

Report No. 171.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

GREAT SOUTHERN MAIL.

FEBRUARY 8, 1848.

Laid up the table.

Mr. GOGGIN, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, made the following

REPORT:

The Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom was referred a resolution of the House of Representatives concerning the transportation of the great northern and southern mail from Baltimore down the bay, to ascertain the terms on which the Post Office Department can be released from the present contract, also the terms upon which the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad and Steamboat Company will engage to carry the mail, report:

That, through their chairman, they addressed a letter to each of the companies, making the inquiries directed by the said resolution, as will appear by a copy of said letter hereto annexed, and received in reply the answers, which are also hereto annexed as a part of this report. From this correspondence, it will appear that the railroad and steamboat company renew offers heretofore made to the department, while the bay company "decline to name any terms" on which they would be willing to release the department from the existing arrangements. All which is respectfully submitted.

H. R., COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE POST OFFICE AND POST ROADS.

January 18, 1848.

GENTLEMEN: In obedience to an order of the House of Representatives, the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads have instructed me to inquire the terms on which the Postmaster General can be released from the contract made by him during the past

year for the transportation of the great southern mail from Baltimore down the bay. Also, the terms on which the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad and Steamboat Company will engage to carry the said mail. I accordingly address the inquiry to each company, (as it concerns each to answer,) and respectfully ask an early reply.

I am, respectfully, &c.,

W. L. GOGGIN,

Chairman of the Committee.

To R. F. & P. R. & S. Co., and Bay Co.

BALTIMORE, January 31, 1848.

DEAR SIR: I wrote you on the 19th instant, in reply to a letter received from you on the subject of our contract with the Post Office Department, and stated, that so soon as I could hear from Mr. Mayo, president of the Virginia Steamboat Company, that I would again address you. Not until to day have I been favored with a reply from Mr. Mayo, and he declines naming any terms upon which they would be willing to relinquish their contract, as they have expended a large sum of money in making their arrangements for the regular transportation of the mail. Should the railroad line feel disposed to buy out, they can make them an offer. It is unnecessary for us to name any terms, as we cannot sell out without their sanction and co-operation.

Yours, respectfully,

ROBT. A. TAYLOR,

President B. T. P. Company.

W. L. GOGGIN, Esq.,

Chairman of the Com. on the Post Office and Post Roads.

OFFICE RICHMOND, FREDERICKSBURG, AND POTOMAC R. R. Co.,

Richmond, January 20, 1848.

DEAR SIR: I have before me your letter of the 18th instant; and, in relation to your inquiry as to "the terms on which the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad and Steamboat Company will engage to carry the said mail," have the following answer to make:

On the 8th March last a proposal was made by this company for the transportation of the great northern and southern, as well as the local mails, between Washington and Richmond, in conformity with a new schedule then proposed *two hours* shorter than the old, for the sum of \$36,500 per annum. A copy of this proposal is herewith enclosed, together with a comparative statement, to which the attention of the committee is particularly asked.

For the compensation above named the proper obligations would

have been entered into, and all the penalties connected with the service encountered.

It pleased the department, however, to decline a contract on the terms proposed, though no offer came from any other quarter for the same service. The companies then proposed a continuance of their service without any contract, as had been the case with the railroad company for several years previously, at the mutual pleasure of both parties, provided the rate of compensation paid from the 1st of July, 1843, say \$32,252 per annum, should be continued. This offer was declined by the department, and the result is known to you.

As the two propositions above referred to were made after a careful consideration of every point which affected the question, and as nothing has occurred since to produce any change in the opinions of the board of directors and stockholders generally, I can only repeat the offers so made.

I will add in conclusion, that the travel on our route has not hitherto justified more than one daily train between Richmond and Washington; but if a contract should be made until the first of July, 1851, at the yearly rate of \$36,500, above mentioned, and during that time the travel shall be found to justify a second daily line, the company will be willing to take additional mail matter on such second line without additional charge.

With due respect, your obedient servant,

ED. ROBINSON, *President.*

Hon. WM. L. GOGGIN,

*Chairman of the Committee on the Post Office
and Post Roads, House of Representatives.*

RICHMOND, FREDERICKSBURG, AND POTOMAC R. R. OFFICE,
Richmond, March 8, 1847.

SIR: Proposals being invited for the transportation of the mail on the various routes through Virginia, after the 1st July, 1847, I have the honor to make to you the following proposals for the route between Washington and Richmond, (Nos. 2401 and 2427.)

That the railroad and steamboat companies, both being now under the control of the same board of directors, will transport the mail in the time and agreeably to the schedules proposed by the department, for four years from the 1st July next, (including the delivery of the mail at the Richmond and Petersburg depot in Richmond, and at the railroad depot in Washington, as well as at the post offices in those cities and the local offices on the route,) for the sum of thirty-six thousand five hundred dollars.

The above offer is somewhat higher than that at which the railroad and steamboat companies proposed to contract for the mail, for four years, at the last mail letting in 1843. On the other hand, it will be seen on a comparison of schedules proposed by the department, that the time allowed in the present schedules is shorter than was then proposed, and that the schedules are particularly disadvantageous to the steamboat portion of the route, the way travel

of which will necessarily suffer greatly by the night schedule coming south in winter, and insuring connections by the short schedules proposed in summer.

I might add to these considerations, that both the railroad and steamboat companies having spared and being determined to spare no expense, whether in their ice-boats or otherwise, in order to insure the speediest and most effective transportation of the mail at all seasons of the year, and never to allow a failure of it when it can be avoided, trust they may rely on the disposition of the department to award a fair compensation for the same.

They hope, under these considerations, that the above proposition may be satisfactory to the department.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. ROBINSON, *President.*

Hon. CAVE JOHNSON,
Postmaster General.

Statement in connection with the above.

From Baltimore to Cumberland, to carry the mail in stages or mail carts, 138 miles, at an average of 6 miles per hour, including stoppages, would require.....	23 hours.
The railroad, 180 miles long, requires.....	11 "

Saving to the department by use of railroad.....	12 "
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From Washington to Richmond, to carry the mail in stages or mail carts, 130 miles, at an average of 5 miles per hour, which, in view of the bad condition of the road between those points, is a larger average throughout the year than 6 on the Maryland turnpike, would require.....	26 hours.
The railroad and steamboat line requires.....	9 "

Saving to the department by use of railroad.....	17 "
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The mail pay on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, at \$237 50 per mile, for 180 miles, is.....	\$42,750
To carry it in stages, 138 miles, at \$200 per mile, would cost.....	27,600

Sum paid for 12 hours' saving of time to Baltimore and Ohio railroad.....	15,150
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The Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad and Steamboat Company's offer, is.....	36,500
To carry the mail in stages, 130 miles, at \$200, would cost.....	26,000

Asked, for 17 hours' saving of time by Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad Company.....	10,500
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