

An Ordinance touching the Office of Postage of Letters, Inland and Foreign.

Whereas upon the one and twentieth of March, One thousand six hundred forty and nine, It was resolved by the then Parliament, That the Office of Postmaster Inland and Foreign, were and ought to be in the sole power of the Parliament; and several Orders were made by the said Parliament, whereby the management thereof was referred to the Council of State. And whereas on the thirtieth day of June, One thousand six hundred fifty and three, the then Council of State did by special Contract demise, and set to farm the said Offices for the Postage of Letters, both Foreign and Inland unto John Manley of London, Esq; at and under certain Rents, Convenants and Conditions for the benefit and advantage of the Common-wealth: For the Confirmation of the said Contract, and the better regulation and due execution of the said Offices, and to the end the same may be managed with most security and expedition in the Carriage and return of Letters, as well of the Publique as Private concernment, and that the prices for postage of Letters may be reduced to a lower rate, and more certainty then in former times, for the ease and advantage of the people; and also for the better enabling the said John Manley to perform the said Contract on his part, and to observe and fulfil the Conditions and Convenants hereafter in this Ordinance contained.

Be it Ordained by His Highness the Lord Protector, by and with the consent of His Council, and it is Declared and Ordained by the Authority aforesaid, The said John Manley, his Heirs and Assigns, from the said thirtieth day of June, one thousand six hundred fifty and three, until the thirtieth day of July which shall be in the year of our Lord, one thousand six hundred fifty and five, shall and may for and under the Rents, Conditions, Clauses, Provisoos and agreements hereafter in this Ordinance set down and mentioned, have, hold, execute and enjoy the said Office of Postage of Letters both Inland and Foreign, together with all the powers, perquisites and profits to the same of right appertaining, and hereinafter expressed, and shall and may by himself and such faithfull, able, and well-affected Deputies and under-Officers (for which he shall stand and be responsible) take and receive such perquisites and profits only and no more as are herein hereafter particularly mentioned, allowed and expressed, in manner and form as hereafter ensueth.

I. And first, The said John Manley shall have the sole Care and Charge of the Postage and Carriage of all Letters and Packets, both Foreign and Inland to and from all persons; and in all places of England, Scotland and Ireland, and to and from all other places within the Dominions of this Common-Wealth, exclusive to all others, except for such as shall be sent either by common or known Carriers along with their Carts, Waggons, or Pack-Horses, or by Messenger or Messengers on purpose, or by some servant, or Friend or Friends, or by some Ship or Ships, Vessel or Vessels not being Packet-Boats nor Vessels or Boats purposely or principally employed to carry Letters; All which said Packet-Boats, and other Vessels and Boats to carry Letters (except only such as shall be employed by the said John Manley, together with all other Posts, but such as shall likewise be thereunto Authorized and impowered by him) are hereby expressly prohibited, forbidden and suppressed.

II. *Item.* The said John Manley, by himself and his said Deputies, Agents, and under-Officers, shall, from time to time and at all times during the continuance of this Ordinance, safely and faithfully carry all ordinary and extraordinary Letters and Dispatches to or from His Highness, and to or from his Council, or Secretary of State, or any of them; And to and from all Members of the Legislative power, and to and from the Commissioners or Committee of the Admiralty or Navy, Generals of the Fleet, General Officers of the Army, Committee of the Army, Committee for Scotch and Irish Affairs, and that by the Common, Ordinary Male or other speedy and safe passage as the urgency of the occasion shall or may require.

Provided, That whatsoever Letters or Packets (which shall not come or be offered by some known Publique Seal, or Impress to be for the Publique, or some of the Affairs above specified) shall, for the freeing them from pay or Postage, have an Indorsement upon them in these words, or to this effect following (*viz:*) These are for the service of His Highness, or for the service of the Common-wealth, together with the names of

such persons or their Secretaries or Clerks, who attend them or those services respectively, indorsed upon the same.

Item. That for all other Letters and Packets to or from private persons, and for private occasions (and not at all relating to the persons and Publique Affairs mentioned in the former Article being absolutely free from Pay and Postage) he the said John Manley shall by himself his Agents, Deputies or under-Officers receive and take for the carriage and postage thereof only according to the Rates following, and no other or higher rates, viz: For every Letter to or from London, if a single Letter, two-pence, and if a double Letter four-pence. And for every Letter at a farther distance than eighty miles if a single Letter, three-pence if a double Letter, six-pence. And for every Letter to or from Scotland, if a single Letter four-pence, if a double Letter eight-pence. And to or from Ireland, for every single Letter, six-pence, and every double Letter, twelve-pence, and for treble or greater Packets of Letters proportionably.

III. *Item.* To the end a weekly intercourse may be continued between England and Ireland, the said John Manley shall (over and besides the Packet Boats for Foreign Posts), and is hereby obliged to maintain one or more Packet Boats to pass and repass, if not hindered by Wind and weather, weekly between Milford and Waterford, and between Chester and Dublin, or to settle such other waies and means for a weekly correspondence between those places as may be equivalent for speed and security with the waies aforesaid.

IV. *Item,* The said John Manley shall be, and is hereby obliged to maintain and keep one or more Foreign Packet-Boats to be weekly employed for the Foreign Posts, as hath been formerly used and accustomed.

V. *Item,* That for the better carrying on of the Publique service, especially of the Navy, there shall be (besides the several Postages now in use) settled, maintained and established by the said John Manley, a weekly post between Dover and Portsmouth, and between Portsmouth and Salisbury, and between London and Yarmouth, and between Lancaster and Carlisle.

VI. *Item,* That for the Foreign Letters imported and exported (other than for Ireland and Scotland, the rates whereof are before particularly set down) the said John Manley, shall have and by himself and his Deputies, Agents, and Under-officers, receive and take for the Postages and carriage thereof, the Rates heretofore used and accustomed, and no other nor further rates nor value, for that it is hereby Declared and Ordained, That there shall be no increase of Rates, nor alteration concerning the same.

VII. That for the more speedy and effectual dispatch of all the said Posts and Premises, the said John Manley, shall be, and is hereby obliged to cause the said Posts to run seven Miles an hour in Summer, viz.: From the first of April to the last of September; And five Miles an hour in Winter, viz. For the rest of the Year.

VIII. *Item,* That the said John Manley shall be and is hereby obliged to take order for, and cause every his under-Post-master, or Deputy, at his several Stage to have in readiness one good Horse or Mare to receive and carry the Male of Letters from time to time that the same may not be staid at any Stage above half a quarter of an hour at most: And for the more speedy despatch thereof, that no other person (besides the Post that carrieth the Male) be suffered to ride Post with the Male.

IX. That the said John Manley shall be, and is hereby obliged to provide Post-horses at every Stage, for all such persons as shall by special Warrant of his Highness, his Council, any of the Generals at Sea, Commissioners of the Admiralty and Navy, Secretary of State, General officer of the Army, Commanders of any Garrison, or Commanders of any Squadron or Ship of the Navy of the Commonwealth, be authorized to ride Post.

X. That for the reasons aforesaid none but the Post-masters, deputed and approved of by the said John Manley, upon the several Roads, shall horse any person post; and that the said Post-masters upon the Roads, deputed by the said John Manley, shall not receive or take from any person or persons riding post as

aforesaid, above the rate of three-pence per mile for each post-horse, being the Rates in each case formerly used and accustomed. And to the end there may be a constant and sufficient provision at every Stage for the horsing of such as shall have such Warrant as aforesaid, to take Post-horses, the said John Manley, shall be, and is hereby obliged to cause every Post-Master, deputed by him, to keep usually and constantly at every Stage, the number of four good Horses or Mares at the least for the said Post-service.

XI. *Item*, That the said John Manley shall truly and faithfully pay unto such Treasurer or Receiver, as His Highness the Lord Protector shall appoint, to the use of the Commonwealth, the sum of ten thousand pounds yearly, by quarterly payments, at and upon such daies and times as he hath promised and secured the payments of the same.

And it is hereby Declared and Ordained, and be it Established and Ordained by the Authority aforesaid, That to the end the said John Manley may be the better enabled to pay the said yearly rent at the Quarterly Rent daies as aforesaid, and to do and perform the several Agreements on his part to be performed as aforesaid, and for and in consideration of the said Rents and Agreements, That he the said John Manley, for himself, his Deputies and under Officers, shall have and enjoy the Priviledges, Exemptions, Freedoms and Immunities hereafter specified.

I. That in respect of the necessary and constant attendance of the said John Manley, and others imployed under him in the execution of the Premises, as well by day as by night; That therefore the said John Manley, as also his Under-Post-Master or Deputy at every Stage, and two Servants at every of the said Stages, are hereby, and shall be from time to time during the term aforesaid, freed and discharged of and from all manner of Presses and Musters, and of and from all and all manner of Summons and personal appearance and attendance upon or at any Assizes, Sessions, Juries, Inquests, and other Offices or Duties requiring personal attendance.

II. That no person or persons whatsoever, besides the said John Manley, his Deputies and Under Officers, shall be allowed or suffered to set up any Post, or keep Horses, or any Packet-Boat or Boats for the carrying or sending of Letters Inland or Foreign.

III. That all Posts, and Carriers of Letters, post to or from Dover Yarmouth, Norwich, Winchester, Lym, Bury, Oxford, Cambridge Southampton, Plymouth, York, Lincoln, Bristoll, &c., or to or from any other Town or Place within this Commonwealth, or the Dominions there-unto belonging, without Deputation, License or Allowance of, from and under the said John Manley, shall and are hereby prohibited, forbidden and suppressed.

IV. That if any person or persons whatsoever, shall offend against anything in these two last preceding Articles, or carry any Letters post, notwithstanding the said prohibition of the said two last Articles, or do any other Act or thing to the Dammage, Prejudice, or Hinderance of the said John Manley in the free-holding and enjoying the said Office of Post-Master General as aforesaid, or any of the Premises to him by this Ordinance granted or allowed; he the said John Manley shall have by vertue hereof his speciall action upon the case against such person and persons so offending, to be commenced in the Court of Exchequer, and if the Verdict pass for the Plaintiff, he shall by judgment of the said Court of Exchequer, recover double Dammages, and have double Costs awarded him in every such action.

V. That no person or persons warranted to ride Post, shall ride above one Stage upon the same Post-horses without consent of the Owners of the said Horses, or the Post-Masters from whom he or they shall hire the same to the wrong of such horses, and prejudice of the Posts; and if any shall attempt to do the contrary, the next Magistrate, Constable or Officer, upon complaint thereof made, shall stay the said Offenders, and discharge them off the said Horses, and likewise cause them to make reasonable satisfaction for the wrong therein done.

VI. And it is hereby further Established and Ordained, That (in respect of the said Rents to be paid for the increase of the Publique Revenue, and Services to be done and performed by the said John Manley as

aforesaid) the said Office and Offices of PostMaster-General, and postage of Letters hereby granted to the said John Manley, shall be absolutely freed and discharged of and from all manner of Taxes and Assessments from time to time during such term as he shall hold and execute the same, and that neither the said John Manley, nor any under Deputie or Officer under him, shall for or in respect of the said Office or Offices, or any of the premisses hereby granted, be taxed or assessed, or any waies be compelled to pay any rate, tax or assessment, but that he and they (at and under the Rents and Conditions aforesaid) may be at all times during the said Term hereafter therefrom freed to all intents and purposes.

Ordinance of the Lord Protector (2nd September 1654)