

penalties, which nevertheless they are prepared to enforce in all cases where the default has arisen from the neglect or mismanagement of the contractors.

My Lords have no objections to offer to the suggestions of the Postmaster General as to making the contractors responsible for the safe custody of the mail bags, or for requiring provision to be made for sorting letters on board, but this must be a subject of negotiation with the contractor, who cannot be expected to give up a portion of the space allotted to passengers without some compensation for the loss which it might entail upon him.

I am, &c.
(signed) *W. G. Romaine.*

S. Cunard, Esq., to the Secretary to the Treasury.

Sir,

Bush Hill, Edmonton, 7 January 1858.

I BEG to enclose the Report of the Postmaster General of the United States, by which it will appear that our mail packets carried during the last year between this country and the United States, a very much greater number of letters and newspapers than all the American mail packets together, viz.—

	Letters.	Newspapers.
By the Cunard mail packets	- 2,658,343	- 2,143,423
By the American mail packets	- 1,220,733	- 1,178,629

The Postmaster General further reports as follows: "Nearly two-thirds of the transatlantic mails have been conveyed by the Cunard line, and nearly four-fifths of the postage goes to the British Government, saying nothing of the still greater proportion it receives on mails so conveyed for countries beyond England." The American packets are frequently withdrawn during the stormy weather in the winter, when there is great wear and tear and little traffic. The last American packet departed from Liverpool on the 23d December, the next is advertised in the Post Office list for the 3d February; there is neither freight nor passengers at present.

If we were to follow this irregular system, what would become of the important correspondence between the two countries?

For 18 years we have never in any one instance failed to depart with the mails at the appointed time; no description of weather has delayed the sailing for a single hour; it is this regularity that has brought the great portion of the letters to our packets, and I think should entitle us to the continued protection and support of the Government. For several months past we have not received as much money for freight and passage as would pay for the coals consumed, but we have not hesitated to do our duty, nor have we asked for any remission of the service in consequence of bad weather, or want of freight or passengers.

It will be seen by the Postmaster General's Report, that the Americans are extending their mail service over almost every navigable part of the world, and will, in many places, have the entire monopoly. They would have had it on the Atlantic long since, if I had not, at great risk and danger, taken up the decided position I did, and I hope and trust, if I am supported by the Government, that I shall be enabled to retain for Great Britain, the good position on the Atlantic which I have established with such unwearied perseverance, and without much, if any cost, to the country. To enable me to do so, I must produce vessels which shall meet the last ships built by the Americans, and I am now losing much valuable time which should be earnestly devoted to that object.

I therefore entreat the Lords of the Treasury to comply with my application for an extension of the term of my contract, as prayed for in my former letters. I am very differently situated from all other mail contractors in this country; they have no competition; I have the greatest opposition, and from a quarter the most to be dreaded. Unless, therefore, I build powerful ships, the whole mail service on the Atlantic will fall into the hands of the Americans.

I am sure that I can appeal with confidence to the Lords of the Admiralty, and to the country at large, for an expression of approbation of the manner in which I have performed this duty for nearly 18 years, besides claiming, perhaps, some merit for having originated this service when no other parties could be found to undertake it.

I have &c.
(signed) *Cunard.*