

post was obliged to travel by the straightest road, the sea ports would be cut off from the advantage of a public mail—and it is a fact, that the mercantile interest principally supports the establishment. The post to be as beneficial as possible to the community, and as profitable to government should pass through as many towns as practicable—by journeying through the interior parts of North-Carolina, these ends would not be answered as letter writers there, will not be found to be numerous. Upon the present establishment he said, the profits of the post-office in the state of North-Carolina, were not more than one fourth of the expence; but if the proposed amendment was adopted, he was of opinion they would not pay more than a tenth part.

Mr. Bloodworth was in favor of the motion.

Mr. Steele said he was satisfied with the route followed by the post as far as Petersburg; but he objected to its returning thence to the eastward, as if to avoid the state of North-Carolina, taking a circular, hazardous and unprofitable route. The merchants, he said, had water conveyance at hand from Petersburg to Georgia, and generally preferred it, as more expeditious than the post. If the excise bill passed, he conceived there would be an additional necessity for a communication with the interior country by means of a regular post, if any revenue was to be collected from distilleries dispersed throughout the state of North-Carolina. Under the present regulations of the proceedings at the seat of general government, and other useful intelligence, but from the direct communications of their delegates in Congress. In support of his opinion he also mentioned the desire expressed by the legislature of his state that a change of route should take place. He was sorry to find his honorable colleague opposed to his amendment; but for his own part even if he was to torture his invention, he could not, he thought, contrive a more absurd and improper road than that now followed by the post. He assured the house he was no ways influenced by private interest in offering the amendment he had proposed.

Mr. Parker objected to the amendment. If a change of route took place, those now benefited by the post, he conceived would be offended, and those in whose favor the amendment was proposed, not materially benefited by, or greatly pleased with the alteration. It would be injuring all the sea port towns of North-Carolina and Virginia, to give an advantage to the interior parts of the former, of which in their present circumstances they would make but little use. If the amendment took place a very small portion of Maryland would feel the benefit of the establishment. He was willing that channels of information from the seat of the general government should be opened for the advantage of the interior parts of North-Carolina; but not so as to injure the interests of other states.

Mr. Sherman mentioned that the disagreement of the two houses in this paragraph had occasioned the losing of the bill last session. The house of Representatives wished to specify the several routes, and the Senate thought the President of the United States and Post-Master-General had a constitutional right to exercise that power, and that Congress had no authority to interfere.

The present post roads, he said, were established from long experience.

He still thought the house was able to enter into the detail of the business. He saw one great objection to leaving it with the President: It was scarcely possible to give universal satisfaction, and constant applications would consume much of his time.

Mr. Tucker adverted to the pains which the house had taken during last session, to specify in the bill the different routes in which it appeared necessary for the post to travel; but unfortunately, he said, their labours had been rendered useless by the non-concurrence of the Senate. However, he wished a similar clause again introduced in the bill, hoping that the Senate would now be differently disposed.

He said that the ideas of particular States, respecting alterations in the post road, ought not to be disregarded. He was firmly of opinion, that it should pass through the most populous parts—tho the inhabitants of those parts had not at present many correspondencies, yet if a regular conveyance was offered them, they would in a short time acquire the habit of writing; and though at first the profits to government might by the change proposed in the post-road be diminished, yet by degrees they would encrease, and in the end become greater than before the alteration.

He could wish therefore, he said, that the clause which had been before agreed to, and was now left out, might be inserted in the bill; but as he had not the bill at hand, he would move a clause respecting the state of S. Carolina, and such propositions as should be moved by other gentlemen, on similar principles, he would give his assent to. He moved that the general route should be from Wiscasset to Augusta, the seat of government in Georgia—from thence to Savannah—and by cross

posts to the seat of government in S. Carolina, and so in each State, in cases where the seat of government is out of the direct road.

Mr. Williamon remarked, that no one knew which was the direct road; if the gentleman who had proposed the amendment would point out its course, members would then be enabled to judge of the propriety of it, but not before.

With respect to the excise, and the necessity of interior posts on that account, he observed, that tho some considerable revenue might be expected from that source, yet in his opinion, the treasury of the Union would still receive more augmentation from the duties collected on imported spirits, in the ports of entry, through which for that reason, he conceived, the post ought still to pass. If it took its direction through the interior parts of North-Carolina, four of those ports out of five would be out of the post-road, and the fifth at a distance of forty miles further than before. Besides the duties on spirits, those on other goods amounted to a sum by no means trifling, and for the collection of which a direct and regular communication between them and the seat of general government was requisite. He mentioned the necessity of giving the merchant regular opportunities to write for insurance, as an additional argument against the amendment.

Mr. Jackson said that if any revenue was to be derived from the post-office, it would be from the commercial and not the agricultural parts of the states. He was against the amendment. He wished matters could be so arranged as to give Augusta, in Georgia, the advantage of the public mail, by establishing a post-road to that place, but thought the post should first go to Savannah, and from thence to Augusta.

Mr. Tucker's motion was disagreed to.

Mr. Bloodworth spoke in favor of Mr. Steele's amendment. He said he had no idea of stopping the communications with the sea-ports, he supposed that provision would be made for their accommodation, and in this view he conceived there was no impropriety in opening the communication in the most direct manner with the interior country. He urged the necessity of giving the people every advantage to acquire information.

Mr. Sherman wished a limitation to the power of establishing cross roads—that such only should be established, as could defray their own expences.

Mr. Bourne was against the amendment as it stood; it would tend to render a number of good post roads almost useless: He hoped as an amendment to the proposition before the house, that a sentence be added to as to make it read thus: "That the most direct roads from Wiscasset in the district of Maine, to Savannah in Georgia, and those now used as post roads, be established as such."

Mr. Hartley feared the house would not find time this session to enter into the minutiae of the establishment, and wished a temporary discretionary power given in the business to the President of the United States, and the Post-Master-General, after having fixed that the main road should remain as heretofore established. However he proposed that the power be not granted without a limitation: He thought no part of the revenue of the United States, other than that derived from the post-office, should by them be touched for the establishment of posts. He wished also this power granted for a limited time.

Mr. Baldwin moved that the post road should be extended from Savannah to Augusta, in the State of Georgia. He observed that it was a duty which the government owed to the parts of which it was composed, to provide at least some channel of communication to them; that hitherto the post had only crossed the river from Carolina—barely landed in the State of Georgia, and returned; that the seat of the government in that State, is 120 miles from that place inland, and all communication with it for that distance, depends entirely on contingency. The operation of this government will prove, said he, that the distant extremes of the union, remote from the warm and vivifying influences of the government, will have a sufficiently hard lot. And is it to be thought best that no way should be provided to communicate any information to them? that ignorance may be a soporific, to prevent a sense of their situation. He was obliged to add that great provision had long been made on one extreme of the union, and none at all for the other. Did the post only cross the river into the district of Maine, and return immediately, their situations would be somewhat similar; but the post road there had been several years extended to Portland, which is 60 miles within the district; and in the year 1788, it was extended 80 miles further, to Pownalborough—not to go to the seat of government of a state, for it is not a state, and the return will shew that it could not be for the sake of the revenue.

The present clause in the bill provides for continuing the post to the same place, he relied on the justice of the house, that his motion would

prevail, and that the post-road would be extended to Augusta.

Some other alterations to Mr. Steele's proposition were offered—all of which were negatived, as was the original motion.

SATURDAY, Feb. 12.

Sundry petitions were read and referred.

On motion of Mr. Boudinot, the committee on the navigation act was discharged from any further proceedings relative to that subject.

The report of the Secretary of State, on the memorial of Andrew Brown, was taken into consideration. A resolution in conformity to said report was submitted, which, after some debate, was amended and agreed to.

A report of the Secretary of the Treasury, on the petition of John Hollins, of Baltimore, was read—which negatived the prayer of said petition. This report being accepted, the petitioner had leave to withdraw his petition.

Read and laid on the table, a report on the memorial of the holders of Loan-Office Certificates, received for loans in 1777 and 1778.

Reported, the enrolled bill for incorporating the subscribers to the bank of the United States, which was signed by the Speaker.

A message from the Senate informed the house, that the Kentucky Bill has received the assent of the President of the United States:—Also, that the Senate has passed a bill providing for the admission of Vermont into the federal union on the 4th March next:—And a bill determining the number of representatives for Kentucky and Vermont;—by this bill, each of these states is to be entitled to two representatives. These bills were read the first and second time, and made the order of the day for Monday next.

On motion of Mr. Gerry, the petition of Thomas Walley, and others, on the subject of the new emission money, was referred to the Secretary of the Treasury.

The amendments to the land-office bill, reported by the committee of the whole house, were taken into consideration—after some debate, the subject was postponed to Monday.

Adjourned to Monday, 10 o'clock.

MONDAY, Feb. 14.

A message was received from the President of the United States, relative to a commercial treaty with Great Britain, the substance of which is, that from such communications as he had received from the Court of London, he cannot infer any disposition on the part of the British government, to form any connection strictly commercial with the United States.

Sundry petitions were read and referred to the Secretary of war.

On motion of Mr. Bourne—Archibald Crary, who presented a petition the last session, which was referred to the Secretary of war—had leave to withdraw said petition.

Mr. Madison, Mr. Wadsworth and Mr. Leonard were appointed a committee to bring in a bill explanatory of that part of the act laying duties on goods, wares and merchandize, which imposes a duty on foreign lead and calicoes.

In committee of the whole house—Mr. Boudinot in the Chair.

The Vermont bill received from the Senate on Saturday, was taken into consideration—and afterwards reported to the house without any alteration—the bill was then read the third time, and passed.

Messrs. Sedgwick, Benson, and Sturges, were appointed a committee to bring in a bill to give effect to the laws of the United States, within the state of Vermont.

A message was received from the Senate, by Mr. Secretary Otis, with the bill, entitled an act, repealing after the last day of next, the duties heretofore laid on distilled spirits, and laying others in their stead; passed with sundry amendments.—Another message informed the house that the act to continue in force for a limited time, the act to regulate processes in the courts of the United States, which originated in the house, had also passed the Senate.

The house then proceeded in the further consideration of the amendments, proposed by the committee of the whole, to the bill to establish offices, for the purpose of granting lands, within the territories of the United States; and having gone through the same, and made some further amendments. Adjourned.

TUESDAY, Feb. 15.

Mr. Sumpter, Member from South Carolina, took his seat this day. A number of petitions were read, and referred to the heads of departments.

Sundry reports from the Secretary of War, on petitions and memorials referred to him, were read and laid on the table.

A report from the Secretary of the Treasury, pursuant to a resolution of the house, directing him to report whether any further compensation is necessary to be made to the Commissioners of the Loan-Offices, in consequence of extra duties and expences, occasioned by the funding-system: This report was in favor of a temporary extra allowance with respect to paying expences—also of Clerks. Laid on the table.

The report of the committee on the petition of Joshua Barney, was taken up, and agreed to by the house.

Mr. Stone had leave of absence from Monday next. The message of the President of the United States, communicated yesterday, was taken into consideration.