

Postmaster General in British North America. On account of his previous experience in a similar situation, he nominated Finlay as a suitable person for this place. About a month later (Nov. 8, 1787), Finlay was duly appointed; and Sydney informed the Governor-General that a monthly mail service had been actually established between London and Halifax. All expenses were to be under control of agents of the post-office who were to be solely responsible for their safe delivery.

When the war with France began six years later, the number of hostile cruisers rendered it unsafe for the packets to follow their customary route to New York, and they were sent direct to Halifax in winter as well as summer, and it is stated, "made their passages with great ease, performing them in a much shorter time than they had previously done in the same months to New York."¹ This arrangement continued for about two years, after which the British navy had so effectually secured the mastery of the Atlantic that it was considered expedient to re-establish the New York service.

Packets were occasionally taken by the enemy's ships of war, or were lost at sea. Others were driven out of their course by gales or buffeted by contrary winds for weeks and sometimes for months. The transmission of even the most important despatches was at all times precarious and uncertain. A letter from Lord Dorchester to Hon. Henry Dundas, written at Quebec on March 28th, 1794, was received on June 10th, while another dated June 7th was not received until September 20th. His despatches to the Duke of Portland, dated 1st January, 1795, was not received until April 20th; while another of April 25th was received on June 25th; and a third, dated 26th October, was not received until December 7th. Simcoe's despatch of 5th August, 1794, to Mr. Dundas, was received on October 17th; another, of August 13th, was received on December 13th; and a third, written on September 12th, was received on December 23rd; while his letter of October 30th, 1794, to the Duke of Portland, was not received until May 1st, 1795, or 182 days afterwards.

On April 5th, 1800, Finlay was succeeded by George Heriot, who is now best remembered as the author of a quarto volume of travels in Canada published seven years later. The postal service seems to have been gradually extended and improved by him, but not rapidly

¹See George Provost to Lord Bathurst, 12th August, 1813.