

GEORGE H. GIDDINGS.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 385.]

MAY, 27, 1856.

Mr. POWELL, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom was referred the petition of George H. Giddings, mail contractor on route No. 12,900, report :

They have carefully examined the petition, and evidence accompanying it.

The mail contract on route No. 12,900 was taken at the letting in March, 1854, by one David Wasson. The contract was for four years, commencing the first day of July, 1854, to end the 30th day of June, 1858. The service required by the contract was the transportation of the mail in two-horse post-coaches, monthly each way, between Santa Fé, New Mexico, and San Antonio, Texas. The compensation for this service was to be sixteen thousand seven hundred dollars per annum.

Wasson commenced the execution of the contract chiefly on means borrowed from the petitioner, and being unable to execute it, the petitioner was compelled, for his own security, to take the contract off Wasson's hands, and he has since been recognised as contractor for the department. Since the petitioner assumed the execution of the contract, he has faithfully performed his duty.

The evidence has satisfied your committee that a mail of the size and weight at present carried over this road cannot be carried in two-horse post-coaches, and the increase of military posts and the business of the country forbid the expectation that the size and weight of the mail will be diminished. The petitioner is compelled to carry the mail in carriages drawn by four, and often by six mules ; and this must be done, or a portion of the mail must be left. There is no prospect that a smaller force will suffice to transport the mail during the continuance of this contract.

From the length and difficulties of the route, the hostile feelings of the Indians through part of whose country it passes, and the exposure to robberies, the contractor must always send with the mail a strong escort of well-armed men, employed at high wages. There

is no prospect that this expense can be discontinued during the existence of the present contract, unless a military escort be allowed the mail, and such an escort will cost the government more than the entire sum proposed to be allowed to the contractor.

The appropriation bill for the Post Office Department passed by the last Congress doubled the mail pay on this route for one year from the 18th August, 1854. This appropriation is not more than a fair indemnity to the contractor for the performance of the double service required from him, and the necessary expense of escorts to insure the safety of the mail.

Your committee believe the necessity for this allowance still continues. They therefore report a bill extending that allowance one year, commencing with the eighteenth day of August, eighteen hundred and fifty-five.

All of which is respectfully submitted.