

The mileage of mail trains, the rates, Government duty, and other taxes paid by railways in the United Kingdom, in 1861, were as under :

	<i>Number of miles per week day.</i>	<i>Average charge per mile.</i>	<i>Maximum.</i>	<i>Minimum.</i>	<i>Government Duty.</i>	<i>Rates and Taxes.</i>
		<i>d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
England	33,041	6½	3 8½	½	335,444	451,782
Ireland	4,180	11½	4 1	½	32,067
Scotland	6,602	7½	4 0	½	27,207	61,370
United Kingdom	43,823	7½	4 1	½	362,751	545,219

In the United States, the railways are under the control of the State governments, while the postal service is managed by the Federal power. The position of the general government, therefore, as compared with other countries, is in this respect a very weak one—no attempt having been made to assume control, by any civil law, over corporations which hold their privileges from the State governments. In 1838 (the year in which England first legislated upon the subject of railway mail conveyance), Congress simply declared the railways to be post routes, and authorized the Postmaster-General to send the mails by them, "provided he could have it done on reasonable terms—and not paying therefor, in any instance, more than twenty-five per cent. over and above what similar transportation would cost in post coaches." The next year, a maximum rate of \$300 per mile per annum was fixed, for any amount of mail service, but still restricting payments to a maximum of twenty-five per cent. over the cost of coach service, under similar circumstances. In 1845, another Act was passed, "to secure an equal and just rate of payment according to the service performed"—which directed the Postmaster-General to divide the railways into three classes, according to the size of the mails; the speed at which they were carried; and the importance of the service; and authorized him to contract with them, provided the first class received no more than the maximum which had been already established by the laws of 1838 and 1839; the second class no more than \$100 per mile; and the third class no more than \$50 per mile. If he could not contract on these terms, he was authorized to separate the letter mail, and forward it by horse express, and the residue by vehicles. But if one-half the service on any railway were performed in the night, he might pay for that twenty-five per cent. over the classified rates; and finally, if there were more than two mails daily each way, he could allow what was just and reasonable for the extra service.