

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO THE AFFAIRS
OF THE

POST OFFICE IN BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

Letter of Appointment of Commissioners, dated 26th October, 1840.

Report of the Commissioners, dated 31st December, 1841.

Letter from the Chief Secretary to Messrs. Dowling and Davidson, two of the Commissioners, transmitting the Protest of Mr. Stayner, Deputy Post Master General, and one of the Commissioners, dated 20th April, 1842.

Letter from Mr. Dowling to the Chief Secretary, returning Protest, with Remarks, dated 3rd May, 1842.

Letter from Mr. Davidson to the Chief Secretary, on Protest, &c., dated 12th May, 1842.

Protest of Mr. Stayner, with Remarks by Mr. Dowling.

*Letter of Appointment of Commissioners.*GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
Montreal, 26th October, 1840.

GENTLEMEN,

I am commanded by the Governor General to inform you that His Excellency has been pleased to appoint you to be Commissioners to enquire into the present administration of the Post Office within the Province of British North America.

It is not His Excellency's intention in notifying to you this appointment, to embarrass your discretion as to the extent of your inquiry or the means of conducting it, by instructions pointing out minutely the course you are to pursue. You will understand that the object of Her Majesty's Government is to ascertain whether any and what alterations can be made to promote the efficiency of the Post Office Establishment, and to advance the convenience of the public. The reduction of postage, lately effected upon all letters from and to the United Kingdom, seems already to have provided for that branch of the subject; but the end to be obtained, in the Post Office arrangement for these Provinces as regards the transmission of letters within them, should be to afford such a reduction of charges, together with such augmentation of convenience, as may be found possible consistently with security, that the revenue raised shall suffice to defray all expenses incurred.

Much also may remain to be done even with respect to the communication with the United Kingdom, apart from the mere charges for letters, and you will therefore embrace in your inquiry every matter connected with Post Office communication in these Provinces which appears of importance,—the number and situation of existing offices and the necessity for new establishments,—the improvement of internal communications whether by land or water,—the rates of inland postage,—the expense of the different lines as compared with the revenue, and the manner in which that expense is defrayed,—the emoluments of the different Officers of the Department, whether arising from fixed salary, from agency, or from perquisites,—and the means of facilitating communication between the respective Provinces and the United States. To all these, and to any other points which may appear to you of importance, your attention will of course be directed.

To assist you in the conduct of your inquiry the Governor General has been pleased to appoint Mr. C. Dunkin to be your Secretary, and you will consider yourselves authorized to require from all officers of the Government, and more especially from all Post Masters or other individuals engaged in the several Post Offices, such information or documents as may appear to you necessary. You will also be at liberty, should you think it expedient, to summon before you any of the servants of the Post Office whose evidence you may desire to receive *vivâ voce*; but in using this authority you will of course endeavour to interfere as little as possible with the conduct of the public business.

In respect to the other Provinces of British North America you will probably be able to obtain, by correspondence with the Post Masters and other officers of the Government, all the particulars necessary for your inquiry. The Lieutenant Governors have already received from the Secretary of State instructions to transmit to the Governor General such information on this subject as they may be able to afford; and the Despatches which have in consequence been received from them will be laid before you at once. Should it appear to you at any time necessary to invoke the interference of the Governor General to obtain any additional information from public officers, whether in this or the neighbouring Provinces, His Excellency will be ready to attend to any representation which you may make to him.

You will probably find it expedient to apply to some of those engaged most exclusively in commerce for particulars relating to your inquiry. In that case His Excellency feels confident that you will receive from them all the attention which the importance of the subject demands.

When you shall have completed your inquiry, you will proceed to report the result to His Excellency for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, accompanying your Report with a scheme of the measures necessary for carrying out the alterations which you may suggest.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

(Signed,) T. W. C. MURDOCH,
Chief Secretary.

E. Dowling, Esquire,

T. A. Stayner, Esquire,

J. Davidson, Esquire.