

Herewith is returned, without approval, H. R. 5681, a bill to provide a differential in pay for night work in the Postal Service.

Night work has always been a necessary and characteristic feature of employment in the Postal Service, and notwithstanding the continuous campaign that has been carried on by the Post Office Department for a number of years, with some measure of success, to induce the public to mail early in the business day rather than just before its close, it is evident that the expeditious distribution, dispatch, and delivery of the mails will continue to require the greater part of postal work to be performed between the hours of 6 o'clock in the evening and 6 o'clock in the following morning.

It is estimated that the provisions of the bill now returned would add \$6,456,000 to the present annual cost of the Postal Service. The operating deficit in postal revenues for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1927, payable from the general fund of the Treasury derived from taxes, duties, and miscellaneous receipts, was over \$31,500,000. For the fiscal year 1928 it is estimated that the deficit will be about \$32,400,000, and for the fiscal year 1929 about \$28,300,000. There is now pending before the Congress a bill (H. R. 12030) revising postal rates. As passed by the House of Representatives it is estimated that the bill will cause an annual decrease in postal revenues, and a corresponding further increase in the postal deficit, based on current mailings, of \$13,585,000. As passed by the Senate it is estimated that the bill will cause an annual decrease in the revenues and a corresponding further increase in the deficit of \$38,550,000.

With these figures before me I am not disposed further to increase the burden on the taxpayers of the country for the maintenance and operation of the Postal Service, especially in view of the very substantial increases in pay given postal employees under the so-called postal reclassification act, approved February 28, 1925. Moreover, it is my understanding that a proposal to establish a night-work differential was considered by the proper committees of Congress in connection with the reclassification legislation, and eliminated by them because of the substantial flat-rate increases in pay that had already been agreed to and which were subsequently included in the reclassification act. If night work in the Postal Service has any basis whatever for a differential in pay, the action of the committees referred to would indicate that the present-pay schedules include it.

It should be recalled that the postal-pay increases which I approved caused an increase in the Budget for 1926 of about \$65,000,000. Every committee that approached me urged that this increase be granted because of certain night work that was involved in the duties of the postal clerks. It is well known that the pay received by those so employed is in excess of that which is paid for corresponding work in private enterprise. While I believe in good wages, they can only be advanced as our economic position improves. The burdens of the war debt have to be borne by all our people. The almost irresistible tendency of Government expenditure is to mount higher and higher. All increases which are not absolutely necessary ought not to be incurred. The officials of the Government who are charged with the conduct of its affairs ought not to yield to constant and organized clamor for increases in pay, unless they are justified by the clearest evidence.