

and no provision was made for a successor in case of the removal of Hamilton from his position.

The points to which the post office drew attention were, as will be seen, far from wanting weight; and if they had not been pressed against the Massachusetts bill alone, would have excited little comment. But the Massachusetts general court noted and resented the discrimination. When Neale was informed of the disallowance, he begged the governors of the post office to prepare a bill which they would regard as free from objections, and to lend their efforts to have it accepted by Massachusetts.¹

A bill was drawn up; and Lord Bellomont, the governor of New England, was instructed to invite the favourable consideration of the Massachusetts legislature to it.² The bill was laid before the general court on June 3, 1699, and it was ordered to be transcribed and read.³

Five days later it came up for consideration, but it was resolved that the committee on the bill should "sit this afternoon,"⁴ and it appeared in the assembly no more. The rejection of the bill, however, was of little or no practical consequence. The post office was too great a convenience to be refused; and so it was established and conducted as if the bill were in operation, except that it had no monopoly in that colony.

But the legislature, which was evidently desirous of extending in its own way all reasonable aid to Hamilton, passed an order in 1703⁵ requiring shipmasters to deliver all letters they brought with them from oversea at the post office of the place of their arrival, for which they were to receive a halfpenny each from the postmaster. Massachusetts equally with the other colonies made an annual grant to the post office for the conveyance of its public letters.

So far the narrative deals only with the northern colonies. The proposition for a post office, however, was submitted to Virginia and Maryland as well. It would seem, however, that the mode of approaching these governments differed from that taken in laying the proposition before the northern colonies. In case of the northern colonies Hamilton dealt with the legislatures in person. The draft bill which he prepared was submitted as a basis for discussion. So far as it went it was accepted, and Hamilton agreed to such additions as the legislatures considered necessary in view of local circumstances.

¹ *Cal. S. P. Col. Am. and W. I.*, 1696-1697, no. 505.

² *Prov. Laws of Mass.*, I. 263.

³ *Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, third series, VII. 64.

⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 1286.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 420.