THE MEMPHIS DAILY APPEAL.

BY M'CLANAHAN, TROUSDALE & DILL. MEMPHIS, THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 1859. VOLUME X.—NUMBER 57.

Daily Appeal.

DEBATE IN THE HOUSE ON THE OVERLAND MAIL QUESTION.

MR. AVERY. I offer the following amendment to come in at the close of the first section of the bill:

Provided, That the contract made and entered into between the Post Office Department and Butterfield & Co., for carrying the overland mail from the Mississippi river to the Pacific coast, be, and the same is hereby, ratified and confirmed; and that Butterfield & Co. be compelled to carry said mail according to said contract.

Mr. AVERY. Mr. Chairman, I offer this amendment in good faith, and only because I want it to pass, but, sir, I also do so in order to avail myself of this, the first opportunity which has been afforded, or likely will be during this session, to reply to the speech of the gentleman from Missouri, (Mr. Blair,) made yesterday upon his amendment to the bill authorizing Butterfield & Co. to select their own route for the transportation of the overland mail to California.

The gentleman saw fit, too, sir, in the course of his remarks, to attribute to the Postmaster-General improper motives in establishing this route. All that I have to say upon this subject is, that the fair fame of the Postmaster-General, not only in his own State, but in the nation, lifts him far above the reach of any imputations of such a character, let them come from whatever quarter they may. While, sir, he deserves and is receiving at the hands of the people, just praise for his wisdom and impartiality in this matter, this route was not selected by him alone, but by the whole Cabinet, with the President at their head, after the most deliberate and mature consideration.

But, sir, a few words as to the merits of the gentleman's amendment. By it, sir, he proposes to give to the contractors, Butterfield & Co., the selection of their own route. Under the present contract between the Post Office Department and Butterfield & Co., they are obliged to carry the mails from San Francisco to Memphis and St. Louis, branching at Fort Smith, in Arkansas. What, sir, will be the effect of this amendment? For what purpose is it moved? The whole and sole object is to collusively enable the Memphis branch to omit and consequently to make everything at St. Louis upon the northern route. Its effect is to strike down the whole interest of the entire region of which I come, in this overland mail; that they are to have no part nor lot in it. I say so, because this Butterfield company are in the interest and under the domination of St. Louis. I have it from the highest authority of gentlemen in this city, fresh from this overland travel, that the most shameful and iniquitous discriminations are made, all along the line, against the Memphis, and in favor of the S. Louis route; that every impediment and obstacle are thrown in the way of a Memphis traveller, while every facility and inducement are held out to the St. Louis route. I give gentleman fair warning now, that if this amendment is pressed in the House I will hold my energy, from this time on, to bring about a rejection of the whole matter. If my motion to be sacrificed, I shall not be unmitigated war upon her adversaries. That Butterfield & Co. are hostile to the Memphis route, independent of this positive testimony, is plain, from the manner in which this service has been performed ever since they have been in operation. But, sir, there is another reason why this power should not be given these contractors. They are compelled to carry the mail on two routes; for this amendment they would select only one, and get double pay for a single service; for they would still get the pay they now do; it would not diminish the expense a dollar.

Sir, this route was selected because it was wise and just; and I say here to-day, that it has fully vindicated itself. The southern route has proved itself to be the most practicable of any of the routes to the Pacific.

I want this contract carried out to its strict conclusion; and I hope, therefore, that the House will not concur in the amendment of the gentleman from Missouri. This is all that I have to say upon the subject at present.

Mr. BLAIR. I am very glad the gentleman from Tennessee has again brought this matter to the attention of the House and the attention of the country. In reply to what the gentleman says about my casting imputations upon the motives of the Postmaster-General, I have only to say, that I stand upon this floor what I deem to be the facts in the case.

Mr. AVERY. Will the gentleman allow me to state what are the facts of the case?

Mr. BLAIR. Yes, sir, I will have stated it in your own time. I cannot allow mine to be taken up. I stated, upon good authority, what I believe to be the facts of the case; and I leave it to the judgment of the House, to the judgment of the country, to draw such inference as the facts will justify.

Mr. AVERY. Will the gentleman be good enough to state precisely what he did say yesterday? It is due to the reputation of Governor Brown, it is due to Buchanan, and it is due to the country, that this thing should be exactly understood.

Mr. BLAIR. I have no objection to stating what I did say yesterday. I say now, that if the facts of this case, as they have been given to me, are true, then the Postmaster-General is not above the imputation, or inference, which it is very clear the country will draw from them.

Mr. ATKINS. What are those facts?

Mr. BLAIR. I stated, upon good authority, that the Postmaster-General was the owner of a large body of land in Arkansas, the value of which would be affected by the location of this route.

Mr. ATKINS. I state, upon my personal responsibility, that the Postmaster-General does not own one foot of land upon the line of this route, and that he does not own within eighty or one hundred miles of it; and I call upon the gentleman for his authority.

Mr. BLAIR. I ask the gentleman from Tennessee if he will deny that the Postmaster-General does own a large body of land in Arkansas?

Mr. ATKINS. I deny that he owns one solitary foot of land within eighty or one hundred miles of the line of this route. He does own land, but it is on the Mississippi river, below Helena.

Mr. BLAIR. That is not the inquiry I made of the gentleman.

Mr. ATKINS. It is true that the Postmaster-General does own land in Arkansas, but, as I have said, not near this route; and now I ask the gentleman for his authority for the statement he has made.

Mr. BLAIR. I had it from two gentlemen that are members of this House; that he owned a large body of land in the second congressional district of Arkansas. I will be true to the gentleman says, that it was not within eighty or one hundred miles of this route.

Mr. ATKINS. I feel compelled to say that it was near the line of this route; and I now understand you to take it back.

Mr. BLAIR. I did understand that it was on or near that route.

Mr. ATKINS. Now, I ask the gentleman to state who are the members of this House to whom he refers?

Mr. BLAIR. One is the gentleman from Missouri, [Mr. Craig,] and the other the gentleman from Indiana, [Mr. English.]

Mr. ATKINS. Will you authorized by the Postmaster-General to say that he does not own one foot of land within eighty or one hundred miles of this route; and I care not who states it? [Laughter.]

Mr. ENGLISH. Before the gentleman from Missouri gives any further, I desire to say that I have never spoken to the Postmaster-General myself. If the gentleman gives me his authority for stating that the Postmaster-General was influenced in the location of this route by motives of personal interest, I desire to reply that I never said any such thing.

Mr. BLAIR. I have a distinct recollection that the gentleman made a statement in reference to land owned by the Postmaster-General in Arkansas, in the presence of myself and Mr. Craig, of Missouri.

Mr. Craig, of Missouri. If the gentleman will allow me, I will state exactly what I remember in relation to that conversation.

Mr. BLAIR. I cannot yield yet at this moment. I do not want this matter to go off in this way. I desire to call the attention of the House to a fact in regard to the location of this mail route, which may explain some things in reference to the matter, in the precise attitude, after the details made here on behalf of the Postmaster-General. There was first located, by the Postmaster-General, a route running from St. Louis and from Memphis, to unite at Little Rock with a line running directly from St. Louis through the heart of the Second Congressional District in Arkansas. Subsequently a strong pressure was brought to bear upon the Postmaster-General from my own State, and particularly national Democrats in my own State, who had a gubernatorial election pending at that time in Missouri, and who thought it would not do to have the interests of Missouri slighted at such a time. The chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means [Mr. Phelps] was one, who induced the Postmaster-General to some extent, to make an alteration, which carried the line from St. Louis, by Springfield, in Missouri, to a town upon the western frontier of the State of Arkansas, which route was about eighty or one hundred miles more