

masters - General and Parliamentary Committees inform us that they are paid for four distinct objects, (1) the conveyance of the mails, (2) to foster the shipbuilding trade, (3) to create an auxiliary naval force, and maintain a reserve fleet of cruisers ready for the event of war, and (4) to preserve England's commercial supremacy on the seas. Obviously the second, third, and fourth objects should be attained out of the general taxation of the country, leaving the first only chargeable to the Post Office. As a matter of fact, however, the total sum payable to secure all four purposes is set down as the cost of conveying mail-bags; and we are told by postal officials that since the transportation of mail-bags is so expensive, Imperial Penny Postage cannot pay. To illustrate what I say. We contribute 280,000*l.* per annum to the Indian mail steamer services, though the postage earned does not exceed 80,000*l.* Up to 1858 these services were charged to the Admiralty, and were transferred to the Post Office estimates against the strong protests of Lord Canning and the Postmasters-General of subsequent years. (Hear, hear.)

And the wrong continues. Three months ago the postal estimates of this country were burdened with an additional 60,000*l.* as a subsidy for a mail service from Vancouver to Hong Kong. The postage receipts cannot exceed 500*l.* a year. I told the Chancellor of the Exchequer it was a scandalous thing to saddle the Post Office with this fresh