

for a term not less than five nor more than ten years in duration, with American citizens, for the carrying of mails on American steamships between ports of the United States and such ports in foreign countries, the Dominion of Canada excepted, as in his judgment will best subserve and promote the postal and commercial interests of the United States; the mail-service on such lines to be equitably distributed among the Atlantic, Mexican Gulf, and Pacific ports. Said contracts shall be made with the lowest responsible bidder for the performance of said service on each route, and the Postmaster-General shall have the right to reject all bids not in his opinion reasonable for the attaining of the purposes named.

2. That before making any contract for carrying ocean mails in accordance with this Act the Postmaster-General shall give public notice by advertising once a week, for three months, in such daily papers as he shall select in each of the cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, Saint Louis, Charleston, Norfolk, Savannah, Galveston, and Mobile; and when the proposed service is to be on the Pacific Ocean, then in San Francisco, Tacoma, and Portland. Such notice shall describe the route, the time when such contract will be made, the duration of same, the size of the steamers to be used, the number of trips a year, the times of sailing, and the time when the service shall commence, which shall not be more than three years after the contract shall be let. The details of the mode of advertising and letting such contracts shall be conducted in the manner prescribed in chapter eight of title forty-six of the Revised Statutes for the letting of inland mail-contracts, so far as the same shall be applicable to the ocean mail-service.

3. That the vessels employed in the mail-service under the provisions of this Act shall be American-built steamships, owned and officered by American citizens, in conformity with the existing laws, or so owned and officered and registered according to law; and upon each departure from the United States the following proportion of the crew shall be citizens of the United States, to wit: During the first two years of such contract for carrying the mails, one-fourth thereof; during the next three succeeding years, one-third thereof; and during the remaining time of the continuance of such contract, at least one-half thereof: and shall be constructed after the latest and most approved types, with all the modern improvements and appliances for ocean steamers. They shall be divided into four classes: The first class shall be iron or steel screw steamships, capable of maintaining a speed of twenty knots an hour at sea in ordinary weather, and of a gross registered tonnage of not less than eight thousand tons. No vessel except of said first class shall be accepted for said mail-service under the provisions of this Act between the United States and Great Britain. The second class shall be iron or steel steamships, capable of maintaining a speed of sixteen knots an hour at sea in ordinary weather, and of a gross registered tonnage of not less than five thousand tons. The third class shall be iron or steel steamships, capable of maintaining a speed of fourteen knots an hour at sea in ordinary weather, and of a gross registered tonnage of not less than two thousand five hundred tons. The fourth class shall be iron or steel or wooden steamships, capable of maintaining a speed of twelve knots an hour at sea in ordinary weather, and of a gross registered tonnage of not less than fifteen hundred tons. It shall be stipulated in the contract or contracts to be entered into for the said mail-service that the said vessels may carry passengers with their baggage in addition to said mails, and may do all ordinary business done by steamships.

4. That all steamships of the first, second, and third classes employed as above, and hereafter built, shall be constructed with particular reference to prompt and economical conversion into auxiliary naval cruisers, and according to plans and specifications to be agreed upon by and between the owners and the Secretary of the Navy, and they shall be of sufficient strength and stability to carry and sustain the working and operation of at least four effective rifled cannon of a calibre of not less than six inches, and shall be of the highest rating known to maritime commerce. And all vessels of said three classes heretofore built and so employed shall, before they are accepted for the mail-service herein provided for, be thoroughly inspected by a competent naval officer or constructor detailed for that service by the Secretary of the Navy; and such officer shall report in writing to the Secretary of the Navy, who shall transmit said report to the Postmaster-General, and no such vessel not approved by the Secretary of the Navy as suitable for the service required shall be employed by the Postmaster-General as provided for in this Act.

5. That the rate of compensation to be paid for such ocean mail-service of the said first-class ships shall not exceed the sum of four dollars a mile, and for the second-class ships two dollars a mile, by the shortest practicable route, for each outward voyage; for the third-class ships shall not exceed one dollar a mile, and for the fourth-class ships two-thirds of a dollar a mile for the actual number of miles required by the Post Office Department to be travelled on each outward-bound voyage: Provided that, in the case of failure from any cause to perform the regular voyages stipulated for in said contracts or any of them, a *pro rata* deduction should be made from compensation on account of such omitted voyage or voyages; and that suitable fines and penalties may be imposed for delays or irregularities in the due performance of service according to the contract, to be determined by the Postmaster-General: Provided, further, that no steamship so employed and so paid for carrying the United States mails shall receive any other bounty or subsidy from the Treasury of the United States.

6. That upon each of the said vessels the United States shall be entitled to have transported, free of charge, a mail messenger, whose duty it shall be to receive, sort, take in charge, and deliver the mails to and from the United States, and who shall be provided with suitable room for the accommodation of himself and mails.

7. That officers of the United States navy may volunteer for service on the said mail-vessels, and, when accepted by the contractor or contractors, may be assigned to such duty by the Secretary of the Navy whenever in his opinion such assignment can be made without detriment to the service; and while in said employment they shall receive furlough pay from the Government, and such other compensation from the contractor or contractors as may be agreed upon by the parties: Provided that they shall only be required to perform such duties as appertain to the merchant service.