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THE GENERAL FINANCIAL SITUATION.

The Transvaal gold offered in London at the beginning of the week was divided between the Bank of England and India. Bank rate has been maintained at 3½ p.c. In the London market rates are approximately the same as a week ago. Call money, 3 to 3¼; short bills, 3⅝; three months' bills, 3 7-16 to 3½. The Bank of France still quotes 3½ p.c. and the Imperial Bank of Germany quotes 5 p.c. In the Paris market discounts are 2 15-16 and in Berlin they are 4 p.c.

In England the threatened coal strike has engaged the market's attention to some extent; probably it has had some effect in delaying the return of confidence. Legislators with socialistic tendencies have had several striking illustrations lately of the fact that the putting into effect of laws shortening the hours of labor does not in all cases result in benefiting workingmen. The great strikes among the woollen mill employees at Lawrence, Massachusetts, occurred largely as a result of the action of the state legislature in shortening the hours of labor. When the mill-owners reduced the weekly wage of the individual employee to make it correspond to the decreased output attributable to his work because of the state's interference, the strike was decided upon. In the same way the legalizing of the eight-hour day has been in large part responsible for the threatened strike in England. Since it went into effect the rate of wages has tended downwards. The collieries are paying in wages approximately the same gross amount; but they have had to increase the force of miners and so the amount expended in wages is divided among a greater number of men, leaving the average individual miner with a lessened revenue.

In New York call money is 2¼ p.c.; sixty day loans are 2¾ to 3 p.c.; ninety days, 2¾ to 3 p.c.; six months, 3¼ to 3½. These quotations do not differ materially from those in evidence last week. The Saturday statement disclosed a loss of reserve strength on the part of the banks and trust companies. Their loans increased $975,000, and cash decreased $2,600,000. So the excess cash reserve fell to $36,202,950—a reduction of $1,413,000 for the week. The banks, taken by themselves, were able to show a small increase. Their loans decreased $320,000, and the cash loss was $550,000. The increase of surplus was $148,000.

The United States are also facing a threatened strike of the anthracite coal miners. The miners' unions are to present to the operators at the end of February demands for increased wages. The operators are said to be determined to resist these demands. At any rate the consuming classes devoutly hope they will resist to the last as it is now well understood that these wage increases when forced by the unions from the coal owners mean increased prices charged to the consumers. With the recent indictments of the dynamiting union officials, it would seem as if the prospects for a successful strike were not particularly good. It is difficult to see how resort could be had to the usual violence and terrorism. The general public in the United States appears to be determined to stop those outrages.

Following Canada's latest bank merger, New York has this week been informed of a big combination of trust companies. The Bankers Trust Company, a powerful Morgan concern, is to merge with the Manhattan Trust Co. The combination will rank next to the National City Bank. It is said that probably the Guaranty Trust Company will later be absorbed by this combination. If that deal also is completed there will result a company possessing $350,000,000 of deposits and ranking ahead of all other financial institutions in the States. Commenting on this movement, leading New York papers say that the "Money Trust" evidently entertains a contemptuous disregard of the pending investigation by a congressional committee.