

BANK OF ENGLAND'S RESERVES.

Suggestions Concerning Bank's Available
Victoria Falls Power Company Criticized
English Insurance Merger Improbable.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

London, Dec. 21st.

and American securities are still so largely
country that their every movement commands
No change of attitude towards the farmer can
reported. "Cannacs" remain first favorites, and
they find buyers who believe in the probability

of the company's land assets the shares are
to be worth 250, while others contend that
the shares return only 3% per cent., a higher
ly be maintained by favor of the market, and
Canada to suffer a set-back the decline on fancy
must be both sudden and steep.

Canadian Welfare.

cial fear is expressed for Canadian wellbeing.
ness comes easily when panic rates for money
New York, and when the best-furnished countries
re concerned about their supply of gold.

in events have recently been overshadowed by
with Africa. The issue of £625,000 of cumulative
shares in the Victoria Falls Power Company has
such a hurricane of criticism as rarely proceeds
ness. This three-million pounder is the joint
the British South Africa (or Chartered) Com-
the leading German banks. Its weak points
merous than need be now detailed. It would
to wire current across 700 miles of wild Africa
ntly hazardous undertaking. It is questionable
part of the scheme relating to the African
be proceeded with.

bles in Africa.

ast moment the power company has succeeded
ing all competing enterprises beneath its own
it seems that German electric plant will be
the Rand. Hitherto, the powerful German
the electrical engineering business have strug-
for a foothold in South Africa. They—or their
them—have now bought the business, and in
the working capital the British investor renders
deal which strikes hard at British capital and

Scotland and England there remains a touch
susies. The jealousy is not ferocious; it is
eptible. There are differences between Scotch
courts, insurance offices, public officials, and
newest manifestation concerns banks. Hitherto,
kers have allowed English travellers in Scot-
g their collections and to transmit them to a
k free of charge. The Scots have now given
they will need a commission, an action which
term tyrannical. A movement is now afoot to
glish bank in Glasgow. Allowing that a time-
ame jealousy affects private persons, let us ask
e invaders expect their Glasgow branch to pay

Commissions.

ommissions" have been the cause of dissensions
glish trades. Insurance people know well what
means to them. The London press has pro-
st the return to the advertiser of a portion of
ommission. A committee of the London Stock
enquiring into the feasibility of permitting
rokerage.

of the Manchester Stock Exchange have taken
allowing none of their colleagues to divide
th individuals who are not members of a re-
change. Exception will be made in favor of
banking firms in isolated areas where no
n well be formed. But there is to be no more
bankers, solicitors, touts or outside brokers.
members will, for the first offence, be fined £100,
cond offence expelled.

Brokers' Record.

er brokers have recently housed themselves in
age, built at a cost of £35,000. For more than
no member of this Exchange has made default.
lue of the securities quoted in their lists was

er's place in the commercial and financial
be fairly judged by its bank clearings. For
ere £261,000,000, or more than those of Bir-
ristol, Sheffield, Newcastle, and Leeds com-

The Estate Duty Returns.

Mr. W. J. Harris and the Rev. K. A. Lake have relied
principally in their estimate of the United Kingdom's
realisable wealth. Deducting certain Government property,
offset by national debt, they arrive at a total wealth of
£8,950,000,000. Divided equally, this spells £207 per head,
which might bring at interest £7 per annum, 2s. 8d. per
week, or fourpence per day. Calculation of the unrealisable
is wisely not attempted, and no guarantee of 3½ per cent.
interest can be given if these employments for capital are
all liquidated.

No Insurance Trust.

Some loose talk of an insurance "trust" or a merger
of all English offices appears on enquiry to be without
foundation. Innumerable obstacles of a personal character
interfere with any such movement. The offices which might
most readily combine are the fire companies, and they have
less cause than any for amalgamation. The "tariff" com-
panies fix rates through their joint committee, and, whilst
they receive premiums of almost £23,000,000 against the
£281,000 of the opposition, it would not seem that any large
measures for mutual protection are imperative.

Gold Reserves Inadequate.

Our inadequate gold reserves are said to be on the
point at last of receiving Government attention. Relief
will probably be sought as recommended to the Institute
of Bankers by Sir Felix Schuster. It is contended that
Britain needs more gold now than formerly, because
abnormal requirements arise more frequently than hitherto.
Sir Felix repudiates the suggestion that bankers ought to
assume the entire responsibility on the nation's behalf, but
suggests that they should assist in authority, and, if need
be, make some sacrifice for the general good.

A contribution by the banks of a sum equal to 2 per
cent. of their deposits on current account would provide
about £8,000,000, and the same proportion from the Govern-
ment on money in savings banks would yield some
£4,000,000. A special gold reserve of twelve millions would
thus be maintained by the Bank of England. Sir Felix
would give the Bank of England power, in certain circum-
stances, to relieve the tension at home by increasing its
issue of notes against securities by perhaps three or four
millions.

Bank Statements Necessary.

To make these changes feasible, a monthly return of
the average figures which each bank prepares weekly for
itself would be necessary. From the Bank of England
would have to be obtained a weekly or monthly, or monthly
and annual statement of the total amount of bankers' bal-
ances in its keeping. Doubtless these measures would be
death to the "window-dressing" that now obscures en-
lightenment.

Sir Felix would also have a census taken in all the
banks in the country on a certain day to show their holding
of Bank of England notes and gold. Eighty million pounds
is thought to be the amount of gold in circulation in this
country, which is said to be much more than is circulated
in any other land.

Bankers' Committees.

Another suggestion is for the appointment of a small
permanent committee, representative of the bankers, to act
with the Bank of England, the committee to decide when
utilization of the special reserve is necessary. A larger
general committee would confer with the Old Lady of
Threadneedle Street on matters of general importance.

The scheme includes much for the better management
of British finance, besides its specific reference to the stock
of specie. Its author does not pretend that universal con-
cord will easily be reached, even on the points that call
for no special legislation. But it is every banker's business
to see that the central mechanism of the money market is
of the highest efficiency.

BOARDS OF TRADE.

Kingston, Ont.—The main interest of the last meeting
of the Board of Trade here was the hearty welcome which
the president and members tendered to Mr. William Les-
lie and the presentation to him of a piece of plate as a
"slight mark of our appreciation of your great skill in tak-
ing the steamship 'Bavarian' off Wye Rock." Mr. Leslie,
in his reply, told the history of the raising of the vessel and
thanked the Board for their appreciation of his undertaking.

Frank, Alta.—The Board of Trade have adopted a
memorial to the Railway Commission of Canada on the sub-
ject of the car shortage in the coal-mining district of Alberta.
in which it is shown that the coal shortage of the country
has not been and is not due to either the strike at Leth-
bridge or the inability of the other mines of the country to
provide the coal, or to any other reason than the failure of
the railway company to furnish adequate transportation
facilities.

PROSPERITY AND POLITICS.

Vancouver Divides Attention Between Business and
Elections—Activity in Coal Lands—Utilization
of Fish Offal.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

Vancouver, December 29th.

Elections are in progress in British Columbia, which
particularly means that other business will be a side issue
until after the voters have declared themselves at the polls.
Fortunately, the campaign will be short, and on February
2nd, voting will take place, with the House to meet on March
7th. The prosperity which has been general over Canada
during the past two or three years has had its good effect
in this province, and the Conservative Government, the first
administration under party lines, has done much to encourage
capital which has been offering, and to improve the situation
by beneficial legislation in regard to the investments already
placed here.

Tactful Legislation.

Local legislators realize that what is required as much as
anything for the upbuilding of this province is legislation
which will not be a hardship to those who are developing the
resources by establishing various enterprises. Liberal assist-
ance has been shown to bona fide companies, and that the
policy has worked well is indicated by the activity in all parts
of the province.

No one is prophesying with any degree of certainty the
outcome of the elections. The last contest was very close,
the Conservatives only retaining power by accepting the
support of two or three Socialists in the House. Since
then there has been a large immigration into British
Columbia, notably to Vancouver city. Vancouver has five
members, and under present conditions would hold the
balance of power. In addition to provincial elections, the
municipal campaign is also about to start. Nominations are
due next week, with polling seven days later.

Good Outlook For Real Estate.

Real estate, both in Vancouver and in the province at
large, promises to be active during the coming year. Prices
are very firm just now, although there is a holiday quietness,
but with the elections over it is very probable that movement
will enhance values. Confidence in the West is on the in-
crease, and with investors constantly looking for city prop-
erty, and areas in the interior adapted for semi-agricultural
and fruit-growing purposes, there should be no annihilation
of interest.

The great demand for timber continues. In this in-
stance, the buyers are almost invariably Americans, and
much money is being made. Alex. Macdonald & Co., who
have wholesale houses at Nelson and Vancouver, have estab-
lished another at Fernie.

Nanaimo and Tacoma capitalists have organized the
North Wellington Colliery Company to develop 300 acres of
coal lands at Nanoose Bay, about 16 miles north of Nanaimo,
Vancouver Island.

Coal Lands Active.

There is more activity in connection with coal lands,
from the Crow's Nest to Vancouver Island, than in any other
part of the mining industry. The fuel shortage of the past
few months has shown how little surplus is available in times
of need, and with constant expansion the demand is increas-
ing rapidly. In the Nicola Valley, there may be a legal fight
over possession of valuable deposits lying near the newly-
constructed branch of the C.P.R.

R. C. Campbell-Johnston and A. E. Hepburn have taken
over for Eastern capitalists options on 25,000 acres held by
A. E. Jukes, of St. Catharines, Ont., and others. They claim
to have prior right over the Diamond Vale Company, and
right to the title of the Nicola Valley Coal & Coke Company,
over a company recently incorporated under that name. Not-
withstanding, both of these latter concerns are going ahead,
and are sinking shafts. A large plant for the Diamond Vale
was ordered in Vancouver this week, and shipments should
be made some time during the year.

Coal deposits in the Bulkley Valley are also being sought.
Excellent mineral leads have been located there, and with
the advent of transportation facilities, coal will be in great
demand for mining and general purposes.

Shortage of cars is handicapping particularly the lumber
and shingle industries. It was stated yesterday by Ald. E.
H. Heaps, a prominent manufacturer, that many carloads
were in the sheds awaiting shipment. In the Kootenay, the
same condition exists, and shortage of cars coming west has
caused a local famine there in hay and oats which are im-
ported from Alberta.

Nothing Wasted.

A few years ago all the offal from the fish canneries was
dumped into the ocean, but now everything in the way of
waste products is treated for the oil contained therein. Mr.