state of the road by Monaghan is best; after passing Five-mile-Town the roads are not very good, they are hilly.

Is it for a day-mail or a night-mail which is proposed?—We would rather have a day-mail, but it would answer the purpose of the post-office here better, as I understand from Sir Edward Lees, to have it a night-mail.

Does the postmaster-general suppose it would answer best as a night or day mail?—A night-mail.

Who wishes for a day-mail?—The contractors, for they would make more money by it.—(Mr. M'Lean): Mr. Ferguson's statement of the reason for having the letters taken by night was, that that would more effectually expedite it, that the letters should not rest for a time.

The road may be good enough for a day-mail, and not sufficiently good for a night-mail?—The contractor promised to do it at a less rate by the day than the night, if they took it by night.

That does not appear in the correspondence?—The secretary of our Chamber of Commerce has the papers.

Has any progress been made in the subscription proposed among the landed proprietors?—There was a subscription at one time among them; they proposed to make a purse.

The Primate offered to give something?—Yes; and Lord Caledon wrote a letter to the president of the Chamber of Commerce, saying he would be very willing to contribute his fair proportion.

Do you consider that there is at present any fairer prospect of its succeeding?—There is no question of that; the anxiety of the Belfast merchants would induce them very willingly to fulfil any obligation resting upon them to effect it.

Is there a road in existence the whole distance which would carry a mail-coach?—(Mr. Tennent): Yes.

What is the state of the road from Clogher to Five-mile-Town?—There is a new line of road that is not yet quite completed, but there is a very good posting road just now.

That would pass through Armagh?—Yes, it would.

The road by Rich-hill is in a bad state; could they avoid that?—They could avoid that.—(Mr. M'Lean): The gentlemen of the grand jury of the county of Armagh have been divided; they have been eleven and twelve, I believe, or twelve and thirteen, on two lines of road from Armagh, each preferring a particular line, but either would have answered the object of avoiding a very heavy hill. At the last assizes they agreed, that whichever line of road the postmasters-general's surveyor should lay down, they will submit their own understanding to it, so that I believe we may expect, to a certainty, that a good road will be made from Armagh to Portadown, and from that to Lurgan, by which three miles and a quarter may be saved.

In your communications with the general post-office, are you satisfied with the attention which has been given to the gratification of your wishes?—(Mr. Ferguson): There has been a great deal of polite attention.—(Mr. Tennent): We have received considerable attention from Sir Edward Lees to all our applications; but the fact is, they have not done any thing; and I conceive the great fault to be, that they hesitated about giving a penny or two-pence a mile more. I think it is no great object, if they throw away a penny or two-pence a mile for a few years; they might have now taken it off, when the coach was fully established.

What is the sum which was agreed on by the contractor for a short time; was it a shilling a mile?—Yes; a shilling per mile was asked in 1825 for running a night-mail.

The question is not whether you have been satisfied with what has been done, but with the disposition of the post-office to attend to it?—I will send up a paper which will show what was promised by Sir Edward Lees in 1821, when he was here; the town was so much gratified with the state of things that it was inserted in the newspapers, and I have read it this morning; I will send you up a volume of papers with that account marked down. It will be necessary to explain that at that time, and for a considerable time before, that the town of Belfast had remonstrated about the situation of our post-office; it was for time out of mind in the principal street of the town, that is, the High-street, until about twenty-four years ago, when it was removed from that street into a narrow lane, called Skipper's-lane, from thence to Donegal-street, and from thence to its present situation, a narrow street scarcely fit for two carriages to pass, and where it is now kept to the great inconvenience of the town; that formed a very considerable subject of our complaint; and when Sir Edward Lees was here, he saw it to be very far from what it should be in a town like Belfast, in a little pimple place; and he went about two or three mornings and picked out two or three places that he thought would answer very well, and finally he reported to the town, that if they could get a place such as they would approve, the postmasters-general would go to the expense of fitting up an office which they had given orders for; and we found a place and made an application to Lord Donegal, and he assigned to us a part of the Exchange building, which is exactly in the centre, opposite the Commercial Building; a part that was formerly the news-room of the town he proposed giving; that there was a drawing and elevation and a ground plan prepared, and Sir Edward Lees approved of it; it was sent up for the purpose of being laid before the postmasters-general. I was in Dublin afterwards,

Examinations.

No. 196.

Mr. John Ferguson,  
Mr. Adam M'Lean,  
andMr. Tennent, &c.  
24th Oct. 1826.

## Examinations.

No. 196.

*Mr. John Ferguson,*  
*Mr. Adam M<sup>c</sup>Lean,*  
 and  
*Mr. Teenent, &c.*  
 24th Oct. 1826.

and saw Sir Edward Lees; it embraced every object which was considered necessary; but Lord O'Neill's objection was, that we had applied for it only for three years; Sir Edward Lees had stated, that if we got it for three years, it should be re-established in that central situation; and in consequence of that, the merchants set about and subscribed the sum necessary. The present office is worth about twenty guineas a year; the rent of this room would be forty, and there was sixty guineas subscribed the next day. A deputation was sent to Lord O'Neill to request a fulfilment of the promise of Sir Edward Lees; Lord O'Neill said to the deputation, that he thought three years was too short a period to expend the public money. I believe some other gentlemen went to Lord Donegal and showed him this answer, and Lord Donegal endorsed upon the back of it, that he would grant it for twenty-one years at the same rent; we conceived then we had succeeded in every object, but from that hour until about a year and a half afterwards we heard nothing on the subject, and then we saw the public money expending in this little shabby street in which the office now is.

What was the estimate for the proposed plan?—I think fifty guineas was the estimate for the making the new post-office out of the Exchange, that part allotted by Lord Donegal; and there was a much larger sum for altering the office as it is now established; these are facts which it is impossible to alter. I got the estimate, and sent it up to Sir Edward Lees, as he had requested. That was one of the things Sir Edward Lees promised when he was here; he told me then that he had given great attention to the post-office, and he attended two or three days immediately at the arrival of the coaches, and prior to the dispatch, to ascertain what could be done for Belfast; he said he would try the experiment, what could be done for us, and that he had, after three days trial, found that the delivery could take place sometimes in a quarter of an hour, but at farthest in twenty minutes, but certainly never to exceed half an hour; and that the receiver should be kept open to within a quarter of an hour of the dispatch; but neither of these three things has been attended to; half an hour before the coach sets off the box is shut, and we pay as late letters after that time.

What do you pay?—I believe it is sixpence immediately afterwards; a letter must be in before half past four; if one minute after that it is sixpence, and for the first ten minutes it makes no difference; then when it comes nearer the dispatch it is increased.

Does the charge ever exceed sixpence?—(*Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Lean*): Yes, it does.

Up to what sum?—If we go within five minutes of the time, it is understood that the postmaster has a discretionary power to charge what he likes.

What is the utmost you have ever heard or known of being charged?—I have never heard of more than a shilling.

Have you ever heard of more than ten-pence?—Yes; since the change of the currency it has been a shilling; but if the post was ordinarily kept open till within fifteen minutes, without any charge, there would be no complaints.

You pay for having your letters delivered more than the postage, do you not?—(*Mr. Ferguson*): We pay for keeping accounts.

Do you pay for the early delivery at the post-office, or at your own houses?—At our own houses; that is done away with now, the early delivery at our own houses; it was thought to be an unfair advantage, people getting information and early intimation, to mercantile people, when things fluctuate much.—(*Mr. Pirrie*): When letters are not called for they are delivered at the houses, for which a penny is paid.—(*Mr. Ferguson*): That is the late delivery; that is after the public are served at the post-office; but there is another thing which is found convenient, and to which nobody objects, to pay the postmaster a certain fee for keeping an account, not requiring the money each day; the person who attends from the merchant generally has a greater facility in getting his letters than those who have not such an account; they get their letters out of a different window.

Is it a fee or a per-centage?—It is a per-centage.

What per-centage?—(*Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Lean*): I believe it varies according to the extent of the postage; above 20*l.* from three to five per cent.—(*Mr. Pirrie*): It costs some houses more, and some less, but it is an accommodation that I conceive is no grievance at all.—(*Mr. Gillies*): At present, it is very frequently from an hour to an hour and a half after the arrival of the coach before we get our letters.

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Mr.

Thomas Whinnery.  
24th Oct. 1826.

## Appendix, No. 197.

24th October 1826.

Mr. THOMAS WHINNERY called in and examined.

HOW long have you been postmaster at Belfast?—I am in my thirty-second year.

What is your salary?—About 250*l.* Irish.

Is that the regular salary?—There is 50*l.* that was not considered a part of the post-office salary included in that.

Under what head does that come?—It was given to me by the Government at a particular period; that does not go to my successor.

Is there any additional salary, under the head of bye salary?—Not to me.

Nor night salary?—No.

What is the net post-office salary?—It is a little more than 200*l.* Irish.

Have you a residence found for you?—No; there is no allowance whatever, either for stationery, rent, or fire, or any thing whatever.

What is the establishment you keep up for the performance of the duty?—I have six persons employed, including myself.

Are you and they employed during the whole four and twenty hours?—We are in attendance from seven in the morning till nine at night.

You have no night attendance?—No, unless an express should come.

Have you full employment for yourself and your five assistants?—Yes, I have; my three assistants and myself and two letter-carriers are kept fully employed.

Do you receive any emolument from the employment of those letter-carriers?—I give them a salary, and receive a penny upon each letter.

To what does that receipt by you amount?—I do not know the amount of it.

Have you any riding duty?—I have a ride to Larne, a distance of eighteen miles.

Is that the only riding duty you have?—Yes, it is.

You have in fact three assistants to do the duty of the office?—Yes; and the letter-carriers assist occasionally in sorting and dispatching the mails; we are all busily employed from the time the Dublin mail arrives till we commence the delivery of the letters.

In what part of the town is your house situate?—In Church-street, near the church.

Is not that rather an inconvenient situation for the public?—It was built by myself about twenty years ago; at the time it was built, the town was inclining in that direction; there was no college here then, and very little building in this part of the town; it was rather running towards the sea. The situation of the office was not found inconvenient until the erection of the Commercial Buildings, where the merchants are accustomed to assemble; it is only a little more than 200 yards from the Commercial Buildings.

There was an application from the merchants to have it in a more central situation, and in a wider street?—There was.

The merchants state that they were given to understand by the postmasters-general that their application would be attended to, and that they had gone so far as to receive from Lord Donegal a grant of land on which a new post-office was to be built; are you aware of the circumstances which prevented that being carried into execution?—I am aware that application was made to my Lord Donegal for what is called the Old Coffee-room, in the Exchange, near the Commercial Buildings, and that it was to be given by his lordship at a certain rent.

What prevented that taking place?—I rather apprehend that there was an expectation that I would have taken it myself, and fitted it up at my own expense; a thing that was never in my contemplation.

Was there ever an application made to you to do that?—No, not regularly; I said if they could point out another situation, I would give them what I could get for rent for the present house, and that was thought to be a very fair thing.

Was that offer accepted?—No.

Have you had any communication with the postmasters-general on the subject?—No, I do not think there was any thing of that kind; but there was an idea afloat that the post-office would do it.

Had you any communication with Lord O'Neill upon the subject?—I had one note from his lordship.

To what effect was that?—I believe it was a private note.

Have you any objection to state the substance of it?—I believe his lordship asked me my opinion of the site and eligibility of the thing, and I stated one objection candidly, that there was no dwelling-house attached to it, and I considered that to be a very essential thing; I conceived that I should not be put to an expense by that, and have to pay a rent besides that for the office; the idea was that the Government would have done it.

Had you any reason to entertain that opinion, that the Government would have done it?—That never was my opinion; it was without precedent, but it was said that something might be done for such a place as Belfast.

What did you understand would be the expense?—I never had an estimate of it.

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Did

## Examinations.

No. 197.

Mr.

Thomas Whinnery.  
24th Oct. 1826.

Did it turn upon your not being able to get a residence in a better situation?—That was a part of it, I think. If the postmasters-general had ordered me to transact the business there, that would have taken the responsibility off my shoulders.

Did Lord O'Neill express any opinion about it himself?—No, I do not recollect that he did; he merely put the question to me which I have stated.

Are you in the habit of corresponding with the postmasters-general direct?—No, I cannot say that I am.

When you have occasion to communicate with them, whom do you address?—Sir Edward Lees, the secretary. I believe I have seldom written official letters to them direct.

By whom were you appointed?—I was appointed by Lords Ely and Bellmont.

What length of time elapses between the arrival of the Dublin mail and the delivery of the letters?—The Dublin mail is due to me at fifteen minutes after nine, and I have several dispatches to make while the sorting is going on; and I am obliged to dispatch two mails for two lines, comprehending the Carrickfergus, Larne, Newtownards, Donaghadee, Bangor, Down, and the Scotland mails.

Is not that the Donaghadee?—Yes; but it is a distinct thing; there is a Scotland account and another with Donaghadee; I have a list of all the accounts I am obliged to keep.

Those bags you make up after the arrival of the Dublin mail?—Yes; all that must be done in the first half hour after the mail arrives, and then the sorting of letters for my own delivery is carrying on by three of us; the first thing I do is to count the charge against the office made by Dublin; I do that myself; there is one of my assistants reckons after me, we see whether we correspond in the amount, then we make an entry in the docket; then I sort into three compartments the letters brought from Dublin, and all the towns short of Dublin with whom I hold accounts; there are three departments in the office, one the pay alphabet, we sort into that, we sort for the credit alphabet, and we sort for the letter-carriers, all at the same time, and as soon as we possibly can; we get the office open in forty-five or fifty minutes after the arrival of the mail, sometimes it may be more, sometimes less, according to the magnitude of the mail.

You would consider an hour a long delay?—Yes, it is a stretch I would not like to extend; there were certain duties required some time ago for which it was necessary to have an hour, but they are done away with.

What were they?—The manner of checking off the amount of postage occupied perhaps ten minutes more.

You have greater facilities given you now in that duty?—Yes; when that time was taken up, it was for ascertaining the loss by change in the currency; it was kept up from the 5th of January to the 19th of July; that duty has been removed.

Could not you establish some mode by which your mails might be dispatched with the proper celerity, and the time for delivery of Belfast letters be shortened?—If they would allow me to work for Belfast in the first instance, and then immediately after opening the office dispatch those mails; if they could give me half an hour later to commence the making up the mails alluded to, that would save time here; it was originally the plan, but expedition appeared to be so desirable, particularly the getting away to Donaghadee with the mail for Britain, that I am afraid such delay could not be afforded; if I could get to attend to the Belfast letters alone in the first instance, that would save time; but the Dublin mail comes in at such a time of day, that it is not of very great moment; people have not their breakfast over before they are able to get their letters; it is my object to let them have them as soon as I can.

You sort into three divisions, the pay alphabet, the credit alphabet, and the letter-carriers?—Yes.

Are they opened and dispatched at the same time?—The letter-carriers do not get out at the same moment; the other two are opened at the same moment.

How soon are they dispatched?—As soon as their letters can be sorted.

Do you begin sorting them before the opening of those two windows?—No; those letters are not of so much importance.

How soon do the carriers start after the office is opened?—The letter-carriers do not get out for half an hour after the opening of those windows.

Is that sorting done in a different part of your place?—The three assortments I speak of are all done in the same place; when the letters are divided in that place, they take them away to another room to divide them into their districts.

Is not there some risk or inconvenience in taking away the letters from the post-office to a loft behind after the sorting has been partly done?—It has been charged against them.

Does not it create a delay?—No.

What salary do you give to the letter-carriers?—£30 each.

Do you pay them by the year or the week?—It is at such a rate per week; half a guinea a week and donation at Christmas.

Do they receive no other perquisites?—They receive Christmas-boxes.

Is not there a penny charged for each letter delivered through the town?—Yes; I get that.

Is that included in your salary of 200*l.* a year?—No; that was my salary.

What is the ground for charging that?—It has been the case for several years.

You are aware that the postmaster is bound to deliver them without charging more than the postage regulated by law?—I believe he is not bound to send them round to persons houses.



At what do you estimate the emolument from the letter-carriers?—It may be about 60*l.* a year.

Not more than that?—No, not more than that; the arrangement of the office is such that there are not a great many letters of consequence delivered in that way.

The penny is taken whether it is a letter of consequence or not?—Yes.

Is there any penny postage in Belfast?—No.

What other fees are there attaching upon the receipt or delivery of letters?—There is no fee, unless they choose to give the clerk a Christmas-box.

For late letters what is the custom?—There is some fee there; we charge sixpence for a late letter.

Did you ever charge more than sixpence?—When they come to be near the closing of the mail we charge ten-pence.

Is it ten-pence or a shilling now?—It is not a shilling.

Since the change of currency do you take ten-pence?—Yes.

Have you any precedent for that claim?—It was the old practice.

Was it the practice to take ten-pence before your time?—I cannot tell that.

Was it the practice to take sixpence before your time?—I believe it was; but I will mention a circumstance which makes it more difficult to get letters introduced; formerly there was a greater extent of time to make up the Dublin mail; when that came to be curtailed, it gave a good deal of additional trouble forwarding letters.

Do you employ a greater number of hands now than you did?—Yes, I do.

Is not that owing to the increased number of letters?—That is part of it, certainly; the revenue has increased, and the number of letters consequently increased; when I came to Belfast the revenue of the post-office was little more than 2,200*l.* a year.

What is it now?—For the last year the amount for the last four quarters was about 9,000*l.* British.

What was the last quarter?—£2,068*l.* or thereabouts.

You have also an emolument from the credit alphabet?—There is some little risk there; there is an emolument.

What is the rate of per-centage which you require from those who open accounts with you?—Those who had been a long time keeping accounts with me before I made an improvement by a contrivance I added, it was three per cent., or the minimum a guinea a year. If I take in a new house now, I charge four per cent., and the minimum 30*s.*; the postmaster of Cork gets five per cent., and not less than two guineas a year.

What is the contrivance to which you alluded?—Instead of having an alphabet against the wall, I have it on a pivot, and after the letters are assorted, when I am ready to begin the delivery, it turns round across the window, and the boxes are all numbered, from one to the highest number; every merchant knows the number of his box, and if he sees a letter, he asks for the number; if he does not see a letter in his box, he walks away.

You borrowed that from Liverpool?—Yes, I did; I did not see it there, but got an account of it. I think I have improved it, for Liverpool has the boxes in alphabetical order, A. to 40, and B. to 40, and so on; I do not use an alphabet at all with the boxes, I use only numbers.

What is the average annual amount from those fees of the alphabet?—It fluctuates, and there is some loss; I suppose at present it may be about 180*l.*, from the credit alphabet, from 180*l.* to 200*l.*

At what do you estimate the late letters?—I suppose not at present more than from 50*l.* to 60*l.* a year; that fluctuates too, according to the press of trade.

Has the receipt from the alphabet increased much of late years?—It has increased since the alteration of the construction to which I have referred.

You do not vary the per-centage with the amount of the postage received during the year?—No; I furnish an account monthly, and I charge it at the four per cent.

Do the letter-carriers give any credit?—I do not allow them.

Who taxes the letters you send away?—I generally tax the Dublin mail myself.

Why do not you tax the others?—I do tax a great deal of the others, but the Dublin mail is pretty smart upon me, and is of the greatest importance.

Do you think it easier to tax the bye letters than the Dublin letters?—Yes, because they have not to be re-taxed; there is no English postage to be added: it is not so with the bye letters; there is three-pence or four-pence, or whatever it may be, put on.

Would it save you trouble if there were not two taxations of the English and the Irish?—It would certainly save time in the taxing.

Another source of your emoluments is the horse-ride; what is that?—Not much above 20*l.* a year.

How many bags do you make up altogether?—I keep a voucher account with twenty-eight post-towns, besides Dublin and Great Britain, by way of Donaghadee.

Have you frequent occasion to re-tax the letters that come from the inland office in Dublin?—Frequently; but I do not find that so much as the English; I re-tax every day.

The correcting the taxation?—Yes.

Do you find the English letters incorrect?—I find a great many of them undercharged, and some Dublin ones.

The Board are in possession of a copy of your monthly voucher for September last, in which nearly all the sums appear to be undercharged?—Yes; I generally make an addition to the Dublin docket every day; I return that docket daily with the correction.

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Mr.

Thomas Whinnery.  
24th Oct. 1826.

Are any observations ever made upon your corrections from the general post-office in Dublin?—No.

Have you ever represented to them that they do not appear to be very accurate in their taxation?—Their own observation will supply that when I return the docket daily.

Do you find that the errors are generally against you or in your favour?—They are sometimes over and sometimes undercharged; sometimes when I tell them over, I find a different sum; they have overcharged me, and sometimes they have undercharged me; but that is distinct from what I call re-taxing; I have frequent opportunities of observing that they undercharge; for some months past they have been much more correct than they had been.

In the month of September they appear to have made a difference of 15*l.*?—That includes the undercharging and the re-charging.

That is the amount of the errors?—Yes; it includes the errors on my re-taxing.

In the month of September there appear to have been errors to the amount of 15*l.* or 16*l.* in the sum of 431*l.*?—Yes; in the time of war I have had more re-taxing than that.

What difference would that make?—There was more correspondence in the provision trade; but that is the return which has been made for the last month.

Do you keep a book in which there are copies of these monthly vouchers?—Not copies of those; that is a total; but I have the particulars.

Have you the copies of your corrections?—I have.

You can send that for the Commissioners to see?—Yes; or I can bring it.

Can you also put the Board into possession of the corrections made in the inland office upon your charges?—No, I have no document from them; I have not been found fault with for improper taxation.

Supposing this had been a return from the inland office to you, and that you had made those errors, should not you conceive you had been neglecting your duty if you had made so many errors in your monthly taxations?—I should not have executed my duty correctly, certainly; but it is not my desire to find fault with the superior Board.

It is not finding fault with the Board, but with the taxing officers; it is their business to see that it is done properly?—Certainly.

Do you find the taxation against you from bye letters pretty correct?—I have to re-tax some of them every day; I keep a monthly voucher, and return it to Dublin; I make a return of what has been undercharged or re-charged, monthly, to Dublin by each town; if a letter comes here from Derry, for instance, taxed at eight-pence, if I think it double, I mark it 1*s.* 4*d.*, and mark my initials against it, and put down so much against myself as a re-charge from Derry.

Do you furnish monthly or quarterly accounts to the Dublin post-office?—They get monthly accounts.

You do not furnish a general account, showing your debtor and creditor account?—No; they furnish me with that.

You could furnish that if you were called upon?—Indeed, I do not know; I suppose I could; it would be rather a new thing, but I should think I could do it.

Can you make up your own account with them as accurately as the accountant-general makes up his account with you?—I suppose I could with a little practice.

Would it take much time?—I must go over all my documents for the quarter in that case.

If you made your entries from time to time, in fact, you would then have only copies of your entries to send at the end of the quarter?—Certainly, if it became my duty I could do it; I never met with any thing in the post-office that I found an insuperable difficulty.

Would it not be easy to any person less competent than yourself?—No, I should think not; it is without precedent.

Do you ever find any errors in the accounts furnished you by the accountant-general quarterly?—There may be some trifling thing, but it cannot amount to much.

Is there generally some slight error?—I cannot say that there is an error in the account furnished to me; the error may be in my making out my memorandum myself; I have not had occasion to return the accountant-general's account.

Do you believe it always to be accurate?—I do.

There is never any short credit to you?—No.

Nor never an over-credit?—No.

You have only one ride?—Only one.

Have you never had more than one?—I had some years ago two additional rides; I had a ride to Cumber, and another to Crumlin, but they are very troublesome things; I have made out an account of the accounts kept in the post-office, of the persons employed in the post-office, and the amount of their emoluments. [The witness delivered in the same.]

Accounts are kept in the Post-office of Belfast,

On the Dublin Line, with	{ Lisburn. Hillsborough. Dromore. Banbridge. Loughbrickland. Newry. Dundalk. Drogheda.		On the Enniskillen Line, with	{ Moirá. Lurgan. Portadown. Richhill. Armagh.
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On

On the Derry Line, with	{	Carrickfergus.	Antrim.
		Larne.	Randalstown.
		Newtownards.	Ballymena.
		Down.	Ballymoney.
		Bangor.	Broughshane.
		Donaghadee.	Coleraine.
		Holywood.	Londonderry.
		Ballyclare.	

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Besides the accounts kept with Dublin, and with Great Britain by way of Donaghadee.

RETURN of Persons employed in the Department of the Post-office at Belfast.

Thomas Whinnery, postmaster.				
James Mundell, 1st assistant	-	-	salary, £45	} All paid by postmaster.
Robert Baillie, 2d ditto	-	-	40	
Archd. Taylor, 3d ditto	-	-	30	
John Baird, - letter-carrier	-	-	30	
John Campbell, ditto	-	-	30	
			£ 175	

No other occupation.—Postmaster and assistants hours of attendance from seven in the morning till nine at night.

It is your custom to affix a placard of all letters, the addresses of which are not found?—Yes; I do that once a fortnight.

How long is it kept up?—For a fortnight.

Do you in that way discover a good many directions?—Yes, a good many.

Are you acquainted with the practice in any other post-towns in the country?—No, not much.

Have you many dead letters?—Yes, I have some dead letters to send up every fortnight.

Do they generally contain any thing?—I never open them; I have no authority for opening them here.

Are any of them double?—We have known instances of letters being written from the general post-offices in Dublin and London, respecting inclosures contained in dead letters, and on the writer describing the inclosures, where the letters have been wrong directed, or the person could not be found, on giving me a proper receipt, he receives their contents.

Do you register your dead letters?—No; I send up the letters with the account of them, I keep no register, except of money-letters.

Those are entered as money-letters?—Yes; I have established very comfortable checks upon that.

You have an arrangement which puts you into possession of every money-letter which passes through your office?—Yes.

What is that arrangement?—If a letter for Donaghadee, or for any town in the north, comes from Newry, marked as a money-letter, and noted upon the post-bill, I have a printed letter for the postmaster of the town to which the letter is intended to go, and I describe in that letter the money-letter, and require his receipt by returning this printed letter to me, and I have that preserved; and any money-letter for my own delivery, I take the party's receipt on the delivery, whether from Dublin or any where else.

When a letter is put into your post-office as a money-letter, do you give a receipt for it?—No; I transmit it with safety, and show that I have done so; if the postmaster of Newry were to adopt the same plan I should have to send him a receipt, but Belfast is of that importance as a key that it secures it throughout a great part of the province.

Is there not a delay in the Scotch correspondence by sorting at Donaghadee?—I would rather leave that to the surveyor.

You have had some communication from Mr. Cupples on the subject of his not being here?—Yes, I have had a note from him from Sligo to-day.

What does he state?—He states that he is detained at Sligo, through some defaulters; I wrote a note to him, stating that this commission was likely to be here, and he wrote in answer, expressing his regret that he could not be here, that he was engaged about important business in that quarter.

What time would it take to bring him here?—A letter dispatched from Belfast this afternoon would be in Sligo to-morrow evening.

When could he be here?—I suppose he could be here in two days after.

He could not be here by Friday next?—No, I do not think he could; he has a delicate constitution; travelling by night would not suit him.

What is the course of travelling of a letter from hence to Sligo?—It goes by Armagh, then Monaghan, Clones, Wattle Bridge, and Enniskillen; beyond that I do not know the names of the towns.

How is it conveyed?—It is conveyed on horseback from Lisburne, unless that some part of it may be conveyed by cart or car.

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 —  
 No. 197.  
 Mr.  
 Thomas Whinnery.  
 24th Oct. 1826.

Do you know that line of road?—I have been to Enniskillen, but never beyond it.  
 Is it a road that a mail-coach could travel over?—I have not been there of late years.  
 Mr. Cupples is a surveyor?—He is the junior post-office surveyor on the establishment.  
 Have you heard of the plan for establishing a mail-coach between Belfast and Enniskillen?  
 —It has been long talked of.  
 What is your opinion of it?—I think it would be a public advantage, but being an untried road, it would be questionable.  
 You think it would be expensive?—Yes; a contract would not be easily taken perhaps.  
 Is it not within your experience that mail-coaches have cost the Government at first a good deal, but eventually been of great advantage?—Yes; and they have cost the contractor a great deal too.  
 What mail-coach have you north of Belfast?—To Derry and to Donaghadee.  
 Does that pay well now?—It is doing better than formerly, but not yet highly productive.  
 Do you know the direct distance from Belfast to Derry?—It is seventy miles by the post line.  
 How much less is it by the direct line?—It may be ten miles less, but that does not go through any of the principal towns; it would not take in Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, or Coleraine.  
 Is there any shorter communication by riding post, or any other post from Belfast to Londonderry?—No.  
 Have there been any other projects for establishing lines of communication from Belfast within your recollection?—There has been a communication about a new line to Derry, to shorten the road.  
 When was the change proposed?—To go direct to Antrim, without going down the Carrickfergus road.  
 Can you state the amount of the postage between Belfast and Enniskillen for the last two or three years?—I can state the amount of my receipts for that total line of road, not Enniskillen particularly.  
 There has been an improvement upon that line?—Yes, there has.  
 When did that improvement begin?—I suppose about a year since; formerly a letter to Sligo would take two or three days to go by that route, now we have it in twenty-four hours.  
 What is the communication which has been established within the last year?—Mr. Cupples, as surveyor, formed a new arrangement of the towns, and struck out different routes for the post, and changed the duties, so as to make expedition very effectual.  
 What was the time between Belfast and Sligo formerly?—I suppose two or three days by Enniskillen.  
 Did it go by Dublin?—I formerly sent Sligo letters by Dublin; it would not take more than two days by Dublin.  
 How did it go to Enniskillen?—Lisburne, Moira, Lurgan, Portadown, Richhill, Armagh; it has been completely simplified and made correct; the Derry line I have marked there, is the line per mail-coach.  
 When you tax a letter to go to Dublin, you tax it all the way?—If it is for England I do; but I do not tax beyond Dublin in Ireland; such letters are taxed in Dublin altogether.  
 You could tax them on?—Yes, but it is prohibited; I used to tax to Dublin, where they had to be re-taxed, but now it is all done in the Dublin office.

THOMAS WHINNERY.

POSTAGE received at Belfast on Letters from Towns on the Enniskillen Line,  
 for one year, ended 5th October 1826.

				£	s.	d.
Month ended	}	5th November 1825	- -	39	13	10
		5th December —	- -	35	19	9
		5th January 1826	- -	41	3	7
		5th February —	- -	36	8	5
		5th March —	- -	29	19	3
		5th April —	- -	34	16	9
		5th May —	- -	31	0	4
		5th June —	- -	22	10	0
		5th July —	- -	26	2	5
		5th August —	- -	26	8	11
		5th September —	- -	23	0	11
		5th October —	- -	26	6	10
				£	373	11 0

RETURN

RETURN of UNDERCHARGES and OVERCHARGES in Dockets from Dublin for Belfast, for Three Years, ending 5th October 1826.

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Mr.  
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MONTH ending	UNDER.			OVER.			MONTH ending	UNDER.			OVER.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
5th Nov. 1823 -	8	13	4	5	8	1	5th May 1825 -	2	1	2	3	3	9
5th Dec. — -	6	14	11	0	12	0	5th June — -	2	1	3	0	14	8
5th Jan. 1824 -	6	3	0	2	4	1	5th July — -	4	2	1	0	6	5
5th Feb. — -	13	1	2	3	2	0	5th Aug. — -	4	4	7	0	5	4
5th Mar. — -	4	7	8	1	18	6	5th Sept. — -	2	7	8	2	6	6
5th April — -	1	15	1	2	18	2	5th Oct. — -	3	3	10	0	18	4
5th May — -	4	17	10	4	0	5	5th Nov. — -	3	15	10	0	12	8
5th June — -	2	15	7	2	6	1	5th Dec. — -	5	8	1	1	17	7
5th July — -	7	11	3	0	11	0	5th Jan. 1826 -	7	18	6	1	18	10
5th Aug. — -	12	5	0	2	5	3	5th Feb. — -	9	19	2	0	17	4
5th Sept. — -	2	12	11	1	7	6	5th Mar. — -	2	7	3	1	4	3
5th Oct. — -	5	8	11	1	15	0	5th April — -	2	10	7	2	2	9
5th Nov. — -	2	17	11	1	3	0	5th May — -	2	16	8	2	7	4
5th Dec. — -	3	18	4	0	10	5	5th June — -	1	10	6	2	11	1
5th Jan. 1825 -	3	0	10	4	12	4	5th July — -	2	11	3	5	11	8
5th Feb. — -	2	6	1	0	6	6	5th Aug. — -	7	0	11	0	10	0
5th Mar. — -	3	0	3	0	5	5	5th Sept. — -	1	8	4	1	2	1
5th April — -	0	19	4	0	4	1	5th Oct. — -	0	15	0	1	13	9
							B <sup>t</sup> for <sup>d</sup>	92	5	9	35	9	10
Carried forward	92	9	5	35	9	10	Total - -	158	12	1	65	14	2

Appendix, No. 198.

28th October 1826.

Mr. JOHN FERGUSON, Mr. ADAM M'LEAN, and Mr. PIRRIE, Deputation from Chamber of Commerce, called in and examined.

No. 198.  
Mr. J. Ferguson,  
Mr. A. M'Lean,  
and  
Mr. Pirrie.  
28th Oct. 1826.

(Mr. Ferguson.) I HAVE received a letter from a very intelligent gentleman, Mr. Macartney of Lismore Castle; he has proposed some regulations and improvements in the correspondence of that part of the country; I will beg to deliver in the paper for the consideration of the Board; the only thing is to give a longer time for the correspondence of this town to Derry; there are a great many towns which it appears would be inconvenienced. At present the Derry mail is dispatched at a quarter before one o'clock; by Mr. Macartney's plan it would be dispatched at a quarter before five. The contract with the Derry mail expires on the 5th of April next; this is on the assumption that a contract could be made at an accelerated rate of travelling; that is the only thing in which I see that Belfast has an interest in it.

Has this representation been made to the general post-office?—It has not.

It would be desirable that Mr. Macartney should make his communication immediately to the general post-office, as the contract will expire in April, and the Report of this Board may not be made for some time to come.

[Mr. Ferguson delivered in the papers, which were read as follow.]

“ October 23d, 1826.

“ UNDER the present system of conveying the mails from Belfast to Derry great delay unnecessarily takes place as regards the Dublin and English correspondence of those districts of country connected with the following post-towns; viz., Randlestown, Magherafelt, Castledawson, Bellaghy, Portglenone, Ballymena, Broughshane, Ballymoney, Dervock, Coleraine, Bushmills, and Ballycastle, in consequence of the mail-coach from Belfast to Derry not being dispatched until one o'clock P. M., nearly four hours after the arrival of the Dublin mail; and even with this great delay the merchants of Belfast, Derry, and the intervening towns complain that serious inconvenience arises to them from the fact of the business on 'Change not being over, and that a protracted dispatch of two or three hours would be a great public accommodation; but which the postmaster-general could not be expected to comply with so long as the Dublin and English correspondence of the above-

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mentioned towns were conveyed by the Belfast route. On the 5th of April next the contract for the conveying the mails from Belfast to Derry expires, and the postmasters-general having advertised for contracts to convey it at an advanced rate of travelling, an opportunity may then occur to meet the wishes of the Belfast and Derry merchants, and to give those towns already named their Dublin correspondence, in most cases, a day earlier; and in all, several hours sooner than at present. For the last two years a riding-post has been established between Banbridge and Antrim *via* Moira and Crumlin, by which the inhabitants of Antrim receive their Dublin letters at eleven o'clock A. M. in place of half-past three, P. M.; if conveyed from Belfast by this method they gain a day in answering their letters; the rate of the Banbridge post is four and a half miles per hour. Were a diligence put on the road to travel at six miles an hour, and proceed for Coleraine by the direct road to Ballymena, through Kells, not passing through Randlestown, (but conveying the mails for that town, and its off-branches by horse,) the Dublin correspondence along the line and its several off-branches would be delivered as per table (which also shows the present time of arrival and dispatch) at an increased expenditure of about 350*l.*, which I presume never could be a consideration when contrasted with the great advantages to be derived by those towns, and by the trading community of Belfast and Derry, as the former would gain twenty-four hours in receiving and answering their Dublin letters, and the latter would have two and a half hours after 'Change to write their letters of business for Derry; and by the intended rate of travelling the arrivals at the intervening towns of Ballymena, Ballymoney, and Coleraine would not be more than about an hour and a half later than at present; if this arrangement could be carried into effect the remote towns of Cushendall and Glenarm would also reap great advantage by having their letters dispatched from Ballymena *via* Broughshane in place of the present route from Belfast *via* Larne, receiving them two hours sooner, and a saving of a three-day post, which at present exists between Glenarm and Broughshane. A saving, as well as a great accommodation to the towns of Ballycastle and Dervock might be expected by having the mails conveyed from Ballymoney to Dervock and Ballycastle in a mail-cart, in place of on the back of an old man wanting an arm, who does what is termed the riding duty, and since the establishment never crossed a horse. Several persons are willing to contract to convey mails for the present mileage, and by branching Bushmills from Dervock a mile could be saved from the present route from Coleraine, and another to Ballycastle.

“ By the proposed delay of dispatching the mails from Belfast the mails from Belfast for Dublin and for Derry would be made up at the same time, twenty minutes before five o'clock, making but one sorting and dispatch in place of two, as at present; and by the accelerated rate of going the mail from Derry would arrive in Belfast half an hour previous to the dispatch of the day-mail, so that a day would be gained in the transmission of the letters for the south and west of Ireland from Derry and the intervening towns.

“ GEORGE MACARTNEY.”

A TABLE showing the Arrival and Dispatch of the Mail on the Belfast and Derry Line of Road as far as Coleraine and the Branch Towns; and also a Table of the Arrival and Dispatch under the proposed alteration.

Towns.	Present Arrival.	Dispatch.	No. Hours from Dublin.	Intended Arrival.	Dispatch.	No. Hours from Dublin.
Antrim - -	11 A. M. - -	2 P. M. - -	15	10 A. M. - -	3 P. M. - -	14
Randlestown -	4 P. M. - -	5 A. M. - -	20	30 min. aft. 10 -	20 min. aft. 2 P. M.	14 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ballymena -	30 min. aft. 5 P. M.	30 min. past 3 -	21 $\frac{1}{2}$	30 min. af. 11 A. M.	1 P. M. - -	15 $\frac{1}{2}$
Broughshane -	30 — 6 P. M.	8 P. M. - -	22 $\frac{1}{2}$	30 min. aft 12 -	12 noon - -	16 $\frac{1}{2}$
Glenarm - -	30 — 4 P. M.	6 A. M. - -	20 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 P. M. - -	30 min. af. 10 A. M.	18
Cushendall -	30 min. past 6 P. M.	30 min. p. 4 A. M.	22 $\frac{1}{2}$	15 min. aft. 4 A. M.	8 A. M. - -	19 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ballymoney -	30 min. aft. 8 P. M.	12 night - -	24 $\frac{1}{2}$	45 — 1 P. M.	30 min. af. 10 A. M.	17 $\frac{3}{4}$
Dervock - {	30 m. aft. 6 A. M. } 2d day - - }	5 P. M. 2d day	34	30 — 2 P. M.	30 — 9 A. M.	18 $\frac{1}{2}$
Bushmills - {	30 m. aft. 6 A. M. } 2d day - - }	6 P. M. 2d day	33	30 — 3 P. M.	30 — 8 A. M.	19 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ballycastle -	30 m. aft. 8, 2d day	4 P. M. 2d day	36	4 P. M. - -	8 A. M. - -	20
Coleraine - -	10 P. M. - -	11 P. M. - -	26	3 P. M. - -	8 A. M. - -	19

\* This allows 15 minutes for making up the mails at Ballymena, which is a sorting office for these three towns.  
 † This allows 15 minutes for making up the mails at Ballymoney, allowed to be a sorting office for these four offices.

(*Mr. Ferguson.*) It would be a great improvement of this plan if the letters were sorted before they came here, according to the suggestion we made when I had last the honour of attending this Board.

You are aware that is done in no instance at present, and probably in no part of the world?—I am perfectly aware of that. There is another communication I have had from a very respectable gentleman, Mr. Ogilvie of Ardglass; it is a matter in which we do not feel so much interested, but I have thought it my duty to bring it forward with respect to the passage between Ardglass and the Isle of Man. Mr. Ogilvie says, “A direct post-office communication between Ireland and the Isle of Man has been felt to be desirable; and to obviate the objection, that the post-office would not defray the expense of a packet, I offered to build a new packet, which I have done at great expense, to carry a mail between Ardglass and Peel, about ten or eleven leagues, for 2*d.* a letter; this offer was accepted; Mr. Freeling wrote to Sir Edward Lees to open a post-office in Ardglass, and when that was ready, he should direct the postmaster of Peel to make up a bag of letters to be sent to the Ardglass post, and directed him to do the same; when Sir Edward discovered that the Irish postmasters could only forward letters by the King’s established packets to the Isle of Man, either from Donaghadee to Port Patrick to be forwarded to Liverpool to be sent to the Isle of Man, or from Dublin to Holyhead, and by Liverpool to the Isle of Man, or from Waterford to Milford, and from Milford to Liverpool as before; if there was much intercourse between Ireland and the Isle of Man, the postage on such a circuitous communication would be an intolerable nuisance to the merchants of Belfast and Cork, and the excess of postage prevents communication, as a direct conveyance would encourage intercourse, and open new channels of trade between two islands so situated by natural position for more extended intercourse. When the Irish postmasters were found to have no power, the Lord Lieutenant recommended a direct communication to the Lords of the Treasury, and the Lords of the Treasury, overpowered with the important business of last Session, referred it to the Commissioners of Parliamentary Inquiry, where it has sprung up again. I had settled to go up to Dublin to wait on the Commissioners, when I read in the Belfast News-letter of yesterday, that the Commissioners had come to Belfast to inquire into the state of your post-office communications, and if you think a direct communication between Ireland and the Isle of Man of sufficient consequence to deserve your attention, I should be particularly obliged to you to recommend the measure to the Commissioners.”

What is your opinion as to the importance of that communication?—I do not feel competent to give an opinion upon it: I have received this letter only this morning. There is one other subject of our former application to the Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, three years ago, which I was not aware of the last day I waited upon the Commissioners here.

What was the nature of it?—(*Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Lean.*) I have put my hand on a copy of the memorial, which I will beg to deliver in.

[*The paper was delivered in, and read as follows.*]

“26 August 1823.

“Having observed in the newspapers a communication from your secretary to the Chamber of Commerce of Dublin on the business of the general post-office, the Belfast Chamber of Commerce feeling confident that it is your intention that the commercial and trading interests of Ireland in general should, as far as in your power, participate in the benefits to be derived from your present investigation of that important branch of the public service,—therefore beg leave to call your attention to the following.

“The mercantile and manufacturing interests of Belfast have for several years felt persuaded that great benefits would be gained by the establishment of a mail-coach betwixt this town and Enniskillen, which would travel through a rich and populous country, and cause a communication with many valuable towns which may at present be considered in a great degree unconnected; viz., through a portion of the counties of Antrim, Down, Armagh, Tyrone, Monaghan, and Fermanagh, taking in its route the towns of Lisburn, Moira, Lurgan, Portadown, Armagh, Caledon, Glaslough, Monaghan, Clones, Newtonbutler, Maguiresbridge, Lismalaw and Enniskillen.

“We trust we shall be excused from further explaining that we have for a number of years been soliciting the attention of the postmasters-general to this very important object, but without success; although we are satisfied that the establishment of a mail-coach on that line of road would, in a short time, not only augment the post-office revenue, but greatly increase the trade and agriculture of this portion of Ulster. The postmasters-general were at one time so satisfied of the importance of the proposed establishment that they advertised for a contractor to run a mail-coach between Belfast and Sligo, by Enniskillen; and at a later period they expressed a willingness to make a contract from Enniskillen to Belfast; but when applied to by persons who would have undertaken the work on the same terms as is now paid to the contractor from Dublin to Enniskillen, the postmasters-general rejected the offer, and have since explained that they will not allow more than 3*d.* per single mile for opening this new line of road, on the greater portion of which no regular coach has ever yet plied. The price now offered by the post-office for conveying a mail on this line by a coach and four horses is the same as was till very lately paid for a single horse post, while at the present time the postmasters-general are paying 6*d.* and 7*d.* per single mile for mail coach contracts on other lines of road. If any thing further were necessary to satisfy you of the utility of recommending a mail-coach to be forthwith established between Belfast and

Examinations.

No. 198.

*Mr. J. Ferguson,*  
*Mr. A. M<sup>c</sup>Lean,*  
and  
*Mr. Pirrie.*

28th Oct. 1826.

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 No. 198.  
 Mr. J. Ferguson,  
 Mr. A. M. Lean,  
 and  
 Mr. Pirrie.  
 28th Oct. 1826.

Enniskillen, we shall notice an important circumstance, that the postage on the line of road from this town to Londonderry has more than doubled since a mail-coach was established thereon; and we feel confident, that even a greater increase would shortly arise from the mail-coach now sought for on the Enniskillen line; and we respectfully submit, that it will appear the present expense attending the conveyance of letters by single horses on that line by cross posts will nearly equal a reasonable mileage paid for a regular mail-coach. The Chamber hope to be excused further trespassing on your valuable time, by offering a few observations respecting the post-office of this town, which was originally situated in the most central and best street, where it had remained from time immemorial, till removed by the present postmaster, first into a narrow lane, sometime after to a more distant street, and again to a still more distant and inconvenient situation, where it now is, which is little more than twenty feet wide within the footways, often causing considerable annoyance to those in attendance and to the passengers. It is right further to explain, that these facts have been frequently represented to the postmasters-general, and also to their secretary when in Belfast in January 1821, who at once saw and admitted the justice of the remonstrance, and promised that the office should be re-established in a conveniently central situation, provided the postmaster was not put to greater expense (for a few years) than his present office was worth. The town immediately agreed to the terms, and subscribed the necessary sums for defraying the expense, having first arranged the matter with Sir Edward Lees. The Chamber soon after obtained part of the Exchange Buildings, which afforded every accommodation required by the secretary; and then forwarded for the satisfaction of the postmasters-general a correct drawing and elevation of the proposed office, also an estimate of the necessary expense for fitting it up, (agreeably to the explanation given by Sir E. Lees,) which there is good reason to believe was a less sum than that since expended on the present post-office, situated as before described.

“ It is always irksome to attach blame to those in office, but the Chamber had no alternative, as it was impossible to communicate their ideas on these subjects without putting you in possession of the facts, which can, if necessary, be supported in the most satisfactory manner.”

(*Mr. Ferguson.*) There is one part of that which has been attended to, which was the acceleration of the speed in travelling from Dublin.

That has been done by the postmasters-general?—Yes; on looking over the paper, we found that was a copy of that which was sent to them.

Is that connected with the Scotch correspondence?—It states all the grievances we felt at that time.

You still continue to be of the same opinion?—Yes; if a communication from Howth could be got, it would be an object of great consequence to the north of Ireland; also, if the mails from Dublin, in place of being dispatched at eight in the evening, as they now are, could be dispatched at six in the evening; we suggested the idea two years ago, that was immediately after the establishment of the steam vessels, and the objection then made was, that the steam vessels were so late coming in that there was not sufficient time to attend to the correspondence and dispatch them at an earlier hour; that objection appears to be altogether done away, as I understand; from correspondence I have had since I was here, as to the time of the arrival of the steam vessels, one of them, I find, is due at six in the morning; in consequence of that, there can be no objection to the dispatch of the mails at six in the evening; no less than twenty-one of the principal towns in the north of Ireland would all receive their letters from Ireland before twelve o'clock the following day, and the towns in the south also; Cork would be just too far off to get them by one o'clock, if the dispatch was by six o'clock; Dublin gentlemen, we know, never think of doing business after they go to dinner; their letters are all written by five o'clock, so that there would be still an hour between that and the dispatch; there are thirty-one towns really of consequence, and all the intermediate towns, which would be served, and the service would not be interrupted by it, and it would enable the coaches to get out of the neighbourhood of Dublin (which is the most probable place for a robbery to take place,) at an earlier hour; there is never a robbery known twenty miles to the north of Dublin. About two years ago the present contractor, who ran the coach from this to Dublin, offered the postmasters-general to run a mail coach from Belfast to Enniskillen at the same rate of mileage that the post-office pays for the mail from Belfast to Dublin; that line of road has been opened by a day coach for thirty-eight years, and on the line of road from Belfast to Enniskillen no regular coach drawn by four horses has ever yet passed; they would not then give them more than 3*d.* a mile, which was in fact what was paid for the horse posts.

What did he ask?—The same mileage that the post-office pay to the contractor for the coach from Enniskillen.

Are you aware what that is?—I believe it is 6*d.* the single mile, and 3*d.* is that which they pay the horse posts.

Of course the reason was, that the estimated correspondence would not pay?—The reason I believe was, that they thought they should get it cheaper; the other contract had been made some years previous, and they expected that it would be got at a cheaper rate.

Who made that offer?—The gentlemen who run the coach from Belfast to Dublin.

Have they renewed it lately?—I rather think not; they were disgusted at the refusal, and the offer to run a coach and four horses at the same price they were paying for a man carrying a bag on a single horse at the rate of four miles and a half an hour. I wrote



yesterday morning to a friend in Dublin, to learn whether they were still in the disposition to make the offer.

It should be understood that there is a great deal may be done without the intervention of the Parliamentary Commissioners of Inquiry?—We are very unwilling to make charges against persons in office, but we have found it very hard to get things done which we think should be done; we now generally go to the higher sources.

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Mr. J. Ferguson,  
Mr. A. M'Lean,  
and  
Mr. Pirrie.  
28th Oct. 1826.

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Appendix, No. 199.

October 27th 1826.

JOHN BAIRD called in and examined.

YOU are a Letter-carrier at the Post-office?—I am.

How long have you been so?—Four years.

What were you before?—I followed the trade of weaving.

Are you a weaver still?—No.

Nothing but a letter-carrier?—No.

What does Mr. Whinnery allow you?—Half-a-guinea a week.

Is that paid by himself?—Yes.

What attendance is required of you?—From half-past eight in the morning or near nine I am sorting till I go out with my letters; I help to dispatch the Donaghadee and Carrickfergus and Larne mail.

At what time does he dispatch you with the letters?—When the mail arrives at the regular time I am always open within half an hour or thirty-five minutes for the delivery to merchants.

What are you doing during those thirty-five minutes?—Putting them in order for delivery.

There is another letter-carrier?—Yes.

How long does it take you to finish?—Our particular letters are delivered by one o'clock.

At what time do you generally go out?—If the mail arrives at fifteen minutes before nine, we are out at a quarter before eleven.

It takes you two hours?—It takes me nearly two hours delivering my particular letters.

How much later are the other letters delivered?—Then I have just to come back and go over its direction again, for persons who do not get theirs so regularly as the others; the merchants are the particular persons, at first I attend to them.

What is the distinction between the particular letters and others?—Because the merchants attend to them by the next post perhaps, and the persons who are not particular would not attend to them till their day's leisure, or the next day.

How do you know that a man wishes to have his letters in that particular way?—A soldier's letter or the like of that I leave till the evening.

How do you know that a merchant is to have his particular letter, or that his are delivered with the others?—It is generally the case that they wish to attend to them by the next mail.

How do you know when he is to attend to his business; who gives you instructions?—Mr. Whinnery says, "Deliver your particular letters first."

What makes it a particular letter?—He merely considers it a letter to be attended to by the next post.

What do you consider particular letters, when the letters are put into your hands?—The merchants.

All merchants letters?—All that I deliver; there are many merchants who attend at the office for their own.

Does Mr. Whinnery tell you, "This letter you are to call a particular letter, and the other not?"—No, he does not point it out to me; he leaves that to me, from my general knowledge.

Are the particular letters for those who pay Christmas-boxes?—No; the men who wish to attend to them the next post.

How do you know that?—I know the men who wish to have their letters early.

Does any man wish to have his letters late?—No, of course not.

What do you get for Christmas-boxes?—Not so much now; I used to get more some time ago.

How much do you get?—1*l.* or 30*s.* Irish currency I have received.

Did you never receive more than 30*s.* any one year?—No.

At what times does your delivery of those letters not particular cease?—About half-past three; it takes me two hours to go round my part of the town again with those letters.

You go over the ground twice?—Yes.

Would it not take much less time if you made no difference with their letters?—Yes, it would of course; but there are some merchants who tell me they would wish to attend to them by the next mail, and they would be too late.

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No. 199.  
John Baird.  
27th Oct. 1826.

You walk over this ground twice to oblige the merchants to enable them to answer their letters earlier?—Yes.

You do that under Mr. Whinnery's instruction?—Yes.

There are two letter-carriers?—Yes.

Does the other do the same?—Yes, he tells me he does.

Which delivers most?—There is not much distinction in the delivery: sometimes I have four or six in the day more than he, and sometimes he has more than I.

The letters which come here at a quarter past nine in the morning are not delivered sometimes till four o'clock?—Till three.

Do you help to sort?—I do.

Are all the letters sorted together?—Yes, they are.

Are not the letters for the alphabet sorted first?—My master sorts them; I have nothing to do with them; it is merely those for the letter-carriers.

Mr. Whinnery takes out the letters for the alphabet?—Every letter in the office passes under his hands; he sorts those for the merchants alphabet; they are put into the different boxes; and then he puts on the other side those which are called for at the other window; and then I am sorting my part, the letters that go by the other man and myself.

Have you many letters which you cannot deliver?—No, not many; in the evening, after the dispatch of the Dublin mail, we go with any letter that we have not been able to find, and inquire further about it, and if the person is gone, where he is gone to, and attend to it the next day.

Have you any perquisites but the half a guinea a week, and the Christmas-boxes?—No.

What money do you receive for the letters?—The tax, and a penny more.

Does every body consent to pay you that extra penny?—They do; some odd people refuse; if they do, I merely tell them, according to my master's orders, "If you do not wish to pay the penny, call at the office, and you shall receive it without the penny."

That is your instruction?—It is.

You do not deliver it then?—No; I say, "Call, and yours shall be left;" and they do some attend to that; and some say, "Never mind, I would rather have them brought to me, and you may attend to mine."

How much do you receive in those pennies in the course of a year?—I cannot say for that.

How many letters do you deliver in the day?—Thirty or forty a day on an average.

That would be forty pence?—No; from thirty to forty.

Do you never receive more than a penny?—No; unless when I go over the Long Bridge; he has a box, and sends them twice a week, and I receive another penny; when I go perhaps two miles through the country, into the county of Down, then I charge an additional penny for them.

Who gets that additional penny?—Mr. Whinnery.

What do you get by going there?—Nothing more than my usual fee.

Do you never charge more than that additional penny?—Never, however far I go.

Have you a book?—No.

You never enter the number of letters in a book?—Never.

If you have got a double letter or a money letter?—A money letter, I make a memorandum of the person, and direct them to call at the office; they give a receipt for it; that I have nothing to do with, but giving them notice that it lies in the office; if it is marked "money," I do not take it; if it is not marked "money," I deliver it as I do others; but when I do, I always pay attention to the person to whom I deliver it, that I can give an account that I delivered one at such a period.

Does every one pay you ready money?—Yes; that is the reason I get no business, for they tell me if I would do so and so, they would make me remuneration, but I never do any thing in that way.

How many deliveries in a day have you?—Only one; only that I have to go twice.

None for the Donaghadee letters?—No, except on the Sabbath day, and then I attend to them on the Saturday evening.

At what time does the Donaghadee mail come in?—At one o'clock, or towards two.

Do they lie in the office till the next morning?—Yes, they do.

How many are there?—I have seen six besides the merchants; they send for theirs when they expect the mail early in the evening.

Are those particular letters, which you deliver in that case?—I cannot say indeed; they remain there till the next morning.

What time do you begin sorting?—I begin a little before four, when I have got my dinner, and from that till the mail goes away.

What is the extent of your walk?—Just half of the town.

How many miles a day?—I cannot say, it depends upon the bounds the letters are for; sometimes they are further scattered than at others in the delivery; sometimes I have to go further with thirty letters, then I have sometimes with forty.

Within what time do you do it?—Going the second time over, I get it done by about three or half-past three o'clock.

That is four hours then?—Yes, it takes me that time.

## Appendix, No. 200.

October 28th, 1826.

Mr. WILLIAM CUPPLES called in and examined.

YOU are one of the Surveyors of the post-office in Ireland?—I am.

For what district?—The north-west and the north-east, I have been employed in both; at present I belong to the north-west; I occasionally work in the north-east, as emergency may require.

You are in the north-east at present?—I am.

What is the general division into north-east and north-west?—The north-east is bounded by the mail-coach line of road from Dublin to Derry, and on the other side by the coast; the north-west begins at Dublin and runs to Enniskillen, thence to Rutland, usually called Rosses, and again from Longford to Sligo on to Killala, and towards Castlebar; it is a long time since the districts have been revised.

When did you make the last inspection of the Belfast-office?—I am occasionally there, and have been there from five or six months; I make it a point to call at the Belfast-office; I have been here off and on these six months.

In what state have you found it?—Always very correct; indeed there is great strictness in that particular; the postmaster is most anxious to give satisfaction so far as accuracy goes.

Do you examine his docketts?—I have occasionally.

Have you seen docketts in which there are marked his corrections of the inland office charges?—I have seen them; I have not compared the letters with the charges.

What is your opinion respecting them?—That there is extreme accuracy.

How does he show his accuracy?—In general he is over the Dublin return, which shows an anxiety to correct either by re-charge or by correction of the tot; he is, generally speaking, beyond the Dublin charge, which is a strong feature in his favour.

Have you observed that that has amounted to a considerable sum, or merely a correction of trifling errors?—Some years ago the corrections were very extensive; but of late, in the general post-office, the clerks have been more accurate, there has been a greater attention appeared to be paid to the particular subject of telling off the sum of letters, and charging the deputies with them in their bills; but notwithstanding that the postmaster of Belfast makes a very handsome return each year of re-taxes.

What do you call a handsome return?—Probably 200*l.* a year or 300*l.* a year; it was more than the sum they charged him; there was a great deal of correspondence at that time.

Do you consider that a large sum?—At present I do not consider that the sum is large; in the war time it was probably 400*l.* a year.

You state that you generally find the postmaster here very accurate in his account?—Yes, and I have great confidence in him.

You state that he had generally corrected the charges made in the inland office?—Yes.

As often as other postmasters?—I think so; I think he is more attentive to the correction of the charges. If a letter comes to him not properly taxed, he will correct it; he takes particular care to do so. His whole wish appears to be to secure to the revenue all that he can: probably that is not very gratifying to many persons.

Have you found that that is not the case with other deputies?—There is a great deal of ignorance in the class of persons employed, in consequence of low salaries; we cannot get them to understand the difference between the proper charge and an improper charge; the thing is not worth their acceptance, and we are obliged to seek for those persons of the lower class.

Have you any reason to suppose that the taxation of letters in the inland office to Belfast is less accurate than that to any other part of the country?—No; I have heard Mr. Whinnery say, that they have been perfectly accurate of late; six or seven years ago there were great complaints of their inaccuracy.

What should you consider as of late?—The last two or three years.

Would you consider two or three pounds error on one side or the other as a large amount?—No, I would not; I think that might occur, particularly towards the close of the evening in the inland office; when they are late in closing the bags there may be occasional errors in the tot.

The question refers to erroneous taxations, overcharges or undercharges?—I speak of the charge upon a letter, eight-pence instead of nine-pence; there may be an error in telling them over also.

Supposing they are marked wrong?—Three pounds a month I would not consider extraordinary.

What should you say of seven or eight or nine pounds a month?—There would be a remissness there I think.

Have you ever observed that in looking over Mr. Whinnery's books?—It does not occur to me that lately I have; but ten or twelve years ago I recollect to have seen that.

They appear to have been in the month ending the 5th January, 7*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.*, and in the following month, 9*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.*?—Those occasional inaccuracies sometimes arise from the

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circumstance of the packets coming in late, and there being a press on the inland office, and the manner of telling up the charge is not so accurate.

The question refers to the charges on separate letters?—What I understand is, that it refers to the amount of the dockets.

The paper before the Board contains the overcharges and undercharges in dockets for three years. Are those overcharges and undercharges on separate letters?—Those are overcharges and undercharges on the sum total in each docket, I apprehend.

Have you examined Mr. Whinnery's books to see what those overcharges and undercharges consist of?—No, not particularly; I have not been called upon particularly to do so.

Do not you consider it part of your duty to examine his books, and if you find the inland office charges have been very inaccurate, to make a report upon them?—Our duty is just now limited to orders; I cannot act except by order; I am ordered to this point and that point, without any discretion of my own; to attend at this place or that place, or inspect that person's accounts; I am not to go at my own discretion to examine the person's accounts; we all act under the immediate orders of the secretary; if a case occurs, we are ordered down to meet that case; if there are complaints, to inquire into them; if the death of a postmaster occurs, to take charge of the office and put a successor into it; our hands are tied up.

Are you particularly instructed to attend to nothing else but the tenor of your special instructions?—Our orders are to attend to particular objects, and not to loiter on the way.

Have you no general instructions?—No; our attention is carried to whatever occurs worthy of notice in their estimation, instead of visiting the district *ad libitum*, and seeking to ascertain where errors are, or any matter of that description; we cannot do that, under the risk of not being allowed for it in our account.

Do you not think it your duty to endeavour to detect errors in the head office while you are in the country?—It is our duty to examine all the accounts, but we have no time for it.

Did you ever examine the accounts kept by Mr. Whinnery?—I have examined Mr. Whinnery's accounts, and the account of the Dublin mails.

Have you ever examined the account he keeps of the correspondence from Dublin?—I have examined his book when I have been in his office; I have seen the letters told over.

Do you recollect to have been told that taking a month, for instance, no one day was an accurate transaction?—I cannot state that.

What should you say if that were the case?—I think that might occur.

That for every day, for thirty successive days, the taxation was erroneous?—The taxation cannot be erroneous, for it is known to be 8*d.*; but supposing the letters are charged 20*l.* on Mr. Whinnery, the postmaster, and on his examination they turn out to be 20*l.* 0*s.* 6*d.* or 20*l.* 0*s.* 8*d.* or 2*s.*, there may be that occur frequently.

Does not every clerk in the inland office count them over at least twice?—I do not understand the detail of the inland office.

Is it not part of your expected duty to understand the practice of the office?—I understand the daily duty, that there are so many coaches and so many mails sent; the surveyor should be ready to go into the office to see the letters told over and re-told with the absolute receipts in every part of the country he visits; he should make it his duty to go into every office he passes.

Is not that the case?—In travelling I always do that.

Do you not make it a practice to do that?—I have the privilege to open every bag, and I may stop the bag for my own letter, which I did in coming up here.

Do you make it a practice to shut your eyes to every charge except that you are sent to examine into?—If there is an intermediate town, I would not call at that town.

Supposing you are sent down to examine into one special abuse in a particular town, do you confine your examination to that special abuse?—No, to the general abuse; but any intermediate town I would not examine into.

You state that you have no authority to do any thing but attend to the special service for which you are sent?—That is our particular instruction.

What is your practice?—We call at the offices and inquire and examine the accounts if we have time, then we go on to the office we are called to attend to.

If you were sent down to investigate any specific error in the bye-letter account, you would never think of turning to any other account?—I would examine, as far as I could, the general letter account, and so on; I would examine the whole office.

You stated a little time ago, that you had not authority to do so, or to examine any thing further than that you were sent to?—What I meant by that was, that I would not stop at any intermediate town.

Do you consider that if you were sent down to any particular office, you have a right to overhaul the whole of that office?—I think I am fully authorized to do so; if I had any suspicion I should certainly do it carefully.

Does it ever happen that you report on any other subject than that you have been sent down to examine into?—I dare say I have, but I cannot recollect, for I have a variety of matters to examine into.

Is it your practice to confine yourself to the particular business you are sent down to investigate, or do you report on any other?—If on examining into that fact, I observe others, I always report it.

If you were sent down to investigate the conduct of a particular letter-carrier, would you examine into the conduct of all the letter-carriers?—Only one letter-carrier; if I perceived that there was any connection with any other letter-carrier, I should inquire into his conduct also; or if I had time, I might go still further.

When you come down to a particular office, have you power to give orders to the postmaster?—To a certain extent.

To what extent?—To instruct him in the nature of his duties; if he wishes to know the postage of a letter from one place to another, I give him instructions.

Is not the postmaster furnished with all those particulars?—He is furnished by his surveyor with that; there is a change frequently, owing to the lines of communication, that makes a difference of the distances.

Is not that intimated from the head office?—By the surveyor.

Is it not sent from the general office?—No, they are not aware of it; it is not their duty.

Is there a change of communication made without the head office being aware of it?—The instructions are given by the surveyors.

Who is to check that when a letter comes to Dublin, if they are not aware of the change?—I refer to the bye-postage, the surveyor's attention is directed to the offices there.

Do you know whether there are at this moment any irregularities in the post-office in this town?—I do not.

Do you know that the letter-carrier demands a penny for every letter he delivers?—That is the practice throughout Ireland; there is a halfpenny and a penny demanded on delivery.

Is it so in Dublin?—No.

Is it so in Cork?—It is either a halfpenny or a penny.

Where did you lately come from?—From Sligo.

Is it the usage there?—I do not believe there is a letter-carrier at Sligo: in Armagh it is a penny.

You are aware of the practice?—Yes, it is very well known.

Is it known to the postmasters-general?—I presume it is.

Is it known to the secretary?—I presume it is; I found it in practice.

Have you ever reported it?—No, I have found it the practice, and have always known it so.

Is that the only abuse you found established when you came into office?—If that was an illegal charge I conceived it to be legal.

Why should not he take 2d.?—I do not know, indeed.

Would not one be as legal as another?—The 2d. is a postage.

Why should 1d. be legal and 2d. not?—We get a letter in the town for 1d.

You say that it is legal for the carrier to demand 1d.?—Yes, I conceive so.

Do you think it would be illegal for him to demand 2d.?—I think that would be too great a charge, unless he went to the country.

Do you say you think it legal for the carrier to demand 1d. more than the rate of postage for delivering a letter; do you think it would be legal for him to demand 2d.?—I conceived it is a legal charge until this moment; I am no judge of the legality of it; I should have thought that it would not have been suffered so long if it was not legal.

Is that a justification for any other abuse, that it has been in existence ever since you have been in office?—I was not aware of any illegality in it.

Has it been your practice to see where the sorting was done in this office?—Yes.

Where has it been done?—In the post-office.

In what part of the post-office?—In the interior of the post-office.

Where has it been done in the post-office?—To the right hand is the road alphabet for the country letters; the alphabet that they sort in for Dublin is in the opposite direction.

Is it in the front room you mean?—Yes.

Have you always seen the sorting done there?—Yes.

You are not aware whether it is the practice to sort letters in a room above stairs?—I never heard of their being sorted in this way, except the letter-carriers; they get their charge for the town.

Is not that sorting?—What I call sorting is the sorting the letters for the towns in the country.

Do not you call it sorting for the town of Belfast?—It is an arrangement of their own; the general post-office phrase is applicable to towns, not to the delivery of the place.

Did you ever see the letters sorted for Belfast?—Yes, I have been in the office often when they were sorting.

Did you ever see them sorted?—I have seen them sorted for the merchants, and I have seen the letter-carriers receive bundles for delivering.

Did you ever see the letters sorted for the letter-carriers?—I have seen them thrown apart and sorted apart for delivery.

Did you ever see them sort their letters?—No, they took them out.

Then you do not know where they sort them, whether they take them to a loft?—No, they take them out; they may sort them up stairs in that loft, and arrange them, but there is a regular sum charged upon the letter-carrier.

Would you conceive that a regular practice?—There should be a bye-office for it; I think the office is too small to comprehend all those details; it is better to sort them there than sort them in the kitchen, or any other place.

Do you know the mode pursued in sorting the letters here?—The town is divided into three divisions; the merchants who keep accounts, and receive them without paying cash; the alphabet, where the letters for those who call and pay cash are sorted, they are put into

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this alphabet for the purpose of delivery, and for the receipt of cash; then there are numbers of letters set apart for the town, which the letter-carriers receive.

What is the consequence of that, that the alphabet letters are delivered before the others are sorted, is not it?—It must be the case.

Do you consider that regular?—I am afraid that is the case almost every where.

Do you consider that regular?—No; there should be a simultaneous delivery open at the same time, and out at the same time.

Did you ever report that that is not the case?—I never knew it till this very day; I was told that that was the case.

You say that is the case in almost all other towns?—I am afraid it may be.

Do you know how many rounds the letter-carriers go in a day in Belfast?—I do not.

Do you suppose they go more than once?—I suppose they do twice; but I cannot give information upon that.

Why do they do that?—The Donaghadee packet may arrive and occasion that.

Do you suppose there is more than one delivery of Dublin letters?—No, I do not know that.

Did you ever put the question?—No, I never heard any complaint.

Did you ever see occasion to make inquiry what was the mode of delivery of letters in the town of Belfast?—I have asked Mr. Whinnery.

What has he told you?—He has told me he had two letter-carriers employed for the purpose, and that there were two or three deliveries; I cannot state whether he told me there was one or two; I never inquired upon that subject; I believe the letters that the carriers deliver are for the lower orders, and it is very difficult to find them at home; they may be out on their occupations.

Do the letter-carriers make any distinction in the letters they deliver?—I cannot state that.

Is not it your business to know how the post-office business is conducted at Belfast?—It should be part of my duty, but I never made any inquiry; I never conceived there was any remissness on that point.

When you are in a town do you observe at what time the mail is dispatched?—I know the time it should be dispatched, and observe whether it is or not to the time.

Have you ever had occasion to observe that it was not punctually dispatched?—There might be a minute, or two minutes, under or over.

Have you ever observed more?—I have observed in this office five minutes over or under.

Did you never observe in any office more than five minutes?—I do not recollect that I have.

Is it any part of your practice to inquire as to the ~~delays~~ of mails on the road?—Yes; I make my inquiries on the post riding duty particularly.

On the mail-coaches particularly?—That belongs particularly to the superintendent of mail-coaches, he observes upon that.

It forms no part of your duty?—No.

Are there no general instructions for surveyors?—No, there are not; there are for postmasters.

How long have you been in this district as surveyor?—I have been in office as surveyor fifteen years; about four or five of those I was extra surveyor.

Have you been always in this district?—The first part of my employment I was through the whole kingdom generally, as an extra surveyor, learning the business and getting a knowledge of the communications and the duty of postmasters.

How long have you been in this district?—Since the year 1814, I think, or 1815; the north-west is particularly mine.

Are you acquainted with a charge that has been made on the deputy postmaster at Bangor, which he disclaims, for the amount of a ride which was not performed?—Yes, I recollect the circumstance.

Did you ever report to the general post-office upon the subject?—It was my examination of his account that caused that; I found that he was credited a certain sum quarterly for a ride that he was not performing.

Was that the first intimation the general post-office had of it?—It was.

Are you quite certain it was the first intimation?—I believe it was; I reported it, and there were steps taken.

Did you ask the deputy postmaster why he did not inform the post-office of it?—Yes, I did; he stated that he had informed the post-office of it.

Did he satisfy you that he had done so?—I had suspicion of it.

Did he state how he had informed them?—I think he stated that he had written to Mr. Ferguson the superintendent of mail-coaches, stating that there was an allowance made to him in the balance sheet for riding duty, which he was not performing.

Do you understand that the general post-office went on allowing him that credit, later than that communication?—No, it was stopped immediately after, in consequence of my report.

How long had it gone on?—For years, I cannot state how many, before my report; the man's account was indistinct, I could not gather much from him; I believe he is an honest man, and I suspect an intimation had been given by him, but further I cannot say.

What was the object of your present mission?—I was sent for the recovery of a number of arrears, in a small district, to the north-west, consisting of seventy-two postmasters; there is an arrear of about 600*l.* due from them; I wrote to them: a recovery took place of almost half the sum immediately: the postmasters immediately remitted to the secretary.

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Supposing the secretary had written to them instead of you, would not the money have been equally recovered?—I suppose it would; I have no reason to find fault with any part of the country.

Where did you write from?—I wrote from home, from Lisburne, from my mother's house

Did you write to the seventy-two postmasters from Lisburne?—I wrote to twenty-one who were in arrear, begging them to remit, before a certain day, or that it would be my painful duty to take possession of their offices.

Under whose instructions did you write those letters?—I got a list from the secretary, of the men and their arrears.

How many postmasters have you in your district?—Seventy-two.

Was there no particular case for inquiry?—I went to Dromahair where there is a balance of about 142*l.* due; I went for the purpose of discharging the man, provided he did not pay the amount.

How many instalments were included in that account?—The instalments were about 2*l.* 10*s.* a month; there were about sixty instalments due.

Sixty monthly instalments?—Yes.

That is five years arrears?—Yes; the whole office produces him gross 56*l.* I think.

What success have you had?—He sent up immediately bills at one, two, and three months sight for 100*l.* to be accepted by his security, and there is an intimation to him from the post-office that they will be accepted; one of his securities had interposed in the early stage to pay 100*l.*

Had you ever applied to him before?—I had written to him several times before, and there was still a promise of his balance being paid.

Have you never been there before?—I put him in charge fifteen years ago, that was on his appointment.

Was that in Sligo?—It was within seven miles of Sligo, in the county of Leitrim.

Had the solicitor written to him?—Yes, he had, and the secretary had written to him.

How many times had the solicitor written to him?—I do not know; I have no communication with him.

Do you ever receive any instructions from the solicitor?—No.

Do you ever apply to securities?—No.

Do you ever apply as to the existence of sureties?—I have sent circular letters to the postmasters, and got the names of their securities who were alive; but that would be no check, for they might return names of persons who were not living.

What was the use, then, of sending the letters?—I cannot see any use; the solicitor has the bonds, and of course their names would be known by him.

You take the fact of their being alive from the postmaster?—Yes; if he said that one of the securities was dead, I should take it to be true.

If he says they are alive you would consider that as true also?—Yes; I have no means of detecting him; the solicitor has the names of them, I have not.

Do you take tours at particular periods?—No; only under orders.

You remain at home unless you are ordered on a tour?—Precisely so; that is the nature of my duty.

Have you any other occupation?—None whatever.

Are you aware of complaints which have been put forward by the towns of Ards, and the district between Ards and Downpatrick, of certain delays to which their communication is subject, by waiting for the arrival of the Donaghadee mail?—I am aware of that, and have reported upon it several times to my superior, that the delay was destructive of all correspondence, and that I begged to suggest an improvement of it, to make the post start from Belfast direct to Downpatrick, in place of going to Newtown Ards by the coach, and hanging on that arrangement.

How would you supply the postage to the country between Strangford, Lough, and the coast?—There is no interruption there, from Portaferry is very well supplied.

Is not that correspondence equally delayed at Newtown Ards for the Donaghadee mail?—No; the post from Dublin arrives in Portaferry by Newtown Ards in the evening, giving them six or seven hours to answer their letters from Dublin or Belfast; it returns early the next morning, and gets into Belfast by the mail-coach from Donaghadee.

Supposing the English mail by Donaghadee has not arrived at Donaghadee, does not the mail-coach wait for it?—It waits till two o'clock, and all the letters from Belfast must be delayed also till the coach comes up; but at Downpatrick it is a miserable arrangement.

Why is there no communication from Holywood to Bangor?—The first object of the line to Donaghadee was to get to that point as shortly as possible.

There is a post to Holywood, but no communication to Bangor?—I do not think there is any correspondence on that road that would pay; they go to Newtown Ards, and there is a post from thence.

Do you conceive that all riding-posts pay?—I think that, generally speaking, they do.

How much shorter would the post from Belfast to Bangor be than through Newtown Ards?—From Belfast to Bangor would be nine miles and a half; to Newtown Ards it is eleven and a half.

Are the letters from Bangor, when they come to Newtown Ards, frequently kept waiting for the mail from Donaghadee?—No; it is a little port of some consequence, and there is a post to supply the Belfast and Dublin letters, and to receive their replies; and there is a post to hang on the Donaghadee arrivals; so that, in point of fact, their letters are nearly as well sent as if they were in the direct line from Belfast to Donaghadee.

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Is there any opposition made to the suggestion on the part of the people of Holywood?—The people at Holywood at present have an opportunity of answering their letters on the same day.

Would they be prejudiced by any arrangement for carrying on a horse-post to Bangor?—If there were a direct post to Bangor, I think it might be managed to give Bangor an opportunity of answering in the day, without interfering with Holywood; the boy might return by that road; but the advantage to Bangor is by having a connection with Newtown Ards, for the Donaghadee correspondence, the Scotch correspondence.

Is it your opinion that the people of Bangor have a right to complain of the present arrangement?—I do not think they have; they are supplied with two trips out; one to supply the Dublin correspondence, and the other to supply the Scotch. There are two posts into Bangor and two out each day, in order to give them the same advantage as if they were on the line. Colonel Ward was anxious that the mail should pass through Bangor, and the answer to that was that it was not the direct line; and the object of Donaghadee being so great, they accommodate him with those extra posts.

Do you ever forward applications for the establishment of post-towns?—I have reported on many; they are sent to the postmasters-general first, and sent to the surveyor to report on, what the amount of the postage may be derivable upon that point, and any thing upon the subject.

How do you compute the amount of postage?—Every small village receives some letters at some great town; I desire the postmaster of that town to keep an account of the letters for that place.

Are you acquainted with the measures that have been taken to establish a line between Belfast and Sligo by Enniskillen?—I am; I arranged that great cross-post myself; there was a great confusion as to the bye correspondence, and great delay in every part of the district, and I hit upon that cross line.

By Monaghan and Wattle Bridge?—Yes; by which means a letter put into the post-office here at four o'clock this afternoon will be in Enniskillen by ten to-morrow morning, and at Sligo in the evening: it before took three days.

Do you think that it would pay for a mail-coach as far as Enniskillen?—I think ultimately it will; I think it is the most promising line in Ireland, either for a proprietor or for the post-office. In this point of view the lines from Dublin diverge; there is no confidence in a cross rider in the night; where there is property it would be a very great advantage in the country.

Are the people in the neighbourhood of Enniskillen and Armagh anxious for it?—They are anxious for that conveyance, they say if they had the opportunity they would go to Belfast to purchase their teas, and so on; that they should be glad to use it for commercial purposes. I conceive that would be a very great advantage to the whole of the district.

## Appendix, No. 201.

Thursday, 17th October 1826.

RICHARD TOWNSEND HERBERT Esq. called in and examined.

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*R. T. Herbert,*  
Esq.  
17th Oct. 1826.

HAVE the goodness to state to the Parliamentary Commissioners any information that is in your possession respecting the delay which has taken place in the auditing of the post-office accounts?—In truth there is only one branch of revenue which is accountable to our office, which is the stamps; the stamp department are by Act of Parliament obliged to have their accounts audited by us annually; no other branch of revenue; but every person who has the charge of public money, we may audit their accounts, if they are sent to us by the Lords of the Treasury or the Lord Lieutenant; it is our duty to call for the stamp accounts, but we have no right to call for the post-office accounts, nor do I apprehend that if the post-office were to send them directly to us we could receive them, it must come through the intervention of the Lords of the Treasury or the Lord Lieutenant; any accounts sent to us through that intervention we must receive and audit; but there are none other but the stamps which we are bound to call for under the Act of Parliament. With respect to the post-office, it was detached from the English post-office about the year 1784, and a postmaster-general appointed for Ireland, and they audited their accounts by order, if they audited them at all, for we never heard of them for twenty years; in the year 1804, that is twenty years after the post-office first existed, for the first time an account, purporting to be an account for the year's expenditure of the post-office, was sent to us by order of Government, and we found that that was so inaccurately vouched, so ill-supported, that all we could do was to declare, that neither in charge nor discharge we were satisfied with it, from defect of vouchers; there was a distinction in the accounts in our office up to 1812, one called Parliamentary Accounts, and the other Government. By an Irish Act of Parliament of the year 1784, all sums of money issued for the maintenance of public institutions in Dublin, or voted by Parliament to be expended in quay-walls or piers, were required to call for to audit the expenditure of them, and to report upon their expenditure to Parliament; but with respect to Government Accounts, one of which is the post-office, we were not to report to Parliament upon them, but to report to the Government



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Government alone; the Government might tender them to Parliament if they pleased, or if Parliament called for those accounts, they were to call upon Government for them, and not to have them direct from us; the first of our reports in the year 1806 upon this very imperfect account of the post-office was a Government account; the Parliament never saw it nor ever saw the strong censure we passed upon the conduct of the post-office; but in the year 1812 there was a new Act of Parliament for regulating our office, and all reports since 1812 are reported to Parliament, and the distinction between Parliamentary and Government Accounts has never existed since that time. Since that of 1812 a new account was sent us from the post-office, the one that we had censured was an account terminating in the year 1806; there was an account, I think, commencing the 5th of January 1810, and ending 1811, sent to us extremely well vouched, under a system which had been then recently adopted; we made a very full report upon this, and on the past state of the office, and condemning the state and proceedings of the office in the year 1806, we praised the system which was going on in the year commencing the 5th of January 1810 and ending in 1811, which, in truth, was the account of expenditure of the year 1810. Six other accounts were afterwards sent in to us by order of Government, for the years 1811, 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816, terminating the year 5th of January 1817.

When were they sent in?—A little prior to the year 1817, they all came in following each other at short intervals in the year 1817; those for these six years came in, I may say, nearly together, for there was but a very few months distance between the receipt of the first and that of the last; our clerks were engaged on them whenever they were sent in, as we were apprised by the post-office that by order of Government they were to send in six years accounts to be audited together, we did not therefore make a separate report on each year, but waited till we had the whole mass of accounts, and reported upon the whole six together. What I have in my hand is a volume of the printed reports to Parliament, and in truth, every information we can give upon the subject is comprised in these reports; in fact, I drew the rough draft of these reports myself, which were approved of by my board, and if there is any matter in them on which there may be any kind of doubt, I shall be happy to furnish an explanation, and if there is any thing in my office with respect to the vouchers to these accounts, or any thing which can forward the object of your Commission, my brother commissioners and I will be happy to give every information, as it is very strongly our inclination to forward every public object.

What is the date of those reports?—The first of these, which appears to be the most material, is dated January 13th, 1817, that is the report upon the account of the year 1810, ending 1811; the other, on the six years accounts, is dated February 19th, 1818.

That report goes to six accounts?—It does; and in fact with respect to the general expenditure of the office, except as far as it was concerned in the conduct of engineers employed in making mail-coach roads, in which we conceived the expenditure was excessively profuse, and in many instances illegal; the material disallowances we made upon it amounted to above 10,000*l.* upon that head, on every other head of the office it was trifling; the reason we have not audited any accounts since that is, that none have been sent to us.

Have you had any communication with the Government on the subject of the subsequent accounts at all?—Not very lately; but it seemed to be the idea of Government that they would send the post-office accounts constantly to us with special orders from Government to audit them, in fact we could not receive them otherwise; but I think that possibly the reason they were not sent is, that either the post-office or the Government were embarrassed by those disallowances that were made upon the expenditure of the engineers of the post-office, which appeared to be actually and *bonâ fide* payments by the postmasters-general, though the expenditure of the engineers was illegal or profuse, or perhaps the post-office might have found it difficult to get the money back from the engineers; but that is a mere conjecture of mine; all I can say is, that my board have got no accounts, and that it is not our duty to call for them, nor do we think it the duty of the post-office to send them to us without order from the Irish Government or the Treasury.

They say they cannot make up a new account because they can make no balance in consequence of those disallowances?—With respect to those disallowances I cannot see why they should prevent the post-office from making up subsequent accounts for our office, a larger balance would be struck against the post-office by us in consequence of these disallowances; but in their statement of the particulars of that balance, they might set out these disallowances as remaining in the engineers hands, and as not repaid or refunded by them.

The existence of those disallowances is no reason for further accounts not being audited?—I conceive not; in fact, in auditing the account of 1810, we, from necessity, assumed the balance as stated by the accountant as brought forward from certain books not verified; that balance of course we were obliged to assume; they could not swear themselves that it was a correct balance; all they could swear was, that their cash balance on such a day was so much, and that the balances were carried on from one book to another, but they had no means of authenticating their former books, and the balance were assumed; but in the six subsequent accounts the balances were regularly made up, and I can see no reason why the balance as we struck it, with the 10,000*l.* or thereabouts disallowed, should not be taken up: credit may be again given for those disallowances if Government should think us hasty or ill advised in making such disallowances; or if the Government think we were justified in making those disallowances, and that they might be

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claimed from those persons, they might take steps upon them; but I can see no reason for the post-office not taking up the balance we struck, and pursuing it on from year to year.

Might not they even take up their own balances?—The first thing we should do with their balance would be to set it aside; supposing they took up a balance in favour of the public by their account of seventeen thousand odd pounds, if our balances were ten thousand more, we should add to the charge 10,000*l.*, being the difference between their balance and ours.

So that if their balance was brought forward, you would bring forward your own disallowances?—Yes; we can admit no balance except our own recorded balance.

With respect to the subsequent accruing account, you would proceed just the same if there was no previous balance?—We should pay no respect to the accountant's balance, we would be governed by our own; if I am asked my reason why the accounts have not been submitted to us by the post-office, I can see no good reason, only that it was not their duty to send them unless Government ordered it. As to our sending for them we have no authority to do it.

What are the accounts you are now authorized to send for?—All accounts of monies that are granted, say to lying-in hospitals, foundling hospitals, the Dublin Society, and all the different institutions known in Dublin that are aided, and sums voted for particular works.

In short, wherever there is an expenditure of public money under votes of Parliament?—Yes; but as to the general revenue of the country, except as to the stamps, we have no control, nor is the authority in us, unless the Treasury or the Lord Lieutenant thinks fit to send them to us.

Has it ever been done with respect to other accounts?—There are some petty accounts for King's silver, but I believe those come under an Act of Parliament; I am not aware of any accounts which have come to us out of the usual course, except the post-office accounts; the stamp-office accounts come to us as a matter of course.

Have you any thing to do with the inland navigation?—Yes; we audit their accounts every year.

You also audit the accounts of the ballast office?—Yes.

Are those satisfactory?—Extremely so.

With respect to the stamp department, what assistance do you derive from the solicitor, Mr. Dunn, in the control of the accounts?—There was a most desperate system with respect to the public in the taxing costs; in any case where two individuals were concerned, the taxing officer was attended by the plaintiff's attorney and the defendant's attorney on the taxation, and objections were made to the different claims; there were some bills of costs which struck us incidentally, for with respect to the taxing bills of costs we know nothing of them, nor the nature of the charges; but there seeming to be an imposition in some of those charges upon the public several years ago, we sent for the taxing officer, and he said claims were made and there was nobody to oppose, he allowed, but that if anybody objected to charges, he would have listened to the objections and not have allowed the items, if he thought the objections well founded; in consequence of which, we determined that whenever any accounts came before us that were accompanied with expenditures on bills of costs, that we would receive no bills of costs as vouchers, the taxation of which were not attended to by our solicitor, to enable him to object on the part of the Crown against such articles as he conceived ought not to be admitted on the taxation; I would say that the effect of that about five-and-twenty years ago, when it originally took place, was very considerable in reducing those bills of costs; but if bills of costs were judged of at present, it might be said very little benefit resulted from Mr. Dunn's attendance, but the reason is, that attorneys will not now produce those items of charge before the taxing officer, being aware that the taxing officer would strike them out, for that they would be objected to by our solicitor; and if his attendance was removed, I am afraid the old bad system would then return in full force, to the great extent it was when we were obliged to apply the corrective of making our attorney attend on the part of the public; he objects to every article of the adverse attorney's bill in the same manner as he would for a private client.

Does he attend before the taxing officer?—Yes, always before the taxing officer.

It is not done at the office of the solicitor of the public department?—No; the bills of costs are referred to him; he then examines them in his own office, and considers how far the different items in those accounts are reasonable or not, and then, having made his observation, he goes before the taxing officer to object, and the officer either admits the objection or allows the charge, having heard both parties; in fact, the taxing officer will be governed by his own discretion; the objections are made and argued in his presence.

Do you recollect whether Mr. Dunn has found occasion to reduce the charges of the solicitor of the stamp department in any considerable amount?—Indeed I do not think he has; there was a very negligent solicitor of the name of Cranford, prior to Mr. Borrowes, who is the present solicitor; there was a prodigious arrear of law duties to be brought up, that made the expense immediately on Mr. Borrowes coming in extremely heavy, on account of long arrears for prosecutions which were instituted by him, which had been deferred by his predecessor; there were several expenses on legacy duties, when they were ordered to be enforced; but there was an extraordinary expense in the law costs of the stamp office on Mr. Borrowes coming in as solicitor, and for some time after.

Is not there at present a considerable disallowance on the stamp accounts, arising out of the solicitor's claims?—No; this very Commission took with them to England, the last time they

they were here, his accounts, which were closed with us, to be examined there, and the whole have been disallowed till the return of them.

Up to what period are the stamp office accounts audited?—Every year; there is no arrear; the officers are preparing for our audit, the stamp accounts terminating the 5th of January last.

Do you consider those accounts to be satisfactorily and strictly vouched?—I do; there were some gross irregularities in the stamp office, but for several years back their vouchers were fair and regular in their appearance, and the accounts supported by the oaths of the commissioners and officers of the establishment.

How far do you consider the commissioners parties?—We had several years ago a dispute with them, and a reference was made to the Government; they wanted to make their office account the account of their receiver-general and comptroller, but we repeatedly sent it back, and would not receive it till we made them sign it as their account of their office.

Did you make them attest it?—We did, and that they had examined the different items of charge and discharge; that they had gone through the different vouchers, and that they verily believed that the charge and discharge formed a just and true account.

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