

TRANSPORTATION OF MAILS. 2

SENATE.....No. 47.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

IN SENATE, Jan. 25, 1842.

Ordered, That the Committee on Railways and Canals be instructed to inquire into, and report the reasons why the mail is not carried upon the Western Rail-road, with a statement of the price required by said Rail-road Corporation for the transportation of Mails, and the price (if any) which has been offered therefor, by the Post Office Department, and that said Committee have power to send for persons and papers.

Sent down for concurrence.

CHAS. CALHOUN, *Clerk*.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Jan. 27, 1842.

Concurred.

L. S. CUSHING, *Clerk*.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Committee on Rail-ways and Canals, to whom was referred an order, directing them to inquire into the causes of the discontinuance of the United States mail on the Western Railroad;—also the petition of Eliphalet Williams and 106 others, citizens of Northampton, on the same subject, have had the same under consideration, and

REPORT:

That after due notice to the Western Rail-road Corporation and the gentlemen who introduced the orders, and presented the petition above-named, they proceeded to a hearing of the facts in the case.

It appeared, that previous to March, 1840, the mail was carried in stage coaches, between Worcester and Springfield, six times a week, each way, for \$3,000 per annum. That after that time, by an arrangement between the stage proprietors, who were also the mail contractors, and the rail-road corporation, the mail was transferred to the cars, after which, the corporation requested the post master general, to pay them a larger sum for carrying the mail than had been paid to the stage proprietors. A negotiation followed between the parties, which resulted in a contract for the rail-road corporation to carry the mail for \$4,000 a year.

This contract expired on the 1st of July last; but the corporation continued to carry the mail in their cars, in the expectation of being able to make a satisfactory contract for the next four years, until the 25th of January last, when the mail was excluded from the cars, and the corporation refused longer to carry it.

The committee do not think it necessary to present in detail, the history of the negotiation between the post-office department and this corporation, in relation to the terms upon which the mail shall be conveyed over the Western Rail-road between Worcester and Albany. The corporation refused to carry the

mail, because the post master general would not pay the price demanded,—and the public are suffering great inconvenience in consequence of this disagreement.

In a late communication to the post master general, the directors proposed to him to submit the question of compensation for the service required on the western road to arbitration. To this he replied, that he was not authorized by law so to do.

He stated in a letter to Mr. Bliss, of — Feb. inst., that he had made the highest offer that he could make. The directors had refused to accept it.

In this state of the case, the directors have expressed a willingness that your committee should recommend a sum, which, in their opinion, it is best, under existing circumstances, the corporation should accept; and the committee have cheerfully consented to give their opinion in the case. They will briefly state the grounds of that opinion.

The service required between Springfield and Worcester is, twice a day, each way, six days in the week, and once a day, each way, on Sunday.

That between Springfield and Albany, six times a week, each way; no Sunday mail.

The whole of this service, six days in the week, will be performed in the regular passenger trains; and if the Sunday service is required, it must be performed by an engine sent for the express purpose of carrying the mail.

The price demanded by the directors for the performance of the service above-named, was at the rate of \$200 per mile, for the whole distance of 155 miles of rail-road.

The distance as measured for stage coaches, and for which they are paid, is 83 miles between Albany and Springfield, and 48 miles between Springfield and Worcester.

The distance of rail-road between Albany and Springfield, is 100 miles; between Springfield and Worcester, 55 miles; making the distance by rail-road 24 miles greater than the distance by stage.

155 miles at \$200 per mile, would be, viz. :—

100 miles,	\$20,000,	—55 miles,	11,000	. . .	\$31,000
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The present contract for stage service, six times a week, each way, is,

Between Albany and Springfield, per year . . .	\$6,500
“ Worcester and Springfield . . .	4,200
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	\$10,700

The post master general offers \$150 a mile

Between Worcester and Springfield, 55 miles, which is	\$8,250
“ Springfield and Albany, 100 miles, \$100	
per mile	10,000
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	\$18,250

And in addition to this, a portion of the route between Springfield and Albany must be supplied by stages, which will cost the department more \$2,000

Making the whole cost of mail, if the offer of the post master general should be accepted,	\$20,250
Deduct amount paid for stage service,	\$10,700
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	\$9,550

it shows that the department have offered the Western Rail-road \$9,550 more to carry the mail between Worcester and Albany, than they are now paying to have the same conveyed by wagons and stage coaches between the same places.

Whatever views the directors of the Western rail-road may have entertained of the importance and value of the service required, and however inadequate they may have deemed the compensation afforded by the post master general; and however sanguine both parties may have been in the maintenance of their respective opinions of what was right, your committee are very desirous of bringing this controversy between these contracting parties to a close, of quieting the public mind, and restoring to the people one of the greatest advantages which they were induced to expect from the completion of this great work. And they recommend that the directors of the Western Rail-road should, at once, accept the offer of the post-master general, for carrying the mail, as reasonable, and as much as in the present condition of the department he can afford to pay.

Per order of the committee,

EDW. DICKINSON,

Feb. 15, 1842.

Chairman.