

such manner and at such times as it may think proper, and that the compensation for such services is to be settled by the mere dictum of that body, or the executive agents of the government, without any consultation or bargain with the carriers, and without even an attempt to ascertain what the service might be worth to other parties. There appears, indeed, to be a total misconception of the relations of the two parties; the railroad companies are compelled to perform the service, but are also compelled to take whatever Congress chooses to allow them for doing it.

It is a maxim of our fundamental law that "private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation." Yet there is a class of cases where private property is daily taken for public use, without "just compensation;" or to put the proposition in its positive form, the Government is continually forcing on certain railroad companies losses of their property, and their appeals for redress of grievances are unnoticed. The ordinary rates for carrying common freights by slow trains—cut down as we may properly suppose them to be by competition—are from 50 to 400 per cent greater than the rates allowed for carrying the United States mails by the express trains. Even if there were no other injuries and abuses connected with the system, this fact alone would be sufficient to entitle the complaining railroads to the relief they seek. Mr. Hinckley's own statement of the facts, as they affect the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Company, is explicit and conclusive:

"You are aware that the postal cars are very much more costly than ordinary express cars or freight cars, and in this respect closely approximate passenger cars. They are lighted and warmed at our cost, and are run at high speed on passenger trains. As a rule, the New York and Washington postal cars carry five clerks each, whose fares, if paid, would amount to 15.75 cents per mile, while our whole mail pay has been but 13.28 cents per thirty-foot car per mile.

"We are, moreover, furnished with a list of ninety-three persons styled special agents, whom we are required at all times to transport free in our passenger cars; and if we collect fares from any of them, the amount thereof is deducted from our mail pay. We are also required, at our own cost, to have the mails transported between our stations and all post offices within one-quarter of one mile of our stations.

"And we are required to receive much of our pay in orders of the Department upon post offices more or less distant from our line, and bear the cost and risk of collection.

"While paid at the low rate of 13.28 cents per thirty-foot car per mile—which rate may be raised to 16 cents—we are paid by our other customers as follows, viz:—

For express freight on mail trains, per car per mile.....	55 to 65 cents.
For cars of fruit (of which we move 4000 to 5000 per annum) on fast freight trains, per car per mile...	55 to 65 "
For open cars loaded with bricks, and for pig iron and similar freight on slow freight trains, when loaded and unloaded free of cost to this company, on open platform cars, per car per mile.....	20 to 25 "
For new freight cars from car manufacturers per car per mile.....	15 "

"Comment upon such discrepancies as exist in the rates paid respectively by your department and by the public is needless.

"Our mail pay falls short of the actual cost of the service by from \$60,000 to \$80,000 per annum."

Now it turns out (though this is not mentioned in the correspondence before us) that on some roads, the mail agents not only take their friends along in the cars, but also undertake the carriage of articles of freight and baggage as well. In some instances we learn of kegs of beer being carried in the mail cars; thus obliging the company to run a car, at one end of the train, at a loss, which shall compete with the cars behind it for public patronage. Besides, there is an increasing swarm of passengers carried gratis over the various roads holding commissions from the Post Office Department who have no legitimate connection therewith.

Another constitutional guarantee is to the effect that "neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, shall exist within the United States." Yet here, we submit, are cases of "involuntary servitude" in contravention of this provision. These railroad companies have protested, and still protest, against this injustice. They complain that the contract does not provide such a just, reasonable, and equitable compensation as the fundamental law and common dealing requires. With as much color of right, might the authorities compel the roads to carry for nothing, as for less than it is worth—the principle of invaded rights is the same. All the companies ask is the right to be treated with; the right to make a bargain; and that there may be no mistake of their disposition to deal fairly with the Government, they have offered to leave the disputed points to disinterested, suitable arbitrations.

Some persons may ask: why this reluctance on the part of the authorities? The answer is not easy to give. Either in the head or the heart of somebody there is an obstacle. The railroad companies very wisely refuse to purchase their rights openly and by the force of their justice. Nor does the injustice end here; other companies besides those carrying the mails in special cars, have other like causes of complaint. The Pacific Railroad Companies, for example, are allowed only such rates for carrying the mails across an uninhabited desert and lofty mountains, as are common in the more densely settled territory—although the Acts of Congress, on which their construction was undertaken, specially provide that the compensation should be the "ordinary" and "reasonable rates" paid for similar service to other parties. But they are allowed far less, and are nevertheless compelled to perform the service.

Of course, it is proper that the mails should be carried regularly and with despatch; the railroad companies do not resist this; nor do they (as is sometimes asserted) propose to discontinue carrying the mails, but only to cease carrying them in special cars.—The Executive may compel them to take the mails; it cannot, however, compel them to do it for nothing; nor at a loss, except as an act of usurpation and tyranny. Now, the Post Office Department is not self-sustaining, and as long as the people's representatives insist on sending such quantities of free printed matter, and in carrying such masses of material, long distances, at rates that cannot possibly be remunerative, so long must this deficit be made good out of taxation. But we submit that certain railroad companies ought not to be called on to pay fifty times

their proportion. If their complaints are left unheeded, there seems to be no consistent or dignified course left for the complaining companies to take, but to carry the mails in the baggage cars as before.

**Northern Central Railway.**

At a general meeting of the stockholders of the Northern Central Railway Company, held in Baltimore on the 9th inst., to discuss the question of leasing the road to the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, Mr. J. D. Cameron, President of the company, presented the following written statement:

"Gentlemen: I am instructed by the directors of your company to say that in a letter received by them yesterday from Mr. Thomson, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad, that it was his intention and desire to have your lines of road critically examined by a railroad expert, and to have laid before you the result of his negotiations in all detail, but owing to a serious and unfortunate illness, which prostrated him at the beginning of his labors, this desire has been frustrated. Feeling great anxiety to have an offer made to you to-day, the members of the board urged Mr. Thomson to make a proposition for a lease. He declined, as at present advised, to make one exceeding six per cent on your stock. Such a proposition he did make, and we report it to you without comment for your acceptance or rejection.

"It has been their desire, and the efforts of the directors have been constant to induce the Pennsylvania road to make a higher offer, but as their views have been criticised and commented upon they prefer to be relieved from all further negotiation in the matter, and if it is the desire of the stockholders to continue the negotiations in view of the fact that Mr. Thomson has not been able to get for his or your information the report of the expert, we would suggest that a committee of stockholders be appointed at this meeting to meet a committee of the board of the Pennsylvania road."

The proposition to lease the Northern Central Railway to the Pennsylvania Railroad Company at six per cent, was, on motion of Mr. L. S. Gittings, almost unanimously rejected.

At the suggestion of Mr. Cameron, Mr. John Hulme offered a resolution that a committee of five stockholders, entirely disconnected with the management of either road, be appointed to examine into the affairs of the Northern Central, and to confer with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company in regard to a lease or a guaranty of dividends that will prove satisfactory to the stockholders of the Northern Central, and that said committee report the result of their labors at an adjourned meeting; also that the committee have power to fill vacancies that may occur in their body by resignation or death.

This resolution was adopted, and the following committee appointed: John Hulme, chairman; Lambert S. Gittings, M. B. Greensfelder, H. C. Borie, and J. H. Williams.

The following resolution, offered by Mr. Cameron, was adopted:

*Resolved*, That for the purpose of providing for the existing floating debt of this company, and for such terminal and other facilities and improvements and equipments as may be necessary to properly conduct its business, as well as to provide for existing mortgage debts on its property and franchise, the board of directors are hereby authorized to create a consolidated mortgage of \$10,000,000, to secure bonds of that amount; said bonds to be issued in such sum or sums, either in sterling or dollar bonds, and at