

communication with their distant ports which feed the main arteries of British commerce." [Parliamentary Report on Contract Packets 1858.]

Britain pays over a million pounds a year in subventions to steamship lines. When next year the Cunard Co. puts its two 25-knot flyers on the Atlantic and receives £150,000 annual subsidy, the total payments made by the British government to shipping companies will be £1,127,145 sterling. Of this sum £860,000 is for mail service, £200,000 for admiralty subventions, as payment for olding vessels at the service of the government in time of war, and £40,000 to the Elder-Deimpster line to Jamaica, to encourage the fruit trade. The companies receiving them, look upon them as very valuable aids to their respective enterprises and use them for the purpose of pushing and extending their lines. Rapid postal communication has mainly followed lines of great commercial traffic, and to this extent British postal subsidies are paid for the assistance of trade. But for these subsidies many of the shipping companies could not keep up the competition. Sir Thomas Sutherland, President of the Peninsular & Oriental Company, which receives an annual subsidy of £350,000 sterling, made a statement recently that his company could build vessels for £10 per ton, but in consequence of the conditions imposed by the government, they cost £30 per ton. The magnificent vessels thus created are potent agencies in pushing freight and passenger business. The Cunard Company receives a trifle over 1 per cent. in subsidy, and its dividends for eight years have averaged only 2 per cent. Could any statement be stronger than this as to the value of public subsidy, without which the Cunard and many other of the great ocean lines would have no existence?