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The Plan for Establishing a new American Post-Office

.... April 30, 1774.

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MHS copy.

The PLAN for establishing a New American POST-OFFICE.

THE present American Post-Office was first set up by a private Gentleman in one of the Southern Colonies, and the Ministry of Great-Britain finding that a Revenue might arise from it, procured an Act of Parliament in the 9th Year of the Reign of Q. Anne, to enable them to take it into their own Hands; and succeeding Administrations have, ever since, taken upon them to regulate it — have committed the Management of it to whom they pleased, and availed themselves of its Income, now said to be at least £.3000 Sterling per Annum clear. By this Means a Set of Officers, Ministerial indeed, in their Creation, Direction and Dependence are maintained in the Colonies, into whose Hands all the social, commercial and political Intelligence of the Continent is necessarily committed; which, at this Time, every one must consider as dangerous in the extreme. It is not only our Letters that are liable to be stoppt and opened by a Ministerial Mandate, and their Contents construed into treasonable Conspiracies, but our News-Papers, those necessary & important Alarms in Time of public Danger, may be rendered of little Consequence for want of Circulation. Whenever it shall be thought proper to restrain the Liberty of the Press, or injure an Individual, how easily may it be effected! A Postmaster-General may dismiss a Rider, and substitute his Hottler in his Place, who may tax the News-Papers to a Prohibition; and when the Master is remonstrated to upon the Head, he may deny he has any Concern in the Matter, and tell the Printer he must make his Terms with the Post.

As, therefore, the Maintenance of this dangerous and unconstitutional Precedent of Taxation without Consent—as the parting with very considerable Sums of our Money to support Officers, of whom it seems to be expected that they should be inimical to our Rights—as the great Danger of the Increase of such Interest and its Connexions, added to the Considerations abovementioned, must be alarming to a People thoroughly convinced of the fatal Tendency of this Parliamentary Establishment, it is therefore proposed,

1. That Subscriptions be opened for the Establishment and Maintenance of a Post-Office; and for the necessary Defence of Post-Officers and Riders employed in the same.

2. That the Subscribers, in each Colony, shall annually appoint a Committee from among themselves, consisting of seven Persons, whose Business it shall be to appoint Post-Masters in all Places within their respective Provinces, where such Offices have hitherto been kept, or may hereafter be judged necessary; and to

regulate the Postage of Letters and Packets, with the Terms on which News-Papers are to be carried; which Regulations shall be printed and set up in each respective Office.

3. That the Post-Masters shall contract with, and take Bonds, with sufficient Sureties, of suitable Persons to perform the same Duty as hath heretofore been performed by Post-Riders; subject to the Regulation and Controul of the Committee.

4. That the several Mails shall be under Lock and Key, and liable to the Inspection of no Person but the respective Post-Masters to whom directed, who shall be under Oath for the faithful Discharge of the Trust reposed in them.

5. That a Post-Master General shall be annually chosen, by the written Votes of all the Provincial Committees, inclosed and sent to the Chairman of the New-York Committee, who on receiving all the Votes, and giving one Month's public Notice in all the New-York Papers, of the Time and Place appointed for that Purpose, shall open them in Committee, in Presence of all such Subscribers as shall choose to attend, and declare the Choice, which Choice shall be immediately communicated to all the other Provincial Committees by a Certificate under the Hand of the said Chairman.

6. That the Post-Master General shall be empowered to demand and receive the Accounts from the several Post-Masters throughout the Colonies connected with this Post-Office, and shall adjust and liquidate the same, and by his Order transfer, in just Proportion, the Surpluses of one Office to make good the Deficiencies of another, if any such should appear; and, in Case of a Deficiency upon the Whole, he shall have Power to draw for the same upon the several Committees, in Proportion to the Amount of the Subscriptions in their Departments: and, at the Year's End, transmit to the said Committees a fair and just Account of the whole Post-Office under his Inspection.

That the several Post-Masters shall charge per Cent. on all the Monies received into their respective Offices, for their Services, and also per Cent. for the Use of the Post-Master General, which they shall remit to him Quarterly with their Accounts.

That whatever Balances may remain in the Hands of the several Post-Masters, after all Charges are paid, shall, by the Direction of the Subscribers in the Province or Provinces, where such Post-Masters reside, be appropriated to the Enlargement of the present Institution within their respective Provinces.

IN Order that the foregoing Plan may be carried into Execution, We the
our Names, to the Chairman of the Committee to be appointed in Pu
they shall be called for by him or his Successor in Office.

Subscribers do severally promise to pay the several Sums annexed to
ance of said Plan, whenever according to the Conditions thereof
BOSTON, APRIL 30, 1774.

To the Gentlemen of the Committee of
Correspondence for the Colonies
from their very humble
Servts.

W. Goddard