

SURVEY OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

PART 9—POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

TUESDAY, MAY 21, 1968

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 10 a.m., in room 2247, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable Jack Brooks, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Representatives Jack Brooks, William S. Moorhead, Ogden R. Reid, Fletcher Thompson, and Margaret M. Heckler.

Also present: Ernest C. Baynard, staff administrator; William M. Jones, counsel; Irma Reel, clerk; Lynne Higginbotham, clerk, and William Copenhaver, minority counsel.

Mr. Brooks. The Government Activities Subcommittee, having been duly organized under the rules of the House of Representatives and a quorum being present, the meeting is hereby called to order.

The subcommittee today is reviewing the operations of the Post Office Department. We welcome the recently appointed Postmaster General, Marvin Watson, and other officials representing the Department here today.

The Postmaster General brings a broad background in business experience and, more directly, the benefit of long hours of applied management at the White House with our very distinguished President Lyndon Johnson. If he indoctrinates the Post Office staff with those same hours they will be doing the 35-hour workweek by each Wednesday.

The postal system is one of the oldest and most fundamental Government services, having been provided for in the Constitution itself. It is also one of the largest businesses in the world, employing hundreds of thousands and serving millions. It is the Government agency with which the citizens of this Nation have the most direct and frequent contact.

Just as a dependable, efficient postal service was of prime concern in the 18th century, it remains so today. American business relies heavily on the Post Office Department. An inefficient, slow, outdated, inadequate postal service could paralyze the growth of the national economy.

The Post Office Department has had to move from the horse and buggy days through the era of mechanization and now seeks to apply the most modern techniques in handling the mammoth volume of mail which is increasing annually. It is mandatory that the Post Office use the resources available to it in the most efficient manner if it is to meet the needs of the Nation during the coming years. An effective postal service is essential to the continued progress of this Nation.

On August 27, 1962, this subcommittee held hearings on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Post Office Department's procedures in handling large shipments of currency. On the evening of August 14, 1962, two postal employees in a panel truck were stopped by hijackers on Route 3 near Plymouth, Mass. An hour or so later they were bound, blindfolded, and gagged, and mailbags containing a sum of money in unmarked currency were taken. A gang of six to eight criminals apparently was involved.