

government established a parcel post system, which has effected a swift and beneficial revolution in connecting city and farm at lower rates than ever known. The U.S. parcel post system has reduced the profits of the express companies, while effecting a marvellous improvement in their efficiency. In Canada a parcel post-branch of the post office has also been established but its rates are so well equalized with those of the express companies as not seriously to disturb the monopoly enjoyed by the latter.

For the modest sum of \$5,800 the Canadian Pacific Railway about 1885 bought the rights of a company now developed into the Dominion Express Co., which was afterwards capitalized at two million dollars. An investigation by the late Judge Mabec, chairman of the newly organized Dominion Railway Commission, showed that in eight years covered by an enquiry made by him in 1910 this express company was able, out of its operations, to pay in to the C.P.R. no less than \$13,409,240, and this at a period when only \$24,500 had been paid in cash on its two millions of capital. The Canadian Express Co., owned by the Grand Trunk, had a capital of \$500,000 on which only \$27,520 had been paid in cash, and it turned over to the Grand Trunk \$923,909 per year. The Canadian Northern Express Co. owned by the Canadian Northern Railway, with a nucleus of \$5,000 actual cash on a nominal capital of a million, paid its railway parent \$353,126 in the six years to date of the enquiry.

The Dominion Express Co. now owns real estate and equipment worth a million. These assets were more than paid for out of its "earnings" and it has paid \$3,500,000 in dividends. The C.P.R. in its original charter bound itself to refund to the people of Canada any profits it made in excess of ten per cent. and it owns this company. As Judge Mabec said, in commenting on the relations of the two corporations and the claim that they were independent, "Of course no such thing could have happened between two corporations dealing at arm's length." His decision made it quite clear that the express charges were railway charges, and that the rates were grossly in excess of rates ruling for like distances in the United States. Especially were these excesses evident in the prairie provinces and B.C., and they were framed, Judge Mabec said, on this idea: "What are the heaviest tariffs we can obtain from the public for the least service we can give?"

Express Charges Based On Postal Rates

As will be seen from the foregoing figures, it is almost literally true that the assets of these express companies were built up simply on the power to levy a system of taxation at rates of their own planning and limited in part years only by the competition of the post office in that class of mail matter for which the rate was a cent for each two ounces. That is the railways, thru their express companies, were charging, for the conveyance of light freight, rates equal to the postal rates on maps, prints, drawings, plans and valuable manuscripts. Between the Canadian parcel post and the rulings of the railway board a few modifications have been made in these rates, but not enough to materially alter the situation; which leaves the railway companies in possession of a taxation franchise for which the people of Canada now pay from ten to twenty times the cost of like service in portions of the United States and in European countries where practically all express business is carried on by the post office.

The Canadian Pacific and the Dominion Express companies have attempted to deny the facts or conceal them by clever devices of bookkeeping, but the attempt failed and silence has since been thought a better defence than subterfuge. To give an air of moderation, the profits of the express companies can be reduced by the simple device of increasing the charges made by the railways for the carriage of goods. Thus the reports they furnish to the government show that their combined "transportation expenses" have increased from \$3,871,901 in 1911 to \$4,981,846 in 1915. By charging its other self the insignificant sum of \$3,234,715 for "express privileges" the C.P.R.

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