

Boston March 15 -1851

Dear Wright,

I hand you herewith a pamphlet which will give you the facts in the postage case. You will see that I would the real founder of the private mails. All the drawback, if any, that is to be made to that statement, is found in what I say of Hale & Co page 49 –

But my argument gave the private mails the only ground to stand on, for the purpose of coercing a reduction in postage – to wit, the unconstitutionality of the laws prohibiting private mails – and it was my taking that ground and establishing my mails on it and publishing an unanswerable argument in support of it, that forced Congress into a reduction, as the report debates and votes in Congress given in the pamphlet show.

The reduction of 1851 is merely a necessary consequence of the reduction of 1845 – and has resulted simply from the fact that revenue, under the act of 1845 exceeded expenses.

The first reduction was forced; the second is a mere result of the first. If therefore I was the cause of the first reduction, I was equally the cause of the second.

As to Mr Bates he has done nothing, I think, that can be shown to have had any important effect in bringing about either the first or the second reduction. He has called some public meetings, and written out his conjectures as to what the revenue of the department would be under such and such rates of postage. But these conjectures and public meetings never coerced Congress into the first reduction, nor ever produced that surplus revenue that has led to the second reduction. He has taken the signature of Rowland Hill, and contrived to get his name mentioned in some of the newspapers, but what he has ever done that produced any important effect on Congress remains to be shown. Probably not one member of Congress in ten ever read his conjectures about revenue to be derived from certain rates of postage. And if they had read them probably not one in ten would have been influenced by them. The first reduction was not made upon any nice calculation of receipts, but upon the palpable fact that the business could be taken from the private mails only by a large reduction; and that unless such a reduction was made, the Department would become bankrupt. Neither was the second reduction made my any nice calculation of receipts, but upon the palpable fact that the Department had a surplus revenue.

Mr Bates had nothing to do with establishing the private mails which caused the first reduction; and he had nothing to do in producing the surplus revenue that caused the second reduction.

He is little or nothing else than a hustling, ambitious, busybody who wants to make himself conspicuous, and get praise and pay for what he never did. And I do not like to be cheated of my rights by such a man.

You can take what facts you want from the pamphlet but do not bring the pamphlet itself before the public yet – it is not quite ready – I wish first to get some names to the card “to the public” –

I will call at your office tomorrow and I wish you would let me see the article before you give it to the printers –

Yours Truly,

Lysander Spooner

I inclose the Herald containing the notice of the intended testimonial to Mr. Bates. I have not seen it in any of the other papers.