

tion to cover the actual cost of transporting the mails, would be satisfactory to the railways; for the considerations which preclude the Government from desiring revenue from the mails, ought to operate even more directly on the railroad interest, to preclude it from attempting to burden a machinery which, in so many ways, creates its business. All increase and acceleration of mails promotes the transfer of persons and property, for which these roads were constructed, and of which the transportation of the mails is but an incident."

The cost of mail transportation by coaches in the United States averages 24 cents per mile, while in England, Ireland and Scotland it only averages about one-fifth, and in Canada (before the Railway era) about one-fourth this amount. The mail contracts in the United States have long been the perquisites of the party successful in the Presidential election; and often were the only means by which the Federal patronage could be made to reach certain districts. The fact that the early rates for railway mail service were fixed with reference to the cost by coaches, and 25 per cent. was allowed to be added for the additional speed, may explain how that Government has been gradually led into an outlay which is now found to be intolerable.

In Canada no legislation was had bearing on the question of mail transportation, before the Union, for the reason that our Post Office was then in Imperial hands. In chartering the early Railway Companies, Lower Canada regulated the tolls—but the Upper Province left these to the discretion of the proprietors: the same principles were applied, respectively, to the railways chartered in each section after the Union, until 1846, when the first legislative reference to mail transportation was made. Although the transfer of the Post Office from the Imperial to Colonial control did not take place until 1851, the Legislature, in view of it, inserted a clause in the Great Western, and Montreal and Kingston Acts of 1846, compelling these railways to carry mails, troops, munitions of war, police, &c., on terms to be fixed by the Governor in Council, in case of disagreement; but the Companies procured a qualification to the effect that they should not be required "to start any train at any other time than their ordinary time of starting the same." In 1849 when the first guarantee Act was passed, another general railway act of the same date repealed this qualification, in the case of any railway subject by its charter or amended act to the provisions of any future railway act: and the General Railway Act of 1851 put all railways, thereafter to be made, under the obligation to carry mails, military and militia, artillery, ammunition, provisions and stores, policemen and constables in Her Majesty's Service, "with the whole resources of the company,—at all times when thereunto required by the Postmaster-General, the Commander of the Forces," &c., the terms to be fixed by the Governor in Council. By the