

Virginia and Maryland were approached quite differently. They were advised of the scheme not by Hamilton, but by the English court. In the minutes of council of both governments,¹ it is recorded that the proposition was laid before them in a letter from the queen. This fact will account for the very different consideration the proposition received from these colonies. Maryland rejected it outright. On the 13th of May, 1695, the scheme was laid before the house of burgesses. It was set aside,² and nothing more was heard of it.

Virginia gave attentive consideration to the proposition to establish a post office, though the ultimate results were no greater than in Maryland. There had been since 1658 an arrangement for the transmission of letters concerning the public affairs of the colony.³ An order was issued by the council that all letters superscribed for the public service should be immediately conveyed from plantation to plantation to the place and person directed, and that any delay should subject the person at fault to a fine of one hog-head of tobacco.

No arrangements of a systematic nature were made for the conveyance of private letters. When information of the patent granted to Neale reached Virginia, the colony showed immediate interest. The council on the 12th of January, 1693, appointed Peter Heyman deputy postmaster,⁴ and proceeded to draw up a post office bill. This bill, which became law on the 3rd of April 1693,⁵ authorized Neale to establish a postal system in the colony, at his own expense.

The conditions were that he was to set up a general post office at some convenient place, and settle one or more sub-post offices in each county. As letters were posted in the colony or reached it from abroad, they were to be forthwith dispersed, carried and delivered in accordance with the directions they bore, and all letters for England were to be despatched by the first ship bound for any part of that country.

The rates of postage were to be threepence a single letter within an eighty mile radius; fourpence-halfpenny for single letters outside

¹ Minutes of council, Virginia, January 12, 1693, *Cal. S. P. Col. Am. and W. I.*, 1693-1696, no. 21; minutes of council, Maryland, September 24, 1694, *ibid.*, no. 1339.

² Minutes of council, Maryland, *ibid.*, no. 1816.

³ Henning's *Statutes at Large*, I. 436.

⁴ Minutes of council, Virginia, *Cal. S. P. Col. Am. and W. I.*, 1693-1696, no. 20.

⁵ Henning's *Statutes at Large*, III. 112; *Journals of the House of Burgesses*, 1659/60-1693, pp. 444-446.