

in Halifax. The grievances complained of have, in the opinion of your committee, arisen partly from the insufficiency of the arrangements, and partly owing to the time not having been kept by the couriers. Your committee are unanimously of opinion that the service from the west river of Pictou to Sydney and Guysborough, has been contracted for at sums quite too small to enable the contractors to carry the mails either with regularity or despatch, independent of any provision for the conveyance of passengers or the convenience of the travelling community. Your committee, fully sensible of the importance of having established between the capital and Sydney, and the intermediate places, including Guysborough, suitable accommodation for the transport of passengers, have adopted a scheme by which both public services will be combined.

Your committee, after mature deliberation, have adopted the scheme before mentioned, in all its particulars—not the least important of which is the hours of departure and arrival at the several places referred to in it. These have been decided upon with all the necessary consideration of controuling circumstances, which the importance of the service demanded; and your committee believe they will be found to give general satisfaction.

Your committee have considered the subject of the mail contracts east of Halifax, as arranged by the committee of last year with Mr. Hyde, as appears by their report, and have adopted an offer of Mr. Hyde, now made, and hereunto annexed, to convey the mails between Halifax and Pictou—the contract to take effect from the 6th of last month, and to end on the 5th of July, 1856, being the same time at which other mail contracts will expire—the change of hours to take place on the 5th January next, subject to the limitations and conditions hereinafter in a subsequent clause contained, for the same sum per annum (£470) he received under his last contract, and subject to the terms as respects the railroad referred to and expressed in his scheme hereunto annexed;—this course has been decided upon by the committee in reference to the retrospective operation of the contract, for the reason, amongst others, that the mails upon that route, owing to particular circumstances, have been carried at a nominal amount since 6th of October.

Your committee recommend that the service of carrying the mails between the west river of Pictou and Sydney, and Guysborough, be offered to be taken by tender and contract, from the 6th of January next until the 5th July, 1856, to be let in one contract, under the following terms, in addition to those usually required by the post-master general and those hereinafter mentioned, that is to say: the mails between the west river of Pictou and Guysborough to be conveyed in covered carriages, drawn by not less than two horses, to run on an average of not over fifteen mile stages. The mails from Antigonishe to Sydney to be conveyed in waggons drawn by not less than two horses, to run on an average of not more than fifteen mile stages.

The post-master general to have the power of determining contracts by giving three months' notice to the contractor or his securities,—to have also the right to change the hours of departure or arrival; but the contractor to be allowed thereupon to determine the contract by three month's notice—provided such notice be given within a month after the change in the hours is carried into effect.

Your committee have also had under consideration the petition of C. H. Belcher, esquire, praying that the mail service between Halifax and Annapolis, be put up for “tender and contract.” Your committee have examined into the circumstances connected with the present contract for that service, entered into in pursuance of a report of the post office committee of last year adopted by this house, and being of opinion that the spirit of the report and the terms of the contract are opposed to the prayer of the petition, your committee cannot recommend that it should be granted.

Your committee have also considered an extract of a letter from the postmaster general in Canada to the postmaster general in Halifax, suggesting and requesting the deduction of the rate of a half-penny each on letters passing in a sealed mail between Halifax and Canada, via the United States, by the steamers. It appears the change has been suggested in consequence of the difference of currency between the two provinces. The postmaster general in England requires that fourpence sterling on each letter should be paid for the postage by the steamers. In order to cover that amount and the uniform provincial rate of 3d. currency, 8d. currency is charged upon letters sent from Halifax to Canada. Owing to