

be ascertained, they would give the question of the resumption of the patent, further consideration.

Neale's indebtedness to Hamilton for salary now amounting to £1100, he assigned his patent to Hamilton, and to one Robert West, who had made some advances to Neale some years before. The new patentees besought the government to extend their term, which in ordinary course would expire in 1712. Their confidence in the eventual success of the scheme, however, suggested to the postmasters general that the time was now ripe for the crown to take back the patent, and manage the postal service through the general post office in England.

The transfer was made; and John Hamilton,¹ son of the founder of the American post office, who died in 1703, was entrusted with the management of the service, as the deputy of the postmaster general. The results were no better than when the service was privately administered. In 1709, there was a yearly deficit of £200; and as the queen would not allow her losses on this head to be augmented, the postmasters were not being paid.²

The postmaster of New England made a strong representation to the government of Massachusetts, pointing out that he had received nothing from the government since 1706, although he had saved the colony £150 a year by the delivery of the public letters. The remonstrance was fruitless, and he renewed his application in 1711. The legislative council on each occasion was prepared to pay what was due to the postmaster, but the assembly could not be brought to authorize it.

¹ G.P.O., *Treasury*, VI. 205. John Hamilton was appointed deputy postmaster general by the queen in 1707.

² *Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, third series, VII. 69.