

CHAPTER L.

AN ACT FOR ERECTING AND ESTABLISHING A POST OFFICE.

Whereas the King and the late Queen Mary, by their royal letters patent under the great seal of England, bearing date the seventeenth of February which was in the year one thousand six hundred and ninety-and-one, did grant to Thomas Neale, Esquire, his executors, administrators and assigns, full power and authority to erect, settle and establish within the King's colonies and plantations in America, one or more office or offices for receiving and dispatching of letters and packets by post, and to receive, send and deliver the same, under such rates and sums of money as shall be agreeable to the rates established by act of parliament in England, or as the planters and others should agree to give on the first settlement, to have, hold and enjoy the same for the term of twenty-one years, with and under such powers, limitations and conditions as in and by the said letters patent may more fully appear:

And whereas the King's Postmaster-General of England, at the request, desire and nomination of the said Thomas Neale, hath deputed Andrew Hamilton, Esquire, for such time and under such conditions as in his deputation is for that purpose mentioned, to govern and manage the said General Post Office for and throughout all the King's plantations and colonies in the main land or continent of America and the islands adjacent thereto, as in and by the said deputation may more fully appear:

And whereas the said Andrew Hamilton hath, by and with the good liking and approbation of the Postmaster-General of England, made application to the proprietary and governor of this province and territories and freemen thereof convened in general assembly, that they would ascertain and establish such rates and sums of money upon letters and packets going by post as may be an effectual encouragement for carrying on and maintaining a general post, and the proprietary and gov-

ernor and freemen in general assembly met, considering that the maintaining of mutual and speedy correspondencies is very beneficial to the King and his subjects, and a great encouragement to the trade, and that the same is best carried on and managed by public post, as well for the preventing of inconveniencies which heretofore have happened for want thereof, as for a certain, safe and speedy dispatch, carrying and recarrying of all letters and packets of letters by post to and from all parts and places within the continent of America and several parts of Europe, and that the well-ordering thereof is matter of general concernment and of great advantage, and being willing to encourage such a public benefit:

[Section I.] Have therefore enacted, and be it enacted by the said Proprietary and Governor of this Province and Territories, by and with the advice and consent of the freemen thereof in General Assembly met, and by the authority of the same, That there be from henceforth one general letter office erected and established within the town of Philadelphia, from whence all letters and packets whatsoever may be with speed and expedition sent into any part of the neighboring colonies and plantations on the mainland and continent of America, or into any other of the King's kingdoms or dominions, or unto any kingdom or country beyond the seas; at which said office all returns and answers may likewise be received: and that it shall and may be lawful to and for the master of the said office to demand, have, receive and take for the postage and conveyance of all such letters which he shall so convey, carry and send post as aforesaid, according to the several rates and sums of current money of this province hereafter mentioned: (That is to say) for the post of every single letter from Europe, the West Indies or other parts beyond sea, four pence; and all letters are to be accounted single, though they contain merchants' accounts, none exceeding one sheet of paper, bills of lading, gazettes, invoices or bills of exchange; and for each packet of letters from the places aforesaid, eight pence, and a packet shall be accounted three letters at the least; and for the post of every single letter from Boston or Rhode Island to Philadelphia, or from Philadelphia to Boston or Rhode Island, eighteen pence;

and so in proportion to the greatness and quantity of letters: and for the post of each single letter from Philadelphia to Piscataway and other parts to the eastward of Boston, and from Piscataway and the said eastern parts to Philadelphia, two shillings; and so in proportion as aforesaid: and for the post of each single letter from the post road in Connecticut Colony to Philadelphia, and from Philadelphia to Connecticut Colony anywhere on the post road, one shilling, and so in proportion as aforesaid: and for the post of each single letter from Philadelphia to New York, or from New York to Philadelphia, eight pence, and so in proportion as aforesaid: and for the post of each single letter to or from any place within eighty miles of Philadelphia, six pence, and so in proportion as aforesaid: and for the post of each single letter from Philadelphia to Maryland or Virginia, or from Virginia and Maryland to Philadelphia, eighteen pence, and so in proportion as aforesaid. Provided they come or go by post; but if by any private person delivered into the office, four pence: and if any letters or packets shall lie or remain in the office uncalled for, by the space of forty-eight hours, the postmaster then sending them forth to the respective houses of the persons to whom they are directed shall have and receive one penny more for each packet or letter.

Provided always, That all letters directed to or going from the proprietary and governor shall be free.

[Section II.] And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all and every such person and persons as shall be employed in the several stages within this province and territories shall and may pass and repass all and every ferry or ferries within this province and territories, at any time during the continuance of this act in force without paying any rate or sum of money, either for his or their own, or his or their horses' passage or passages; and if any ferryman or ferrymen or other person or persons interested in any such ferry or ferries within this province or territories, shall at any time neglect, refuse or delay the conveying over his or their ferry or ferries any such person or persons employed as aforesaid in the execution of their respective employment or employments, or his or their horse or horses, he shall for every such offense forfeit the sum of five

pounds, to be sued and recovered in any court of record within this province by bill, plaint or information, wherein no essoin, protection or wager of the law shall be allowed—one-half of the said forfeiture towards the support of the government of this province and territories, and the other half to the master of the said general letter office who shall sue and prosecute for the same.

And whereas, upon the arrival of ships into the several parts of this province, many letters directed to several merchants and others have been detained long to the great damage of the merchants in want of that speedy advice which they might have had if the same had forthwith been dispatched; and sometimes such letters have been delivered by the master or passengers of such ships to ignorant and loose hands that understand not the way and means of speedy conveyance and delivery of letters, whereby great prejudice hath accrued to the affairs of merchants and others, as well by the miscarriage of many letters as many times by opening of the same, to the discovery of the correspondencies and secrets of merchants:

[Section III.] Be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all letters and packets of letters that by any master of any ship or vessel shall or may be brought to any port within this province, shall by such masters be forthwith delivered to the said master of the general letter office for the time being, his servants or agents, by him or them to be delivered according to the several and respective directions of the same; and in default thereof every such master as aforesaid, offending in the premises, shall forfeit the sum of twenty shillings, to be recovered in such manner and to such uses as aforesaid.

And for their respective encouragement in the observance hereof:

[Section IV.] Be it also enacted, That the said master of the said office, his agents or servants, shall pay to every master or masters of any such ship or ships, vessel or vessels so delivering in letters as aforesaid, one penny for every such letter or letters, packet or packets, excepting always from this act such letters of merchants and masters, owners of any such ship or any part of the cargo, as concern the said ship or cargo thereof, or shall

be sent by persons employed by them for carriage of such letters, or by any messenger or messengers sent on purpose for or concerning the private affair of any person or persons, or by any private friend or friends to his, her or their friend or friends within the said province or territories thereof.

[Section V.] And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no person or persons whatsoever other than the said master of the general letter office aforesaid, his agents or servants, shall presume to carry, recarry or deliver letters for hire (other than as before excepted), or set up or employ any foot post, horse post, packet boat or conveyance whatsoever, for carrying, conveying or recarrying any letters or packets by sea or land, upon pain of forfeiting the sum of forty pounds current money of this province, for every several offense against the tenor of this present act, to be sued and recovered in such manner and to such uses as aforesaid.

Provided, That this act or anything therein contained shall continue in force no longer than seven years from and after the publication thereof, anything therein contained to the contrary thereof in anywise notwithstanding.

Passed November 27, 1700; allowed to become a law by lapse of time, in accordance with the proprietary charter, having been considered by the Queen in Council, February 7, 1705-6. See Appendix I, Section II; expired and supplied by an Act of Parliament.

CHAPTER LI.

AN ACT FOR THE ASSIZE OF BREAD.

For the better regulation of bakers, and the assize of bread:
[Section 1.] Be it enacted by the Proprietary and Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the freemen of this Province and Territories in General Assembly met, and by the authority of the same, That henceforth every baker who makes any bread for sale shall have a distinct mark to be set on all the bread he