# THE POSTAL SERVICE.

## MR. VILAS MAKES THE ANNUAL REPORT.

A LONG DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION OF THE TRANSPORTATION OF FOREIGN MAILS.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 1.—Postmaster-General William F. Vilas has issued the annual report of his Department for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1885. That year, he says, "witnessed three persons at the head of the administration of the Department. It was, when the year began, under the charge of the Hon. Walter Q. Gresham, who resigned this office on the 24th day of September, 1884, to assume the duties of Secretary of the Treasury. To him succeeded the Hon. Frank Hatton, who as Postmaster-General commenced on the 14th day of October, 1884, and terminated, upon the acceptance of his resignation, on the 7th of March last, at which date, by virtue of your commission, I took the office. The exposition of the transactions of the year must therefore be in the greater part derived from the books and records, which impose the risk of a less satisfactory presentation of the affairs in which I had no part than my distinguished predecessors would have given for the archives—a risk lessened by their able administration and faithful records.

"The financial summary of the year shows a considerable increase in the deficiency of the postal revenues to sustain the cost of the postal service. This deficiency has now attained to a large figure, and it will contribute to an understanding of the causes for its existence and of the manner in which they have operated their effects to state the general exhibit of the past year in contrast with similar showings of the two preceding years. Statements from the Auditor's Office and the Finance Division are then given, showing the surplus, June 30, 1883, to have been $1,033,233 17; the deficiency, June 30, 1884, $5,246,951 42; and the deficiency, June 30, 1885, (partly estimated) $8,381,571 41. This is due, continues Mr. Vilas, "first, to the decrease of the revenues, which amounts in total only to $2,947,848 78, and secondly, to an increase of the expenditures to the extent of $6,466,955 80, of which $6,042,436 19 have been in the cash disbursements and $424,517 61 in the cost of transportation upon the Pacific railroads. Chiefly the decrease of revenue has resulted from the diminishment in the rate of letter postage from three to two cents upon the half-ounce, which was the unit of weight during the period, while the increase of expenditures has arisen principally from the natural increase of mails to be carried and the natural extension of the service, although other causes have contributed something to both effects."

Examining in detail the operations of the various divisions of this Department, Mr. Vilas reports that "2,021 offices were newly established and 886 discontinued during the year, leaving at its close the total number to be 51,252, of which 2,233 were Presidential and 49,019 fourth class. Both establishments and appointments were considerably less in number than during the preceding year. More new offices were created in the Southern States than in any other section, as was the case during the year before; and it is interesting to note that of these Virginia required more than any other State—100. In every State and Territory the number of post offices was increased, save only in Nevada, in which due discontinuances exceeded new establishments. The number of appointments of postmasters during the year was 11,203, less by 2,658 than during the year preceding. The decrease arises from the fact that comparatively few offices were established or appointments made during the incumbency of Postmaster-General Hatton, who left it to the incoming administration to fill vacancies to the number of two thousand and upward occurring during his period of service. The number of removals during the year was 810, exceeding by 297 those made in the preceding twelve months. The vacancies caused by death were 412; less by 65. The carrier-delivery service has continued to meet with popular favor, and been somewhat extended during the period reported on. Nineteen cities—Jamestown, Lockport, Newburg and Saratoga Springs, in New-York; Brockton and Fitchburg, in Massachusetts; Norwich and Waterbury, in Connecticut; Eau Claire and La Crosse, in Wisconsin; Decatur and Elgin, in Illinois; Fort Worth, in Texas; Lawrence, in Kansas; Raleigh, in North Carolina; San Jose, in California; Sedalia, in Missouri; Sioux City, in Iowa; and Salt Lake City, in the Territory of Utah—have been added to the number of those which enjoy this convenience, making the total number at the year's end 178."

### DOMESTIC TRANSPORTATION.

"Attention is arrested," says Mr. Vilas, "by the fact that not only does the number of miles of railroad service yearly increase, but, under the operation of the present law, the average rate of pay per mile also continually and strongly increases. Thus:

| Years. | Miles. | Total pay. | Rate per mile. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1880 | 85,320 | $32,720,[illegible] | $[illegible] |
| 1881 | 91,569 | 10,[illegible],291 | 111 9[illegible] |
| 1882 | 1[illegible],065 | 1,297,335 | 112 34 |
| 1883 | 11,208 | 1,258,[illegible] | 112 50 |
| 1884 | 11,[illegible]00 | 13,[illegible],406 | 113 29 |
| 1885 | 11,102 | 14,818,476 | 121 95 |

"The constant increase shown by these figures challenges careful examination of the present method and serious inquiry whether it does not work somewhere excessive compensation for the service returned. The disproportionate jump in the rate per mile for the last year, as disclosed by the statement, is due partly to the fact just mentioned, that the service has been more closely paid and that the computation of rate has been annually made on the actual payments of the year reported instead of the full cost. That practice has operated to exhibit a less increase in the rate per mile during previous years than was in truth attained, and it is one of the benefits of the more prompt adjustment of accounts that such information is more accurate. Steamboat service on the 30th of June last was performed on sixteen routes, aggregating in length 11,997 miles, at an annual rate of expenditure of $511,669. There was a decrease of one route and of $33,571 in annual cost during the year. The Star Routes,—the Departmental designation of all routes of mail carriages, except railway and steamboat lines—numbered on the 30th of June 12,271, aggregating in length 232,222 miles, and then stood at an annual rate of charge of $5,414,804, an increase of 542 routes, 5,443 miles, and $324,803 in cost for the year. The increase was chiefly in Western States and the Territories. Between the 1st day of April and the 30th of September there has been, however, in each month a decrease effected in the cost of the service: of $9,045 in April, $6,244 in May, $1,065 in June, $7,561 in July, $40,433 in August, $5,725 in September, amounting to a total saving in the annual cost of $148,696."

### FOREIGN MAIL SERVICE.

"The dispatches of our mails to other countries having necessarily been by sea except such as were interchanged with the Dominion of Canada on the north and the Republic of Mexico on the south, the Postal-Union Convention has relieved the Department from further care, and extra-territorial land carriage—save only across of the Isthmus of Panama—has not required the direct employment of any carrier, but was effected through foreign postal administrations. No special contract for the transportation of any foreign mail was made or in force during the past year with either foreign or domestic carriers, but the policy, satisfactorily pursued during many years, of sending the mails by whatever vessel could most expeditiously and properly transport them at such times and to such ports as the business required it to sail, continued to be observed with good results.

"The total cost of the service by carriers directly employed was $331,963 24, of which $270,908 72 was paid for the trans-Atlantic, $22,124 14 for trans-Pacific, and $38,870 08 for the American-continental carriage. So far as can be stated from adjustments made, the charges of foreign postal administrations for carrying our mails during the year amount to $104,897 89. The Department earned credits with other countries for the transportation of their mails amounting to $140,502 46, of which $81,681 56 was for our transcontinental carriage of British and Australian closed mails. The tables annexed to the superintendent's report show that the weight of mail sent to each country, its relative proportion to the whole, the service performed by all the different carriers, and the amounts paid them. The net revenue, if any, derived from our foreign mail service cannot be stated with certainty, because of the impossibility of securing accurate information either of receipts or cost. Letters do not often reach exactly the full unit of weight, and therefore an estimated receipts based upon weight, would be probably less than the actual postages received; nor do the counts furnish very reliable means; and upon the other hand, data for estimating the cost of the inland service bestowed on foreign correspondence are difficult of satisfactory ascertainment. It is fairly certain this cost must have exceeded the domestic rates of postage, because those rates have proved insufficient to pay the cost of domestic mails carried in the same manner during the year.

"By the Act of June 26, 1884, the statutes, which during over twenty years have secured the service of American vessels as mail carriers, were repealed, to take effect on the 1st day of April, 1885; and soon after my assumption of duties inquiries were received from two of the steamship companies concerning the course to be pursued by the Department during the quarter-year to begin with that date. No time had then been afforded for consideration of the future policy of the Department, nor had any apprehension of difficulty in regard to it been conceived; and inasmuch as no special appropriation for the quarter-year beginning with April had been granted, the request was made in reply that the service should continue upon the same terms upon which it had previously been rendered. No others addressed the Department in respect to the particular period, and all the American companies which had before shown that they had been employed as mail carriers continued to transport the mails during that quarter at the same rate of compensation which they had therefore received. Verbal application was, indeed, made on behalf of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company to carry the mails during the three months without determination or payment of any fixed compensation, leaving that to be the subject of special application to Congress. Inasmuch, however, as no act authorizes the Department to contract, even for a brief period, for any service upon a *quantum meruit* basis, or to oblige the Government to pay any indefinite price, it was necessary to decline the application, which was not further insisted on, and payment to all was made for that quarter at the same rates therefore given."

### STAMPS AND MONEY ORDERS.

"The statistics of the stamp division show a decrease in the issue of all the stamped paper from which revenue is derived, except only newspaper and periodical stamps and stamped envelopes bearing return requests, corresponding to but not measuring the decrease of revenue and the depression of business. The entire weight of news paper and periodical matter carried, not estimating the free circulation allowed within the county of publication, was in round numbers 50,529 tons, on which postage to the gross amount of $2,021,159 26 was collected, more by $131,567 12, or nearly 7 per cent, than during the previous year.

"At the close of the post fiscal year the number of money-order offices was 7,056, of which 762 were established during that period, while 16 were discontinued. Additional establishments of 303, with the last four discontinuances, brought up the full number at the date of the report to 7,355. Nearly 7,726,000 domestic money-orders, averaging $15 26 each, yielding an aggregate amount of nearly $924,000 in fees, were purchased during the year. Postal notes exceeding 5,000,000 in number, averaging $1 98 each, reaching in total almost $10,000,000, and producing over $152,000 in fees, were issued to buyers. International money-orders to the number of almost 449,000 were drawn upon the 19 different foreign countries with which a mutual interchange had been put in operation, averaging about $15 23 each, aggregating over $6,840,000 and returning gross fees exceeding $141,000. There was a decrease in both the domestic and foreign money-order business denoting the effects of the general depression in the pecuniary affairs of the country; the more strikingly because with our increasing population there should have been under ordinary circumstances an increase of the transactions. The total volume of the business of the several kinds was, notwithstanding, very considerable, amounting to $134,695,554 11 received for orders issued, and $132,009,812 24 paid out upon them."

### SPECIAL DELIVERY SERVICE.

"From reports received for the month of October, it appears that 140,820 letters bearing the special stamp were immediately delivered at the several designated offices during that time, of which 98,906 came in the mails and 41,914 were local. Of all these, 129,812 were at carrier-delivery offices and 11,008 at the others. Sales of special-delivery stamps at special-delivery offices alone aggregated $20,432 99 for the month. There has been at most offices sufficient application to supply messengers, although in some places the small-ness of the service has so limited the compensation that postmasters have found it difficult to secure them. The average compensation to the messenger for the month was about $6 50; and the average number of letters delivered on a trip but a small fraction over one. The average time required for delivery has been seventeen minutes. No sufficient experience has yet been afforded to justify much generalization from it. Yet it is apparent that the public have accepted the system with favor, and that it affords a privilege to the patrons of the service which is very convenient and often of much value. Its largest employment has naturally been at the carrier-delivery offices, because there are at towns of importance where the centres of business exist, and to which a great or volume of important correspondence flows. This is only in accordance with the relative position of the same offices in every feature of the postal service, and does not disprove the desirability of affording the facilities at others.

"Judging from present evidence, the system is capable of being made vastly more useful, and at the same time profitable, by a greater extension; and it is worthy of consideration whether the steps on that not be soon taken which will expand it to the almost limits of the postal service. It is self-evident that if the privilege of immediate delivery is desirable for the public at some offices, it would be still more useful if afforded at all. As it is, the sender must, if he addresses any but the well-known large cities and prominent towns, consult the list of designated offices before he can affix the stamp with out a risk of wasting it; and this works to the disadvantage of the smaller places among the designated offices, and doubtless abridges the number of special-delivery stamps upon letters mailed to them, since the list most frequently be not at hand when desired. If the stamps were effective at all offices its use would not only be greater in general but proportionately increased at the smaller. It is believed that a few changes may be made, which will enable the system to be safely extended to all offices of the country."

### FOREIGN MAILS.

Under the head of "Foreign Mails" Mr. Vilas discusses at length the operations of the Department under the appropriation for that service of March 3, 1885. "The inquiries," he says, "which have been addressed to the Department with a view to intelligent and proper employment of this appropriation discovered such difficulties and objections to stand in the way that it was finally, after a protracted and painstaking consideration of the subject, as you know, decided to be inexpedient and in report to exert the authority of the act to contract for ocean service upon the mileage plan of compensation. Of the reasons which compelled this determination I will state as briefly as possible the more prominent.

"The first was the apparent impossibility of applying its provisions to the conditions affecting the various American steamship carriers, without such a course of proceeding as would have been inadmissible to the Department to pursue under the law itself. A statement compiled in the office of the foreign mails, shows the total miles sailed last year, and to have been expected to be sailed this year by all American companies, to be over 2,050,000; and the total compensation at the maximum rate would exceed $1,025,000; or over two and one-half times the utmost authorized expenditure. The act requires a letting to the lowest responsible bidder after local advertisement to invite competition; and except to contractors, so brought into service, no money could be paid on mileage contracts. Only two routes are navigated by more than one American company; one between New-York and Havana, the other between San Francisco and Japan and China. To have solicited competition by advertisement would have been idle, except upon the ocean; competition to bring the bids below the maximum rate would be impossible. The consequence would be, inadequate, but the Department must either have made choice of certain routes, whose total mileage would have demanded no more than the limited sum, and, by ostentatiously calling, through advertisement for a competitor which could not come, have distributed the whole bounty to the chosen, entirely excluding the others; or else have so planned its advertisements to meet the circumstances of the only possible bidders, that, by concerted understanding with all American companies, or some as the Department chose to give the money to, contracts might have been made for such sums to each that the whole appropriation would be divided between them.

"The first method of expending the money would have been partial and unjust. There are no circumstances, it may be safely affirmed, which give any American line the right to be so greatly preferred that it should be paid their full bounty while others should receive none. And to have so adjusted the contracts that all would have shared the objects of the appropriation; since, it may well be supposed, the disfavored lines would, promptly and justifiably, have refused their further service as mail carriers to the Government. There may be reason to think that the Government ought to award these companies differing measures of compensation, not depending upon their varying mileage so much as upon other facts, perhaps; but no lawful right or means to discriminate between them is afforded by the statute, which requires the contract, if advertised for, to be let to the lowest responsible bidder.

"The objections to the first plan of administering the authority being obviously insuperable, it was intimated to the Department that it might expect all the companies to conform their bids for such limited sum as should be suggested as necessary, if the advertisements for proposals were adapted to that end. But the act is clearly contemplated, by its terms, that the Government should secure the gain of competition, wherever possible among bidders. The two routes already mentioned afforded the opportunity. Yet, if the law were pursued and a contract were awarded to either of the companies on the trans-Pacific route, and another to either of those plying between New-York and Havana, both public injury and private injustice would have been wrought, because the public would have lost the service of one company on each route when it ought to enjoy the greater frequency of both, and one company on each would have been denied a share of the bounty to which it was well entitled on the other. This constituted in itself so grave an objection to any employment of the authority of the act as to render it of doubtful expediency, a proof of which lies in the usages of the trans-Atlantic carriage, where the best service is gained by employing at will the swiftest ship among those ready to sail at any time when mail is to be dispatched, no special contract being made. To obviate this obstacle lying in the path of the second proposed plan, the further suggestion came that two contracts should be made on each of these routes, one suited to the convenience of each company, and the advertisement be accordingly framed to solicit proposals for stated sailings, such as were habitually made by these lines. Thus, between New-York and Havana, as one company regularly sails on Thursday and the other on Saturday, one advertisement should invite proposals to contract for a Thursday departure, another for a Saturday.

"In brief, without more particular mention of the details, the Department must have specially preconsidered all the peculiar features of the lines and business of each of the companies which would affect the contract or competition for it; must have carefully estimated the miles of sailing each would perform and the price per mile each might bid; must have received the concurrence of all in the scheme; and so arranging as to receive but one bid for each contract advertised for, and that one at the prearranged price per mile, or practically making the several contracts before the advertisements, might have distributed the appropriation among the American steamship companies fairly and justly according to their mileage. To warrant such a procedure this act must be read as directing the Department to distribute $400,000 among American steamship companies in return for their carrying the mails, in such manner as it might deem fairest between them, and most ingeniously evasive of its written purpose to secure competition and award the contract to the lowest bidder.

"There were objections to this course other than the indicated one of inexpedience of power granted the head of a department for one purpose, that it might be available for another. It may not be doubted whether some of the companies would have assented to the unfair rule of division proposed—whereby they who carried the heavy and important mails took ratably no more than they whose services were comparatively insignificant—unless driven to it by the inability or inexpediency to devise another method to escape the practical inconveniences of distribution which the language of the act created. I included, also, payment of its share to the American line, which plies between Philadelphia and Liverpool, and the public spirit which has steadily maintained that line at great odds and cost for years as the only one of United States steamships across the Atlantic merits the recognition as well as any call on National pride presented by an other. Yet this would have been to bestow the yearly sum of above $25,000, in place of a sum approximating the $1,416 52 paid this line last year for the mails it carried without any increase of its service; because the public convenience has required and must continue to require substantially all the trans-Atlantic mails to go on the numerous vessels of many other lines frequently sailing from New-York, and competing for their contracts at sea postage only. So, as has been observed, the proposed course would have involved double contracts on two routes, in apparent disregard of the statute, which seems to contemplate but one between the same terminal ports.

"Again, it would have exposed the Department to difficulty, if any increase in the sailings took place, or was needed by the public convenience; because the contracts so made would have required payment, at the stipulated price per mile, of the whole amount at command for the mileage originally estimated. No stimulus to enterprise could have resulted; since, if any new American steamship were during the year, put upon the seas—as has happened in fact—the Department could not have employed it as a mail-carrier in a similar manner, the whole bounty having been pre-engaged to the long established lines. It will also be observed that the appropriation is for but one year, and the power of making such contracts limited to this appropriation only. To have instituted such a system would have served but the temporary purpose of dividing the particular sum, and threatened much future difficulty.

"But one other course of procedure by which to expend the appropriation has suggested itself as affording escape from some of these objections. The Department might have arbitrarily prescribed to each company, upon such circumstances as should have been deemed fit to control the differential compensation, a price per mile which it would have accepted a proposal for, and by advertising accordingly, have made contracts to disburse the authorized sum of $400,000, or less, according to its own views of justice. Such a method would have encountered other practical difficulties of serious character, too readily suggested by what has been said to require special explanation, as well as have been unwarrantable under the law.

"A just understanding of the statute and of the obligations imposed by the law on an executive officer seemed not only to coincide with the conclusion indicated by the foregoing considerations, but to add other imperative reasons for its adoption. The act puts at the disposal of the Department, in the ordinary terms of appropriation, the sum of $800,000 for transportation of the foreign mails, warranting thereby its entire expenditure, if necessary, under previously existing powers. The mere authority to make contracts on the mileage plan of compensation with American steamships is superseded. No mandate to pursue that course is expressed or implied. Authority to let contracts for transportation of the ocean mails, after advertisement for proposals, has long existed on the statute book, unexercised for years, and it was never thought to be obligatory on the Department to exert it.

"The true rule seems to be that the Department ought, when the Congress submits the question to its discretion, to pay such reasonable price to its carriers as, in fair dealing between them and the people, shall justly recompense their service, in view of its nature and the cost and burden of their performance of it. Accordingly inquiry was carefully directed to ascertain what is a just compensation to our mail carriers by sea, and whether it could be paid under the pre-existing powers of the Department.

"The general conclusion seems sustained by the facts that, except special circumstances should require a greater, the rate of sea postage is remunerative for the service of carrying the mails. The statute authorizes the entire sea and inland postage to be paid to American steamships, although out sea postage may be allowed to foreign vessels—a proof of the legislative judgment that the latter rate is sufficiently remunerative to compel and the service, as the fact is. This statute appeared to afford power to make abundant compensation for all the service necessary until the next session of the Congress. The accompanying tables, prepared in the foreign mails office, show that this would have yielded to the following American companies, on the basis of last year's business, respectively:

"To the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, on its New-York and Colon line, $19,275 82, as against $7,501 78 at sea postage, and $7,679 49 at its parcels-dispatch rates, and $411 40 at its freight rates, for nearly 55 tons of total mail; an average of $507 26 per trip for 288 pounds of matter, which it would have carried for $10 82 at freight rates and $202 09 at parcels-dispatch rates.

"On its San Francisco and Panama line, $3,496 18 for about 7 tons, against $1,238 44 at sea postage, $71 69 at freight, and $1,002 55 at parcels-dispatch rates.

"On its San Francisco and Yokohama line, $10,125 80 for 1 ton in 19 tons, against $4,506 64 at sea postage, $226 34 at freight rates, and $3,758 40 at parcels-dispatch rates.

"On its Australian line, $11,018 65 for about 48 tons, again $13,565 29 at the special rates paid heretofore, $762 93 at freight rates, and $9,537 40 at parcels-dispatch rates; an average per trip of $3,155 28 for 7,336 pounds, nearly 54 times its freight rates, over 4 times its parcels-dispatch prices, and a better average price per trip than the average paid across the Atlantic by $22,505 92.

"To the Venezuelan Red "D" Line, $3,942 86 for about 8 tons of mail, against $1,392 95 at sea postage, $58 34 at its freight rates, and $1,155 01 at its parcels-dispatch rates.

"To the New-York and Cuba Line $5,203 48 for about 12 tons, against $2,271 94 at sea postage, $61 63 at freight rates, and $1,548 17 at its parcels-dispatch rates.

"To the New-York, Havana and Mexican line, $11,932 11 for about 25 tons, against $4,134 13 at sea postage, $129 17 at freight rates, and $3,229 53 at parcels-dispatch rates.

"These facts seem to prove that the total sea and inland postage is an abundant recompense for the proposed service; and without further recapitulation, reference to the tables will show the amounts to each of her lines a proportional compensation. If this be correct judgment, no more could be rightfully expended of the appropriation unless other objects were to be sought than the care of the postal service. Upon a review of all these facts and reasons, it seemed a plain duty, the only admissible course, for the Government to decline to make contracts upon the mileage plan, and await the meeting of Congress, to which the subject might be referred for consideration and direction. It involved but a few months of delay, and in the interim the American vessels could be paid a compensation more than three times as great as most of them have received for similar service during the past seven years. The small rate claims to some lines from the limited mails to be carried by them, the exigency arising from the repeal of the compulsory law, and the desirability of marking the friendly disposition of the Government toward American lines, notwithstanding the particular statute could not be executed, were deemed justifications warrant for proffering the full rate of sea and inland postage until definite legislation should be enacted.

"Much has been said about employing the postal appropriation to aid American commerce. When Congress shall desire to invest the Post-Office Department with such power, it will also, it can not be doubted it will easily choose language which will plainly convey the purpose and impose the duty. Until then, that Department cannot rightfully employ the moneys appropriated for its postal service to secure objects not intrusted to its care, however meritorious in themselves. It may be properly further observed of this, that during many years the practice of granting pecuniary aid to American lines was pursued at so great a cost, and to so at disadvantage, that it was long since wholly abandoned; that when followed, Congress had directed it; and if that body desires its renewal, presumably it would do it have declared the purpose. But the policy of subsidizing American steamship companies, or any of them, is not involved in the decision arrived at. That pertains to Congress instead of the Department, and therefore the Department can only award just compensation and then stop. If exigencies may arise to justify its adoption, it seems to belong to that body to recognize their existence and prescribe the object and amount of the grant.

"The report of the Superintendent of the Foreign Mails Office gives a full account of the manner in which the mails have been dispatched since the 1st of August, from which it will be seen that the inconvenience resulting from the action of the companies, though annoying in character, such it been very great. Between New-York and Havana the service is stated now to be three times a week instead of two, as formerly, and within a short time it is expected to be passed in time to almost seventy-four hours, a gain of at least one half over the time of steamers. The Australian mail has not been specially interrupted, and a new company has undertaken the service under contract with New-Zealand for three years. Some delays and inconveniences have arisen between New-York and Colon, San Francisco and Japan and China, and to the west coast of Mexico, by the refusal of the Pacific Mail Company, and some between New-York and Venezuela, by the like action of the Red D Company. Except these, all the foreign mails are transported either in the same manner or a better than during the past year."

### THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR.

"So much has been said already in respect to the financial problem of the present year, as affecting probable receipts, that nothing need be added to explain the necessarily monitory character of the estimates attempted in order to furnish some indications of future revenue. No way is open but to conjecture the probabilities, and no test of the value of different conjectures is possible.

"Starting with the unknown quantity of the present year as ordinary postal revenue taken at the figure previously arrived at, it stands thus:

| | |
|---|---|
| | $43,630,022 34 |
| An deducting the amount the $ as counted as given from second-class matter | 1,091,426 00 |
| To which result of | 42,538,596 34 |
| Add the gross net increase from improved postal service, viz: | 3,493,807 70 |
| Aggregate present year's revenue | 46,032,404 04 |
| Deduct the estimated loss of revenue | 1,091,426 00 |
| With an estimated gain of per cent | 102,142 60 |
| | 1,200,568 60 |
| Gives a result for the ordinary postal revenue of | 47,142,252 64 |
| To which add estimated from one-order business of | 10,000 00 |
| And the gross revenue for the year ending June 30, 1887, would estimated | $47,024,252 64 |

### LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS.

"A commission of expert officers of the service made, during the summer, a careful examination of the local service of the cities of New-York and Brooklyn, and upon the facts and suggestions they presented, although they commended the administration of the former officer in view of the means afforded, such steps were directed to change the system of in all collections and deliveries in and between the four cities, as, with increased provision for carriers and carriers, it is believed will greatly advance the frequency and rapidity with which the mails will be collected, handled and delivered. An attempt has been made to establish the publication of a local guide for those cities in which shall be furnished every week to the public at a small charge, and without cost to the Government, a complete time-table of the local postal service, and its connection with the principal postal routes to the various parts of the country, so that from it the course and time of a letter, from any collection box to its delivery at any part of either city or any of the larger offices of the country, may be read, besides much other valuable information affecting the conduct of the local office. It is believed that the greater convenience the public derive to acquire with every part conducive to serve the most of all their efficient become, and that it will prove a highly efficacious agency to stimulate and compel the most faithful and efficient performance of the best methods. A reference to the tables given will show that so great is the net revenue from the cities of New-York and Brooklyn, that the Government owes to these cities, in sheer pecuniary recompense, a local service unsurpassed in the world."

### RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Postmaster-General makes a number of miscellaneous recommendations concerning transportation, money-order fees, leases, abuse of the mails, postal clerks, lost mail, etc., and concludes his report with expressions of gratitude to the heads of bureaus, who, he says, "while their faithful industry and abilities have stood in the forefront of the service, have solicited by their steadfast support and kindness the pressure upon me of its unaccustomed duties. To the clerical force of the Department in general the acknowledgment of obedience and attention to duty is due, although I have been compelled to impose upon many unusual hours of labor, in order to a prompt dispatch of the departmental business; and especially to those gentlemen who have served upon the several commissions which have been directed to particular inquiries. I give my thanks for the ability, zeal, and courage which each have characterized the discharge of the tasks intrusted to their performance."

### AIP NOICES.

Appendices subjoined to the report give the report of the commission appointed to investigate the division of Post Office supplies; the business of mail transportation lines for the year; the Attorney-General's opinion upon the question whether the authority to make contracts under the former section is limited by the latter upon the point of compensation; and a table of all correspondence relating to foreign mail transportation.

## *CHANGE IN A WELL-KNOWN DRUG FIRM.*

The well-known firm of McKesson & Robbins, wholesale druggists of Fulton-st., was dissolved yesterday by limitation. A new co-partnership was formed immediately between Daniel C. Robbins, William Hull Wickham and John McKesson, jr., who, together with Charles A. Robbins, make up the old firm, and William J. Venturi, George Clinton McKesson and Herbert D. Robbins. Charles A. Robbins retires from the firm to enter into business with Daniel C. Robbins, under the style of the New-York Quinine and Chemical Works, which will give special attention to the manufacture of medicinal chemical preparations. Mr. Wickham said yesterday: There is nothing significant in the change that has been made in the firm of McKesson & Robbins. No disagreement of between any of its members has led to the dissolution. The partnership expired by limitation and the place of Charles A. Robbins is taken by his son. The business will be carried on at the old stand under the old name. The new partners, with one exception, have been connected with the business for many years, and no change will be made in the details of conducting the business with the exception perhaps that efforts will be made to extend the business in some fields that have not been carefully worked."

The new State of Dakota asks admission, with her coat of arms bearing this motto: "By God the People Rule." Perhaps the last blizzard shook a reef out of the Dakota grain ar—surely, something did. The motto, while not euphonious, is rather rugged.—[Philadelphia Press.

# THE MONEY MARKET.

## SALES AT THE STOCK EXCHANGE, DEC. 1.

THE GENERAL LIST.

| Name. | Actual sales. Open-ing. | High'st. | Low'st. | Clos-ing. | Closing bids. Bid. | Ask'd. | Shares sold. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Atlantic & Pac | 10 | 10 | 9¾ | 9¾ | 10 | 10 | 500 |
| Buffalo Nor | 80 | 80 | 80 | 80 | 80 | .. | 14 |
| Canadaigua | 56¾ | 57 | 56¾ | 57 | 56½ | 57 | 510 |
| Can Southern | 43¼ | 43¾ | 42¾ | 42¾ | 42½ | 42⅞ | 1,520 |
| Cen Iowa | 20½ | 20¾ | 20¼ | 22¾ | 22 | 23 | 2,610 |
| Central N J | 45¾ | 45¾ | 45¼ | 45¾ | 45¾ | 45½ | 1,420 |
| Central Pacific | 43¼ | 43¼ | 41⅞ | 42⅞ | 42 | 42⅞ | 2,320 |
| C C & Am | 36 | 36 | 36 | 36 | .. | .. | 100 |
| Ches & Ohio | 11½ | 11½ | 11⅛ | 11½ | 11¼ | 11⅝ | 130 |
| C & O, 1st pref | 19¾ | 19¾ | 19½ | 19½ | 19¾ | 19¾ | 500 |
| Chic & N W | 113¾ | 113⅞ | 112⅞ | 112⅞ | 112⅞ | 112⅞ | 6,150 |
| C M & St P | 94¾ | 95 | 91⅞ | 94¾ | 94½ | 94¾ | 25,733 |
| Do pref | 116 | 116 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115½ | 800 |
| C St L & P, pr | 36 | 36 | 34⅝ | 34⅝ | .. | 34½ | 400 |
| C S P M & O | 41½ | 41½ | 40 | 40½ | 40¼ | 40½ | 1,735 |
| C St P M & Om | 103 | 103 | 103 | 103 | 103 | 103 | 100 |
| Do pref | 133½ | 133¾ | 133¼ | 133¾ | 133½ | 134 | 440 |
| C C C & I | 60⅝ | 60⅝ | 60½ | 60½ | 60 | 62 | 200 |
| Col, H V & Tol | 31 | 31 | 30 | 31 | 30¾ | 31 | 855 |
| Del, L & W | 121 | 121¼ | 120 | 120¼ | 120⅜ | 120½ | 8,120 |
| D & H, Canal | 97½ | 97½ | 96¾ | 96½ | 96¾ | 97 | 454 |
| D & Hud C | 21 | 22½ | 21½ | 22 | 22 | 22¼ | 2,435 |
| Dub & S C | 63 | 63 | 63 | 63 | 61 | .. | 100 |
| E Lex & Big S | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 22 | 25 | 5 |
| E Ten V & Ga | 7⅛ | 7⅛ | 6⅞ | 6⅞ | 6⅞ | 7 | 965 |
| E T, Va & Ga pr | 12 | 12 | 11½ | 11½ | 11 | 11¼ | 750 |
| Ev & T H | 67 | 67 | 67 | 67 | 67 | 69 | 200 |
| Ft W & Den | 22¾ | 22¾ | 22¾ | 22¾ | 23 | 24 | 220 |
| Green Bay | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 9¾ | 3,5 |
| Hous & Texas | 37 | 37 | 37 | 37 | 37 | 38 | 100 |
| Ill Cent | 24¾ | 25 | 24 | 24¾ | 24 | 24½ | 1,300 |
| Lake Shore | 86½ | 87 | 86 | 86¼ | 86¼ | 86¾ | 14,702 |
| Long Island | 80¼ | 80¼ | 78¾ | 80 | 78¾ | 80 | 52 |
| Long Island | 48 | 48 | 47 | 47⅝ | 47⅝ | 47¾ | 3,830 |
| Manhattan | 118 | 118 | 118 | 118 | 117½ | 118 | 50 |
| M L S & W | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 24½ | 25 | 300 |
| M S & W, pref | 52½ | 52½ | 52½ | 52½ | 52 | 54½ | 50 |
| M S & L | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 23 | 30 |
| Michigan Central | 50 | 50 | 49 | 49 | 48½ | 49½ | 350 |
| Minn & St L | 3¼ | 3½ | 3⅛ | 3⅛ | 3⅛ | 3⅜ | 21,525 |
| Mo, Kansas & T | 10¼ | 10¼ | 10¼ | 10¼ | 10¼ | 10¼ | 9 |
| M & O | 16 | 16 | 16½ | 16½ | 14½ | 16½ | 25 |
| N Y Cent | 104½ | 104⅝ | 104¼ | 104⅝ | 104¼ | 104⅝ | 4,010 |
| N Y & H | 88 | 88 | 88 | 88 | 84 | 88 | 1,000 |
| N Y C & St L | 18¾ | 18¾ | 18¾ | 18¾ | 18¾ | 19½ | 500 |
| N Y L E & W | 23½ | 23¾ | 24⅝ | 24⅝ | 24¾ | 24⅞ | 9,765 |
| Do pref | 52 | 52 | 51½ | 51½ | 51 | 52 | 250 |
| N Y & N E | 35 | 35 | 33½ | 34½ | 34 | 34½ | 2,300 |
| N Y & N H | 202½ | 202½ | 201½ | 202 | 200 | .. | 10 |
| N Y O & W | 18⅝ | 18⅝ | 18⅝ | 18⅝ | 18⅝ | 18⅞ | 10 |
| N Y S & W | 8¾ | 8¾ | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8½ | 800 |
| N Y S & W, pref | 21¾ | 21¾ | 20½ | 20½ | 20¾ | 20¾ | 800 |
| Nor & W | 11¾ | 11¾ | 11¼ | 11¼ | 11 | 11½ | 10 |
| Nor, & West pf | 30½ | 30½ | 30½ | 30½ | 30¼ | 32 | 410 |
| Northern Pac | 30⅝ | 30⅝ | 29⅞ | 29⅞ | 29⅞ | 29⅞ | 8,225 |
| Northern Pac pf | 63⅝ | 63⅝ | 62¾ | 62¾ | 62¾ | 62⅞ | 15,415 |
| Ohio Central | 2⅛ | 2⅛ | 1⅞ | 1⅞ | 1½ | 2 | 800 |
| Ohio & Miss | 24½ | 24½ | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24½ | 200 |
| Oregon Trans | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 32 | 33 | 5 |
| Oregon & Nav | 107¼ | 107⅜ | 106¾ | 107 | 107 | 107¼ | 2,450 |
| Oregon Short L | 21½ | 21¾ | 21⅜ | 21⅜ | 21⅜ | 21⅝ | 10,607 |
| Pa, D & Ev | 21⅝ | 21¾ | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21⅝ | 800 |
| Phil & Read | 22⅞ | 22⅞ | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22¼ | 1,110 |
| P P W & Balt | 141⅝ | 141⅝ | 141⅝ | 141⅝ | 141½ | .. | 30 |
| Pacific Mail | 32 | 32 | 31½ | 32 | 31½ | 31 | 165 |
| Pac Dec & Sw | 21⅝ | 21⅝ | 21⅝ | 21⅝ | 21 | 40½ | 1,000 |
| Phila & Reading | 22⅝ | 22⅝ | 22½ | 22½ | 22 | 22½ | 500 |
| St L & I M | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 36 | 200 |
| Texas Pacific | 24½ | 24½ | 23½ | 23½ | 23⅝ | 23¾ | 5,100 |
| Union Pacific | 56⅝ | 56⅝ | 55¾ | 55¾ | 55⅝ | 55¾ | 3,160 |
| Western Union | 70¾ | 70¾ | 70⅛ | 70⅛ | 70 | 70⅛ | 2,300 |
| W L E & P | 12¾ | 12¾ | 12¾ | 12¾ | 12¾ | 12¾ | 200 |
| Total shares sold | | | | | | | 412,410 |

### *GOVERNMENT BONDS.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| U S 4s Registered | 110,000 | 111 | 122¾ |

### *BONDS AND BANK STOCKS.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Missouri 6s 1886 | 100 | 104 | |
| A L Hoot | 500 | 110 | |
| Mexican Central 1st | | | |
| Do coupon | 10,000 | 48⅝ | |
| Mich Cen 7s | 2,000 | 127 | |
| M Kan & Tex 2d 6s | 2,000 | 31 | 33¾ |
| Do | 6,000 | 29 | 29 |
| Mo K & Tex con 7s | 10,000 | 113¾ | |
| N Y W S & Bon 1st | 10,000 | 100 | |
| Norfolk & West 1st | 15,000 | 96 | |
| Do 2d | 30,000 | 106 | |
| Northern Pac 1st | 27,500 | 115⅝ | |
| Do 2d | 20,000 | 45¾ | |
| Do land | 20,000 | 47⅝ | |
| Ohio Southern 1st | 1,000 | 80 | |
| Do 2d inc | 10,000 | 30⅝ | |
| Toledo & Wabash 2d | 1,000 | 94½ | |
| Do 1st | 10,000 | 105 | |
| Texas & St L